

THE LONE HUSKY

HANNAH GOLD

**THE LONE HUSKY BY HANNAH GOLD, ILLUSTRATED BY LEVI PINFOLD:
Educational Resource Pack - 4x Lesson Plans and Ideas
Suitable for: Ages 8+**

Explore themes of:

- **The Polar Night:** Explore how the extreme Arctic environment affects the characters and the challenges they face. Understand how the harsh conditions shape both people and animals and the ways they adapt to survive and thrive.
- **Looking after a husky:** Learn about the specific needs of huskies and compare them to domestic dogs. Discover the daily responsibilities, care routines and special considerations required to keep these working dogs healthy and happy.
- **Mushing and balance of physical and mental strength:** Follow the characters as they mush across the snow and ice. Examine how it demands both physical endurance and mental focus and consider how both are crucial to success.
- **Women being excluded from sport:** Investigate the historical barriers female athletes faced and the unfair treatment they endured. Promote awareness of their achievements and show how progress continues to inspire future generations.

Subjects: • English • Science • PSHE

ABOUT THE BOOK

Join April Wood on a thrilling Arctic adventure set in the world of the internationally bestselling *THE LAST BEAR* and *FINDING BEAR*. Can she win his trust ... and win the race?

April Wood is no stranger to adventure. After all, she lives in the Arctic and her best friend is a polar bear. But when April finds herself volunteering for the Polar Race – a long-distance dog sled race across the frozen tundra – even she wonders if this may be an adventure too far. April will need all the help she can get if she's to make it to the finish line. And competition is fierce – with experienced dog sledders, including new boy Finn, who will go to any lengths to win. But April has something the other teams don't: Blaze, a solitary husky with a troubled past, who may just prove to be her secret weapon...

With illustrations by the award-winning Levi Pinfold, *The Lone Husky* is a breathtaking adventure that will take readers on an unforgettable journey through the Arctic and reunite them with some beloved characters.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR - HANNAH GOLD

Hannah Gold is a multi-award-winning and bestselling author known for writing heartwarming adventure stories. Her books – including *The Last Bear*, *The Lost Whale*, *Finding Bear* and *Turtle Moon* – have won several major awards such as the Blue Peter Book Award and the Waterstones Children's Book Prize. Translated into twenty-eight languages, her books are beloved by readers around the world. Hannah currently lives in Lincolnshire with her tortoise and her husband.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR - LEVI PINFOLD

Levi Pinfold has been drawing from his imagination for as long as he can remember. He has published many acclaimed books, and is a winner of the prestigious CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal. Born in the Forest of Dean, he has somehow found himself living in Queensland, Australia. He likes paintings, books, music and some cats.



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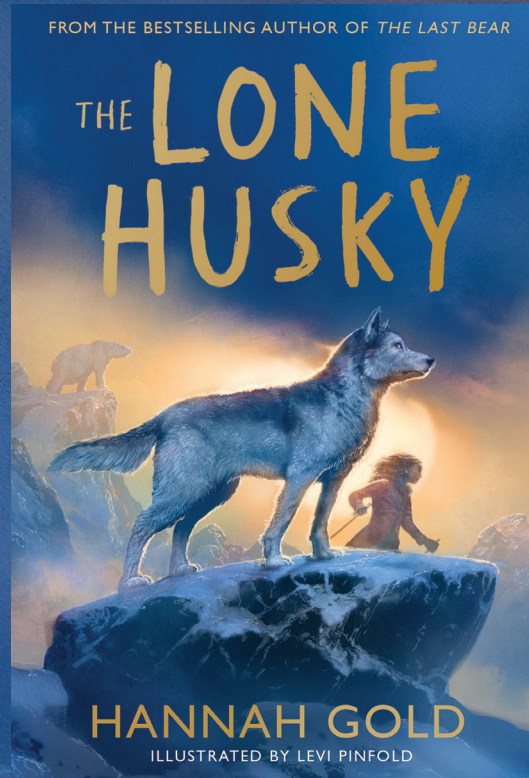
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POST-READING: ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS

NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES (KEY STAGE 2/3)

