

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 10 ENGLISH/HOMEWORK 2

NAME (FIRST AND LAST): _____ GRADE: _____

DAY/TIME/TEACHER: _____

We read a part of Jack London's short story, "To Build a Fire," while working on Homework 1. For Homework 2, we will read a few more pages. The questions in the left column would help you follow the story. Respond to them in the blank space. Responses may be in point form, but try to be as clear as you can because your instructor will assess them. Write legibly.

"TO BUILD A FIRE" BY JACK LONDON

<p>He pulled the mitten on hurriedly and stood up. He was a bit frightened. He stamped up and down until the stinging returned into the feet. It certainly was cold, was his thought. That man from Sulphur Creek had spoken the truth when telling how cold it sometimes got in the country. And he had laughed at him at the time! That showed one must not be too sure of things. There was no mistake about it, it <i>was</i> cold. He strode up and down, stamping his feet and threshing his arms, until reassured by the returning warmth. Then he got out matches and proceeded to make a fire. From the undergrowth, where high water of the previous spring had lodged a supply of seasoned twigs, he got his fire-wood. Working carefully from a small beginning, he soon had a roaring fire, over which he thawed the ice from his face and in the protection of which he ate his biscuits. For the moment the cold of space was outwitted. The dog took satisfaction in the fire, stretching out close enough for warmth and far enough away to escape being singed.</p>	<p>Why does the man want the stinging to return to his feet?</p>
<p>When the man had finished, he filled his pipe and took his comfortable time over a smoke. Then he pulled on his mittens, settled the ear-flaps of his cap firmly about his ears, and took the creek trail up the left fork. The dog was disappointed and yearned back toward the fire. This man did not know cold. Possibly all the generations of his ancestry had been ignorant of cold, of real cold, of cold one hundred and seven degrees below freezing-point. But the dog knew; all its ancestry knew, and it had inherited the knowledge. And it knew that it was not good to walk abroad in such fearful cold. It was the time to lie snug in a hole in the snow and wait for a curtain of cloud to be drawn across the face of outer space whence this cold came. On the other hand, there was no keen intimacy between the dog and the man. The one was the toil-slave of the other, and the only caresses it had ever received were the caresses of the whip-lash and of harsh and menacing throat-sounds that threatened the whip-lash. So the dog made no effort to communicate its apprehension to the man. It was not concerned in the welfare of the man; it was for its own sake that it yearned back toward the fire. But the man whistled, and spoke to it with the sound of whip-lashes, and the dog swung in at the man's heels and followed after.</p>	<p>What does "singed" mean?</p>
	<p>How is the dog different from the man? Explain in your own words.</p> <p>Does the man respect the dog?</p>

The man took a chew of tobacco and proceeded to start a new amber beard. Also, his moist breath quickly powdered with white his mustache, eyebrows, and lashes. There did not seem to be so many springs on the left fork of the Henderson, and for half an hour the man saw no signs of any. And then it happened. At a place where there were no signs, where the soft, unbroken snow seemed to advertise solidity beneath, the man broke through. It was not deep. He wet himself halfway to the knees before he floundered out to the firm crust.

He was angry, and cursed his luck aloud. He had hoped to get into camp with the boys at six o'clock, and this would delay him an hour, for he would have to build a fire and dry out his foot-gear. This was imperative at that low temperature—he knew that much; and he turned aside to the bank, which he climbed. On top, tangled in the underbrush about the trunks of several small spruce trees, was a high-water deposit of dry fire-wood—sticks and twigs, principally, but also larger portions of seasoned branches and fine, dry, last-year's grasses. He threw down several large pieces on top of the snow. This served for a foundation and prevented the young flame from drowning itself in the snow it otherwise would melt. The flame he got by touching a match to a small shred of birch-bark that he took from his pocket. This burned even more readily than paper. Placing it on the foundation, he fed the young flame with wisps of dry grass and with the tiniest dry twigs.

He worked slowly and carefully, keenly aware of his danger. Gradually, as the flame grew stronger, he increased the size of the twigs with which he fed it. He squatted in the snow, pulling the twigs out from their entanglement in the brush and feeding directly to the flame. He knew there must be no failure. When it is seventy-five below zero, a man must not fail in his first attempt to build a fire—that is, if his feet are wet. If his feet are dry, and he fails, he can run along the trail for half a mile and restore his circulation. But the circulation of wet and freezing feet cannot be restored by running when it is seventy-five below. No matter how fast he runs, the wet feet will freeze the harder.

All this the man knew. The old-timer on Sulphur Creek had told him about it the previous fall, and now he was appreciating the advice. Already all sensation had gone out of his feet. To build the fire he had been forced to remove his mittens, and the fingers had quickly gone numb. His pace of four miles an hour had kept his heart pumping blood to the surface of his body and to all the extremities. But the instant he stopped, the action of the pump eased down. The cold of space smote the unprotected tip of the planet, and he, being on that unprotected tip, received the full force of the blow. The blood of his body recoiled before it. The blood was alive, like the dog, and like the dog it wanted to hide away and cover itself up from the fearful cold. So long as he walked four miles an hour, he pumped that blood, willy-nilly, to the surface; but now it ebbed away and sank down into the recesses of his body. The extremities were the first to feel its absence. His wet feet froze the faster, and his exposed fingers numbed the faster, though

Why is the man angry?

