

Togo–Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 2)

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By Carol Montgomery

Performance Time = about 4 minutes

Readability = Grade 5.0

Cast (3-5):

Narrator 1 (for Seppala and the team)

Narrator 2 (for Seppala and the team)

Narrator 3 (for Seppala and the team)

Narrator 4 (for Togo)

Leonhard Seppala

For 3 readers: One reader reads the odd narrator parts (N 1 and N 3). One reader reads the even narrator parts (N 2 and N 4). One reader reads Seppala's parts.

For 4 readers: One reader reads Narrator 1. One reader reads for Narrators 2 and 3. One reader reads for Narrator 4. One reader reads for Seppala.

NOTE: This story comes from the adult book *The Cruellest Miles—the Heroic Story of Dogs and Men in a Race Against an Epidemic*, by Gay and Laney Salisbury

Vocabulary:

already	mournfully	continued	you're
anguish	howled	Leonhard	that's
looped	towline	Seppala's	we're
struggled	suddenly	tightly	master's
grabbed	sensed	harness	closest
speechless	skirted	jammed	narrow
lurched	predicament	drifted	
chasm	floe	escape	
understand	straightened	curled	
solemnly	stunts	reared	
heaved	backwards	gale	
shoreline	somersaulted	snuggled	
required	haw	warmth	
hitched	northeast	what's	
opportunity	struggling	watery	
ominous	haw	yelp	



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Narrator 1: Dog sled driver Leonhard Seppala heard an ominous crack.

Narrator 2: His dog team leaned against the northeast gale, struggling to pull the sled across the frozen bay.

Narrator 3: Seppala called out to his trusted lead dog, Togo...

Seppala: Haw!

Narrator 4: Togo felt the crack in the ice and was already racing toward land.

Seppala: Good boy, Togo!

Narrator 4: Togo was close to shore when he reared up and somersaulted backwards onto the team.

Narrator 1: Seppala shouted...

Seppala: Togo, this is no time for circus stunts! You're twelve years old. What's wrong with you?

Narrator 2: Seppala sprinted up the line of dogs to Togo to check for trouble.

Seppala: Oh, no! That's open water ahead of you, Buddy. And, it's getting wider all the time.

Narrator 3: Seppala quickly turned his head.

Seppala: Don't panic. We're on an ice floe drifting out to sea, but we're not done yet!

Narrator 1: Seppala straightened out the team and skirted the edge of the ice floe searching for an escape back to land.

Narrator 2: He found none.

Narrator 3: Night came and Seppala curled up with his dogs for warmth, hoping for an opportunity to escape their predicament.

Narrator 4: Togo snuggled close.

Seppala: Maybe the wind will shift and we can get back on land. Keep watch, Togo!

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Narrator 1: Several hours passed. The wind did not shift.

Narrator 2: The dogs sensed Seppala's anguish and howled mournfully.

Narrator 4: Suddenly, Togo gave a short yelp.

Seppala: You're right, Togo! The wind has shifted and it's blowing toward shore. Let's get ready for our escape!

Narrator 3: Seppala hitched his team again and waited for the perfect opportunity.

Narrator 2: They drifted for nine more hours.

Seppala: That's the shoreline up ahead. It looks like our ice raft is closing in on an ice floe that has jammed up against the shore ice. Let's see if we can find a narrow place to jump...

Narrator 1: The closest point required about a five-foot jump for Seppala.

Seppala: (*shakes head*) That's too far for me to jump. But, if Togo can get to the other side he could pull our ice raft closer.

Narrator 2: Seppala loved and trusted Togo. Togo was their only hope.

Narrator 3: If they didn't get back to land the wind could change again and their ice raft could drift out to sea.

Narrator 1: Seppala knew others who had drifted out to sea.

Narrator 3: They were never seen again.

Seppala: Togo, I'm going to tie this towline onto your harness. When I'm sure it's nice and tight I'm going to throw you across the channel. Your job is to pull this ice raft close to the shore so the team and I can cross. Okay, Buddy?

Narrator 4: Togo looked up solemnly and seemed to understand.

Narrator 1: Seppala kissed his dog and heaved him as far as he could.

Seppala: That a boy, Togo! Dig in and pull!

Narrator 4: Togo dug his nails into the ice and lurched forward.

Narrator 2: Then the towline snapped apart.

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Seppala: NO!

Narrator 4: Togo spun around and saw his master and his friends across the watery chasm.

Narrator 3: The towline slipped into the water.

Narrator 1: Speechless, Seppala just stared at his canine friend for a moment.

Narrator 4: As Seppala stared, Togo dove into the water and grabbed the towline from the ice raft in his mouth. Then, the dog struggled up the shore ice holding the towline tightly in his jaws.

Seppala: Well, look at that. Good boy, Togo!