PRE-READING: FRONT COVER AND INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Look closely at the cover. Which part do you notice first, and why do you think your eyes are drawn to it?
2. Does the cover make you want to read the book? What is it about the title or illustration that makes it exciting or appealing?
3. The colours used in this cover illustration are mostly different shades of blue. What do these colours make you think of and how might they set the mood for the story?
4. The cover shows a girl, a husky, and a polar bear. What do you think their relationship might be? How might they be connected? Do you think they will help each other in the story?
5. The book is called *The Lone Husky*. What do you already know about huskies and how might that help you imagine the dog's role in the story?
6. Based just on the cover, what do you imagine might happen in the story? What kind of adventure or challenges do you think the characters might face?
7. Who is the author of this book? Have you read any of their other books, like *The Last Bear* or *Turtle Moon*? What did you enjoy about them?
8. Can you also find the name of the illustrator on the front or back cover? What do you notice or like about their artwork?
9. Now find the blurb and read it. What new details does it give you about the story?
10. After looking at the cover and reading the blurb, what questions do you have about the story? Can you make a list of these questions and try to answer them as you read?

EXTRACT 1A:

ANYTHING BUT ORDINARY

(from Chapter One: The Polar Night – pages 9-10)

April Wood stood with her family in the centre of Longyearbyen and watched the sun go down for the final time that year. It was minus twelve degrees with a bitter wind that made it feel even colder.

Today marked the start of the dark season. Where night would become day and day would become night and there would be nothing for April, save the hands on her watch, to tell the two apart.

‘The polar night,’ she whispered.

Longyearbyen was the capital of Svalbard, a group of islands close to the North Pole. It was a place of final frontiers, unimaginable adventures and one of the few locations left on Earth that still ached with a pure, deep wilderness. And it was also April’s home.

It hadn’t always been this way. Up until about six months ago, April had been living a perfectly ordinary life far away from the Arctic. She had lived in a small, red-brick house, attended her local school and studied unremarkable, everyday lessons.

But ordinary lives can only carry so much allure.

And living in the Arctic was anything but ordinary.

EXTRACT 1B: THIS IS MAGIC

(from Chapter One: The Polar Night – page 12)

‘And this simple procession represents the final passage of the sun across the sky, as it disappears from sight.’

‘Not to be seen again until March,’ April said in awe.

‘All that darkness!’ Maria shivered, winding her handknitted scarf around her neck even tighter. Maria was originally from Spain, and whilst she had adapted to Svalbard surprisingly easily, she was still nervous about the prospect of an entire winter without any daylight.

‘We would not be human,’ Dad said, offering a reassuring smile, ‘if we did not fear the dark. But there is nothing to be afraid of. The polar night is merely a result of the axial tilt of the Earth. In fact, in scientific terms, it is considered—’

‘Edmund! How you manage to suck the excitement out of any occasion is beyond me.’ Maria rolled her eyes playfully at April. ‘This is not just science. This is . . .’

‘Magic,’ April said, finishing Maria’s sentence.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In the first extract, what was the temperature outside?
2. How would it feel to go outside in minus twelve degrees? What clothes would you need to wear?
3. Why is this time of year called ‘the polar night’? What happens to the sun during this period?
4. What is the name of the capital of Svalbard?
5. Just six months before this story takes place, where has April been living?
6. How might April be feeling about her new home?
7. What do you imagine she misses most about her old one?
8. After the polar night ends, when will the sun appear in the sky again?
9. According to April’s dad, what is the reason the polar night happens?
10. During the polar night, how might people manage without daylight? What do you think daily life would be like?

ACTIVITY 1:

