

Kamnik Joins the Pack

Adapted from the memories of Darryl Baker · Illustrated by Qin Leng



EDUCATOR'S
RESOURCE



Kamik Joins the Pack

About the Book

Kamik Joins the Pack is the third in a series of books about Jake and his sled dog-in-training Kamik.

Jake can't wait for his uncle to meet Kamik, and to see what an obedient puppy he is becoming! Jake's uncle is a great musher who has won many dogsledding races, and if Kamik is good enough, Jake hopes today might be the day that Kamik finally gets to run with a dog team!

Following *Kamik: An Inuit Puppy Story* and *Kamik's First Sled*, *Kamik Joins the Pack* continues the story of Jake and his puppy Kamik as they learn from their Elders everything they need to know to someday be part of a winning sled dog team. The story is adapted from the memories of Darryl Baker.

This educator's resource has been written for Grade 1–3 classrooms. The discussion questions and activities can be adapted depending on the background knowledge and experiences of students.

Teachers can use this book in the classroom in a number of ways, including:

- To teach about Inuit sled dogs
- To explore the role of Elders and family as teachers in the community
- To have discussions about themes and concepts such as perseverance, knowledge, and family



Note to Educators

This story takes place in Nunavut. If your school is located in a community outside of Nunavut, or if your students are not Inuit or do not speak Inuktitut, there is some vocabulary in the story that may be unfamiliar. Before you share the story with your students, read through the book and make note of any words or concepts that your students might need support with understanding. You may wish to pre-teach some of the words or make a note to pause and talk about the words in context as you read. Examples of words students may need support with include *Anaanatsiaq*, *Ataatatsiaq*, and “musher.”

Pre-Reading Discussion Questions and Activities

If you haven't shared the first two books in the series, *Kamik: An Inuit Puppy Story* and *Kamik's First Sled*, consider reading the first two books to the class before reading *Kamik Joins the Pack*. You do not need to have read the first two books in the series to understand *Kamik Joins the Pack*, but reading them will provide you with additional opportunities to explore with your students how Jake and Kamik evolve as characters.

If you read the first two stories in the series, *Kamik: An Inuit Puppy Story* and *Kamik's First Sled*, tell students that this is a continuation of those stories. Ask students to recall what happened in the first two books and to make predictions about what might happen next in *Kamik Joins the Pack*.

OR

If you have not read the first two stories, show students the cover of *Kamik Joins the Pack* and ask them to make predictions about the book. Consider using the following prompts:

- Who do you think is in the story?
- Where do you think the story takes place?
- What do you think the story will be about?

You may wish to record student responses on the board or chart paper and revisit the predictions after reading. Alternatively, you may wish to write the questions on the board or chart paper and have students record their own responses to the prompts.

Ask students, “What do you know about Inuit sled dogs?” Record student answers on the board or chart paper and revisit after reading the story. If you have read the first two books in the series, you may have already begun a list of facts about sled dogs. If students do

not have a lot of background knowledge about these animals, tell them that they will learn about Inuit sled dogs in the story!

Post-Reading Discussion Questions

- How does Jake feel about Kamik at the beginning of the story?
- Why is Jake so eager to show his uncle how much Kamik has learned?
- What reason does Jake's uncle give for the importance of keeping the dogs healthy?
- As Jake's dad explains all the different skills you need to have and things you need to do to keep your dog team healthy, how do you think Jake is feeling? Why do you think he is feeling this way?
- Did Jake's uncle succeed with his first dog team right away? Explain your thinking.
- Did Kamik do well on his first run as part of a team? How do you know?
- Do you think Kamik is going to make a good sled dog in the long run? Explain your thinking.

Activities

Inuit Sled Dogs

After reading the story, review the list of information the students brainstormed about sled dogs before reading the story. Have students add any information they learned about sled dogs from the story that is not already on the list. This may include:

- Sled dogs need lots of exercise.
- You need to cut sled dogs' nails so they don't break while running.
- You need to check that ice isn't forming in the hair on the bottoms of their paws.
- Sled dogs need to be fed regularly.
- Sled dogs like to chew on harnesses and ropes.



