

Lesson Plan Title: Paws Along the Trail for Character Traits

**Developed by:** Heidi Sloan, 2018 Teacher on the Trail™

**Discipline / Subject:** Character Education, English vocabulary

**Topic:** Goals for character development

**Grade Level:** 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grades

**Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:**

Website links in lesson  
Husky outline  
Definition of character for children

**Lesson Summary:**

The student will compare his/her character traits to that of sled dogs, setting goals for growth, and creating a concrete poem of character qualities.

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

*The Common Core State Standards goals include preparing students for college, career, and civic readiness. Character development and social-emotional skills are the critical foundation students need to meet those goals.*

*CCSS.ELA.LITERACY 2.4, 3.4, 4.4, 5.4, 6.4*

*Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning word and phrases based on grade \_\_\_ reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.*

**Learning objectives:**

Show students dog photos, read descriptions. Ask students to look through character qualities and list the kind of “sled dogs” they would be on the trail. How can you become a great member of the team? What qualities do you already have; which do you want to work toward? Set goals.

**Assessment:**

Keep concrete poems.  
Mid-year, bring out the poems and have students self-reflect. In which qualities have they shown improvement?

**Procedural Activities**

1. Read article on sled dog team positions.  
<http://iditarod.com/zuma/dog-jobs-on-a-team/>
2. Show picture or drawing of a sled dog team. Point out different positions, pairings, and jobs of dogs. Compare and contrast with the class on how this class is like or unlike a team of sled dogs.
3. Discuss character and what it is. When do you see it? What qualities do you look for in a friend? What qualities are in a strong team member?

4. Show dog photos on websites (many mushers have their dogs featured)  
<http://www.natureskennel.com/mutt-club>  
<http://spkenneldoglog.blogspot.com/p/the-dogs-of-sp-kennel.html>
5. Ask students to read through dogs' biographies and notice their character and personality qualities
6. List the kind of "sled dogs" they would be on the trail.
  - Ask students, "How can you become a great member of the team?"
  - "What qualities do you already have; which do you want to work toward?"
7. In Google Classroom or on devices, have students go to an adjective word list.  
[https://lesn.appstate.edu/fryeem/re4030/character\\_trait\\_descriptive\\_adje.htm](https://lesn.appstate.edu/fryeem/re4030/character_trait_descriptive_adje.htm)  
<https://www.esolcourses.com/content/exercises/grammar/adjectives/personality/more-words-for-describing-personality.html>  
<https://www.esolcourses.com/content/exercises/grammar/adjectives/personality/words-for-describing-personality.html>
8. Tell students they will find a variety of words that describe what kind of "dog" they are for the team.
9. Discuss concrete poetry; it is creating a shape with words. Our concrete poems will be in the shape of sled dogs, which are mostly huskies. Fill in the husky outline with all the character quality words you have and want to have this year to make you a team player, a good friend, and a better student.
10. Put up husky concrete poems on a bulletin board.

**Materials Students Need:** Outline of husky (search free Google images)  
 Device on which to see character quality list

**Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:**

**Concrete poetry site:** enter character quality words into shape template and print poem.  
[Concrete poetry creation site](#)

**Modifications for special learners/ Enrichment Opportunities**

Younger students or special learners could have lines drawn within the husky outline to make the filling in more manageable.

An enrichment opportunity comes from an idea by Terrie Henke, 2006 Teacher on the Trail™ where students create an acrostic poem with the letters IDITAROD using character traits.