

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 24 Word Count: 1,843

Book Summary

Many people have heard of the Iditarod sled-dog race—a grueling race through the Alaskan wilderness. This book introduces readers to the Jr. Iditarod—a sled-dog race in Alaska for young people ages fourteen through seventeen. Readers will learn about the race, how mushers prepare for it, how dogs are trained, and the challenges along the trail. The specialized vocabulary of sled-dog commands is also included.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Summarize

Objectives

- Identify the main idea and supporting details
- Use the reading strategy of summarizing to understand the text
- Understand and use hyphenated compound adjectives
- Recognize and understand the use of syllable patterns

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*The Jr. Iditarod* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Main idea and details/summary, hyphenated compound adjectives, syllable patterns worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

- Content words:
 Story critical: **brutal** (adj.), **endure** (v.), **ethics** (n.), **grueling** (adj.), **stamina** (n.), **terrain** (n.)
 Enrichment: **anticipate** (v.), **cooperative** (adj.), **diligently** (adj.), **muster** (v.), **priority** (n.), **unique** (adj.), **withstand** (v.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Show students a picture of a sled-dog team. Ask them to share what they know about dogsledding.
- Write the word *Iditarod* on the board. Explain to students that the Iditarod is a popular sporting event in Alaska. Invite them to share what they know about the Iditarod.
- Show students the title of the book, and read the *Do You Know?* on page 4 to them.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name).

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Main idea and details**

- Write the following list of words on the board: *March, November, April, July*. Ask students to describe what these words refer to (months of the year). Point out that the description of these words is the main idea and the words are the details that support the main idea.
- Explain to students that sometimes the amount of information about a topic is so large that it is grouped into sections, and each section has its own main idea.
- Read page 4 aloud to students. Model identifying the main idea and details.
Think-aloud: I know that the headings of sections sometimes identify the main idea. Each section contains details that support a main idea about the Jr. Iditarod. As I read this section, most of the sentences mention something that helps define the Jr. Iditarod. The sentences also mention that the Jr. Iditarod is a demanding race for young adults ages fourteen through seventeen years old. They race on sleds pulled by dogs. I will underline this information. Based on what I've read, I think the main idea of the section is: The Jr. Iditarod is a demanding sled-dog race for people fourteen through seventeen years of age.
- Write the main idea on the board. Ask students to identify the details from the book that support this main idea (pull sleds through snow and ice, people race across 150 miles of challenging terrain, people race through blizzards and severe winds, and so on).
- Create a main idea and details/summary chart similar to the one on the worksheet. Say: *I can use this chart to help me keep track of the main idea and details of each section of the book. I will use the section heading as a strong clue as to what the main idea will be for that section.* Write the main idea and details of the first section of the book on the chart on the board.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Summarize**

- Explain to students that one way to understand and remember information in a book is to write a summary, or a brief overview of the most important information in the text. Point out that a summary includes the main idea and one or two supporting details. It often answers the questions *who, what, when, where, and why*.
- Model summarizing the main idea and details from section one on the board.
Think-aloud: To summarize, I decide which information is most important to the section that would be important to remember. To do this, I can identify the main idea and important details, and then organize that information into a few sentences. When I look at the main idea and details on the board, a summary of this section might be: The Jr. Iditarod is a demanding sled-dog race for people fourteen through seventeen years of age. The participants race sleds through snow and ice pulled by dogs. They race across 150 miles of challenging terrain through blizzards and severe winds.
- Write the summary on the board. Have students identify the main idea and details within the summary. Discuss how you used your own words to create the summary.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As students preview the book, reinforce the vocabulary words they will encounter in the text.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. Have students find the bold word *stamina* on page 7. Tell them to first look for a clue to the word's meaning in the sentence. Explain that in this book, they will not always find a context clue in the sentence that contains the unfamiliar word, but that other information in the paragraph will give them clues.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