THE POLAR NIGHT

- Begin by showing the class a photo of a village in the Arctic where the sky is completely dark even though it is daytime. Ask them: 'What time of day do you think this photo was taken?' Most will probably say 'night' and allow them to think this because darkness is usually something we see at night.
- Then, explain that this photo is actually quite different from what we are used to because, even though it was taken in the middle of the day, it is still completely dark outside. This happens during an event called the Polar Night, which is when the Sun does not rise above the horizon at all.
- During the Polar Night, it can stay dark for days, weeks, or even months depending on how close a place is to the North or South Pole. Show students where these are located on a map or globe. People and animals who live there have to adapt to the long periods of darkness. The Polar Night is the opposite of the Midnight Sun, which is when the Sun does not set at all.
- Re-read the first extract in which April experiences the Polar Night, describing the beginning of the dark season. Progress onto the second extract and focus on how April's dad explains the science behind the Polar Night. Highlight how he describes the Earth's tilt and its orbit around the Sun and how this causes regions near the poles to receive no direct sunlight for extended periods.
- To give students a concrete visual understanding of this, you could demonstrate it with a spherical object like a globe or inflatable ball (ideally with axis marked, but can be improvised) and a torch.
- Turn off or dim the classroom lights if possible so the torch beam is clearly visible. Explain to students that the torch will represent the Sun and the spherical object or ball will represent the Earth.
- Hold the torch in one hand and the spherical object in the other. Slowly rotate the object to show how the Earth spins on its axis, creating the cycle of day and night. Explain that as the Earth turns, different areas receive sunlight while others are in darkness. Ask students to watch closely and describe what they notice, helping them understand how Earth's rotation causes day and night.
- Next, describe the tilt in more detail. Explain that some people might think the Earth stands straight up, but it actually leans slightly at an angle of about 23.5 degrees. Because of this tilt, the top part of the Earth, called the Arctic, can sometimes point away from the Sun. Slowly tilt the spherical object away from the torch so students can see that the Arctic stays in continuous darkness.
- Reflect on what they observed in the demonstration and read in the extracts:
 - How would it feel to live in a place where the Sun doesn't rise for weeks? They might say it could feel really tiring, lonely or boring because it is dark all the time or a bit strange and scary to be without sunlight. For some students who are more self-aware, they might notice that daily routines would change and that moods could be affected, perhaps making people feel depressed.
- After discussing these ideas, ask students to use their activity sheet to write their own diary entry about how it might feel to live through the Polar Night. Remind them what a diary entry should include, such as writing in the first person ('I'), using the past tense and details of daily events. Model how to construct an opening sentence, for example: "Dear Diary, Today I woke up and it was still pitch black outside. It felt strange to eat breakfast when it looked like the middle of the night." Allow students time to write their own and once they have finished, encourage a few to share their writing with the class.

ACTIVITY SHEET 1: A DAY IN THE DARK

Imagine you are living in a town inside the Arctic Circle during the Polar Night. The Sun has not risen for weeks and it is dark all day.

Use your thoughts, feelings and what you have learned to write a diary entry.

Dear Diary. . .

LESSON 2:

EXTRACT 2: DOG DUTY

(from Chapter Ten: Blaze - pages 80-82)

April smiled as she watched him play – like all dogs deserved to play. The vet had visited in the week and said the husky was about four years old – only a young dog – and for the first time, April could actually believe it. The vet also confirmed that the husky had undoubtedly been mistreated by previous owners, which would explain why he was so guarded. She said it might be difficult to get him to trust humans again, certainly not enough to ever become a sled dog.

‘But I don’t think that’s right,’ April said, tilting her head to one side. ‘You just need to find yourself first. The way I had to find myself once upon a time.’

April was watching him shake the toy from side to side between his jaws when a tired-looking Hedda appeared by her side. ‘That dog poop isn’t going to clear itself!’

Attached to a long broom handle, the pooper scooper was bigger than April’s head. But in a dog yard with forty-two dogs (plus the new husky), there was a lot of poo to pick up.

With the help of her headtorch, April cleared up the poo, refreshed the hay in the doghouses, de-iced the water bowls and dished out breakfast. Working in the yard wasn’t something she was paid for – unless dog cuddles counted. She did it out of love. Love for Hedda. Despite her gruff exterior, it was only the most treasured of friends who would save your life after falling into a freezing fjord. But also, April did it out of love for the huskies.

‘There you go, Nellie!’ The floppy-eared husky nuzzled against April’s legs before tucking into her food. Next to Nellie was Pickle who, as usual, had flipped her bowl over.

Hedda said that husky owners often named their dogs in themes. Some mushers would name a litter of puppies after types of car or species of flower, for example. One of the entrants in the Polar Race, a veteran called Bob Zodiac, had named all his huskies after Canadian cities.

Not so, Hedda. She preferred to get to know the personality of the dog and then name them. This was why she had called her lead dog Ripley, in homage to one of the most powerful female roles in film history.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How old did the vet think the dog was?
2. The vet also said it had been treated badly before. What clues might show that a dog hasn’t been cared for properly?
3. How do you think the dog might feel after having a hard life with other owners?
4. What could April do to help the dog feel safe and start trusting people again?
5. Are there any similarities between her and the dog, such as their personalities, feelings or experiences?
6. From this extract, what is your first impression of Hedda? What kind of person does she seem to be and why do you think that?
7. What jobs does April do to help take care of the dogs?
8. What are some of the names of the huskies? Which name do you like the best? Why?
9. How do husky owners get ideas or inspiration for naming their dogs? If you could give a husky a name, what would you choose and why?
10. Why is it important for people to take good care of their pets?

