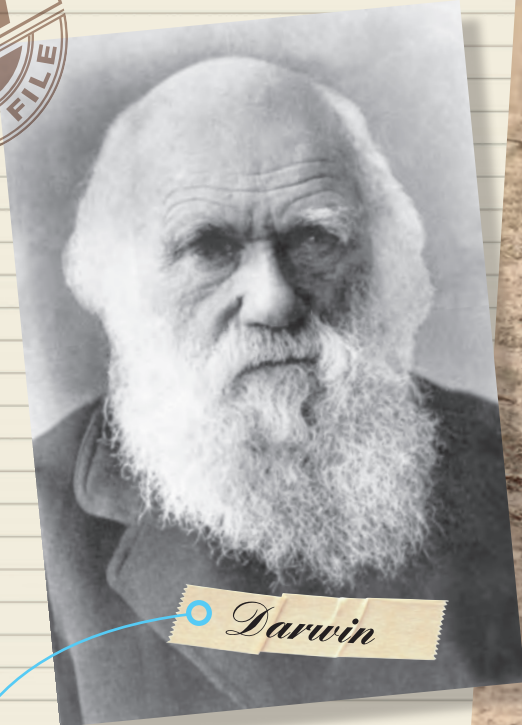


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INTO THE WILD

CHARLES DARWIN

The Call of the Wild relies very heavily on **Charles Darwin's** theory of evolution, developed in his book *The Origin Of Species* (1859). By the end of the nineteenth century, Darwin's premise had become one of the most controversial scientific theories ever advanced. According to his findings, life on earth evolved through a

process of natural selection, which is "undeviating, pitiless, careless." A struggle for survival in which only the 'fittest' or the most able to adapt to their environment survived. Jack London totally embraced Darwinism, or rather its philosophical implications, and even took a copy of Darwin's book with him when he went to Alaska



Klondike



Jack London

- **advanced:** (here) put forward; proposed
- **careless:** that does not care
- **embraced:** (here) agreed with
- **on the heels of:** immediately after
- **pitiless:** without pity (kindness)
- **premise:** idea; theory
- **principles:** main ideas
- **regression:** going back
- **undeviating:** that does not change direction

for the **Klondike Gold Rush** in 1897. Like many other writers, he felt the need to write in the light of Darwin's new vision of the world.

NATURALISM

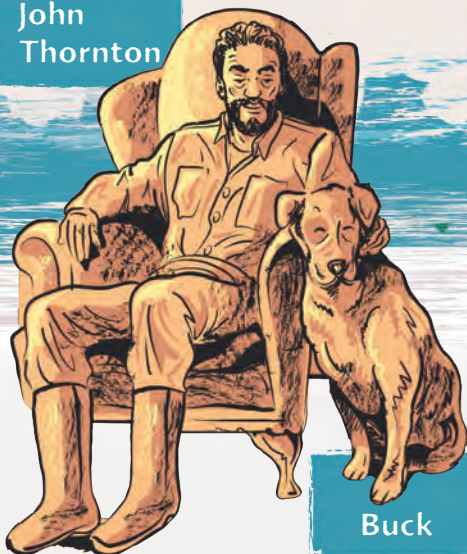
On the heels of Darwinism, a new philosophical movement, called **Naturalism**, also evolved, that was based on the theory of evolution. One of the most important concepts of Naturalism is the idea that there is a 'primitive' or 'primordial' beast that lies within each living creature (either animal or person), however civilized

they may seem to be. This 'beast' can emerge at any moment depending on the environment, and it will emerge more quickly in extremely difficult conditions.

London used Buck's transformation from a civilized dog to a wild wolf to show these two basic principles of the theory of evolution and Naturalism - the 'survival of the fittest' and the retreat to the primitive or primordial beast. All of this is clear in Buck's 'development,' or rather his gradual 'regression' into a primitive beast.

