Information Quest

Would a dogsled team be necessary to respond to an outbreak of an illness in Nome today? This activity will guide you to use websites that will help you compare life during the time of “The Race Against Death” with life today. Directions: Click the links to visit each website and find the answers to the questions.

Nome, Alaska, Chamber of Commerce: http://www.visitnomealaska.com

1. What is the population of Nome, Alaska, today? ______________________________________________________

2. Who were the original inhabitants of the region? How does their culture contribute to life in Nome today?
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________

3. How many flights from Anchorage to Nome are there each day?
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________

4. In what other ways could you get to Nome?
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
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5. What is the main purpose of mushing in Alaska today? _______________________________________________________________

6. What are the most popular means of transportation in Alaska?
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
7. What are typical symptoms of diphtheria?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

8. Why is diphtheria extremely rare in the United States today?

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Writing prompt: In 1925, teams of dogsleds and their mushers were needed to respond to an outbreak of diphtheria in Nome, Alaska. Why would such a response almost certainly be unnecessary today? Cite at least two reasons in your answer.

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1. The video describes the 1920s as a time of **optimism** and **innovation**. What do these two words mean?

   **optimism:**

   **innovation:**

2. Why were the 1920s a time of optimism compared with the years before them? What dark events happened just prior to the 1920s?

3. What were some of the innovations that affected people’s lives during the 1920s?

4. What kinds of entertainment were popular during the 1920s?

5. What was life like for African-Americans during the 1920s?
Paraphrase a Complex Text:

*The Call of the Wild*

**Directions:** Write unfamiliar words in the column on the left and their definitions in the column on the right. Use the back of this page if you need more room.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >
Directions: To **paraphrase** is to put something into your own words. Below, paraphrase each paragraph of the excerpt from *The Call of the Wild*.

**PARAGRAPH 1:**

**PARAGRAPH 3:**

**PARAGRAPH 2:**

**PARAGRAPH 4:**
Paraphrase a Complex Text: The Call of the Wild
Teacher Guide

First . . .
Set a purpose for reading. Let students know that they will be paraphrasing, or putting into their own words, the excerpt from The Call of the Wild. Then read the excerpt aloud as students follow along. Distribute the skills sheet “Paraphrase a Complex Text.”

Paragraph 1:
Whole-Class Activity
1 Direct students to reread the first paragraph of the excerpt, circling unfamiliar words.
2 Ask students to share the words they circled; write those words on the board. Choose students to look up and read aloud the definition of each word. For words with multiple definitions, discuss which definition applies to the word as it is used in the excerpt. Write the definitions on the board.
3 Have students read the first paragraph again, thinking about how they would explain what it’s about to someone else.
4 Tell students to close their magazines. Discuss what the first paragraph is about.
5 Call on several volunteers to paraphrase the first sentence of the excerpt. Encourage students to give one another feedback. Repeat for the second sentence of the excerpt.
6 Have students complete the first section of page 2 of their skills sheet by paraphrasing the first paragraph of the excerpt.

Paragraphs 2 & 3:
Small-Group Activity
Have students work in small groups to paraphrase the next two paragraphs of the excerpt. Students should circle tricky words and then divide up the task of defining the words, using the graphic organizer on the first page of their skills sheet to record the definitions. After each student shares the meanings of the words he or she looked up, all group members should reread the paragraphs they are paraphrasing, querying one another if they need a reminder of what a word means. Students should then discuss what each paragraph means before working together to paraphrase it. They should record their paraphrases on page 2 of the skills sheet.

Paragraph 4:
Individual Activity
Have students paraphrase the final paragraph of the excerpt on their own, following the same process they followed for the first three paragraphs.
“The Race Against Death” Quiz

Directions: Read “The Race Against Death.” Then answer the multiple-choice questions below.

1. Which sentence BEST summarizes the article?
   A In 1925, Leonhard Seppala helped save a town in Alaska from a diphtheria epidemic.
   B In 1925, the mayor of Nome, Alaska, came up with a daring plan to save lives.
   C In 1925, relays of sled dog teams delivered life-saving medicine to a remote town in Alaska.
   D In 1925, diphtheria was extremely deadly.

2. Why was transporting the diphtheria medicine by dogsled a risky plan?
   A The vials could break or get lost in the snow.
   B Some mushers weren’t familiar with the trails.
   C The sled dogs could get frostbite.
   D The sea was already partially frozen.

3. Consider this sentence from the article: “Today, most American children are vaccinated against diphtheria.”
   Why does the author include this information?
   A to broaden the reader’s understanding of the time period in which this story takes place
   B to argue that vaccines are effective
   C to suggest that children in other parts of the world are not vaccinated today
   D to show that diphtheria harms millions of children today

4. What is a central theme of the article?
   A Modern medicine saves millions of lives.
   B Much can be accomplished through teamwork.
   C Living in Alaska can be grueling and isolating.
   D Doctors are dedicated to helping their patients.

