



Objectives

- To enjoy reading and understanding the main ideas of the stories in English.
- To relate characters and episodes in the stories to historical events.
- To be aware of social problems in recent history (poverty, child labour, desperate search for wealth).
- To encourage the students' awareness and use of cognates in their mother tongue and target languages.
- To work collaboratively to reconstruct a text, using all four skills.

Word Bank

Key Vocabulary

Nouns: words related to the cold - frost, blizzard, icicle; words related to professions - weaver, prospector, trader, carrier, foreman

Verbs: words related to the cold - freeze, shiver, thaw; negative concepts - complain, threaten, twitch, shrug, wound

Adjectives: words related to the cold - subzero, icy, sub-arctic; negative states - stiff, rotten, dizzy, painful, oversensitive

Expressions: to die of hunger; to just be skin and bone, to be the breadwinner

Tips and Ideas

Before reading

- As each story begins, ask the students to use their imaginations to picture the scenes: of Old Koskoosh sitting in the snow, Johnny being woken up on a cold morning, David Rasmussen making his calculations and the Tarwater family's problems. What do the characters look like? Where are they? What are they wearing?
- Move your students on to more abstract speculation: why is Koskoosh there? What is happening around him? What might happen as the story unfolds?
- Do the same as you begin to read each tale.

During reading

- As the stories unfold check the students are following the plot by asking simple Yes/No questions and *Wh-* questions.
- Encourage them to ask questions too (let the other students give their answers if they can, before you respond).
- Keep referring the group back to the first image they had of the characters - how is this changing or developing? Do they still expect the same outcome?

After reading

- Think, pair, share: group focus on the sequential action in each story and also how the tales come to a climax.
- Lead a discussion with the students about the different endings and their reactions. Two ended in death and two in hope and life. Would they prefer another ending for one or other of the tales?
- Groups choose a tale and either defend the ending or describe an alternative one.

Teacher support activities

CLIL Link: Newspapers – Hold the Front Page!

Gold found!

Get your students to imagine the excitement caused by the arrival of the first shipment of a million-dollars-worth of Klondike gold in San Francisco in July 1897. Elicit different features that your newspaper could run (this project is on paper - there were no blogs or websites in London's day!), perhaps including a front page story about the arrival of the gold dust in the city; interviews with the lucky prospectors, and with the unlucky ones who have caught scurvy, who ran out of money or whose team of dogs fell through the ice; background stories about the geography and meteorology of the Klondike; a piece on the effect the Gold Rush has had on the Native American Indians in the area; maps and statistics.

Groups divide up to research and write. To ensure everyone takes part, the teacher could allot roles within each group: the investigator, the secretary, the editor, the illustrator, the gopher (the one who "goes for" the glue and scissors).

Energising language skills: Paired Dictation

You read, I write

This dictation activity requires students to read their gapped text and to try to understand as much as possible of the context. Their partner has the missing phrases so they must listen hard to each other in order to complete their text, while speaking clearly in order to dictate to their partner. When students write in the missing language they must also be aware of meaning and correctness so their final text is error-free and makes sense.

Before the activity, you could elicit some helpful requests for the students to use during the activity, such as "Could you repeat that, please?", "How do you spell that?" or "I've got XYZ, is that right?"

Student A:

the Gold Rush had _____ on the Native American Indians who _____. The Tlingit and the _____ people worked as guides and carriers and _____ to the prospectors. However, the _____ were moved off their ancestral land and _____ where many died as a result of _____. They also suffered because the _____ the ecological balance of the _____ where the Hän fished and _____.

Student B:

The _____ had an important effect on the _____ who lived in the region. The _____ and the Koyukon people _____ and made money selling food to _____. However, the Hän people were moved _____ and into a reserve where _____ of contaminated water and smallpox. They _____ the gold mining damaged the _____ of the rivers and forests where _____ and hunted.

Full text:

The Gold Rush had an important effect on the Native American Indians who lived in the region. The Tlingit and the Koyukon people worked as guides and carriers and made money selling food to the prospectors. However, the Hän people were moved off their ancestral land and into a reserve where many died as a result of contaminated water and smallpox. They also suffered because the gold mining damaged the ecological balance of the rivers and forests where the Hän fished and hunted.