OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): OSMS
Classes/Grade Level(s): ELA 8-12

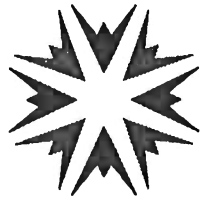
ABOUT THE BOOK

Book Title: Call of the Wild
Author: Jack London
Genre: Historical Fiction
Lexile Reading Level: 1010L
Total number of pages: 116 pages

Book Summary (abbreviated, bulleted list)	**Potentially Objectionable Content**
• The Call of the Wild is a novel by Jack London published in 1903. The story is set in the Yukon during the 1890s Klondike Gold Rush—a period in which strong sled dogs were in high demand. • The novel's central character is a dog named Buck, a domesticated dog living at a ranch in the Santa Clara Valley of California as the story opens. Stolen from his home and sold into service as a sled dog in Alaska, he reverts to a wild state. • Buck is forced to fight in order to dominate other dogs in a harsh climate.	**Violence** "Men and dogs are beaten and killed, and attack and kill each other. Men beat dogs with clubs and whips. Dogs fight to the death and tear out the throats of men and other dogs. Lots of bloody details." - Common Sense Media **Offensive Language/Racial Slurs** Racist depictions of Native Americans as violent and savage are frequent in the second half of the book, as well as negative terms such as "half-breed" and "squaw". A type of plant called a "n***** plant" is referred to in Chapter 7. Another dog's name is "Nig" and the dog has black fur, so this would also be offensive to readers.

Book Reviews:

From Common Sense Media: Parents need to know that Jack London's classic novel *The Call of the Wild* was originally published in 1903. It traces the journey of a dog named Buck from domestic family life to pulling sleds during the Klondike Gold Rush of the 1890s, and then heeding the pull of his natural instincts to return to the wild. This is a story of survival and includes



has some bigoted and sexist portrayals of humans. At one stage in Buck's story, he's owned by two men who are described as "... a black-faced giant called Francois. Perrault was a French-Canadian, and swarthy; but Francois was a French-Canadian half-breed, and twice as swarthy." Native Americans commit a ruthless attack in the book as well, killing dogs and men. And the only woman who figures in the story acts like a spoiled child, by turns overfeeding the dogs (which leads to insufficient food and starvation later) and overworking them. Ultimately, however, this is a story about the power of a dog's natural instincts, and the dignity that animals deserve.

From the Book Bag: When he was stolen and sold by a family servant, Buck was a young dog, just four years old. He was in his prime, a huge dog, a German Shepherd - St Bernard cross. He'd become the lord of all he surveyed around Judge Miller's place - he was a lucky dog; born with the strength of one parent and the intelligence of the other. But Buck's civilized life was about to come to an end, for dogs like him were in demand. Gold had been found in Alaska and men were rushing to find their fortunes. Dogs like Buck were desperately needed to pull the sleds in that harsh, frozen country. And Judge Miller had a servant who had not enough money and too many children to feed. That is how Buck came to be stolen away from his pampered life and sold into the slavery of the sled dog. Buck learns hard lessons but, thanks to his intelligence, he learns fast. He learns not only how cruel the Alaskan territory is, and how hard the life of a sled dog is, but he also learns how cruel and hard man, and other dogs, can be. His first lesson is dealt by the man in the red sweater, the man with the club. His second is dealt by Spitz, the lead dog of the sled team who kills the first friend he has made. There is so much Buck has to learn: how to dig a 'nest' under the snow to keep from freezing at night; how to protect his food and survive on a starvation diet; how to fight; and, above all, how to avoid the club. But he learns all his lessons well and eventually becomes the leader of the team. The sheer hard work and effort of his snowy journeys seem never-ending.

ABOUT THE CLASS

Course Rationale:

The Call of the Wild offers students a story of transformation, survival, and adventure in a narrative structure. The length of the book and chapter size make reading this book at the middle school level appropriate for the whole class.

The Ohio Department of Education ELA Standards (list priority standards *only and* abbreviations)

1. RL8.2: Determine a theme or central idea
2. RL8.3: Analyze dialogue, plot, and characterization
3. RL8.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases; analyze tone
4. RL8.7: Analyze a film vs. written text

RL8.9: Analyze how a modern work draws on a classic text

ALTERNATIVE TEXTS

What alternative texts would allow students to meet the same objectives?

1. Nightjohn by Gary Paulsen
2. Woodsong by Gary Paulsen

SIGNATURES (embedded jpegs of authentic signatures are fine OR download/print form and obtain traditional signatures)

Teacher: Sarah Zeth Date: 2·7·25

Department Chair: Valerie Biggam Date: 2.5.25

Building Principal: Date: 2.7.25

District Curriculum Administrator: Elaine Nejohn Date: 2-10-25