The Call of the Wild Response to Literature Essay (7th Grade Honors Project)

The Call of the Wild is one of the most popular books in the United States and has been since its release in the late 1800s. Generations of students have written about the topics, themes, and symbols that are hidden among its pages. Now, it’s your turn.

You will be writing a response essay. A response essay is a short piece of writing in which you:

- retell key events in the story
- interpret the theme of the story (interpret means looking at the important events in a story and understanding how they reveal a message about life or human nature)
- show how the development of the main character relates to the development of the theme

To determine your topic, consider the following questions; these will lead you to your topic.

- What did Buck learn from his experience in the Northland?
- What effect did each of his masters have on him?
- Who did he learn the most from?
- What do symbols like fire, the moon, seasons, and forests have to do with the story?
- What motivates Buck?

Stated another way, you will be writing about the lessons Buck learned in the Northland. As evidence for what Buck learned, you will identify and use the key events that had the biggest effect on Buck. Analyzing this will help you determine what Buck learned about life (the theme).

Points Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Process – 40 Points</th>
<th>Final Draft – 60 Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prewriting (Events chart, outline, notes)</td>
<td>Ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rough Draft(s)</td>
<td>Evidence</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<td>Conventions</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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Total Points: 100
The Most Important Lesson

"Buck’s first day on the Dyea beach was like a nightmare" (14), the narrator explains the terrible sights Buck witnesses in the few hours he is in the Northland. Throughout *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London, Buck, the protagonist Southland dog, is thrown into situations where he is unfamiliar and forced to adapt or face the consequences: death. Buck is originally from Santa Clara, California, but is stolen by his master’s gardener and sold up the coast until he reaches Alaska. Dogs like Buck who are strong, smart, and easily adaptable are in high demand in the Northland because there is a gold rush and everyone is looking to get rich quick, and the quickest way to get around is by dog sled. As Buck struggles to survive in the Northland, he learns The Law of Club and Fang could either help him thrive or be the reason he doesn’t live.

Buck’s first introduction to the Law of Club and Fang came from a man in a red sweater. Buck had been stuffed in a box on a train car for days when he was unloaded and put in front of a man in a red sweater who held a club. The man’s job was to break Buck and make him obedient. The man began beating Buck mercilessly with the club until Buck could no longer move. The narrator describes the lesson Buck learned, “He saw, once for all, that he stood no chance against a man with a club. He learned the lesson, and in all his life he never forgot it” (10). Buck learned to never question the authority of a man with a club in his hand. He learned the law of club when he was beaten by the man in the red sweater. This was Buck’s introduction to primitive law, but it certainly wasn’t his last visit with it.

The next lesson Buck learns that solidifies the Law of Club and Fang in his mind is when Spitz kills Curly. Spitz is the alpha dog in the pack and takes it as his responsibility to intimidate all of the other dogs into submitting before him. Spitz is a violent dog who will stop at nothing to remain the alpha, even if it means killing a member of the team. Curly, as a new member of the pack, tries to introduce herself
to Spitz, when he violently attacks her, “there was no warning, only a leap in like a flash, a metallic clip of teeth, a leap out equally swift, and Curly’s face was ripped open from eye to jaw” (14-15). Curly is brutally killed by Spitz in an effort to send a message to the other dogs: obey or be killed. The image that stands out in Buck’s mind isn’t the violent attack, but Spitz’s reaction after killing Curly, “he saw Spitz run out his scarlet tongue in a way he had of laughing” (15). Buck then realized that the Law of Club and Fang was real and if he wasn’t careful, he too would end up like Curly. From this day forward Buck was very cautious about which dogs he approached and the manner in which he came near them.

When Buck kills Spitz he proves that he is the dominant beast in the pack, but also that he has mastered the Law of Club and Fang. After weeks of feuding, Buck finally seizes an opportunity to kill Spitz and take control of the pack. The fight is long and terrible, and the other dogs in the pack wait impatiently for one of the dogs to fall and stay down so they can get a midnight snack out of him. At the end of the fight, “Buck stood and looked on, the successful champion, the dominant primordial beast who had made his kill and found it good” (40). When Buck kills Spitz he becomes the alpha and shows all of the other dogs that he too can live by the Law of Club and Fang.