← The title of the short story can be found in this paragraph? Is this significant? Explain.

What effect does the image cold space have on the reader?

Where/what are the extremities?

they had not yet begun to freeze. Nose and cheeks were already freezing, while the skin of all his body chilled as it lost its blood.



But he was safe. Toes and nose and cheeks would be only touched by the frost, for the fire was beginning to burn with strength. He was feeding it with twigs the size of his finger. In another minute he would be able to feed it with branches the size of his wrist, and then he could remove his wet foot-gear, and, while it dried, he could keep his naked feet warm by the fire, rubbing them at first, of course, with snow. The fire was a success. He was safe. He remembered the advice of the old-timer on Sulphur Creek, and smiled. The old-timer had been very serious in laying down the law that no man must travel alone in the Klondike after

fifty below. Well, here he was; he had had the accident; he was alone; and he had saved himself. **Those old-timers were rather womanish, some of them, he thought. All a man had to do was to keep his head, and he was all right. Any man who was a man could travel alone.** But it was surprising, the rapidity with which his cheeks and nose were freezing. And he had not thought his fingers could go lifeless in so short a time. Lifeless they were, for he could scarcely make them move together to grip a twig, and they seemed remote from his body and from him. When he touched a twig, he had to look and see whether or not he had hold of it. The wires were pretty well down between him and his finger-ends.

All of which counted for little. There was the fire, snapping and crackling and promising life with every dancing flame. He started to untie his moccasins. They were coated with ice; the thick German socks were like sheaths of iron halfway to the knees; and the moccasin strings were like rods of steel all twisted and knotted as by some conflagration. For a moment he tugged with his numb fingers, then, realizing the folly of it, he drew his sheath-knife. But before he could cut the strings, it happened. It was his own fault or, rather, his mistake. He should not have built the fire under the spruce tree. He should have built it in the open. But it had been easier to pull the twigs from the brush and drop them directly on the fire. Now the tree under which he had done this carried a weight of snow on its boughs. No wind had blown for weeks, and each bough was fully freighted. Each time he had pulled a twig he had communicated a slight agitation to the tree—an imperceptible agitation, so far as he was concerned, but an agitation sufficient to bring about the disaster. High up in the tree one bough capsized its load of snow. This fell on the boughs beneath, capsizing them. This process continued, spreading out and involving the whole tree. It grew like an avalanche, and it descended without warning upon the man and the fire, and the fire was blotted out! Where it had burned was a mantle of fresh and disordered snow.

Why is it important to obey the law that the old-timer lay down?

← **Based on this paragraph, find an adjective to describe the man's character.**

What causes the disaster, and what is the disaster?

<p>The man was shocked. It was as though he had just heard his own sentence of death. For a moment he sat and stared at the spot where the fire had been. Then he grew very calm. Perhaps the old-timer on Sulphur Creek was right. If he had only had a trail-mate he would have been in no danger now. The trail-mate could have built the fire. Well, it was up to him to build the fire over again, and this second time there must be no failure. Even if he succeeded, he would most likely lose some toes. His feet must be badly frozen by now, and there would be some time before the second fire was ready.</p>	<p>Why does the man grow “very calm”?</p>
<p>Such were his thoughts, but he did not sit and think them. He was busy all the time they were passing through his mind. He made a new foundation for a fire, this time in the open, where no treacherous tree could blot it out. Next, he gathered dry grasses and tiny twigs from the high-water flotsam. He could not bring his fingers together to pull them out, but he was able to gather them by the handful. In this way he got many rotten twigs and bits of green moss that were undesirable, but it was the best he could do. He worked methodically, even collecting an armful of the larger branches to be used later when the fire gathered strength. And all the while the dog sat and watched him, a certain yearning wistfulness in its eyes, for it looked upon him as the fire-provider, and the fire was slow in coming.</p>	<p>Why is there a “yearning wistfulness” in the dog’s eyes?</p>
<p>When all was ready, the man reached in his pocket for a second piece of birch-bark. He knew the bark was there, and, though he could not feel it with his fingers, he could hear its crisp rustling as he fumbled for it. Try as he would, he could not clutch hold of it. And all the time, in his consciousness, was the knowledge that each instant his feet were freezing. This thought tended to put him in a panic, but he fought against it and kept calm. He pulled on his mittens with his teeth, and threshed his arms back and forth, beating his hands with all his might against his sides. He did this sitting down, and he stood up to do it; and all the while the dog sat in the snow, its wolf-brush of a tail curled around warmly over its forefeet, its sharp wolf-ears pricked forward intently as it watched the man. And the man, as he beat and threshed with his arms and hands, felt a great surge of envy as he regarded the creature that was warm and secure in its natural covering.</p>	<p>What is causing the man to panic?</p>

VOCABULARY

Choose the best synonym for each of the underlined words. Ensure that the synonyms are compatible with the Jack London's writing in "To Build a Fire."

