



## English 7: Reading: Module 3: Lesson 3: Section 2

Synthesize Ideas in Informational/Expository Text

### Annotating a Text

**Instructions:** As you notate, be alert to literal information that lead to critical inferences. Look for comments, ideas, and facts that can help you answer the question, “Why do people love dog sledding?” If you find something that seems very similar to a comment from the first article be sure to note this even though it seems like a repetition. The repetition is a clue that this idea is particularly important. When you are finished click on the button to see an annotated version of the article.

Excerpt from “Racing (Briefly) Along the Iditarod Trail” by Andrew McCarthy

[McCarthy is a reporter for the *New York Times* who—wanting “a taste of the experience” of the Iditarod—signed up for a “four-day intensive training in the art of sled dog racing” in Alaska.]

In early February, I boarded a four-seat Cessna out of Anchorage, and headed to Winterlake Lodge, at Mile 198 on the Iditarod Trail. The program, offered by the Within the Wild Adventure Company ([withinthewild.com](http://withinthewild.com)), can accommodate up to a dozen wilderness enthusiasts and would-be **mushers**—but, as I found out when I arrived, I was the only one who’d signed up.

I met my instructor, a scrappy outdoorsman who has been teaching sled dog running since 1995. My lessons began before we got off the frozen lake landing strip. “Rule No. 1,” he said, “when you crash, never let go.”

“When I crash?” I asked.

“And we say ‘hike,’ not ‘mush’,” he added later.

After showing me the log cabin, complete with wood-burning stove, that would be my home for four days, Mr. [Carl] Dixon led me out to meet his dogs.

“Hi, Boxer. Hey, Fiona. Hiya, Axle.” He greeted each dog, petting, hugging and massaging them as he went. I let each one sniff my hand, and offered a tentative pat.

When we pulled out the six-foot sled, the dogs grew even more excited. “They want to run,” he said.

After a lunch . . . it was my turn behind the sled.

“Remember,” my instructor said, “You’re solo now. ‘Gee’ is right, ‘haw’ is left. Call it out so they know where to go. Lean into the turns, and don’t be afraid of the brake.”



Source: White huskies mushing in w:Inuvik, Northwest Territories, Canada, Pharaoh\_Hound, Wikimedia Commons



Source: Sled dogs in Quebec -a.jpg, Wikimedia

Over the next few days, twice a day, I took the dogs out. As I grew more relaxed on the sled, and with the animals, I graduated to more challenging routes, leaning hard into turns through the trees. I shouted encouragement to the dogs, and they seemed to run faster. There were fleeting, and thrilling, glimpses of what it was like to be in sync with the animals in the wilderness.

Late on the third afternoon, [we] walked part of the Iditarod Trail that I would attempt on my final day. The trail was narrower than those I'd

been running, the trees were closer, the turns tighter, the ground more undulating. Then we came to a sharp bend and a steep 50-foot drop.

"We call this Wipe Out Hill," Mr. Dixon said. "During the race . . . [h]alf the pro riders wipe out on this hill."

The next morning the Alaskan air was dry and cold. The sled was positioned directly on the Iditarod Trail as we harnessed the dogs. We burst out of the yard into the trees and headed up a short incline and then down. We raced across a frozen frog pond and were back in the trees.

Ahead I saw the sharp turn and the drop-off of Wipe Out Hill. I stood on the brake. It did nothing to slow the dogs, and they were over the ridge. I leaned hard to my left but was going too fast. The sled shot up over the bank and we were in the air, and then I was falling, tumbling and twisting, until I settled, covered in snow, at the base of Wipe Out Hill.

"Just like the pros," Mr. Dixon called out.

[Click to view annotation of the McCarthy excerpt](#)



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