

Togo–Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 3)

By Carol Montgomery

Performance Time = about 5 1/2 minutes

Readability = Grade 5.5

Cast (3-9):

Narrator 1 (for Seppala and the team)	Man #1
Narrator 2 (for Seppala and the team)	Man #2
Narrator 3 (for Seppala and the team)	Man #3
Narrator 4 (for Togo)	Musher

Leonhard Seppala

* The hardest parts are Narrators and maybe Seppala. The other parts are very short, but may contain challenging vocabulary.

Suggestions:

For 3 readers: Reader 1 reads the odd narrator and Man parts (N 1 and N 3, M #1 and M #3). Reader 2 reads the even narrator parts (N 2 and N 4, M #2 and Musher). Reader 3 reads Seppala's parts. **(Encourage students to change voices for different parts.)**

For 4 readers: Reader 1 reads Narrator 1, Man #1 and Musher. Reader 2 reads Narrators 2 and 3. Reader 3 reads for Narrator 4 and Man #2 and #3. Reader 4 reads for Seppala. **(Encourage students to change voices for different parts.)**

For 5 readers: Reader 1 reads Narrator 1 and Man #1. Reader 2 reads Narrator 2 and Man #2. Reader 3 reads Narrator 3 and Man #3. Reader 4 reads Narrator 4 and Musher. Reader 5 reads Seppala's lines. **(Encourage students to change voices for different parts.)**

For 6-9 readers: Reader 1 reads Narrator 1. Reader 2 reads Narrator 2. Reader 3 reads Narrator 3. Reader 4 reads Narrator 4. Reader 5 reads Seppala. Reader 6 (or readers 6-9) read the parts for Man #1, Man #2, Man #3, and Musher. **(Encourage students to change voices for different parts.)**



Togo—Sled Dog Hero, a True Story (Part 3, Advanced)

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 and from the children’s book *Togo* by Robert Blake.

(The authors visited Alaska, including some of the villages Togo traveled through for his part of The Great Serum Race. The authors interviewed many people and researched newspaper and other accounts of Togo’s journey; but, not all accounts agree with each other. Only Leonhard Seppala and Togo knew what really happened.)

Vocabulary:

Alaska
antitoxin
attentive
awaited
breathless
coastline
constantly
couldn’t
delivery
depended
desperate
Diphtheria
directly
depending
hampering
drifting
encouraged
epidemic
exhausted
favorite
fifty-three
finally
Golovin
harnessed
hundred
impossible
increased
intercept
Isaac’s
strategically
blustery
misbehaving
accomplished

Leonhard
unfortunately
swift
musher
significantly
immediately
attentive
recognized
Nulata
obedient
possible
applying
radioed
reputation
sensed
Seppala’s
serum
Solomon
squinted
suddenly
together
village
volunteered
definitely
whistled
hastily
wintry



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Narrator 1: Leonhard Seppala raised sled dogs in Alaska in 1925.

Narrator 2: His sled dog team constantly won races.

Narrator 3: Seppala's favorite lead dog was Togo.

Narrator 4: Togo gained a reputation of being a swift, strong, and winning leader.

Narrator 1: One wintry day Seppala heard a desperate knock at the front door.

Seppala: May I help you?

Man #1: (*breathless*) Nome is experiencing a diphtheria epidemic! Children are dying and it could wipe out the whole town. The antitoxin serum can stop it, but the train doesn't go to Nome. A dog team volunteered to bring the serum from the train station to Nulata.

Seppala: That's about three hundred miles from Nome.

Man #1: Yes, but you have the fastest team in Alaska. Would you go to Nulata and bring the serum back to Nome?

Seppala: When do you need me to leave?

Man #1: As soon as possible. They needed the serum days ago; diphtheria could wipe out the city in two weeks if we don't hurry.

Seppala: I'll do my best.

Man #1: We knew we could depend on you. Thank you!

Narrator 1: Seppala chose the swiftest, smartest, and most obedient dogs for the team.

Narrator 4: He strategically placed Togo in the lead.

Narrator 3: During this time of year Alaska had about six hours of daylight.

Narrator 2: Seppala encouraged his team to run so quickly that they made it to the village of Solomon at sunset.