THE CALL OF THE WILD

John
Thornton



Buck

François

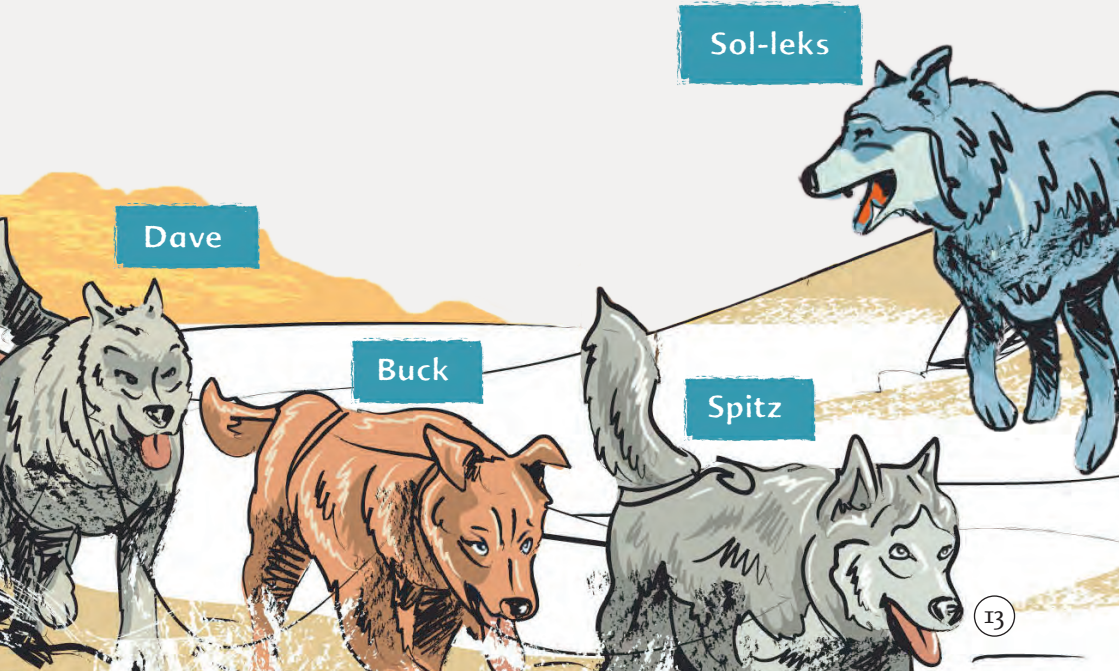




Mercedes

Charles

Hal



Dave

Buck

Sol-leks

Spitz

BEFORE READING

Dogs

1 What do you know about dogs? Circle the words in the box which can best be used to describe them.

carnivorous	undependable	friendly
herbivorous	dangerous	useful
intelligent	wild	loyal
faithful	domesticated	strong

2  With a partner make sentences using the words you circled.

3 There are many different kinds (breeds) of dogs, and each breed has a different characteristic. Match the dogs with their characteristics.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Alsatian | a a lap-dog, to be petted |
| 2 St Bernard | b a dog for pulling sleds in the snow |
| 3 Pointer | c a guard dog or police dog |
| 4 Pekinese | d a sheepdog |
| 5 Husky | e a gun dog, for hunting |
| 6 Collie | f a mountain rescue dog |

4 Have you got a dog? If so, write a paragraph about it. If not, either write about a dog you know well, or write what you think about dogs.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Alaska

1 Answer these questions:

- a What country does Alaska belong to?
- b Where is Alaska located?
- c What is the climate like?
- d What wild animals live there?
- e Who were the first inhabitants of Alaska?

2 Why did Alaska suddenly become famous at the end of the 19th century?

Tick (✓) below.

- The film industry started there.
- People discovered gold there.
- Men started digging for oil.
- Ice cream was invented there.

3 If you were going on a trip to Alaska what things would you want to take with you? Make a list under the two headings.


Clothes

Equipment

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

4 Would you like to live in or visit Alaska? Why/why not? Tell a partner.

INTO THE PRIMITIVE

 Buck did not read the newspapers. So he did not know that there was trouble ahead•. Trouble for every dog with strong muscles and warm long hair, from Seattle to southern California. Some men had found a yellow metal in the Arctic darkness, and thousands of other men were rushing there. These men wanted dogs that were heavy, with strong muscles for working hard and furry coats to protect them from the cold.

Buck lived at a big house in a sunny valley in California which was owned by Judge Miller. And Buck ruled over it all. He was born there, and had lived there for the four years of his life. There were many other dogs, but they lived together in the kennels•, or inside the house. But Buck was neither a house dog nor a kennel dog. The whole of Judge Miller's land was his. Buck was king – king over all the creeping•, crawling•, flying things of Judge Miller's lands, humans included.

