

Togo–Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 1)

**Togo–Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 1)**

By Carol Montgomery

Performance Time = about 4 minutes

Readability = Grade 4.7

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:**

accomplish	focused	nuzzled	taut
Alaskan	followed	position	tether
attempted	freight	refitted	tugline
canine	pranced	refrained	unusually
continued	patiently	reindeer	wilderness
cooperated	harnessed	ruffled	workhorse
bounded	instructions	scaled	
dangerous	intently	scurried	
delinquent	kennel	settled	
departure	Leonhard Seppala	several	
discovered	mining	shenanigans	
distracting	musher	special	
distraction	misunderstood	suddenly	
escaped	Narrator	surrounding	
enough	natural-born		
experienced	Nome		



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**Seppala:** I'm taking a dog team out to haul some more freight, Togo. You're not old enough to pull a dog sled across the Alaskan wilderness, so you can welcome us back. Okay, Buddy?

**Narrator 1:** Leonhard Seppala ruffled the fur on the eight-month-old husky pup. Seppala raised sled dogs and he knew this one was special. But, he also knew Togo hated to be locked up.

**Seppala:** No shenanigans this time, Togo. We'll be back in a few days. I can't have you distracting the team.

**Narrator 2:** Although Togo wasn't old enough to pull a sled he had watched the sled dog team intently as they left to race or carry freight. And, Togo loved his master.

**Narrator 3:** Seppala left with his team that morning for a quick trip to a gold mining camp outside of Nome. He left instructions that Togo should be kept secure for two days after his departure.

**Narrator 4:** But, Togo had other ideas. He slipped out of his tether and scaled a seven-foot-high fence surrounding his kennel.

**Narrator 1:** It snowed hard the next morning, but snow doesn't stop a dog musher.

**Seppala:** Well, you all don't seem to mind the snow today; that was an unusually quick start. Do you smell a reindeer or a moose?

**Narrator 2:** It can be dangerous for a dog team to find a moose. A moose can kill a dog and injure a team.

**Narrator 3:** The team sniffed the air and picked up their pace.

**Seppala:** What is it? What do you dogs smell? A reindeer? A fox? A moose?

**Narrator 3:** Suddenly, a dark form bounded along the trail.

**Narrator 4:** It was Togo. He had escaped and followed the trail of the team.

Togo—Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 1)

**Seppala:** Togo! What are you doing here? I told you to stay home.

**Narrator 4:** Togo scurried up to Seppala and nuzzled him.

**Seppala:** Togo, did you run all night? You sure look like you did. What am I going to do with you, Buddy?

**Narrator 1:** Seppala hugged his fluffy friend and attempted to continue his trip with Togo running free.

**Narrator 2:** The team wanted to obey their master, but Togo was a BIG distraction.

**Narrator 4:** Togo made a pest of himself by nipping and barking at the other dogs. Sometimes he led charges against reindeer along the trail.

**Narrator 3:** Finally, Seppala had enough of Togo's shenanigans.

**Seppala:** Togo, you're a big distraction. You'll have to go into a harness with the rest of the team.

**Narrator 1:** Seppala tried to catch Togo, but Togo wanted to play.

**Narrator 2:** When Seppala finally caught Togo, he harnessed the fluffy husky at the back of the team.

**Seppala:** I'm watching you, Togo. I put you there so I can keep my eyes on you. No more trouble. We have work to do, Buddy.

**Narrator 3:** The whole team settled down, ready to run whenever they heard the call.

**Seppala:** Mush! Let's go!

**Narrator 4:** Togo pulled the tugline taut and focused on the trail.

**Seppala:** Well, what do you know? Togo knows how to pull. Good boy, Togo!

**Narrator 4:** Togo pranced along, keeping up with the team's pace.

**Seppala:** I guess you just wanted to be part of the team. Right, Togo?

## Togo—Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 1)

**Narrator 1:** Several hours passed and the dogs continued to run hard.

**Narrator 2:** Seppala decided to move Togo up the line.

**Seppala:** Togo, you're doing so well I'm going to move you up closer to the lead. Let's see how you do when you're not as close to me. Can you keep your focus, Buddy?

**Narrator 3:** Seppala changed Togo's harness position in the team.

**Narrator 4:** Togo patiently waited for the harness to be refitted. He refrained from nipping at his dog friends because now he was part of the team.

**Narrator 1:** A few more hours passed and the dogs continued to run hard.

**Seppala:** You're a workhorse, Togo! How about if I move you up to the lead position of the team with Russky? Do you think you can get along with an experienced lead dog and still be part of the team?

**Narrator 4:** Togo wagged his tail. He cooperated with every step.

**Narrator 2:** At the end of the day the dog team had traveled seventy-five miles.

**Narrator 3:** The team had worked together to accomplish the goal. And, Seppala discovered his canine delinquent was simply misunderstood.

**Seppala:** Togo, I can't believe you. I've tried for years to get a natural-born leader. You've surprised me on this trip. I can see that you'll be a great leader.

**Narrator 4:** Togo wagged his tail and seemed to smile.



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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](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

## Togo–Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 1)

<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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## Togo–Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 1)

<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://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/iditarod/top_mushers/index.asp?article=gary_paulsen)

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/lesson103.shtml](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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## Togo–Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 1)

<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.



## Togo–Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 1)

<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.

## Togo–Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 1)

<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](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](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](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

## Togo–Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 1)

<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](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