ACTIVITY 2:

HOW TO LOOK AFTER A HUSKY

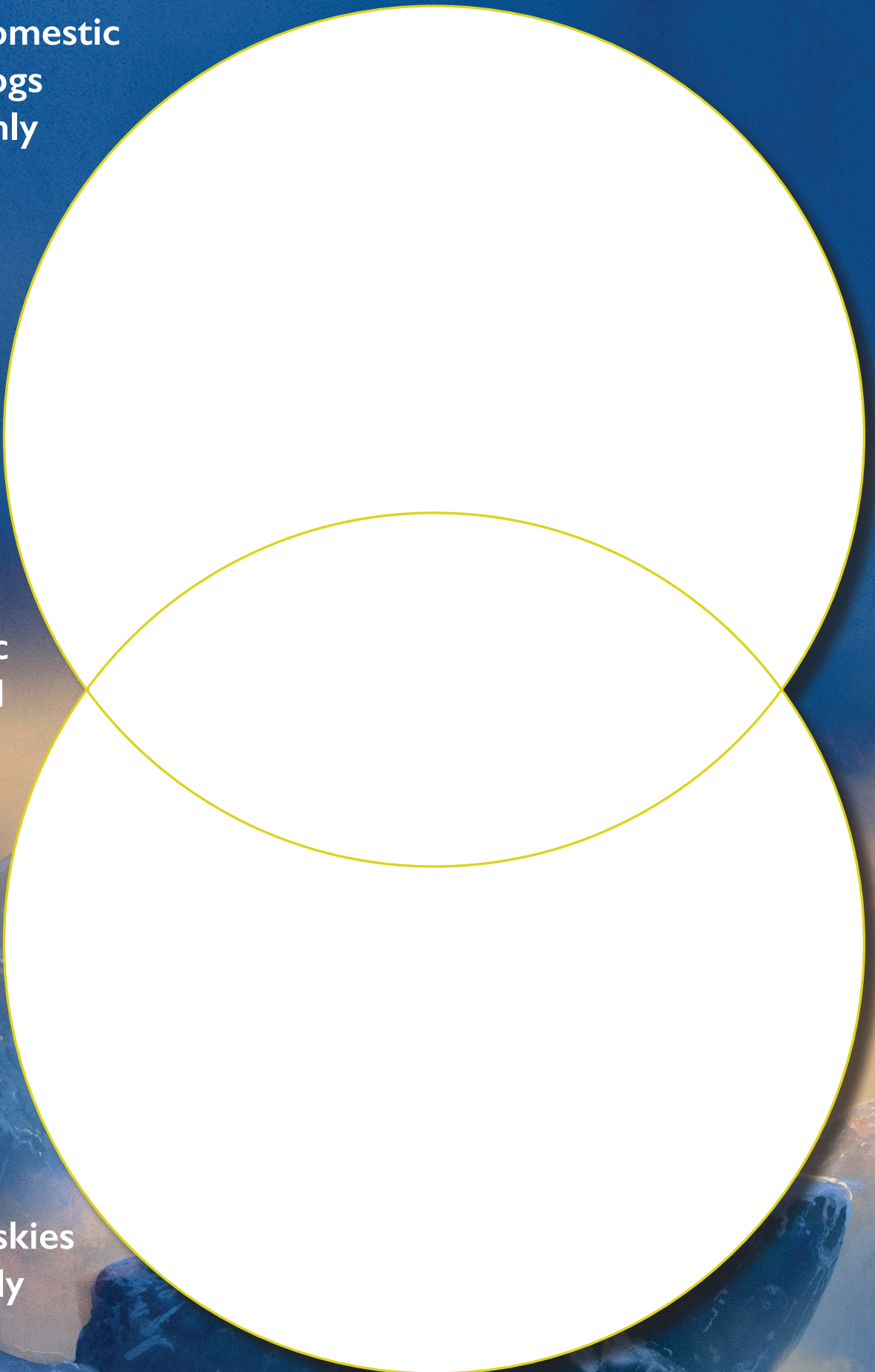
- Start by asking, “Who has a pet at home?”, being mindful to those that do not have a pet by also inviting them to share about pets they know, have met or wish they could have, so everyone can participate without feeling left out.
- Make a range of their suggestions on the board in a diagram. These could include dogs, cats, hamsters, birds, fish or any other pets they say.
- Describe how there are basic things that all pets need regardless of the type of animal, such as food, water, shelter, exercise, love and regular visits to the vet for check-ups and vaccinations.
- Say that out of all these pets, we are going to focus on dogs today and more specifically, the dogs mentioned in the book: huskies.
- Read the extract together where April is looking after the dogs in Hedda’s yard. As you read, draw their attention to all the tasks she does for them, such as clearing up the poo, refreshing the hay in the doghouses, de-icing the water bowls and serving them breakfast.
- Show them an image of a husky so everyone is familiar with this dog breed and talk about how they are different from domestic dogs we know, such as labradors or spaniels, because they are bred to pull sleds and work in cold climates, so they have much thicker fur, higher energy levels and stronger muscles. Huskies need lots of exercise and space to run and often have strong pack instincts, unlike many domestic dogs who are bred primarily for companionship and family life.
- Explain to the class that to better understand the differences and similarities between domestic dogs and huskies, we are going to compare their needs side by side using a Venn diagram. This will help us see what all dogs need and what is unique to huskies.
- Provide each student with an activity sheet that has a Venn diagram on it. Explain how to use the Venn diagram by showing that the overlapping section in the middle is for things that both domestic dogs and huskies need and the outer sections are for things that are unique to each type of dog.
- Discuss a few examples as a class, talking about which section of the Venn diagram they belong in, and then let students sort them on their own sheets. Encourage them to add their own ideas as well. Examples could include:
 - **Overlapping section (things both domestic dogs and huskies need):** food; water; shelter; love and companionship; regular exercise; visits to the vet; grooming (etc.)
 - **Outer sections (things unique to each type of dog):**
 - **Huskies only:** lots of space to run; high-energy exercise (sled pulling, running); thick fur care / extra grooming; strong pack around them; work or activity-based stimulation
 - **Domestic dogs only:** comfortable living indoors; family-focused play; less intense daily exercise; more predictable behaviour for home life
- Once they have completed their Venn diagrams, share ideas as a class and discuss the importance of looking after animals properly. To extend the lesson, students could design their own care posters with tips and advice and display them around the school to spread the message of animal welfare and raise awareness about responsible pet ownership.