Throughout The Call of the Wild, Buck learns a lot of lessons about life, but the most important is the Law of Club and Fang. He is able to adapt to the hard conditions in the Northland and overcome the obstacles because he is more cunning and has more imagination than any of the other dogs. Buck is beloved by all of the masters he has in the Northland because his leadership is paramount to their success. Buck transforms from a lazy, inexperienced Southland dog to a dominant primordial beast that lives and thrives by the Law of Club and Fang.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

London, Jack.
Throughout The Call of the Wild by Jack London Buck is a dog and he is thrown into situations where he is unfamiliar and forced to adapt or die and he,, is originally from Santa Clara, California, but is stolen by his masters garden and sold to a mean guy from Alaska because he needs money for his gambling debts and gambling is really bad and i dont know y he do it even tho it bad. Dogs like him who are strong, smnrt, and easily adaptable are in high demand in the Northland because there is a gold rush. Buck lerns the law of club and fang so he can mess the other dogs up. Buck’s first knows the law of club and fang cuz the dude in the red swetter hit him with a club a lot. he had been stuffed in a box on a train car for days when he was unloaded and put in front of a man in a red swetter who held a club. The man in the red swetters job was to hurt Buck so badley that he would become obedient. The man beets Buck really bad with the club until Buck could no longer move. The narrator describes the lesson Buck learned, “He saw, once for all, that he stood no chance against a man with a club. He learned the lesson, and in all his life he never forgot it” Buck learned to never question the authority of a man with a club in his hand and he learned the law of club when he was beaten by the man in the red sweater. The next lesson Buck learns that make the Law of Club and Fang in his mind is when spits kills kurly. Spits is the alpha dog in the pack and takes it as his responsibility to hurt all of the other dogs into
submitting to him. Spits is a violent dog whom will stop at nothing to remain the alpha, even if it means killing a member of the team. when kurley first showed up she tries to introduce herself to spits, when he violently attacks her. Curly is brutally killed by spits. Buck then realized that the Law of Club and Fang was Real and if he wasn’t Careful, he to would end up like kurly. When Buck kills Spitz he proves that he is the dominant dog and thqat he likes being a sled doggy cause its fun and he likes fun stuff just like Franshwa and peerot and Jon Thorrntton. After weeks of small fights buck fuinallu sees an chance to kill spits and so he ataks him. The fight is long and bloody and the other dogs in the pack wait impatiently for one of the dogs to fall and stay down so they can make a midnight snack out of him. Throughout The Call of the Wild, Buck learns a lot of lessons about life, but the most important is the Law of Club and Fang. He is able to change and accept the hard conditions in the Northland and overcome the obstacles because he is more smarter and has many much more imagination than any of the other dogs. Buck is liked by all of the masters he has in the Northland because his leadership is good to their success.

MR. SELTZ
ENGLISH CLASS
6TH PIRIED
**Gathering Chart**

**NAME:**______________________________________  

**DIRECTIONS:** Using the chart below, list key events that show important changes in the character you want to write about. Under each event, list specific details that you might include in your interpretation.

**EXAMPLE:**
- **Event:** Buck meets the man in the red sweater and learns the law of club
- **Specific Details:**
  - Buck is beaten with a club in an attempt to “break” him and make him obedient
  - Buck is hurt really badly
  - Buck learns that people aren’t always friendly, in fact, they can be really mean
  - This event is Buck’s introduction into the Northland and how life is going to be while he’s living there

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<th>Event 1:</th>
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**Specific Details:**
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</table>

**Specific Details:**
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### Event 3:

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

**Specific Details:**
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### Event 4:

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

**Specific Details:**
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**NOTES:**
DIRECTIONS: Use this paper to help you create an outline. The purpose of an outline is to organize your ideas so writing your rough draft is really easy. Why do we do outlines? Well, simply stated, outlines make life easier.

THESIS STATEMENT (Also known as a Focus Statement):

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

1. **Topic Sentence of 1st BODY PARAGRAPH:**

__________________________________________________________________________________________

   A. Supporting Details (details, explanations, evidence, quotes, etc.)

   _______________________________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________________________

   B. Supporting Details

   _______________________________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________________________

   C. Supporting Details

   _______________________________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________________________

2. **Topic Sentence of 2nd BODY PARAGRAPH:**

__________________________________________________________________________________________

   A. Supporting Details

   _______________________________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________________________

   B. Supporting Details

   _______________________________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________________________

   C. Supporting Details

   _______________________________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________________________
3. **Topic Sentence of 3rd BODY PARAGRAPH:**

____________________________________________________________________________________

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A. **Supporting Details**

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

B. **Supporting Details**

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

C. **Supporting Details**

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

**NOTE:** If you have more than 3 body paragraphs, finish your outline on a separate sheet of paper.

**Conclusion**

**Restated Thesis:**

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

**Final Thought (a snazzy, summed up way to end your essay)**

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

**Introduction**

**Attention Grabber** (the sentence your whole essay starts with; should be something that catches the reader’s attention like a quote, a narration, a description, or a shocking statistic.)

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

**Notes, Citations, Reminders to self:**

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
Peer Response Guide – Response to Literature

WRITER’S NAME: __________________________________________

REVIEWER’S NAME: ________________________________________

Directions: The writer will read his/her essay aloud to the reviewer. The reviewer, on THIS sheet, will provide detailed feedback about how the writer could improve her/his essay in each of the following areas. The more feedback and suggestions you give the writer, the more you will help him/her improve their essay. If you have to, pretend the essay you are reading is your own, and think about what you would change if it were your paper. Anytime you answer “NO” that means ACTION is required to fix that area in your essay.