- Sled dogs live outdoors so require dog houses for shelter.
- Not all dogs make good sled dogs.
- Some dogs work hard when they pull (looking straight ahead and not bothering the other dogs).
- Some dogs are not as hard-working; they can get distracted and bother the other dogs.
- The lead dog on the team needs to be very focused.
- Young dogs can't pull for very long or else they can strain their muscles.

Ask students the following questions and support students in developing a plan for researching the answers.

- Was there anything you learned about sled dogs that surprised you?
- What did you learn about sled dogs in the story that you would like to know more about?
- What else would you like to learn about sled dogs?

Never Give Up!

Reread page 13 to the class. In this part of the story, Jake's uncle talks about the first time he took his five dogs out with a sled, and how embarrassed he was. Ask students:

- What does it mean to feel embarrassed?
- Why was Jake's uncle embarrassed as the other mushers passed him by that day?
- What message do you think Jake's uncle is trying to communicate to Jake?

Have students think about a time where they persevered to learn something new, even though it was challenging. Ask students to draw and write about the experience.



What Is Jake Thinking?

Show students the illustration on page 11. Point to the thought bubble in the illustration and ask students what that part of the illustration is telling the reader. Then turn to page 23 and show students the illustration of Jake, his uncle, and the dog team travelling across the snow. Ask students, “If there were a thought bubble for Jake on this page, what do you think it would show?” Have students recreate the scene in their own drawing and add a thought bubble that shows what they imagine Jake to be thinking as he speeds across the snow.

The Nunavut Quest

At the beginning of the story, Jake’s uncle is described as a great musher who had won many dogsled races. In April 2019, the Nunavut Quest celebrated its 20th anniversary. The Nunavut Quest is a week-long traditional dogsled race where racers travel across the territory. Show students some of the photos from the 20th anniversary:

- <https://www.qia.ca/the-20th-anniversary-of-the-nunavut-quest-%ef%bb%bf/>
- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nunavut-quest-arctic-bay-start-1.4078686>

Then have students watch this short video about Michael Inuarak, the youngest entrant in the race at the time: <https://fb.watch/zid1Yu7liY/>. Challenge students to notice how Michael cares for his dogs, just as Jake’s uncle explained in the story.



Hard Work

On page 6, Jake’s uncle tells him, “Being a good musher takes a lot of work.” Create a mind map on the board or chart paper with the words “hard work” in the middle circle. Have students find examples in the story that explain why raising a team of sled dogs (or one sled dog!) is hard work. Ideas may include:

- You are responsible for their health all year long.
- You have to keep them physically healthy (with lots of exercise, keeping their paws and claws tidy, etc.) and mentally healthy (by spending lots of time with them, playing with them, etc.).
- You have to be patient and not ask too much of your dog too soon.
- Ideally you have other skills that you need to use such as sewing, building, and repair skills.

Sled dogs used to be a primary means of transportation in the North. But these days, there are machines like snowmobiles that can be used instead. Ask students, “Why do you think Jake is so determined to raise his own team of sled dogs?”

What Will Happen Next?

There is one more book in the Kamik series that continues the story of Jake and his sled dog Kamik. Have students think about what might happen in the next installment of the series. Will Kamik develop into a successful sled dog? Will Jake learn everything he needs to know about bringing up a successful sled dog? Invite students to write and illustrate the next part of the story.

Note to Educators

Inuit sled dogs have played an important role in Inuit history in the North. You may wish to have students further research the role of *qimmiit* (sled dogs) in Inuit society.

Pages 10–14 of the *Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Thematic Reports and Special Studies, 1950–1975* includes information about the origin of Inuit sled dogs and the important role they played in the traditional Inuit economy. The report can be found here: https://www.qtcommission.ca/sites/default/files/public/thematic_reports/thematic_reports_english_qimmiliriniq.pdf.