

# K-12

CC-G6-ELA  
Common Core Grade 6 English Language Arts

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## Topic: 1

### A WORLD OF WHITE: THE IDITAROD TRAIL

Questions 1 - 8 pertain to the following short story:

(1) Imagine clinging desperately to your sled as brutal winds batter your body. The path ahead appears and disappears like a mirage, frequently obscured by blowing curtains of snow. You are freezing and sweating at the same time. Your throat burns with thirst, and your body aches with fatigue. You know your dogs must feel it too, so you encourage them to press on to the next checkpoint. All around you, the world is endless, empty, and white. Welcome to the Iditarod Trail.

(2) Alaska's Iditarod Trail is the world's most famous sled dog racing venue. But the trail is older than the sport of sled dog racing. In fact, the Iditarod Trail was first established in the early 1900s, during the Alaskan gold rush. In those days, dog teams were used for work, hauling thousands of pounds of gold from landlocked Iditarod to the port of Anchorage. But in faraway Nome, also known for gold, six-year-old George Allen had the idea to put together a race to see whose sled dogs were fastest, and the sport of sled dog racing was born.

(3) Though the Iditarod Trail race is the most famous race in the sport of sled dog racing, the first race along the trail was actually a race to save lives. In 1925, a diphtheria outbreak began in Nome. To prevent an epidemic that could kill thousands, doctors were desperate for the vaccine serum, but the closest serum was in Anchorage. The train ran from Anchorage to the village of Nenana, but that was still 674 miles from Nome. A cry for help was sent by the doctors, and in the midst of the blizzards and windstorms of January, the call was answered. Twenty brave mushers drove their dogs in a frantic relay, carrying 300,000 bottles of serum from Nenana to Nome. They followed the Iditarod Trail.

(4) Dog sledding, or "mashing," became quite popular after that heroic journey, but by the 1960s, it had lost popularity and the Iditarod Trail had been largely forgotten. There were a few lovers of mashing, however, who worked tirelessly to reestablish the Iditarod Trail and create a new sled dog race that used the trail as its course. The first official race was held in 1967 to celebrate the centennial of the purchase of Alaska from Russia. The race involved 58 drivers who mushed 56 miles in two days. This race was a success, but the popularity and future of the Iditarod Trail was still in question.

(5) In March of 1973, the first Anchorage to Nome Iditarod Trail race was organized and held. This race was much longer than previous races, covering more than 1,000 miles—the whole Iditarod Trail. Thirty-four mushers began the race, but only 22 were able to finish. After the 1973 race, the popularity of the Iditarod Trail finally grew and was firmly established. In 1978, the Iditarod Trail became a National Historic Trail.

(6) The modern Iditarod Trail race is open to mushers over 18 years old who have qualified in a recognized race of 200 miles or more. For younger mushers between 14 and 18 years old, the Junior Iditarod offers a 130-mile version of the race. Many Junior Iditarod participants go on to compete in the Iditarod Trail race, as the Junior Iditarod is good practice for the grueling trek of the main race. All mushers must prepare for the race extensively, often for months before the race. Many mushers

run their dogs more than 1,500 miles in preparation, giving them experience in all types of weather and terrain.

(7) To enter the Iditarod Trail race, participants must pay an entrance fee. Then they must travel to Anchorage with their dogs. In Anchorage, they attend a mushers' banquet where they are given their racing order numbers. Afterwards, all participating dogs are checked by a veterinarian and marked by race officials to prevent dog switching mid-race, which is not allowed. The dogs are even drug tested at the beginning and at checkpoints throughout the race to prevent cheating! Finally, the sleds and equipment are checked. Then participants are ready to start the race.

(8) On the morning of the Iditarod Trail race, mushers leave Anchorage in their assigned racing order. They are sent out one at a time, at 10-minute intervals. For more than a week—sometimes up to three weeks—they travel throughout Alaska, stopping at designated checkpoints all along the Iditarod Trail as they make their way to Nome. When all participants have reached Nome, another mushers' banquet is held. Awards are given, and everyone is applauded for their achievement. Win or lose, the mushers know that only the toughest of the tough have what it takes to finish the race and conquer the great Iditarod Trail.

### Question: 1

What does the simile in paragraph 1 describe?

- A. The snow
- B. The path
- C. The musher's throat
- D. The dogs

**Answer: B**

Explanation:

A simile compares one thing to another by using "like" or "as": the only simile in paragraph 1—"like a to the path."

### Question: 2

This question has two parts. Answer Part A then answer Part B.

Part A: What is the best description of the word "diphtheria" in paragraph 3?

- A. a mode of transportation
- B. an illness
- C. a trail name
- D. a celebration

**Answer: B**

Explanation:

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"Diphtheria" is a type of respiratory illness.

Part B: Which sentence from the passage best supports your answer from Part A?

1) For see below answer is Explanation

**Answer: 1**

Explanation:

This sentence best supports the answer from Part A: "To prevent an epidemic that could kill thousands, doctors were desperate for the vaccine serum, but the closest serum was in Anchorage." It talks about needing a vaccine which is used to cure illnesses.

### Question: 3

What two cities are on the ends of the Iditarod Trail?

- A. Anchorage and Nome
- B. Nome and Nenana
- C. Iditarod and Anchorage
- D. Nenana and Iditarod

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

This information is found in Paragraph 5: "In March of 1973, the first Anchorage to Nome Iditarod Trail race was organized and held. This race was much longer than previous races, covering more than 1,000 miles—the whole Iditarod Trail."

### Question: 4

What is the author's main purpose in writing this article?

- A. To encourage mushers to race on the Iditarod Trail
- B. To inform the reader about the 1925 diphtheria outbreak
- C. To describe the terrain of Alaska
- D. To educate the reader about the Iditarod Trail

**Answer: D**

Explanation:

This is an informational article - the author's main purpose in writing this article is to educate the reader about the Iditarod Trail.

### Question: 5

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In paragraph 3, which words best convey the feelings of the doctors in Nome in 1925?

- A. "Epidemic" and "diphtheria"
- B. "Blizzards" and "windstorms"
- C. "Brave" and "frantic relay"
- D. "Desperate" and "cry for help"

**Answer: D**

Explanation:

The descriptive word "desperate" and the descriptive phrase "cry for help" are used in reference to the doctors in Nome in 1925.

### Question: 6

Why did the author choose to write this article in third-person point of view?

- A. Historical overviews are best written in third person
- B. The author has never been to Alaska
- C. Third person is the required point of view in nonfiction writing
- D. This article is not written in third-person point of view

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

Historical overviews, like this one, are best written in the third-person point of view.

### Question: 7

How is this article organized?

- A. Chronologically
- B. Geographically
- C. Randomly
- D. Spatially

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

This article is organized chronologically, from earliest to latest dates.

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