His father, Elmo, a huge St Bernard, had been the judge's inseparable• companion. And when he died, Buck took his father's place. He was not so large – he weighed only sixty kilograms – for his mother, Shep, had been a Scottish sheepdog. He had had a good life and he was proud of himself, for he had not become a house dog. Hunting and other outdoor activities had hardened• his muscles, and swimming had made him healthy.

- **crawling:** moving on all four legs, close to the ground
- **creeping:** moving close to the ground
- **hardened:** made hard
- **inseparable:** impossible to separate
- **kennels:** little houses for dogs to sleep in
- **trouble ahead:** problems in the near future

This was Buck in the autumn of 1897, when the discovery of gold in the Klondike brought men from everywhere to the frozen north. But Buck did not read the newspapers. And he did not know that Manuel, one of the gardener's helpers, was not a good man. Manuel gambled• and wasted• the little money he had. And one time when the judge was away on business, and his sons were busy with an athletics club, Manuel did something terrible. No one saw him and Buck go off on what Buck thought was a walk. No one saw them arrive at the railway station, where Manuel sold Buck to a man who was waiting for him.

Manuel put a rope• round Buck's neck, under his collar. Buck accepted this because he knew Manuel, but when the rope was given to another man, he growled•dangerously. And when the rope was tightened round his neck, he started to choke• and jumped at the man in anger. The man fought him off and forced Buck to lie on his back, and tightened the rope even more. Buck had never been treated so badly in his life, and he had never been so angry. Then his strength drained away• and he soon became unconscious•. He was still unconscious when the train arrived and the two men threw him into the baggage car.

TRUST

Buck goes with Manuel because he trusts him.

But Manuel betrays Buck's trust.

Who do you trust?

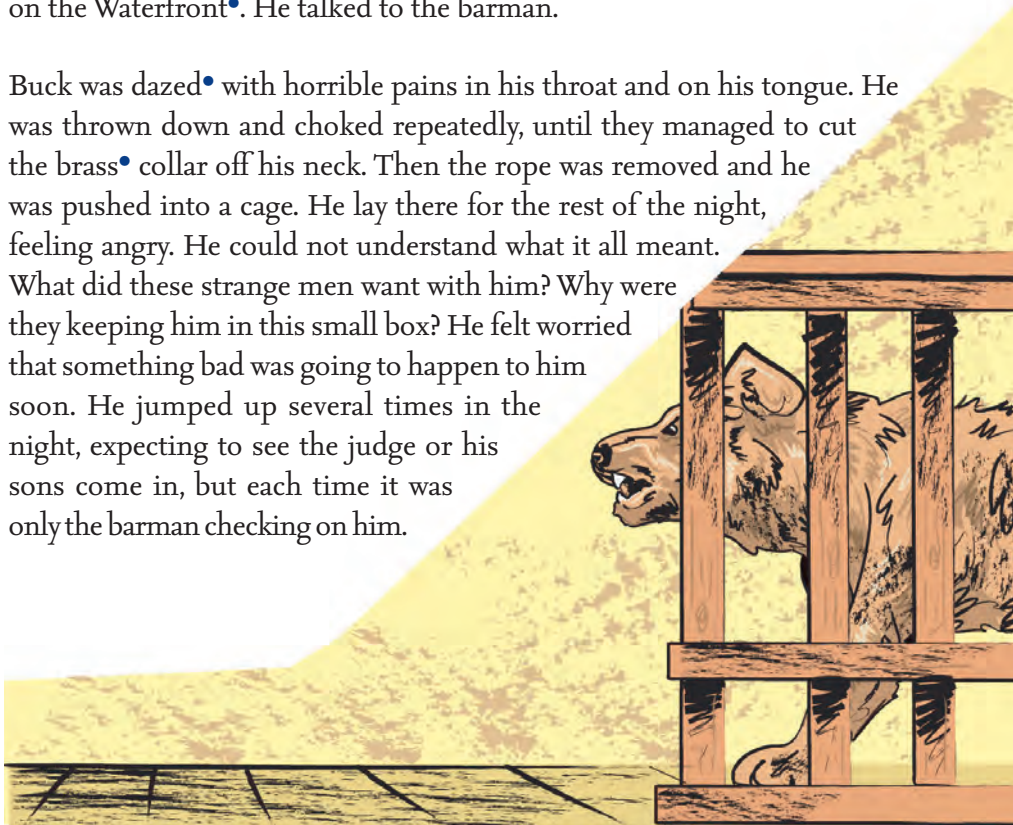
Has anyone ever betrayed your trust?

