



The Bravest Dog Ever ***The True Story of Balto***

By Natalie Standiford.
Illustrated by Donald Cook
1989. NY: Random House

The following is a summary of the book using major Kick-offs. These function as Attempts to carry out the main plan “To get medicine from Anchorage to Nome.”



Characters:

- People of Nome.
- Balto, a lead sled dog
- Gunnar
- Other sled drivers

~ Describe Balto using SGM® Character Map:

Young Dog Black, Husky, blue eyes, pointed ears|
Male Smart (personality) Lead Dog (pages 5-9)



Setting:

At points of the Star on the Story Grammar Marker® Setting Map:

- Alaska (Route: Anchorage see pages 4-5)
- Transportation in winter: dogsled
- Mines
- Climate
- Dogsleds

Overall Organization as a Narrative:



Characters: People of Nome Alaska joining with others in Alaska.



Setting: Alaska



Initiating Event: Diphtheria Epidemic



Feeling: Panic



Plan: To get medicine from Anchorage to Nome



Attempts:

- Request medicine by train.
- Train gets stuck (Embedded Episode)
- Organize a dog sled relay.



Direct Consequence: Medicine gets to Nome

Resolution: Relieved and Joyful

People in NYC erect a statue to Balto for his bravery.

Initiating Events that Drive the Plot

-  1. Parents notice children are ill.
-  2. Diphtheria epidemic “page 12 The doctor knew he had to get medicine fast. (Critical Thinking Triangle)
-  3. Train gets stuck in snow, causing the people to feel desperate
The plan is to get a dog sled relay going beginning at Nenanna (where the train got stuck) on January 27, 1925.
They ask for drivers and several sign up.
-  4. Gunnar hears the plea on the radio (pages 18-20) in Bluff, Alaska.
-  5. Drivers run into trouble but each gets to the next stop. (pages 24-25)
-  6. Gunnar’s dogs hit snow drifts and sink up to their necks.
-  7. Gunnar is concerned, frightened because of the dogs.
The plan is to get the dogs out of the snow.
Balto remains calm.
-  8. Medicine falls out of the sled on icy river.
-  9. Balto signals cracking ice.
-  10. Gunnar sees Balto’s paws are frozen (what does Gunnar know about this and its effects?).
-  11. Snow blinds Gunnar’s eyes/view.
He feels panic and resigned.
His plan is to depend on Balto because Gunnar knew Balto had run the trail many times.
-  12. No one is there to meet them at Point Safety.
-  13. They arrive at Nome with the medicine and saved Nome.



ACTIVITY IDEA: Using both the Kick off and Feelings Magnets on the board, infer and discuss the FEELINGS the characters must have had as a result of each kick off! (This is similar to the lesson posted in January for “Alexander and the Terrible...”, yet at a higher level.)

Points of View

Using Story Grammar Marker®, take the perspectives of the following characters:

- People of Nome
- Doctors in Nome and Anchorage
- Sled dog Drivers as problems happened along the way.
- Gunnar: How did Gunnar’s feelings change from the radio message to the arrival in Nome?

Expository Text Applications

Use ThemeMaker™ Maps and ThemeMaker™ overheads with the class:

What caused the train to get stuck?

How long was the trip from Bluff to Nome in miles and time?

What is diphtheria?

How many dog teams were in the relay?

How many stops were along the way? (Sequence them). Sort them by syllable number.

What was on the dog sleds?

What would happen if Balto's paws froze? (cause/effect)

How did Gunnar deal with the problem of Balto's paws? (problem/solution)