

# Dog Diaries: Togo – Unit Plan

**Developed by:** Jen Reiter, 2014 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail

**Discipline / Subject:** Reading/ Language Arts

**Topic:** Togo, Serum Run, Iditarod Trail History

**Grade Level:** 2-5, adaptable for other grades

## Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:

- Balto and the Legacy of the Serum Run – brochure from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, can be downloaded here:  
[https://www.cmnh.org/CMNH/media/CMNH\\_Media/Balto/Balto\\_CMNH\\_update2013\\_02.pdf](https://www.cmnh.org/CMNH/media/CMNH_Media/Balto/Balto_CMNH_update2013_02.pdf)
- Relay Participants list: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1925\\_serum\\_run\\_to\\_Nome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1925_serum_run_to_Nome)
- Historical Photos of Balto: <http://www.baltostruestory.net/apps/photos/album?albumid=650941>
- Cartoon Pictures of Balto: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0112453/>
- Balto Movie Trailer: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0112453/>
- Balto and Togo Video from the History Channel: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxz\\_OWeeiWM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxz_OWeeiWM)
- Balto’s Statue in Central Park: <http://www.centralparknyc.org/things-to-see-and-do/attractions/balto.html>
- Why Is There a Statue of Balto in Central Park?: <http://www.nyhistory.org/community/balto-statue-central-park>
- Audio Tour for Balto Statue in Central Park: 646-862-0997
- Dog Diaries: Togo by Kate Klimo

## Lesson Summary:

Students will read and analyze the novel Togo from the Dog Diary Series by Kate Klimo. They will learn about the Serum Run as a part of the history of the Iditarod Trail, and Togo’s role in the event.

## Standards Addressed: (Local, State, or National)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events

## Learning Objectives:

- TLW distinguish between historic fact and fiction
- TLW identify and distinguish between character and physical traits
- TLW explain to perform a task
- TLW retell a story from the text

## Assessment:

Each of the assignments can be collected and graded as completed.

## **Procedural Activities:**

### **Introduction Focus: Background**

- Ask the students to brainstorm what they already know about the Serum Run of 1925.
- If the students are unfamiliar with the story, you can share the short video clip from the History Channel to introduce them to the event.
- Share with them the brochure “Balto and the Legacy of the Serum Run” published by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History to help with the basic information of the event.
- Share with the students the list of mushers who participated in the Serum Run.
- Share with the students the historic photos of Balto and pictures from the cartoon movie of Balto to compare, or you can use the Balto movie trailer instead.

Assignment: A question sheet is included for the students to work on.

### **Chapter One Focus: Flashback**

Discussion Questions/ Talking Points:

- Page 2: Why are sled dogs so important/ popular in Alaska in the 1920's?
- Page 7: Why does Togo not like being called cute?
- Page 8: There is a reference to explorer Roald Amundsen. You may want to discuss his accomplishments.
- Introduce to the students the idea that the majority of the novel is a flashback. Ask them to think about what the author may want to tell us about Togo in the flashback. Why might an author choose to use flashback in their novels?

Assignment: Based on the information gathered so far, students will complete an extended response question that has them state an opinion and support it. They may use support from the first chapter of the novel and the resources they used yesterday to support their opinion of who is the bigger hero, Balto or Togo.

### **Chapter Two & Three Focus: Physical vs. Character Traits**

Start a chart that can be continued during the unit that shows the physical and character traits of Togo. As new traits are mentioned in the book or at the end of each chapter, have the students add them to the chart.

Discussion Questions/ Talking Points:

- Page 16: What is Togo's health issue and how is it cured?
- Page 18: What does Togo mean when he says, “Now I had two mommas.”
- Page 19: What does Togo say was his very first race? How does that phrase foreshadow what is to come in his life?
- Page 19: What does Togo learn from free-running? [Note: Many mushers include free running time in sled dog puppies' earliest training to this day!]
- Page 21: Physical Trait example: “curled up with my nose in my tail” – one adaptation sled dogs have is tails that can be curled over their noses to help retain heat. For more information on physical adaptations of sled dogs see: <http://www.nps.gov/dena/forteachers/learning/sled-dogs.htm>
- Page 25: Character Trait example: “Togo, you are one pesky little rascal.”
- Page 34: What does author mean by “More Nerve Than Brains”?
- Page 35: How is Togo able to find the trail?
- Page 42: One of Togo's well known physical traits is his raggedy right ear. Togo currently resides in the Iditarod Headquarters, but if you look at pictures of him now, the raggedy right ear trait is not evident. Jona VanZyle reports the reason for this is, “Togo was part of the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University collection of purebred dogs until sometime in the early 1950s. In 1964 he was acquired by the Shelburne Museum in Vermont, where visiting schoolchildren patted off much of his hair and badly damaged his ears and tail. Togo was returned to storage until about 1983 when he was recognized by local mushers and returned to Alaska. His ears and tail were replaced and he now resides, in a protective glass case, at Iditarod Headquarters. Sadly, the taxidermist didn't have a clue about his distinctive “tipped ” right ear when the ears were replaced, so this trait was lost.”