ACTIVITY SHEET 2: VENN DIAGRAM

Domestic
Dogs
Only

Domestic
Dogs and
Huskies

Huskies
Only



LESSON 3:

EXTRACT 3A: WE GO AGAIN

(from Chapter Twelve: Old Rivals – pages 95-97)

On today's training run, Hedda wanted to practise the opening segment of the race. There were five different stages in total, each stage lasting a day, with the competitors following a specially marked-out trail that made up the course.

'It is important we practise the start,' said Hedda as the pair of them set out from the yard – Hedda on her streamlined race sled, and April on one of the more basic, cumbersome tourist ones. (She had taken it out a few times before but as it was larger than the sleds she had used previously, it could be tough to handle.) Both wore their headtorches as Svalbard was still in the grip of the polar night. 'What no musher must do is allow their dogs to set out too fast.'

April was working with the reserve dogs, and although Hedda wasn't going quickly, it wasn't long before her team of eight prime huskies had disappeared into the distance.

How could Hedda make mushing look so effortless? Standing on the back of a sled might sound easy, but it required a lot of physical strength, as well as the ability to navigate through different types of weather. Modern-day mushers were athletic, strong of mind and body – a different breed of human altogether.

There was no room to be tired.

After mushing for a while, Hedda would stop the race sled, so April could help her switch some of her team around and try a different formation of dogs. And then they would have to start over. This happened about ten times.

After an hour, April's hands were as stiff as tree trunks and her muscles ached with the exertion. She was also panting just as hard as the huskies themselves. Why anyone would want to competitively mush for five long days was beyond her.

'We go again,' Hedda ordered, just as April was dreaming of a warm bath.

EXTRACT 3B: INSIDE YOUR HEAD

(from Chapter Twenty: Training – pages 158-159)

'Mushing might appear straightforward, but I can assure you it is not. Especially during a race.' Hedda shut the laptop with a resounding click. 'There are a number of components that April needs to master. Can anyone guess what these are?' She eyeballed the group. 'Edmund?'

Dad, who hadn't been expecting the attention, coughed on the aniseed candy he was sucking. 'The dogs themselves? I mean, it is rather a long way.'

'Correct. The huskies need specific training for such a distance,' Hedda answered. 'I have been working on their endurance all winter, but April will continue this work. Then, in the next two weeks, we will cement our final race team.'

Jurgen put his hand up. 'Yes, Jurgen?' Hedda sighed. 'If you have something to say, please say it.'

'It's just . . .' Jurgen hummed and hawed. 'I saw Finn Hudson's dogs last week. And whilst I certainly respect your huskies, I cannot see how they are a match for those beasts.'

'Finn Hudson.' Tör rolled his eyes. 'Why does everyone think he is so special?'