Narrator 1: The next day was harder because of a blustery wind and drifting snow.

Narrator 4: Togo struggled to follow the trail.

Seppala: Okay, this is not working; the fierce weather is hampering our progress. I guess we'll have to try a shortcut across the frozen bay and trust for the best.

Narrator 3: Although the blustery wind increased on the open ice, somehow the team made it to the village of Golovin.

Narrator 2: Bad news awaited Seppala there.

Man #2: The epidemic is significantly worse in Nome. They radioed us to say they need the antitoxin serum as soon as possible to save lives. They think that if it takes two weeks to get it, it will be too late.

Seppala: I'll do my best.

Narrator 1: Seppala left early the next day and covered the fifty-three miles to Isaac's Point in record time.

Man #3: You look tired. How are the dogs?

Seppala: They're holding up, but it's tough out there. I keep applying salve on their feet and they all wear booties. I sure hope they can make it.

Narrator 1: The next morning Seppala sensed something was wrong. The wind had definitely changed.

Seppala: The wind is coming directly from Norton Bay now. That's not good because it will break up the ice. If we're going to make it across the bay we have to leave immediately!

Narrator 2: Seppala hastily harnessed the team.

Seppala: Let's go, Togo! Lead the way!

Narrator 4: Togo was far ahead of the sled, but he knew the team depended on him to lead the way. He studied the ice for cracks and listened for sounds of ice breaking.

Narrator 3: The attentive dogs recognized that the wind was blowing in a storm.

Seppala: Keep it up! We have to get the antitoxin serum because Nome is depending on us.

Narrator 1: The dogs ran for hours. Some were almost exhausted, but they didn't give up.

Narrator 4: Togo heard a noise, tilted his head, and squinted off to the side. He saw another team with some dogs fighting.

Seppala: Keep running! Keep running!

Narrator 2: Suddenly, Seppala heard a voice call out.

Musher: Serum! Turn back!

Narrator 3: Seppala immediately slowed his team. The other musher raced up to Seppala.

Musher: I was sent to intercept you. Unfortunately, the epidemic in Nome is much worse. Dog teams have been added to run the antitoxin serum relay day and night.

Seppala: *(nods)* Good. So, you'll be taking the serum?

Musher: No, for some reason my team isn't working together. They keep misbehaving. You have a better team. You'll have to turn back and deliver the antitoxin serum to the next relay man in Golovin.

Seppala: Golovin? That's ninety miles behind us and it means we have to cross Norton Bay again...only this time we'll be facing the wind.

Narrator 1: Seppala studied his team. He recognized that they all needed rest; however, lives depended on him.

Seppala: *(sigh)* Okay, give me the serum and I'll leave immediately.

Narrator 2: Seppala packed the serum safely to protect it from freezing and sped away. He hugged the coastline with his team as long as he could.

Seppala: Togo, haw!

Narrator 3: Seppala turned his team back onto the ice of Norton Bay. The wind whistled in their ears, biting their faces with frozen blasts. It was forty degrees below zero, but the windchill made it feel much colder.

Narrator 4: Togo fought the wind and struggled to follow the trail.

Narrator 1: Seppala dropped his head and pulled the hood of his parka down over his eyes. A man's eyelids could freeze in that frozen wasteland.

Narrator 2: Togo would be Seppala's eyes and ears.

Narrator 3: The dogs hung their heads and struggled against the blustery wind for hours.

Seppala: I hope this serum doesn't freeze before we pass it on to the next relay team.

Narrator 1: The dogs dragged the sled and the serum forward. Seppala ran to the front of the exhausted team to help Togo lead. They couldn't quit now. Lives depended on them!

Narrator 2: Finally, the dogs smelled a familiar scent—Golovin Village. The other musher and his team were waiting.

Seppala: (*breathless*) Good! You're here. Here's the serum. Togo and this team did the impossible. You do the same.

Narrator 4: Togo led his team more than three hundred and fifty miles for his part of the serum run—more than any other team in the relay.

Narrator 3: Another dog, Balto, became famous for leading a dog team to Nome with the antitoxin serum delivery.

Narrators: But, Balto couldn't have accomplished their goal without Togo's help.

Seppala: It takes teamwork to succeed.



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