Narrator 4: Togo somehow looped the line around his shoulders twice and began to pull.

Narrator 1: The ice raft began to move closer to Togo and the shore ice.

Seppala: Atta boy, Togo! Keep pulling! We're almost there!

Narrator 4: Togo continued to pull until the ice raft was close.

Narrator 3: Somehow Seppala and the whole dog team jumped toward the land.

Narrator 2: Finally, they made it safely to shore.

Seppala: You did it, Togo! You saved the team! Now, let me dry you off, Buddy. It's a good thing you have thick fat and fur!

Narrator 4: Togo snuggled into his master's arms, ready to run again.



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Curriculum Links (Valid in 2016):

TOGO

<http://iditarod.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Togo-Unit-Plan.pdf>

“Dog Diaries: Togo—Unit Plan” for grades 2-5 (adaptable for other grades) by Jen Reiter, **2014 Teacher on the Trail**, based on the novel *Dog Diaries: Togo*, by Kate Klimo. This 5-page PDF mentions CCSS standards and several websites. Some of the websites also include information on Balto, another Iditarod do hero.

<http://iditarod.com/zuma/our-hero-togo-by-sanka-w-dog/>

“Togo—Our Hero!” Iditarod’s educational page on Togo. **Small print.** Somewhat boring for students, but has information for teachers. Refers to one of the books I used *The Cruellest Miles* by Salisbury.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Togo_\(dog\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Togo_(dog))

Wikipedia’s page on Togo with a **black and white photo**.

<http://www.baltostruestory.net/togo.htm>

“Togo—A Capsule History” is a great newspaper-type of page with **several historical photos and abbreviated information on Togo**. (I didn’t read the whole page, but there’s a **GREAT photo of Togo with Seppala** at the bottom of the page.)

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/13/sports/spirit-of-a-racer-in-a-siberian-huskys-blood.html?_r=0

“Spirit of a Racer in a Dog’s Blood” (New York Times, Feb. 12, 2012) shares a little about a local dog show (including a photo of Winnie, a Siberian husky descendant of Togo) and a lot about Togo’s story. **Excellent article with a few great photos.** Since the source is the New York Times you may be able to email the article to yourself using the email icon on the left side (under the top photo). If it is appropriate for your children you may **use this article as a non-fiction source of more information on Togo**.

Togo—YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQipgKqm7a4>

“Four-Legged Heroes: Togo & Balto” short video excerpt from a History Channel documentary. Short commentaries. Shows historic photos, film clips, maps, and newspaper clippings. **EXCELLENT for students grades 2 or 3 and up.** Review the video clip BEFORE using the script. You may want to show it as a hook before any Iditarod scripts or you could use it after the scripts have been introduced so the video does not spoil the story in the script. The video snippet ends abruptly. (Note: If you have sensitive students, this clip mentions that five dogs died on the Great Serum Race.) 5:25

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBf8QMA0F2s>

“Togo,” short video showing historic photos of Togo with vocal music background. :51

IDITAROD

<http://www.homeschoolroom.com/iditarod-unit-study/>

Home Schoolroom’s page on “Iditarod Unit Study” with several links to resources. You may like to see her photos of the students’ “**Iditarod Lapbooks**” and the information contained in each “mini-book.”

<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/Iditarod-Resources-for-Grades-K-5.html>

NEA’s page on **7 lesson plans for grades K-12** on the Iditarod’s 2015 race. (The title of the article says grades K-5, but there are several PDF links that include higher grades.) Titles include the following:

- “The Iditarod: The Last Great Race” (grade K)
- “Go Idita-Walking and Get Healthy” (grades K-12, health)
- “Iditarod Activities for the Classroom Book II”(grades K-12, including math, science, social studies, language arts, and more)
- “Iditarod Activity Book III” (grades K-12, “all content areas”)
- “Iditarod Ready...Storm Ready” (grades K-12, weather related science and math activities)
- “Iditarod Scavenger Hunt” (grades 5-8, web research using the Iditarod website)
- Women of the Iditarod (and more): A Journey through the Data (grades 5-12)

<http://d3r6t1k4mqz5i.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/educatorPacketrevised.pdf?db746e>

“**Iditarod Educational Packet for Teachers**” references for grades K-12 includes: facts, history, champions, the Iditarod Trail, healthy sled dogs, vocabulary, and a map.

<http://seasonal.theteacherscorner.net/iditarod/>

The Teacher’s Corner home page on “**Iditarod Activities and Lesson Plans.**” Includes several links to worksheets (described below), a word search, crossword puzzle and more.

<http://worksheets.theteacherscorner.net/seasonal/iditarod/>

“**Iditarod Printable Worksheets**” and **coloring pages** from The Teacher’s Corner. Includes **printable journal pages** with small illustration (e.g., musher on sled), musher biography pages, and coloring pages (dogs and sled).

