

The Great Race

The Great Race

by Carol Montgomery

Performance Time = about 1 minute

Readability = grade 1.8 (0.8 changing the names of the readers from “Hero” and “Winner” to A and B. Think K-1.)

Cast (2 or 2 choral groups):

Hero

Winner

Note: This is a true story based on the Great Race of Mercy of 1925. The children’s picture book, *The Great Serum Race* tells the story, too. We also have other K-1 Readers Theater scripts related to this event in our Iditarod category (e.g., *Togo Tales*).

Vocabulary

away
children
doctor
Hero
Hooray
lived
mushers
needed
night
relay
running
serum
teams
through
Twenty
very
way
Winner



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Hero: A long time ago a lot of children were very sick.

Winner: They lived far away in deep snow.

Hero: They needed a shot of serum to get well.

Winner: Their doctor did not have the serum.

Hero: Sled dogs and their mushers were the only way to get through the snow.

Winner: Sled dogs and their mushers rushed to get the serum from the train.

All: Run, Team, Run!

Hero: Next, the sled dog teams rushed to get the serum to the doctor.

All: Run, Team, Run!

Winner: The teams had to cross ice.

All: Run, Team, Run!

Hero: The sled dog teams had to cross snow.

All: Run, Team, Run!

Winner: They ran day and night.

All: Run, Team, Run!

Hero: It took five and a half days of running.

Winner: Twenty sled dog teams ran the relay race.

Hero: The doctor got the serum and gave it to the children.

Winner: All the children got well.

All: Hooray! Rest, Team, Rest!



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Curriculum Links (valid as of Jan. 2017)

NOTE: The annual Iditarod Race in Alaska commemorates the Great Race of Mercy. See the Iditarod section below for those links.

Great Race of Mercy (also known as the Great Serum Run) (valid as of Jan., 2017)

<https://www.cdc.gov/about/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.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1925_serum_run_to_Nome

Wiki article on the “1925 serum run to Nome.” Includes a small map, a tiny photo of the statue of Balto, and an **interesting summary chart of the mushers, their stories, and the distance each covered.**

<http://www.education.com/worksheet/article/great-race-mercy/>

Education.com’s free worksheet on the Great Race of Mercy. I didn’t download the worksheet because **you have to join their email list in order to download it.** It looks like it may include a map and maybe more worksheets.

<https://alaskaweb.org/disease/1925serumrun.htm>

“The 1925 Serum Run to Nome” article includes a **summary of each important day of the Great Race of Mercy.** Slightly boring, but informative. No photos.

<http://www.ancestry.com/historicalinsights/great-race-mercy-alaska-1925>

Short article with **large historical black and white photos depicting some of the highlights of the Great Race of Mercy.**

Great Race of Mercy YouTube (valid as of Jan., 2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAW0rsjXgb8>

Good introduction to the Great Race of Mercy and the Iditarod race that commemorates it. Shows a map, photo of Dr. Welch, mushers with dogs (e.g. Seppala) and more. You could easily **use this short video as a HOOK for students** (2nd grade and up?). Less than 2 minutes! 1:40

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3ngRqNM7H8>

“Four Legged Leaders: The Serum Run Sled Dogs” won 2nd place Junior Individual Documentary at the 2015 Utah State History Fair. It’s an excellent overview of the Great Race of Mercy with a focus on sled dogs. Since the documentary narrates so many facts, I would **use it as a follow-up review to the Great Race of Mercy or an introduction to the Iditarod**. The video includes historic photos, film footage, and some private Skype interviews with experts. Well done, but 10 minutes of narration could be boring to some students. The topic and choice of photos and film makes it very interesting, though. Some students will find it fascinating. Grades 3-4 and up?
10:00

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rE6UQNZXPO>

Smithsonian’s video **“How a Diphtheria 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=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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okMPs1hmOAY>

“Icebound the Greatest Dog Story Ever 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.) 1:09:04

Iditarod (valid as of Jan., 2017)

<http://jriditarod.com/2013/12/article-from-1981-runner/>

Jr. Iditarod website that shows a newspaper article from 1981 about the Junior Iditarod.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iditarod_Trail_Sled_Dog_Race

Wikipedia’s article “Iditaord Trail Sled Dog Race” describing the history, the route, the checkpoints, the participants, the dogs, and a list of winners. Includes a small photo of the statue of Balto in New York’s Central Park.

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<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, a map and even **a list of the Jr. Iditarod Champions on page 10. (Dusty is listed for 1995 and 1996. Can students find him on the list?)**

<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).

<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 (before Dusty), 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).

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

Teacher SUCCESS STORIES using the Iditarod grade K-college.

<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/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/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.

<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/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/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.

Iditarod YouTube: (valid as of Jan., 2017)

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

“Pre-K Iditarod” race in Alaska with **4th graders pulling Pre-K 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=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=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=2rE6UQNZXPO>

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