### **Chapter Four Focus: Reading for Details**

Assignment: The students will complete the character and physical trait chart based on what they have read in chapters two and three. They will create a “Lost Dog” flyer for Togo. The flyer should include as many physical and character traits as possible. The more details given, the more easily people will be able to determine if they have found the missing dog.

#### **Chapter Four Focus: Reading for Details**

Discussion Questions/ Talking Points:

- What does it take to be a member of the team?
- Page 49: What is Togo’s plan to show he can be a good team member? Is his plan a good one? What would be a better plan?
- Page 54: Togo gets a whiff of the reindeer herd and chases them. Is he really ready to be on the team?
- Page 56: He makes the team! Why did Sepp decide to put him in the team after all of his shenanigans?
- Page 61: Why does Sepp think Togo is a natural leader? What traits would you want to have in your lead dogs?

Assignment: In this chapter, the students will learn some of the team positions and commands. Challenge the students to find a way to teach others what they have learned about hooking up and directing a team from this chapter. My class used the app “Explain Everything” to sketch and explain the team positions and the basic commands they learned.

#### **Chapter Five Focus: Retelling**

Discussion Questions/ Talking Points:

- The team is travelling from Nome to Unalakleet which is a checkpoint on the modern Iditarod Sled Dog Race.
- What does it mean to have Ice Sense? How many senses does Togo use to determine if the ice is safe or not? Why would it be so important to have a lead dog with good ice sense?

Assignment: Have the students create a six panel comic strip to retell the story of the time that Togo’s Ice Sense saved the team that is found on pages 64-71 of this chapter. There is a worksheet in this packet for them to use to plan. Alternately, they could retell the story as if they were reporting on it for the local paper or news station.

#### **Chapter Six & Seven Focus: Similes**

Discussion Questions/ Talking Points

- Page 75: The idea that Sepp dropped food along the trail is similar to how mushers prepare drop bags for today’s races. What are the advantages of doing this?
- Page 78: The red line drawn in the snow as a starting line of the Sweepstakes can be related to the legend that the first Iditarod finish line was Kool Aid sprinkled in the snow: <http://iditarod.com/the-burled-arch/>
- Page 79: The Nome Kennel Club is still in existence and can be found here: <http://www.nomekennelclub.com/> There is also information on that site about the All Alaska Sweepstakes.
- Page 82: If you have read Mush: Sled Dogs of the Iditarod with the students, they may immediately make the connection between Sepp’s racing strategy and Dallas Seavey’s strategy!
- Page 95: The booming of the cannons at the end of the race can be compare to the firehouse sirens in the modern Iditarod Race: <http://iditarod.com/about/history/>
- Discuss the author’s use of similes and how they help the reader experience the story more.

Assignment: Students will complete the simile paper and create their own on the back. After creating their own similes, students can choose one to publish or share. We made sports pennants and displayed the simile with detailed drawings and then hung them in the hallway.

### **Chapters 8 & 9 Focus: Poetry**

#### Discussion Questions/ Talking Points

- Page 103: Discuss the quote, “A sled dog likes nothing better than to be needed for a job. All any dog wants is a job to do.” Do you agree with that statement? What does that tell us about how we should treat our animals? How can we give our “pet” dogs jobs to do?
- Page 104: Have students use their inference skills to determine what happened to Bobby Brown.
- Page 109: Discuss the idea that epic poems were often written to commemorate heroic deeds. Have the students discuss the poem written about Togo. Interesting to note, this poem may not be accurate:  
[http://siberiandoghistry.com/Seppala\\_Poem.html](http://siberiandoghistry.com/Seppala_Poem.html)

Assignment: Students can use the Triangle Poem lesson created by 2013 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail, Linda Fenton, to create their own poems about Togo based on their reading. The lesson can be found here:

<http://itcteacheronthetrail.com/2013/02/09/triangle-poem/>

### **Chapter 10 Focus: Memorializing Togo**

#### Discussion Questions/ Talking Points

- Page 134: What does Sepp mean when he refers to “Balto Business”?
- Compare the events of Togo’s life after the Serum Run to Balto’s life after the Serum Run. While Balto may have gotten most of the credit, did he end up being more fortunate than Togo?

