



# The Call of the Wild



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## What Do *You* Think? Questions for Discussion



**H**ave you ever been around a toddler who keeps asking the question “Why?” Does your teacher call on you in class with questions from your homework? Do your parents ask you questions at the dinner table about your day? We are always surrounded by questions that need a specific response. But is it possible to have a question with no right answer?

The following questions are about the book you just read. But this is not a quiz! They are designed to help you look at the people, places, and events in the story from different angles.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

These questions do not have specific answers. Instead, they might make you think of the story in a completely new way.

Think carefully about each question and enjoy discovering more about this classic story.

1. Buck is captured because he follows a man he knows and trusts. How does this betrayal of his trust alter Buck's character? Have you ever been betrayed by someone you trusted?

2. Buck's reaction the first time he sees snow causes everyone to laugh at him. Have you ever had a similar reaction to something new? How did everyone else respond?

3. The author writes of Buck, "When, on cold nights, he pointed his nose at a star and howled long, like a wolf, it felt like one of his ancestors was howling through the centuries, and through him." What do you think this means? Have you ever felt a similar connection to your ancestors?

4. Part of the book deals with how Buck tries to gain control of the other dogs and remove Spitz as leader of the pack. If you were in Buck's pack, would you want to lead the pack or be a part of the group of dogs?

5. The dogs in the story have very different personalities. For instance, Billee is good-natured and Joe is brooding and sour. How are the dogs' personalities like those of your friends and other people you know?

6. Throughout the book, Buck learns a series of hard lessons. How does each lesson help him to better survive in the real world? Have you ever learned a hard lesson that helped you in a later situation?

7. When Hal begins to beat the dogs, Mercedes cries and says to Buck, "Why don't you pull hard? Then he won't be so mean to you." How does Mercedes's treatment of the dogs differ from the way Hal treats them? Are Mercedes and Hal

intentionally cruel to the dogs or do they just not understand their limitations?

8. Why does Buck express unconditional love and loyalty to John Thornton? Have you ever felt this way about someone? Why and to whom?

9. By the end of the book, Buck has undergone extreme changes. How is he different from the beginning of the book? Are these changes for the better or for the worse?

10. The tale of the Ghost Dog describes an animal that is smarter than either animal or man. Do you believe in legends? Do you believe that Buck is the Ghost Dog? Why or why not?