The Jr. Iditarod



- Model how students can use the glossary or a dictionary to find a word's meaning. Have a volunteer read the definition for *stamina* in the glossary.
- Have students follow along on page 7 as you read the sentence in which the word *stamina* is found to confirm the meaning of the word. Repeat the exercise with the remaining content vocabulary words.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read the book to find out more about the Jr. Iditarod. Remind them to underline important information, or details, in each section and to use that information to identify a main idea.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 9. Encourage those who finish before others to reread the text. Point out that there are three subsections in this section: "Training Together," "Caring for the Dogs," and "Choosing a Leader." Explain that each subsection will require a summary and contains a main idea with details. When students are ready, discuss the important details they identified.
- Model identifying the main idea and details of the first subsection, "Preparing to Race."
Think-aloud: *As I read the subsection titled "Training Together," most of the sentences mentioned something about the mushers and how they work with their dogs long before the day of the race. I will underline this information. The sentences also discuss how the mushers need to wear special clothing and eat healthy foods in order to do well in the race. I will underline this information, too. Based on what I've read, I think the main idea of this section is: Mushers must learn how to stay healthy and work together with their team of dogs to do well in the Jr. Iditarod.*
- Write the main idea on the board. Ask students to identify details that support this main idea (mushers start training for the Jr. Iditarod at an early age, they must learn how to dress, they must learn how to eat healthy foods, they must learn how to train their dogs using special commands, and so on). Write these details on the board.
- Review how to create a summary from the main idea and details. Refer back to the summary created during the introduction to the skill. Discuss and create the summary as a class and write it on the board. (Mushers must learn how to stay healthy and work together with their team of dogs to do well in the Jr. Iditarod. They must learn how to dress to stay safe in the cold. They must eat healthy food to be strong enough to last the full distance of the race. Mushers must also practice special commands with their dogs.)
-  **Check for understanding:** Divide students into groups. Assign each group one of the remaining subsections of "Preparing to Race." Have them identify and underline important details in the chapter. Have students work with their group to identify the main idea from these details. Discuss their responses as a class and write a main idea for each subsection on the board.
- Ask students to write a brief summary of the section on a separate piece of paper. Have them share what they wrote.
- Ask students to read the remainder of the book. Remind them to think about the important details in the book so they can summarize the information they read.
-  Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding skills and context clues.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Discuss how stopping to review the important details helped students remember the facts and better understand the information in the book.
- Invite students to share the important details they underlined in the remaining sections of the book. Write these details on the board. Divide students into groups. Assign each group a subsection from sections 3 and 4. Have each group work together to identify the main idea from the details and write this information on a separate piece of paper. Discuss their responses as a class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce and explain the [main-idea-and-details/summary worksheet](#). Have students write the main idea and supporting details for the last section of the book on their worksheet. If time allows, discuss their responses.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Have students work in their group to write a summary for their subsection using the main idea and details they identified and discussed as a class. Discuss their responses as a class.
- **Independent practice:** Have students write a summary using the information from the remaining section of the book on their main idea and details worksheet. If time allows, discuss their responses.
- **Enduring understanding:** You read about how challenging and difficult the Jr. Iditarod race is for people who are not much older than you. Now that you know this information, what does this tell you about the character traits needed to accomplish a goal?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Hyphenated compound adjectives

- Write the following sentence on the board: *The girl wore a red dress.* Have a volunteer come to the board and circle the adjective in the sentence (*red*). Then have him or her underline the noun that the adjective describes (*dress*). Review or explain that *adjectives* are words that describe nouns or pronouns and tell *which one, how many, or what kind*.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *The Iditarod is a sled-dog race that covers over 1,000 miles.* Underline the word *race*. Have a volunteer come to the board and circle the word that describes the race (*sled-dog*). Explain that this word is an example of a *hyphenated compound adjective*. The short line in between the words is a *hyphen*. Point out that each part of a *hyphenated compound adjective* alone does not accurately describe the noun. For example, the author could have called it a *sled race* or a *dog race*, but together the words *sled* and *dog* create a hyphenated compound adjective that correctly and more accurately describes the noun.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following sentence on the board: *"...and their hearts are pounding as they wait their turn to leave at the two-minute intervals."* Underline the word *intervals*. Have a volunteer come to the board and circle the adjective that describes the *intervals* (*two-minute*). Ask students to discuss with a partner the reasons why each word within the hyphenated compound adjective could not describe the noun *intervals* alone (it doesn't make sense to say a *two intervals*; it isn't accurate to say a *minute intervals*).
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [hyphenated-compound-adjectives worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Word Work: Syllable patterns

- Explain to students that a *syllable* is a unit of sound in a word. A syllable contains a vowel and possibly one or more consonants. For example, point out to students that the word *dog* contains one syllable and the word *sledding* contains two syllables. Explain that many words have multiple syllables, like the words *cooperative* and *Iditarod*. Tell students that knowing how to break words into syllables can help them read and spell longer words.

- Write the word *blizzard* on the board. Say the word aloud, clap the syllables, and put a dot over each of the vowels in the word. Then draw a line to divide the word into its two syllables. Say: *Notice that the vowel i is in the middle of the syllable bliz, and it is closed in by the consonants l and z on either side. The vowel sound is short in the syllable bliz. We call this a closed syllable. Often, vowels in closed syllables are short vowels. I can use this strategy when I am trying to sound out unfamiliar words.*
- Repeat the process above with the word *prepare*. Demonstrate that the syllable break comes after the vowel, so the first syllable is an *open syllable*—there is no consonant closing it in at the end. Often, open syllable vowels are long.
- **Check for understanding:** Write several more words from the book on the board (*began, master, and so on*). Ask student volunteers to come to the board and divide each word into syllables and then explain whether the first syllable is open or closed.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [syllable patterns worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently or with a partner. Encourage repeated timed readings of a specific section of the book.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students discuss with someone at home the main idea of each section or subsection of the book to share what they learned about the Jr. Iditarod.

Extend the Reading

Informational Writing Connection

Discuss with students how the Jr. Iditarod is part of Alaskan culture. Divide students into teams. Have them use the Internet and print resources to research other aspects of Alaska and Alaskan culture, such as the environment, clothing, food, and other favorite activities. Have each group research one aspect and then report their findings in a presentation format of their choice.

Visit [Writing A–Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on informational report writing.

Social Studies Connection

Discuss with students questions they still have about the Jr. Iditarod after reading the book. Write these questions on a chart. With supervision, have students use the Internet to find out more information about the Jr. Iditarod to answer their questions.

Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment**Monitor students to determine if they can:**

- identify the main idea and supporting details to better understand the text through discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately use main idea statements and supporting details to write a summary in their own words
- accurately identify hyphenated compound adjectives in text during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly recognize and understand the use of syllable patterns within words during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)