

## Unit 1/ Week 1

Title: Akiak

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.3, RL.4.4; RF.4.3, RF.4.4; W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.9;  
SL.4.1, SL.4.2, L.4.4, L.4.5, L.4.6

### Teacher Instructions

*Refer to the Introduction for further details.*

#### **Before Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers, about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

##### Big Ideas and Key Understandings

Persistence and desire can help to overcome challenges.

##### Synopsis

The story takes place during the Iditarod, an annual race through the Alaskan wilderness. The lead dog of one team in the Iditarod is injured and is forced to be removed from the race. But she escapes and runs after her team. She runs for days with limited food and water and ultimately catches up with her team and helps them win the race.

2. Read entire main selection text, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.

3. Re-read the main selection text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Vocabulary.

### **During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire main selection text independently.
2. Teacher reads the main selection text aloud with students following along.  
(Depending on how complex the text is and the amount of support needed by students, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.)
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions and returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e.: whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

### Text Dependent Questions

<b>Text Dependent Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
Ask students to reread from “Akiak had lead the team...” to “This was her last chance.” Why is this race so important to Akiak? (p.30)	She had run the race several times before, but she never won the race. Because she is 10 years old, this is her last race. Because this is her last race, she really wants to win.
What does it mean to work the team through Akiak? (p.33)	Akiak is very important to the team. She is the leader and she is able to “tell” the dogs what to do and they follow her.
Reread the last paragraph on page 33. Describe the setting using the language of the author. How would you describe the Iditarod trail?	Dangerous, cold, confusing, icy waters, Miserable. Treacherous
What does the phrase <i>break out</i> mean in the sentence that begins <i>The dogs were ready to break out...?</i> Why does Mick hold the dogs back? (p. 34)	Break out means letting the dogs run at full speed/go as fast as they can. Holding back was a deliberate/purposeful decision by Mick because Mick feels it isn’t the right time.
Mick’s team finally made its move. What is the team’s move? (p. 37)	She let the dogs go and they went into first place.

What does the phrase “clung to Mick like a shadow” mean? What does that tell us about what is happening in the race? (p.37)	A shadow is something that is really close to a person/object. The race is close because K’s team is really close to Mick’s team. Sometimes one team is winning and all of a sudden another team is winning.
How did Akiak get hurt and why is she limping? (You may need to define <i>limping</i> for your students.) (p. 37)	Akiak gets snow packed into her paw and makes it sore. She is limping because it hurts to walk.
What happened as a result of her injury? (p.37)	She was <b>forced</b> to be removed from the race.
The author wrote, “To run. To win.” Why did the author choose to use those two short sentences? (p. 39, Day 5) <i>NOTE: You may consider asking the students to locate the sentences before you draw their attention to the sentences by asking the question “What does Akiak want?”</i>	All Akiak wants is to run this last race and finally win. She wants nothing else. This is her purpose. By using two short sentences, the author is conveying this to the reader. There is nothing for the reader to infer.
How does Akiak’s behavior show that she wants to race/win? What is the final result? (p. 39)	She pulls, tugs, wriggles out of the people’s hands. She escapes from the people.
Describe what happened on Day 6? (p.39)	The obstacles that Akiak is facing are getting more challenging and harder. There is a blizzard.
Re-read the first sentence on page 40 “Word had gone out that Akiak was loose.” What does that mean.	Akiak had escaped from the handlers. No one could catch her.
How have people’s attitude/actions toward Akiak changed from Day 7 to Day 8? How do you know? (p. 42)	When she was pulled out of the race, the people tried to capture her. But now the people are starting to help her like putting out food for her as she goes along. The author says everyone was rooting for her.
What is a layover? (p. 44)	A rest before the final run/ The dogs are given a chance to rest before they continue the race.
Why is the layover important and how does it help Akiak? (p. 44)	All the other dogs on Mick’s team got a layover/rest. Akiak did not rest and was able to push on/keep on going and get closer to the team.

<p>Why is there such confusion amongst the team on Day 10. Find as many examples from the text/illustrations to support your thinking. (P. 46)</p>	<p>Text: Maze of snow mobile tracks; The dogs lost the trail; Mick squinted looking for a sign; They wandered about; tangling up the lines; something was blocking the trail. Illustration: The dogs are tangled up; the dogs are looking in different directions; the dogs are not organized.</p>
<p>Re-read the last sentence on page 46 and the first sentence on page 49. What was blocking the trail? (p. 49)</p>	<p>Akiak!!!</p>
<p>How does Akiak get her team back on track/trail? (p. 49)</p>	<p>Akiak circles... She pushed... She ran ahead...</p>
<p>What did Akiak finally do once she got the team back on track/trail? Why is this important?(p. 49)</p>	<p>She doesn't stop running until her team is back on the right track. Only then does she jump into the sled. She was able to stop running because she met up with her team because she got what she wanted.</p>
<p>Why was there a tremendous cheer when Akiak's team won the race? (p 50)</p>	<p>Since Akiak's story had spread, people had come from all over (Alaska) to see Akiak and her team cross the finish line. There were so many people at the finish line that all of their cheering was so loud.</p>

Vocabulary

	<b>KEY WORDS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING</b> Words addressed with a question or task	<b>WORDS WORTH KNOWING</b> General teaching suggestions are provided in the Introduction
<b>TEACHER PROVIDES DEFINITION</b> not enough contextual clues provided in the text	<p>p. 37 limping 44. layover</p>	<p>p. 30 rugged p. 33 descents, steep, confusing p. 39 volunteer</p>
<b>STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING</b> sufficient context clues are provided in the text	<p>p. 34 break out p. 39 blizzard p. 40 loose p. 42 rooted p. 46 squinted, wandered, tangled p. 50 courageous</p>	<p>p. 33 musher p. 34 pounded p. 39 grip p. 40 experienced p. 42 struggled, raided, discard</p>

## Culminating Task

- Choose one of the following prompts. Use evidence from the story to support your answers.
  - **Persistence** means to keep on trying no matter what happens. Explain how Akiak showed **persistence**.
  - **Desire** means to want something very much. Demonstrate how Akiak showed **desire**.
  - **Impressive** means something that is really awesome. Why is Akiak's winning this race so **impressive**?

*(Answers may vary. Students should provide at least two to three reasons to support their thinking.)*

- Describe how people's attitude towards Akiak changed through out the story. What did Akiak do to lead people to admire her? Use evidence from story to support your argument.

*(Answer: At the beginning, people were did not think Akiak would be able to win the race because she is so old. After she escaped, people/handlers were trying to catch her. Soon, people/handlers saw how much she wanted to participate in the race and they began to root for her to win.)*

- "Nothing was going to stop this dog from winning." How is this statement demonstrated through out the story? Use evidence from the story to support your argument.

*(Answer: See above)*

### Additional Tasks

- Personification means giving human qualities or actions to objects and ideas. Find examples of personification in the text.

*Answer: ["In the morning, the mound of snow came alive, and out pushed Akiak." (Also refer to page 46 in the teacher's guide)]*

### Note to Teacher

- In this story, there are many idiomatic expressions that might be challenging English Learners (e.g.: *break out; dropped two more dogs; pounded the snow*). Be aware of these challenges and address them as needed.