Assignment: Share the information about Balto’s statue in New York’s Central Park. Students can use the attached assignment sheets to create a memorial for Togo.

#### **Materials Students Need:**

- Individual copies of Dog Diaries: Togo by Kate Klimo
- Printed or digital copies of Balto and the Legacy of the Serum Run, downloaded from here:  
[https://www.cmnh.org/CMNH/media/CMNH\\_Media/Balto/Balto\\_CMNH\\_update2013\\_02.pdf](https://www.cmnh.org/CMNH/media/CMNH_Media/Balto/Balto_CMNH_update2013_02.pdf)
- Printed assignment sheets

#### **Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:**

Technology used for research, see Resources section above

#### **Other Information:**

Additional Information Can be Found:

Balto:

<http://www.baltostruery.net/>

Roald Amundsen:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/ice/peopleevents/pandeAMEX87.html>

All Alaska Sweepstakes:

All Alaska Sweepstakes: History of the Great Sled Dog Race 1908-2008 by Helen Hegener:

<http://northernlightmedia.wordpress.com/articles/sled-dog-history/all-alaska-sweepstakes/>

<http://www.adn.com/article/all-alaska-sweepstakes>

Nome Kennel Club:

<http://www.nomekennelclub.com/nkchistory.htm>

**Modifications for Special Learners/ Enrichment Opportunities:**

- Individual assignments can be modified by allowing the students to complete assignments orally or with a partner.
- Assignments could be enriched by including a presentation piece.

**Additional Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Balto and the Legacy of the Serum Run

Directions: Read the brochure about Balto and the Legacy of the Serum Run that was published by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What was the problem facing Nome in January of 1925? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why was it so difficult to get the needed serum to Nome and what method was chosen to deliver it? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Read the chart of mushers who participated in the relay. How many mushers in all participated? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Who was Togo's musher? How far did they travel? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Who was Balto's musher? How far did they travel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What happened to Balto and his teammates after they saved the children of Nome?  
How do you feel about what happened to them? Do you agree with what was done  
with them? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Eventually, a cartoon version of the story was made of Balto. Compare the pictures of  
the cartoon Balto and the real Balto. How was Balto changed for the movie (besides  
making him into a cartoon)? Why do you think they made those changes? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Dog Diaries: Togo

### Chapters Two and Three: Lost Dog

Togo is quite a character! The author has done a wonderful job of bringing him to life. Togo seems to keep wandering off from his home.... Maybe it's time to post some "Lost Dog" flyers to see if anyone has found him! The more information you can give to people about him the easier it will be for them to know if they have found him or not! Use the chart below to identify Togo's physical and character traits. Then on another sheet of paper, design your "Lost Dog" flyer.

Physical Trait:	Support:	Character Trait:	Support:
	"curled up with my nose in my tail" page 21		"pesky little rascal" page 25

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Togo – Chapter 5 – Togo's Ice Sense

Sepp says that Togo has good “ice sense.” What does he mean by that? \_\_\_\_\_

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Which senses does Togo use to sense the ice? How does each sense help him determine if the ice is safe? \_\_\_\_\_

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On pages 64-71 Togo tells the story of a time when he almost got into real trouble with a patch of ice. You are going to retell that story in a six panel comic strip. Before beginning your comic, plan out your six panels by listing what should happen in each panel in the chart below. Be sure to choose the six main events in the story so that you can tell the whole story from beginning to end!

Panel:	Event:
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Togo – Chapters 6 & 7 – Sports Similes

Kate Klimo uses similes in her book. The definition of simile is: a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid (e.g., *as brave as a lion*, *crazy like a fox*). Similes usually use the words “like” or “as” to compare the two things.

In each of the similes below, circle the two things that are being compared and then explain what Ms. Klimo is saying with the simile. The first one is done for you as an example.

1. “... the place where sled dogs were, in those days, about as common as harbor seals.”

Page 2

Explanation: There are a lot of sled dogs in Alaska.

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2. “The crowd made a deep rumbling sound, like white water boiling down the Yukon River.” Page 4

Explanation:

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3. “The ice was as slick and smooth as the first freeze on Norton Sound.” Page 5

Explanation:

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4. “A bad mood was like a disease – easy to catch and hard to shake.” Page 36

Explanation:

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5. “I was full as a tick and one happy Siberian.” Page 72

Explanation:

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6. “Our team was as fresh as a bouquet of daisies.” Page 93

Explanation:

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## Your Turn!

