

Call of the Wild Webquest: Building Background Knowledge

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Objectives

1. To help students build background knowledge necessary to more easily read Jack London's challenging novel, *Call of the Wild*
2. To practice research skills: sifting through pertinent and non-pertinent information
3. To practice technology use (PowerPoint) and presentation skills

Background

I planned my webquest with middle school students in mind, so the information links are rather readable, but require students to drill into their sites. They cannot always find what they may need on their first look. There are a few topics that are more challenging to others (Charles Darwin, Jack London, and Yukon Geography, Flora & Fauna). I gave these to my higher-level readers and more studious students.

Students are provided with an authentic situation in which to research and present their information. This can be done over two class periods (one research and one creating their presentation) or extended to several weeks depending on what you want your students to accomplish. I simply wanted them to "get in the mood" of the time and life of the Yukon Gold Rush (1898) so that reading would be easier since they wouldn't have to work trying to understand what this place looked like, where it was and who was in it.

To scaffold the process, I created an online form that they could use to note their research findings and a PowerPoint template so that all students could successfully meet the color, bullet and slide number criteria.

In addition, I would recommend showing your students my own BASIC presentation, using the template and the minimum criteria, to model how to successfully present their project.

The following information is taken directly from the "task" page of the website:

http://www.tc.umn.edu/~bosc0036/BOSCHEE/cotw_webquest/

Scenario: You and your partner are competing for exhibit space in the new Jack London Call of the Wild Museum. As partners, you will "pitch" (sell) your expertise to the museum committee.

You need to know that you will be competing with other partnerships in demonstrating your knowledge about a particular subject that connects to Jack London's novel, *The Call of the Wild*.

The teams that are able to sell their knowledge (facts), in the most creative and informative way, win exhibit space and a commission (prize)!

[NOTE: We used Klondike bars, but thought about letting the winners not have to do their required book report for that quarter.]

Task: You will present your information during your next meeting with the museum (day after tomorrow). You and your partner will have FIVE minutes to pitch your knowledge.

You will need to answer the following questions in your presentation:

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and/or HOW?

Presentation format: Your presentation must be in the form of a PowerPoint presentation and you must answer 5 of the 6 WH-questions noted in yellow above. You need to have one slide for each WH-information.

Who, what, when, why, where and/or how

Topic options:

Dog Sledding	Wolves	Yukon Gold Rush
Women in the Yukon	Postal Service in the Yukon	Charles Darwin
Jack London	Yukon Geography, Weather, Flora and Fauna	A Miner's Life