- **choke:** be unable to breathe
- **drained away:** slowly went away
- **gambled:** risked money on the result of a game or sport
- **growled:** made a low angry sound
- **rope:** thick cord
- **unconscious:** not awake or capable of reacting
- **wasted:** used badly; lost


When he woke up he heard a whistle• blow, and he knew where he was because he had often travelled by train with the judge. He opened his eyes, and he was filled with the full anger of a kidnapped• king. The man jumped for the rope, but Buck was too quick for him. He closed his teeth on the man's hand, and held on until he was choked unconscious again.

Later, the man, his hand wrapped• in a bloody handkerchief, and his right trouser leg torn from knee to ankle, went into a San Francisco bar on the Waterfront•. He talked to the barman.

Buck was dazed• with horrible pains in his throat and on his tongue. He was thrown down and choked repeatedly, until they managed to cut the brass• collar off his neck. Then the rope was removed and he was pushed into a cage. He lay there for the rest of the night, feeling angry. He could not understand what it all meant. What did these strange men want with him? Why were they keeping him in this small box? He felt worried that something bad was going to happen to him soon. He jumped up several times in the night, expecting to see the judge or his sons come in, but each time it was only the barman checking on him.



- **brass:** shiny yellow metal
- **dazed:** confused and unable to think
- **kidnapped:** taken away by force


- **the Waterfront:** houses and shops near the river
- **whistle:** 

- **wrapped:** covered

Buck passed through many hands• in that cage. He travelled by wagon and ferry boat with other boxes to the railway station, where he was put on an express train. For two days and nights he travelled north, without food and drink. And all the time Buck grew more and more angry. He was desperate for a drink to ease• his swollen• throat and tongue. But he decided that nobody would ever put a rope around his neck again. His anger would be directed against the first person who tried to hurt him. His eyes became red, and he changed into a raging devil. He was so changed that the judge would not have recognised him.

After two days he was carried off the train in Seattle into a small, high-walled yard. There, a fat man in a red sweater broke open the cage with a small axe•, while holding a club• in the other hand. When there was a big enough opening, Buck jumped out like a red-eyed devil, straight at the fat man. But in mid-air, just as his teeth were going to close on the man, he received a shock that he had never felt before. It turned him over and onto the ground. He had never been struck by a club in his life, and he did not understand. With a bark• that was more a scream, he jumped at the man again, and again he was clubbed• to the ground. Although he now knew what was happening to him, his anger made him continue jumping. He was smashed down a dozen times.



- **axe:** 
- **bark:** sound a dog makes
- **club:** thick stick used to beat people
- **clubbed:** hit with a club
- **ease:** make better
- **passed through many hands:** was touched and moved by many different people
- **swollen:** larger than usual because of an injury



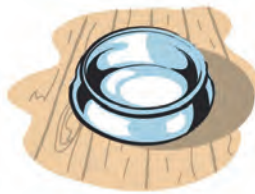
In the end he could jump no more. Blood was flowing from his nose, mouth and ears. The man came and deliberately hit him hard on the nose. It was agony• for Buck. With a roar like a lion, he jumped at the man again, but the man hit him under the jaw•. Buck rose into the air then crashed• to the ground on his head and chest. For the last time he rushed at the man but the man struck him with a clever blow• and Buck fell down unconscious.

‘He’s a great dog-breaker,’ said one of the men who’d carried Buck into the yard.

Buck’s senses came back to him, but not his strength. He lay where he had fallen, and watched the man in the red sweater.

“Answers to the name of Buck,” said the fat man, reading the barman’s letter. ‘Well, Buck, we’ve had our little fight, and the best thing we can do is stop there. You’ve learned your place. Be a good dog and it’ll go well for you. Be a bad dog, and I’ll beat you again. Understand?’

As he spoke he fearlessly patted the head he had recently beaten so hard. Although Buck’s hair stood up on end, he did not protest. When the man brought him water, he drank quickly, and later ate a generous meal of raw• meat, piece by piece from the man’s hand.