In the spaces below, create three similes related to sports!

Example: The sprint racer ran like the wind and crossed the finish line first!

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Dog Diaries: Togo – Chapters 9 and 10

### Remembering a Hero

Balto is remembered with a commemorative statue in New York’s Central Park. The Central Park website gives the following information about the Balto statue:

*“This sculpture honors the sled dog who saved Alaska's children from a diphtheria epidemic by delivering medicine over the frozen tundra. In January 1925, Alaskan doctors feared a deadly diphtheria epidemic would spread among the children of Nome. Medicine to stop the outbreak existed, but doctors needed to travel nearly a thousand miles to Anchorage to retrieve it. More than 20 sled teams coordinated to make the trip through blinding snow and sub-zero temperatures. Led by Balto, the team covered 53 treacherous miles back to Nome in 20 hours. Newspapers and radio around the world followed the trek, fascinated by the brave team whose efforts eventually helped end the epidemic.*

*Balto became a national hero. Just 10 months after the successful mission, this statue by animal sculptor Frederick G. R. Roth was dedicated in Central Park.*

#### Location

East Drive at 67th Street

#### Details

**Sculptor:** Frederick George Richard Roth (1872-1944)

**Date:** 1925

**Material:** Bronze statue with slate tablet over natural rock

**Donor:** Balto Monument Committee to the City of New York”



<http://www.centralparknyc.org/things-to-see-and-do/attractions/balto.html>

Leonhard Seppala was disappointed that Togo did not receive the same recognition. What if you could right that wrong today? On the next pages, design a monument to honor Togo. Draw a detailed sketch of your monument in the frame and answer the included questions in complete sentences.

1. Where would you place your monument and why?

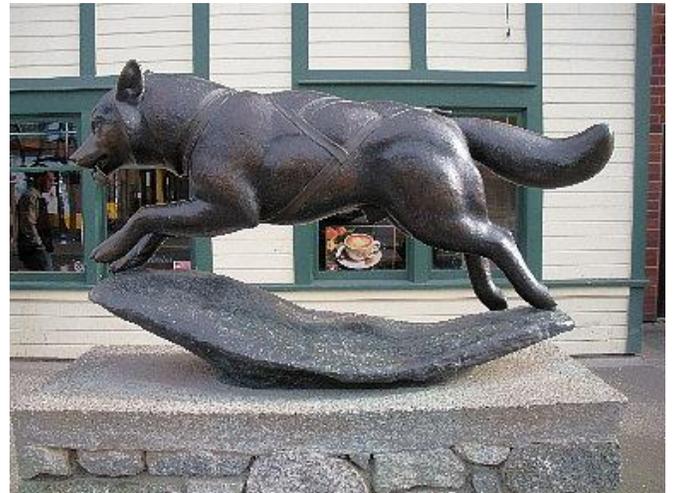
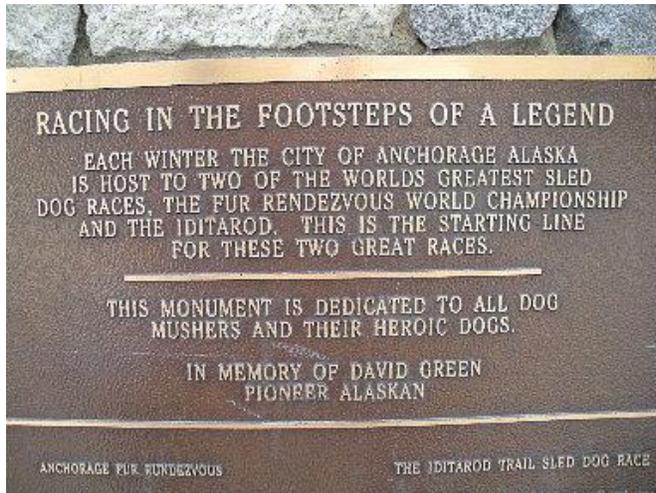
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2. Write an informational panel to display with your monument that explains the significance of your memorial to visitors. Who does the monument honor and why is he so important? What do you want people to know about Togo?

Here is a sample plaque from another statue to give you an idea of what to write. This plaque is on a statue of a sled dog that is in Anchorage and is the site Ceremonial Starting Line for the Iditarod!



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