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<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/iditarod/>

Scholastic's page (2009?) on the "Iditarod Race Across Alaska" with links on Alaska, the Iditarod Trail, the history, young mushers, the Junior Iditarod, a dog's life, and top mushers.

* Includes a **partial transcript of a live interview that could easily be turned into a Readers Theater script**: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/iditarod/activities/interview.asp>

* And, here are **student interview questions with master storyteller and children's literature author, Gary Paulsen, who has raced twice in the Iditarod**. (NOTE: This could also be turned into a Readers Theater script radio show.): http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/iditarod/top_mushers/index.asp?article=gary_paulsen

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson103.shtml

Education World's page, "The Iditarod: The Last Great Race" with several ideas for teachers (e.g., math, reading, geography, science).

<http://www.cdc.gov/24-7/savinglives/diphtheria/index.html>

CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) article on "Iditarod: Celebrating the "Great Race of Mercy" to Stop Diphtheria Outbreak in Alaska." **Gives more information on the dreaded bacterial disease–diphtheria– which causes the throat to become blocked with a thick, leathery coating that makes breathing very difficult. Left untreated, young children could die of suffocation.** Part of the article explains the vaccine. Includes a photo on each of the three pages.

IDITAROD HIGHLIGHTS: from The Iditarod Education Portal: <http://iditarod.com/teachers/>

(Note: Most of the following links are from the left column menu. I did not review every lesson mentioned; but they all come from teachers.)

<http://itcteacheronthetrail.com/teachers/kim-slade-2007-teacher-on-the-trail/kim-slades-lessons-and-messages/>

Kim Slade, 2007 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail, created a series of Iditarod lessons with worksheets. (e.g., math, billboards, press releases, Suduko, weather, and more). Here's the worksheet to compare and contrast Togo and Balto: <http://itcteacheronthetrail.com/teachers/kim-slade-2007-teacher-on-the-trail/kim-slades-lessons-and-messages/>

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/teachers-share-success/>

Teacher SUCCESS STORIES using the Iditarod grade K-college, in the U.S. and in Germany.

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<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/lessons-games-and-activities/>

Games and Activities from the Iditarod’s main site for teachers. Includes 8 ideas from BINGO and math skills to “The Serum Run Game” and “An Iditarod Game.” (Note: I did not review every game, but the grade levels range from elementary to middle school levels.)

<http://iditarod.com/zuma/>

“Zuma’s Paw Prints–Iditarod’s K9 Journalists” has links to **articles “written” by sled dogs. Each of the four dogs writes at a different readability level.** I didn’t read all the entries, but I LOVE the idea. Your students could try to do a similar project.

<http://iditarod.com/teacher/bulletin-board-ideas/>

Bulletin Board Ideas with photos from teachers.

<http://iditarod.com/teacher/creating-an-enriched-iditarod-classroom-environment/>

“**Creating an Enriched Iditarod Classroom Environment**” has more bulletin board and other ideas for teachers.

<http://iditarod.com/teacher/powerpoints/>

PowerPoint Presentations (not reviewed).

<http://iditarod.com/teacher/virtual-art-show/iditarod-landscape-and-jon-van-zyle/>

“**Iditarod Landscape and Jon Van Zyle [artist].**” Includes lesson plan for art project painting a simple Alaskan landscape with student examples.

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/lessons-character-education/>

“**Character Education**” page for teachers using the Iditarod–filled with teachers ideas (e.g., “Habits of the Mind.” “Matters of the Heart,” “Behavior Program,” teamwork, and more).

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/8-traits-of-iditarod-character-ed/>

“**8 Traits: Character Ed**” covers Innovation, Diligence, Integrity, Team Work, Attitude, Respect, Optimism, Determination and more.

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/lessons-healthphysical-fitness/>

“**Health/Physical Fitness**” page for teachers focuses on dog health, but can be adapted and expanded to people (e.g., nutrition, exercise, rest...).

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/lessons-language-arts/>

“**Language Arts–Literacy**” page for teachers includes fiction and non-fiction ideas from teachers teaching, reading, writing, and language arts skills.

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/math-curriculum-for-the-classroom/>

Math page for grades K-6 using Iditarod-related information.

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<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/science-curriculum/>

Iditarod science ideas for teachers (from teachers) includes several topics: snowshoes, nutrition, cells, lead dogs, and forensics.

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/lessons-science/>

“Science Lessons by Topic, Activities, and Info” page from teachers with 4 main topics: forces of flight, science fair, nature, and weather.

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/iditareads/>

“IditaRead™” READING CHALLENGE ideas from teachers. Includes a link to “Idita Read Challenge: Literacy in Idita Action”: <http://iditarod.com/teacher/idita-read-success-2/> (Word documents you may edit from 2011: Teacher Checklist, IditaRead Parent Letter, Student Package, Musher Listing, Student Bookmark, Reading Log, Certificate. (Note: I didn’t try downloading all the documents into Word, but the first one appeared to still be working. Feel free to design your own.)