5. Complete the following analogy:
   vaccine : diphtheria ::
   A tissue : sneeze  B bandage : cut  C sunscreen : sunburn  D shin guards : soccer

6. Which statement is NOT supported by information in the article?
   A Many citizens of Nome would have died if the medicine had not arrived.
   B In 1925, there was no railroad to Nome.
   C Some Nome officials thought the medicine could be brought in by boat.
   D People all over the country were concerned about the medicine getting safely to Nome.

7. Which sentence from the article contains personification?
   A “In a matter of hours, the coating could block Billy’s windpipe and kill him.”
   B “With little warning, the ice might break up and carry them out to the Bering Sea.”
   C “For the next 20 miles, the wind beat mercilessly at Kaasen and his dogs.”
   D “He staggered off the sled, stumbled up to Balto, and collapsed, muttering, ‘Fine dog.'”

8. Based on what you know from the article, the author would most likely agree that
   A the medicine could have been delivered to Nome faster if more mushers were involved.
   B the blizzard was not that bad.
   C Kaasen was not a crucial part of the relay.
   D the mushers and their dogs risked their lives.

Directions: Write your answers on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

9. What characteristics do Balto and the other sled dogs have in common with Buck from the excerpt of The Call of the Wild? Use textual evidence to support your ideas.

10. Find three examples of sensory language in the story. How do these phrases or passages contribute to the overall tone of the article?
Read, Think, Explain

Identifying Nonfiction Elements

Use this activity sheet with "The Race Against Death." See the Glossary of Nonfiction Terms available at Scope Online for definitions of the words that appear in bold.

**Before Reading: Text Features**

1. Read the **headline**, or title, on page 4. Write it here: ____________________________________________

2. Look at the large photo on pages 4-5. What does it show?

   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

3. Look at the “As You Read” box on page 4. What does it tell you to think about as you read?

   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

4. Look at the photos on pages 7 and 8. What do they show? What story do the two photographs tell together?

   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

**During Reading: Text Structure**

5. Answer the following questions after you read the section “A Deadly Outbreak.”

   A. Place a check (✓) on the **text structure** that best describes how this section is organized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sequence</th>
<th>Problem and Solution</th>
<th>Cause and Effect</th>
<th>Compare and Contrast</th>
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</table>
B. Explain why you chose the text structure that you did. ________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

After Reading

6. Write a three- to four-sentence objective summary of “The Race Against Death.” Think about what you would say to a friend who asks, “What is this article about?”

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

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7. Below are two pieces of supporting evidence for a central idea of “The Race Against Death.” In the space provided, write a central idea that this evidence supports. Then find a third piece of supporting evidence.

Central idea: ________________________________________________

Evidence #1: “One musher would pick up the medicine at the railroad station in Nenana. Twelve others would wait with their dog teams in villages along the trail.” (p. 6)

Evidence #2: “When [Shannon] arrived in Tolovana, his face was black with frostbite. Men rushed out from the roadhouse. They loaded the medicine onto another sled and helped Shannon into the warmth.” (p. 7)

Evidence #3: ________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

8. Below is another central idea of “The Race Against Death.” Find three pieces of evidence that support this idea. Include the page numbers they come from.

Central idea: Sled dogs have heightened senses and physical attributes that make them particularly good at their jobs.

Evidence #1: ________________________________________________

Evidence #2: ________________________________________________

Evidence #3: ________________________________________________
9. Sequencing: Number the following from 1 to 6, in chronological order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diphtheria medicine is located in Anchorage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balto finds his way back to the trail.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A Native Alaskan family arrives in Nome with a sick child.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seppala sets out with his dogs on his journey to Nulato.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nome’s mayor alerts leaders in Washington, D.C., that the situation is dire.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The last ship of the fall season leaves Nome.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Look at the map on page 6. Then read the claims below. For each, write whether the claim is true or false. Then explain your answer by identifying the supporting evidence that proves the claim is true or false.

Claim 1: The distance from Nome to Nenana is approximately 1,000 miles.
This claim is □ true □ false (check one).

Supporting piece(s) of evidence: ________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Claim 2: Seppala’s route took him across frozen water.
This claim is □ true □ false (check one).

Supporting piece(s) of evidence: ________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

11. Consider how the mushers might have felt, knowing that if the medicine didn’t get to Nome, hundreds of people would likely die. What experience have you had in which someone depended on you? How did that feeling compare with how you think the mushers felt? Explain. Use text details in your answer.

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12. What else have you read in which a character had to solve a major problem like Dr. Welch and the leaders of Nome did? What was the problem, and how was it similar to the one in the article? Use text details in your answer.

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Vocabulary:
“The Race Against Death”

Directions: Read the following definitions and example sentences. Then add another word from the article.