'A team of dogs is only as strong as their leader,' Hedda said, keeping things on track. 'Which is why, as I was about to say, the second part of the training is about April.'

April felt all eyes upon her and cleared her throat nervously. She didn't like being the centre of attention at the best of times.

'You must be strong physically, but more importantly you must be strong up here,' Hedda said, tapping her head. 'Mushing is one thing. But racing is another altogether. Never, under any circumstances, must you allow the race to get inside your head.'

LESSON 3:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How many stages are there in the race?
2. What advice does Hedda give April at the start of the race?
3. Can you explain what mushing is and what mushers do?
4. Why is April so impressed by Hedda? What makes mushing look easy?
5. How does April feel after an hour of mushing? What happens to her body?
6. What about the dogs? How do you think they feel when they are pulling the sled?
7. Who is Jürgen worried about?
8. Is being a good musher just about having strong dogs or something more?
9. What else does Hedda say a musher needs to think about or do?
10. Have you ever had to use both your physical and mental strength to get through something tricky?



ACTIVITY 3:

MUSHING: WHERE MIND MEETS MUSCLE

- Start the lesson by sharing the extracts with the class. Encourage them to pay close attention to what the characters, particularly April and Hedda, are doing while mushing. Ask them to imagine themselves in April's position and notice both the physical and mental effort involved.
- Next, introduce the sport of mushing in more detail. Explain that mushing is a sport where a person, called a musher, guides a team of dogs to pull a sled across snow or ice.
- Describe the historical origins briefly if appropriate, such as mushers being used for travel and transport in snowy regions and how it is now also a competitive sport.
- To make the lesson more engaging, show students a series of images or a short video of mushers and huskies in action. While showing the images or clip, ask students to notice details: the speed of the sled, the coordination of the dogs, the way the musher gives commands and how the team works together. Ask the students, "What do you notice about the dogs?" and "Why do you think it might be hard to control a team like this?" Use these observations to emphasise that mushing is not just about strong dogs; it requires a lot from the musher as well.
- Return to the extracts and refer specifically to the moments when April is in awe of Hedda. Ask students to consider why April is impressed. Prompt discussion about how Hedda makes mushing look effortless, even though it requires enormous skill and effort. Contrast this with April's own experience, pointing out how her body is exhausted, muscles are aching and she is struggling with the physical side of the task.
- After this, guide students to consider the demands of the sport. Highlight that mushing requires both physical and mental strength.
- Explain that physical strength includes endurance, balance, coordination and the ability to handle long periods of effort, while mental strength involves staying focused, making decisions under pressure, reading the behaviour of the dogs and managing the team effectively.
- You can also ask, "What do you think would happen if a musher was very strong physically but not focused mentally, or vice versa?" to illustrate the importance of balance.
- Ask students to give examples from their own lives where they have needed physical and mental strength, such as playing sports, completing challenging puzzles or learning new skills.
- After this, hand out the activity sheet containing a range of statements and go through them as a class, discussing what each scenario might involve. Then, have students work in pairs to debate and decide whether each task requires physical strength, mental strength or both, encouraging them to explain and justify their reasoning to one another.
- After a few minutes, bring the class together and ask pairs to share their thoughts. Finish by reinforcing the idea that many challenges in life need both body and mind working together and encourage students to reflect on how they can use these skills in their own activities and experiences

ACTIVITY SHEET 3: BODY, BRAIN OR BOTH?

Activity	Circle One	Why do you think this?
Running a long-distance race	Physical / Mental / Both	
Completing a jigsaw puzzle	Physical / Mental / Both	
Riding a bike	Physical / Mental / Both	
Doing a workout	Physical / Mental / Both	
Climbing a tree	Physical / Mental / Both	
Learning a new dance routine	Physical / Mental / Both	
Baking a cake	Physical / Mental / Both	
Playing chess	Physical / Mental / Both	
Swimming laps in a pool	Physical / Mental / Both	
Learning a new language	Physical / Mental / Both	
Walking up a mountain	Physical / Mental / Both	
	Physical / Mental / Both	

Add your own example here 

LESSON 4:

EXTRACT 4: THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE RIVALRY

(from Chapter Thirteen: The Rivalry Unravelling - page 106-108)

'You've seen Hedda, right?' April frowned. 'I caught her limping yesterday. Oh, she pretended she wasn't. But it's that knee of hers. What with training for the race and trying to run the business, she's definitely overdoing it.'