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/service-learning-projects/>

“Service Learning Projects” related to the Iditarod includes blankets for dogs, books, and more.

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/technology-integration/>

“Technology Integration” includes web tools, GPS trackers, virtual dog teams and more.

<http://travelingquilt.com/>

“Iditarod Traveling Quilt Project” has several quilts visiting several schools across the U.S., but you may use the idea to create a “paper quilt” like another teacher’s class produced. More quilt projects: <http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/quilt-projects/> and “The Virtual Quilt” examples: <http://iditarod.com/teacher/traveling-quilt-virtual-journey/>

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/chartscertificatestemplates/>

“Charts, Certificates, Templates, Tracking Forms” (e.g., to follow the race).

<http://iditarod.com/teacher/maps/>

Printable “Maps” of the Iditarod Trail, Alaska, and other states.

<http://iditarod.com/teacher/iditarod-books/>

“Books About Iditarod and Alaska”–fiction and non-fiction for children, young adults, and adults. Includes a special link for more teacher resources (e.g., Alaska)! :) (Note: Some of their links are already in our list of annotated links.)

<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/jr-iditarod/>

“Jr. Iditarod” page with numerous articles (going back to 2011). A lot of the focus is on the dogs and photos of special canines.

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<http://iditarod.com/teachers/category/heroes-heroines-idols/>

“Heroes, Heroines, & Idols” includes articles on women mushers, famous dogs (e.g., Togo, Balto, Baldy of Nome) and famous musher (i.e., “idols”).

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hteoXjepRQs>

“PreK Iditarod” race in Alaska with **4th graders pulling PreK students in sleds across the grass**. Fun! 1:04 min.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKtVqn3jefA&list=PLGQ7g9NCqegp2mmeYdevldxmKANCeABP-&index=1>

“Iditarod: 1,049 Miles” shows **excerpts from a documentary** on the Iditarod with real snow, real dogs, real sleds, and real mushers. 4:19 min.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PduJB34_xl

“Iditarod: A Musher’s Life” shows a Discovery Channel **interview with a four-time iditarod musher from Wash DC one week before the race in Alaska**. He talks about training his 16 dogs, training himself, and a little about the trail. **“What you’ve got is a bunch of individuals and you’ve got to make them into a team....You always get lost...”** 2:42 min.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAHa-6VkUQY&index=3&list=PLIOX0M0jXKJGU41kiJ4AyE5eF6i_kPyle

“Hold tight! **Take a wild sled dog ride with 4-time Iditarod champ Jeff King**” shows **a FAST race across ice, snow, and even dirt**. This IS WILD! 4:04 min.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rE6UQNZXP0>

Smithsonian’s video **“How a Diptheria Outbreak Spawned the Iditarod”** includes a bit of history, an animated map of the Iditarod Trail, plus a few interesting aerial views. 2:35 min.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXc44GZGEY&list=PLIOX0M0jXKJGU41kiJ4AyE5eF6i_kPyle

“Inside the Iditarod.wmv” **video from the YOUNGEST musher to win the Iditarod (2012), Dallas Seavey. Shows the race from his view.** 2:54 min.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxLqqtvgelE>

“1925 Serum Run Tribute” video displays **historic photos and old movie clips featuring Balto, Togo, and the sled dog teams**. (Seppala is in some photos.) The dog statue honors Balto—one of the lead dogs who successfully helped deliver the life-saving serum to Nome, Alaska. Balto helped lead the last relay team and became a media star. Togo led his sled dog team more miles than any team, but was not honored the same way. Upbeat music background = “The World’s Greatest.” 5:09

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OguY5SCu71Y>

“**Togo and Balto**,” appears to be a school project with two mature girls reading their narration to a photo slide show–instrumental background music. They did an **excellent** job and mention diphtheria vaccination, Inuits, and native Americans. I love the picture of the ice. 2:17

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ed_umUicLjQ

“**Icebound the Greatest Dog Story Every Told**” documentary from the **BBC** shares the 1925 serum run story. The beginning of this documentary shares about several children dying, segregation (i.e., Alaskan natives), and media influence. Several interviews are included (e.g., children of the mushers in the Great Serum Race of 1925) as well as old film clips and photos of the propeller, open-cockpit biplanes that could not be used. Togo is recognized as Seppala’s greatest dog. The weather is described as an enemy. The sled dog relay team (with map) is well-described. The British narrator tells Balto’s survival story after the serum run. NOTE: There was a media frenzy over the Nome story and Balto’s story–not everything written by journalists was true. **Well done for mature students.** (5 commercial interruptions.) 59:34

