

**Unit Organizer—7th Grade English**  
*The Call of the Wild*

**Subject Matter and Relationship to Core Knowledge Sequence:**

- ❖ *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London is one of the two required Core Knowledge novels for 7<sup>th</sup> grade.
- ❖ Different elements of fiction are reviewed/learned throughout the unit including...
  - Aspects of plot and setting
  - Theme
  - Type of narration (point of view of narrator)
  - Conflict (internal and external)
  - Suspense and how to build it
- ❖ Expository writing fundamentals are reviewed and refined in the course of this unit.

**Assessments:**

- ❖ There are daily interactions/discussions with the students over the stylistic and thematic highlights of the text.
- ❖ There is a major paragraph assignment in which the student has to pick a theme from the novel and show it/analyze it from the text.
- ❖ There is a unit test on the stylistic and thematic elements of the novel.

**Standards for Achievement and Performance:**

**AFTER THIS UNIT THE STUDENT SHOULD BE ABLE TO...**

- ❖ Know the basic biographical details of Jack London.
- ❖ Know the basic historical background details of the novel (Yukon Gold Rush, etc.)
- ❖ Explain why this novel is considered a “member” of the literary movement of Naturalism.
- ❖ Explain the influence of Darwinian thought on this novel.
- ❖ Appreciate a writer’s use of verbals (gerunds, participles, and infinitives) in action-packed scenes.
- ❖ Know the five elements of a plot structure (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, denouement) and apply that structure to the plot of the novel.
- ❖ Understand the elements of good characterization (vivid description, dialogue, anecdotes).
- ❖ Understand and start to use the relevant figures of speech and/or stylistic devices learned from the novel.
- ❖ Flat out enjoy the novel, showing him/her that classic literature’s stereotype as boring is far from fair or realistic.
- ❖ Gain conviction that the best writing flows from personal experiences; London wrote from first hand experiences, thus making it possible for true voice and vibrancy to emerge from the text.
- ❖ Desire to read more literature by Jack London.

### **Character Traits/Habits of Mind:**

- ❖ Stories. We are creatures who love stories. Our lives are stories. A unit like this one is priceless for showing students that art (whether visual or written—i.e. literature) is priceless for putting “meat and bones” on the “-ism’s” of our language: Naturalism, Darwinianism, etc. When such philosophy is delivered in the context of a story with characters that we learn to love and/or hate, then the result is a great impact than the mere “form of reasoned explanation” (as Tolstoy put it).
- ❖ Also, using texts that the students are engaged with to teach literary devices and stylistic lessons is much more effective than separate lectures on the issues.

- ❖ **Previous Unit**

- Grammar launch

- ❖ **Next Unit**

- Short stories