April wasn't entirely convinced Blaze understood. Not in the way Bear seemed to intuitively understand her. But huskies were trained to obey instructions – otherwise the musher would have no control over their team – so she liked to think he got the gist of what she was saying.

'At least Hedda finally told me why she dislikes Ace so much,' April confided. 'Well. I made her tell me. I said it was a condition of me helping her.'

The other day, April had sat Hedda down and point blank asked for the truth. Normally April didn't work in conditionals, but in order to help Hedda beat Finn, she needed to know the root cause of the rivalry.

Hedda had been grooming Ripley, the husky positively smiling in pleasure under the brushstrokes. On hearing April's question, she'd paused mid-stroke, before slowly looking up. 'It's because of what happened in the Iditarod.'

'The Iditarod?'

'It is the most famous husky race in the world and takes place in Alaska . . .'

'I know what it is,' April said, interrupting Hedda, although not unkindly. 'It's just . . . wasn't your race a long time ago?'

'It was my first and only time competing,' Hedda replied, her voice as outraged as if the race had happened yesterday. 'You must understand, Yrsa, that times were different back then, especially for female mushers. There were many people who disagreed with me entering such a high-profile race. Including Ace.'

'But that's so unfair!' said an even more outraged April. 'What does being female have to do with anything?'

'Ace felt threatened,' Hedda shrugged. 'The same way a husky feels threatened when a new dog joins the pack. He did not like that I was outspoken in my disapproval of him.'

Hedda had said many times that she thought Ace pushed his animals too hard – that he treated them more like commodities to get him to the finish line and all the glory that awaited. Whereas for Hedda, winning might have been important, but the dogs' welfare was everything.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why might Hedda want to appear strong, even when she is injured or struggling?
2. Do you think Hedda would ever admit to overdoing things? Why or why not?
3. What is the Iditarod?
4. Where does it take place?
5. April says that Hedda's race was a long time ago. Why do you think people can still hold grudges even after many years?
6. What reason does Hedda give for disliking Ace?
7. What does Hedda mean when she says, 'times were different back then'?
8. How does the author show that April is outraged in this extract? Think about the use of exclamations, short sentences and the way questions are asked to create strong emotion.
9. Has our world changed today to not only allow more women to take part in sport, but also to celebrate their achievements and support equality?
10. How might April feel if she were treated unfairly in a race because she is young or female?

ACTIVITY 4:

BREAKING BARRIERS

- Begin with a simple, open question to engage everyone. Ask: “Who here enjoys sport, either playing it or watching it?”
- Take a quick hands-up vote to see how many enjoy sport, then invite a few students to share which sports they like most and why. Make links between their answers and the idea that sport is something many people enjoy all around the world, whether as players or fans.
- Highlight that sport is for everyone and today, they’ll be thinking about whether this has always been the case for both boys and girls.
- Briefly explain that for much of history, women were often told they could not take part in certain sports because they were seen as ‘too weak’ or because society believed sport was ‘only for men’.
- Give a few notable examples, such as:
 - Women were not allowed to run the Olympic Marathon until 1984.
 - The first women’s football teams were banned from playing on official pitches in England in 1921 and it took over 50 years for the ban to be lifted in 1971.
 - In dog sledding, like the Iditarod, women had to fight for respect, but mushers like Libby Riddles (the first woman to win the Iditarod in 1985) proved they could succeed.
- After mentioning Libby Riddles and the struggles female mushers faced, the teacher can explain that these challenges are also reflected in the story. In the extract, Hedda is shown being treated differently by Ace because she is a female musher.
- Emphasise how unfair this was and ask: “How do you think women, like Hedda, who loved mushing so much must have felt?” Encourage students to develop empathy by imagining themselves in their position, experiencing a sense of injustice and reflecting thoughtfully.
- Explain that today, things have thankfully changed and women now have many more opportunities to take part in sport and be celebrated for their achievements. Share with them some notable female athletes including the Lionesses (England Women’s Football Team), Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill (Olympic heptathlete), Dame Kelly Holmes (double Olympic gold medallist), Ellie Simmonds (Paralympic swimmer), Nicola Adams (boxing), Serena Williams (tennis) and Simone Biles (gymnastics).
- Point out how female athletes now compete at the highest levels, break records and inspire future generations, showing that talent, skill and determination are not limited by gender. This progress demonstrates how society is moving toward greater equality, though there is still work to do to ensure fair treatment, recognition and opportunities for all.
- Tell them that as part of thinking about the future of women in sport, you would like them to create a poster to promote women in sport and celebrate their achievements, inspire others and highlight the importance of equality and opportunity for all athletes. Give them freedom in how they create their poster. They can use the provided activity sheet to draw, write slogans, or include images, or they can choose to use online tools if they prefer. Remind them to be creative, bold and eye-catching so their message really stands out. Once complete, invite students to share their posters with the class or display them around the school to inspire others and raise awareness about equality in sport.