1. antitoxin (an-tahy-TOK-sin) noun; a substance that stops or reduces the effect of a poison
   example: After a rattlesnake bit him, Clarence was rushed to the hospital and given an antitoxin.

2. epidemic (ep-ih-DEM-ik) 1. noun; a widespread occurrence of a negative event, especially an infectious disease; 2. adjective; affecting a large number of people; widespread
   example 1: The flu epidemic has now hit all 50 states.
   example 2: By 1985, the number of AIDS cases in America had risen to epidemic proportions.

3. frostbite (FRAWST-bahyt) noun; the freezing of the skin or deeper layers of tissue in some part of the body; an injury caused by severe cold, often to the nose, cheeks, chin, fingers, toes, or ears
   example: Frostbite is a serious condition, so be sure to wear warm clothes when you go outside.

4. neutralize (NOO-truh-lahyz) verb; to make something ineffective or harmless
   example: Placing a box of baking soda in the refrigerator will neutralize bad smells.

5. outpost (OWT-pohst) noun; 1. a military camp apart from the main group of soldiers, which guards against a surprise attack; 2. a settlement or station on a frontier or in a faraway place
   example 1: The army prepared for battle after the outpost sent word of an approaching enemy.
   example 2: The people at the outpost were shocked to see us approaching. Largely cut off from the rest of the world, they didn’t get many visitors.

6. serum (SEER-uhm) noun; 1. the clear, thin, liquid part of the blood; it separates from blood when blood clots; 2. a liquid used to prevent or cure a disease; it is usually taken from the blood of an animal that has had the disease and is immune to it (also called antiserum)
   example 1: The doctor took a blood-serum sample to check Elliott’s dad’s cholesterol level.
   example 2: Jasper was saved by the serum he received at the hospital.

7. windchill (WIND-chil) noun; a measurement given in degrees that reports the combined effect of low temperature and the wind speed on exposed skin
   example: It was 40 degrees outside, but the windchill made it feel much colder.

8. windpipe (WIND-pahyp) noun; the tube that links the lungs and the throat and that carries air for breathing; the trachea
   example: Janet started coughing after a bit of food went down her windpipe.

9. ______________ ( ____________ ) ____________:
   example: ______________ ( ____________ ) ____________:

   example: ______________ ( ____________ ) ____________:

   example: ______________ ( ____________ ) ____________:

   example: ______________ ( ____________ ) ____________:
Vocabulary Practice:  
“The Race Against Death”

Directions: Complete the sentences using a form of the vocabulary words listed in the Word Bank.

## WORD BANK
- antitoxin
- epidemic
- frostbite
- neutralize
- outpost
- windpipe
- windchill

1. According to the weather report, the ______________ makes it feel like 26 degrees outside.

2. The general explained the plan to ______________ the enemy troops.

3. Swelling of the ______________ makes it difficult to breathe.

4. During the mid-14th century, a/an ______________ called the Black Death killed millions of people across Europe.

5. Dave worried that he would get ______________ while waiting in the cold for the bus.

6. Scientists from the university built a research ______________ deep in the jungle.

7. “Watch out for spiders,” warned our tour guide, “because obtaining a/an ______________ is difficult in these parts.”

Directions: Choose two of the vocabulary words listed on the first two pages of this activity. Write a single sentence that includes both words.

8. ____________________________

   ____________________________

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Critical-Thinking Questions

“The Race Against Death”

1. What combination of problems did the town of Nome face in 1925? Why is it unlikely that Nome would face these problems today?

2. Who was responsible for overcoming Nome’s diphtheria outbreak? What role did each play?

3. The medicine arrived in Nome in even less time than officials had hoped. What does this tell you about the mushers and the sled dogs?

4. Which details show the challenging natural conditions the dogs and mushers had to overcome?

5. What does the excerpt on page 9 tell you about a sled dog’s senses?

Name: ___________________________________________ Date: ___________
Sled Dog Contest

Consider the following quotation by Helen Keller: “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” What does this quote mean? How does it relate to the central idea of “The Race Against Death”? Answer both questions in two to three well-organized paragraphs. Be sure to use text evidence. Five winners will each receive a copy of *Wilderness* by Roddy Doyle.

*My response:*

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Please continue on another sheet of paper if you need more room.

My name: ________________________________________________________________

My home phone number: __________________________ My grade: __________________

My teacher’s name: __________________________________ My teacher’s e-mail: ______

School name: ___________________________________________________________

School address: __________________________________________________________

City: __________________________ State: __________________ ZIP: _______________

School phone number: ___________________________________________________

My parent or legal guardian consents to my participation in this contest.

Parent’s or legal guardian’s signature: _______________________________________

TO ENTER THE CONTEST, MAIL THIS SHEET TO:
SLED DOG CONTEST, c/o SCOPE, P.O. BOX 712, NEW YORK, NY 10013-0712
ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 15, 2013!