Step 1: Read through the entire draft OUT LOUD to get a feeling of how well your essay works. This will help you point out the flaws or areas that need improvement later on.

Step 2: Highlight the FOCUS STATEMENT
Does the focus statement state the topic clearly? (Circle one) YES NO

If NO, help the writer revise their focus statement so that it is clear and makes sense.

Does the focus statement state all of the writer’s main ideas? (Circle one) YES NO

If NO, help the writer revise their statement so that it includes everything they are writing about.

Step 3: Check the body paragraphs to make sure each contains a topic sentence that supports the focus statement. Highlight the TOPIC SENTENCES in a different color than you highlighted the FOCUS STATEMENT.

Does the writer have a topic sentence for each body paragraph? (Circle one) YES NO

If NO, help the writer create a topic sentence for the paragraphs that need one.

Step 4: Check the body paragraphs for the elaboration techniques (description, evidence, and explanation).
Does the writer use enough details to explain their ideas? (at least 3-5 sentences of details) YES NO

If NO, help the writer think of ways to add more details.

Does the writer use enough evidence to support and prove their main ideas? YES NO

If NO, help the writer find more evidence to use.

Does the writer use QUOTES or PARAPHRASES from the novel? YES NO

Does the writer use the correct page numbers for their quotes and paraphrases? YES NO

If NO, help the writer come up with more quotes and page numbers?

Does the writer use EXPLANATION to explain why their evidence proves their main idea? YES NO

If NO, help the writer come up with more explanations for their ideas.

STEP 5: Tune up your voice. Is your voice formal sounding or do you slip into an informal tone?
Does the writer use any of the following words: I, YOU, WE? YES NO

If YES, help the writer eliminate these words from their paper.

STEP 6: Check your words and sentences to make sure they are right and make sense.
Change any words and fix any sentences that don’t quite make sense.
# Rubric for Response to Literature (7th Grade Honors Project)

**Habits of Effective Writers**

## Prewriting: Gathering Chart and Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gathering Chart and Outline</th>
<th>Gathering Chart OR Outline</th>
<th>Not Included (0 points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rough Draft(s)</strong></td>
<td>Included (20 points)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Included (0 points)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Final Draft – Traits of Effective Writing

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<th>4</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas</strong> (X2)</td>
<td>The focus statement and related details show real insight into the reading.</td>
<td>The response has a clear focus statement and all the necessary details.</td>
<td>The response has a clear focus statement. Unnecessary details need to be cut.</td>
<td>The focus statement is too broad. Unnecessary details need to be cut.</td>
<td>The focus statement is not developed. Details are needed.</td>
<td>The response needs a focus statement and details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong> (X2)</td>
<td>The opening, middle, and ending lead the reader smoothly through the response.</td>
<td>The organization pattern fits the topic and purpose. All parts are well developed.</td>
<td>The organization pattern fits the topic and purpose. A part of the response needs better development.</td>
<td>The organization fits the response’s purpose. All the parts need more development.</td>
<td>The organization doesn’t fit the purpose.</td>
<td>A plan needs to be followed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice</strong></td>
<td>The writer’s voice expresses interest and complete understanding. It engages the reader.</td>
<td>The writer’s voice expresses interest and understanding.</td>
<td>The writer’s voice needs to express a clearer understanding.</td>
<td>The writer’s voice needs to express an understanding.</td>
<td>The writer’s voice does not express an understanding.</td>
<td>The writer needs to understand how to create voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Choice</strong></td>
<td>Clear word choice creates a response that inspires the reader.</td>
<td>Specific nouns and active verbs make the response clear and informative.</td>
<td>Some nouns and verbs could be more specific.</td>
<td>Too many general words are used. Specific nouns and verbs are needed.</td>
<td>General or overused words make this response hard to understand.</td>
<td>The writer needs help finding specific words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence Fluency</strong></td>
<td>All sentences are skillfully written and engage the reader.</td>
<td>No sentence problems exist. Sentence variety is evident.</td>
<td>No sentence problems exist. More sentence variety is needed.</td>
<td>Sentence problems are found in a few places.</td>
<td>The response has many sentence problems.</td>
<td>The writer needs to learn to construct sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td>The response is correct from start to finish.</td>
<td>The response has minor errors that do not interfere with the reader’s understanding</td>
<td>The response has some errors in punctuation, spelling, or grammar.</td>
<td>The response has errors that may confuse the reader.</td>
<td>The number of errors confuses the reader and makes the essay hard to read.</td>
<td>Help is needed to make corrections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation</strong></td>
<td>The essay is very neatly written (or typed) in black or blue ink.</td>
<td>The essay is written (or typed) in black or blue ink; some parts are difficult to read.</td>
<td>The essay is written in black or blue ink.</td>
<td>The essay is written in pencil or ink; more than half of it is difficult to read.</td>
<td>The essay is written sloppily and is very difficult to read.</td>
<td>The writer needs to take more time and rewrite the essay neatly.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Score: _____ / 100**