ACTIVITY SHEET 4: THE FUTURE IS FEMALE

Design a poster that celebrates girls and women in sport and shows that everyone can play and succeed, no matter who they are.



POST-READING: ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS

- **Arctic Adventure Map:** Have students create a map of the Arctic route April takes in the sled race. They could mark key locations, hazards and places where important events happen. This helps students visualise the setting and understand the challenges of navigating in extreme conditions.
- **Redesign the Cover:** Discuss Levi Pinfold's cover illustration and brainstorm your own design that represents your vision of the book's characters, settings and key moments. Create a new cover that captures the essence of the story and reflects your personal interpretation of its themes and imagery.
- **Design a Sled Dog Team:** Students could invent their own sled dog team, choosing names and unique personalities for each dog. They could draw or digitally design the team, showing each dog's role, how they work together, the musher's responsibilities and the strategies they would use to succeed.
- **Blaze's Backstory:** In the book, it is revealed that Blaze hasn't been treated well by his previous owners. Students could explore his past and think about how it affects his behaviour, trust and relationship with April. They could also write a short story from Blaze's perspective, a character profile or a comic strip showing key moments from his life and how he gradually learns to trust again.
- **Sled Race Showdown Board Game:** Students could design their own long-distance sled dog race board game, inspired by Snakes and Ladders. Positive squares allow the musher and team to advance (e.g. 'Blaze pulls strongly across the ice: move forward 3 spaces') and challenging squares cause setbacks (e.g. 'Snowstorm slows the team: go back 2 spaces').
- **Front Page Feature:** On page 164, the local newspaper Svalbard News features April competing in the sled race. Students could design their own newspaper front page highlighting April's achievement. They could create a catchy headline, a main image or illustration, a short article summarising her journey, and sidebars with fun facts about the race, Blaze or the Arctic environment.
- **Survival Kit:** Students could imagine they are helping April prepare for her first sled race and create a survival kit for her. They would need to think carefully about what items she would need to stay safe and healthy while mushing in the Arctic. This could include clothing for the extreme cold, food and snacks for energy, supplies, navigation tools, first-aid items, dog care equipment and emergency gear.
- **Fact File:** Students could research Svalbard, the Arctic archipelago where *The Lone Husky* is set and produce a fact file highlighting key information. This could include its geography (islands, glaciers, polar night/day), climate (temperatures, snow, wind), wildlife (polar bears, huskies, arctic foxes), local communities and the challenges of living in such a remote environment.
- **Sketch a Husky:** Students could choose a moment from *The Lone Husky* or imagine their own scene to sketch Blaze or another sled dog. Encourage them to focus on features that make huskies unique, such as their thick fur, pointed ears, bushy tails and expressive eyes. They could work in pencil, charcoal or digital tools and add backgrounds to place the dog in an Arctic setting.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES (KEY STAGE 2/3)

READING – COMPREHENSION

Pupils should be taught to:

- maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by:
 - continuing to read and discuss an increasingly wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks
 - recommending books that they have read to their peers, giving reasons for their choices
 - identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing
- understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by:
 - drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence
 - predicting what might happen from details stated and implied
 - summarising the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas

WRITING: COMPOSITION

Pupils should be taught to:

- plan their writing by:
 - discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar
- develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:
 - writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)

SPOKEN LANGUAGE

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates

SCIENCE

Earth and space

Pupils should be taught to:

- describe the movement of the Earth, and other planets, relative to the Sun in the solar system
- describe the Sun, Earth and Moon as approximately spherical bodies
- use the idea of the Earth's rotation to explain day and night and the apparent movement of the sun across the sky.

PSHE (TAKEN FROM PROGRAMME OF STUDY FOR PSHE EDUCATION: KSI-5)

Pupils learn:

Communities

- L8. about diversity; what it means; the benefits of living in a diverse community; about valuing diversity within communities
- L9. about stereotypes; how they can negatively influence behaviours and attitudes towards others; strategies for challenging stereotypes
- L10. about prejudice; how to recognise behaviours/actions which discriminate against others; ways of responding to it if witnessed or experienced

Choices and pathways

- L10. to recognise and challenge stereotypes and family or cultural expectations that may limit aspirations