- **agony:** great pain
- **blow:** hard hit with hand or weapon
- **crashed:** fell heavily to the ground

- **jaw:** lower part of face; chin
- **raw:** not cooked

He was beaten• (he knew that), but he was not broken. He saw that he stood• no chance against the man with the club. He had learned the lesson, and for the rest of his life he never forgot it. It was his introduction into the world of primitive law. As the days went by, other dogs came in, some quietly and some raging• and roaring like he had. And one by one he watched them being tamed• by the man in the red sweater. Buck understood that a man with a club was a law-giver, a master to be obeyed, though not necessarily a friend.

BUCK'S FEELINGS

How does Buck feel now?

How have his feelings changed?

What do you imagine will happen to him next?

Now and again, strangers came to talk to the fat man. They gave him money and took away one of the dogs. Buck wondered where they went, for they never came back. He was frightened of the future. In the end a small man called Perrault paid three hundred dollars for him, and he was led away with Curly, a good-natured• Newfoundland dog.

The two dogs were put onto a ship where they were looked after by Perrault and another French-Canadian called François. They were a new kind of man to Buck, and while he developed no affection for them, he grew to respect them. He quickly learnt that they were fair men and too clever about the ways of dogs to be fooled• by them. There were also two other dogs on the ship – a large, snow-white dog called Spitz who was quite difficult, and stole Buck's food, and a gloomy, quiet dog called Dave who wasn't interested in anything.

- **beaten:** (here) defeated
- **fooled:** tricked
- **good-natured:** kind and friendly

- **raging:** fighting in an angry way
- **stood:** (here) had
- **tamed:** domesticated; made to obey



As the ship moved northwards the weather grew steadily• colder. Eventually the ship stopped, and François tied the dogs together and brought them onto the deck•. At the first step upon the cold surface, Buck's feet sank• into something that was white and soft like mud. He jumped back with a bark. More of this white stuff• was falling through the air. He shook himself, but more of it fell upon him. He sniffed• it curiously, then licked some up with his tongue. It was like fire, and the next instant it was gone. This puzzled• him. He tried it again, with the same result. The people watching him laughed loudly, and he felt ashamed, though he didn't know why, for it was his first snow.

- **deck:** floor of a ship
- **puzzled:** confused
- **sank:** went down into

- **sniffed:** smelled
- **steadily:** in a regular way
- **stuff:** thing; substance

AFTER READING VOCABULARY

1 Use FIVE of the words in the box to complete the sentences.

starving stumbling heals ribs
 unaided weary threatened hell

- a The long trail to Dawson is described as ‘.....’, that is, tiring.
- b If you are, it means you are very hungry.
- c If a wound, it means it gets better.
- d You cannot relax if you feel by something.
- e The two dogs fought like, which means very hard.

2  **In pairs, write three sentences with the words left out in Exercise 1.**

3 Complete the word formation table below with words from the story.

 **Make sentences with a partner.**

ADJECTIVE	NOUN
EMPTY	EMPTINESS
STRONG
.....	FUR
ANGRY
.....	HEALTH
FAT
ESSENTIAL
.....	AMBITION
HOT
.....	ANXIETY
LONG
.....	HAIR

P B1 Preliminary English Test Reading Part 5

1 Complete the sentences taken from the book by choosing the correct answer.

a They did good seventy-five kilometer run on the first day.

- 1 no 2 more 3 some 4 a

b He at the head of the pack, running after a wild thing – living meat.

- 1 looked 2 pointed 3 howled 4 was

c 'You've got a heavy load. If I were you I take the tent.'

- 1 wouldn't 2 didn't 3 shouldn't 4 couldn't

d Buck made sure the team did their share of the work.

- 1 fair 2 right 3 equal 4 good

e Buck started to relax and he slowly his strength back.

- 1 got 2 took 3 had 4 forced

f Buck was in open revolt. He wanted the leadership. It was by right.

- 1 now 2 his 3 won 4 also

g 'I wouldn't like to be the man that attacks Thornton while Buck's'

- 1 here 2 around 3 angry 4 hunting

h Buck was proud of himself, he had not become a house dog.

- 1 but 2 and 3 although 4 for

i There was nothing new in this. It was had always been, the way of things.

- 1 what 2 as 3 like 4 that

j Many men had searched for the gold mine and many had returned from their trip.

- 1 just 2 never 3 already 4 yet