1. For the moment the cold of space was outwitted.

- A) frigid B) challenged C) severe D) outsmarted

Answer:_____

2. But the dog knew; all its ancestry knew, and it had inherited the knowledge.

- A) received B) evolved C) created D) learned

Answer:_____

3. He wet himself halfway to the knees before he floundered out to the firm crust.

- A) limped B) climbed C) stumbled D) crawled

Answer:_____

4. Lifeless they were, for he could scarcely make them move together to grip a twig, and they seemed remote from his body and from him.

- A) easily B) almost C) hardly D) struggled

Answer:_____

5. Each time he had pulled a twig he had communicated a slight agitation to the tree—an imperceptible agitation, so far as he was concerned, but an agitation sufficient to bring about the disaster.

- A) gentle B) unnoticeable C) slight D) violent

Answer:_____

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Respond to one of the following questions.

1. When he falls in the river, the man curses his bad luck. Do you agree with where he places his blame? Why or why not?
2. In the paragraph (in bold print) where the man reflects on “old-timers” and “men who are men” what do you think of his mentality and beliefs?

1 or 2 (Circle)

Question 1 grading rubric

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
The point of view is unclear. The story/question might have been misread.	The point of view needs to be more clearly expressed.	A point of view is expressed.	A point of view is clearly expressed.
There is minimal engagement with the text.	There needs to be more engagement with specific moments in the short story.	There is a discussion of specific moments in the short story.	There is a discussion of the well-chosen moments in the short story.
There are severe grammatical errors.	Grammatical errors sometimes block comprehension.	The grammatical errors are minor.	There are essentially no grammatical errors.

Question 2 grading rubric

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
The description is unclear. The story/question might have been misread.	The description of the man's mentality and beliefs needs to be clearer.	There is a clear description of the man's mentality and beliefs.	Well-chosen words are used to describe the man's mentality and beliefs.
There may not be any discussion of the man's preconceived notions.	The discussion of the man's preconceived notions needs to be clearer.	There is a discussion of the man's preconceived notions.	There is a precise discussion of the man's preconceived notions.
There are severe grammatical errors.	Grammatical errors sometimes block comprehension.	The grammatical errors are minor.	There are essentially no grammatical errors.

GRAMMAR

IDENTIFYING TYPES OF SENTENCES

Sentences can be identified by type.

- A **declarative sentence** makes a statement. It is followed by a period.
EXAMPLE: Our band is called Heir Apparent.
- An **interrogative sentence** asks a question. It is followed by a question mark.
EXAMPLE: Why did you choose such a strange colour?
- An **imperative sentence** expresses a command or request. It is followed by a period or an exclamation mark.
EXAMPLE: Finish your work.
- An **exclamatory sentence** expresses surprise or strong emotion. It is followed by an exclamation mark.
EXAMPLE: What a great concert! Heir Apparent rocks! Watch out!

Identify the following sentences as either declarative (D), interrogative (IN), imperative (IM), or exclamatory (E). Add the correct punctuation at the end of each sentence.

- ___ 1. Excuse me, but there's a snail crawling up your leg ___
 - ___ 2. What a horrible thought that is ___
 - ___ 3. Who let that thing in ___
 - ___ 4. I think it probably let itself in ___
 - ___ 5. Well, let it out please ___
 - ___ 6. Come here, snail ___
 - ___ 7. Do you think it's listening ___
 - ___ 8. I don't think snails have ears ___
 - ___ 9. It seems to be crawling onto the counter ___
 - ___ 10. Don't let it near the food ___
-

NATURAL ORDER AND INVERTED ORDER SENTENCES

- When the subject of a sentence comes before the verb, the sentence is in **natural order**.

EXAMPLES: The soldier ran over the hill.

Rosa does love pizza.

The keys are here.

- When the verb or part of the verb comes before the subject, the sentence is in **inverted order**. Most questions are in inverted order. So are sentences that begin with here is, here are, there is, or there are. Writers sometimes use inverted order to create an effect or to change the emphasis in a sentence.

EXAMPLES: Over the hill ran the soldier.

Does Rosa love pizza?

Here are the keys.

A. Rewrite each sentence in natural order. Change questions to statements, if necessary.

1. Around that corner is a music shop. _____
 2. Never have I seen so many guitars. _____
 3. Does he want to go home already? _____
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B. Rewrite each sentence in inverted order. Underline the subject and circle the verb in each new sentence.

1. My bean plant is here. _____
 2. The balloon in the little girl's hand went BANG. _____
 3. Elijah sat in the first row, grinning from ear to ear. _____
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THE END