

Harness UP!



Objective: Students will learn new mushing vocabulary while learning the basic set up and commands of a dog sled team

Materials: Open Space for students to line up in pairs
Optional: Two 10 foot ropes for Tow Line and 60 two foot strings for individual Tug and Neck Lines

Time: 20 Minutes

MN Standard: **Language Arts—Reading and Literature:**
Vocabulary Expansion

The student will use a variety of strategies to expand reading, listening and speaking vocabularies.

- Acquire, understand and use new vocabulary through explicit instruction and independent reading.

Set Up: Divide the class into two sled dog teams. Each student should stand side by side with a partner and the pairs should fall into a line with adequate spacing (refer to the diagram). If using the rope, lay it on the ground between each pair of “dogs.” If not using the rope, explain the imaginary Tow Line. The Tug and Neck Lines can also be laid from each student to the center Tow Line.

Process: Explain the position and role of the dogs using the vocabulary: Lead Dogs, Swing Dogs, Team Dogs and Wheel Dogs. There should only be two Lead, Swing and Wheel Dogs, the remaining students will be Team Dogs.

Now it is time to learn the commands!

Gee: Turn Right

Haw: Turn Left

Mush: Go Straight Ahead

Hike: Go Straight Ahead

All Right: Go Straight Ahead

Whoa: Stop

Come Gee: 180 Degree Turn Right

Come Haw: 180 Degree Turn Left

Have the students point in the direction that corresponds with each given command (both hands straight up for stop, turn in place 180 degrees for Come Gee and Come Haw).

After practicing the commands for several minutes, have a “race” by seeing which team can follow the commands more quickly and accurately as the teacher shouts the commands from the rear sled.

Review: Have the students return to their desk and review the vocabulary words orally and by having them write the words and definitions in their notebooks.

Extension: This same activity could be done outside or in the gym. Instead of simply pointing in the directions, the student teams could move together in the commanded direction.

Mushing Vocabulary

Lead Dog or Leader: Dog who runs in front of the others. Generally must be both intelligent and fast.

Swing Dog or Dogs: Dog that runs directly behind the leader. Further identified as right or left swing depending on which side of the tow line he is positioned on. Its job is to help "swing" the team in the turns or curves.

Team Dog: Any dog other than those described above. Its job is to run.

Wheel Dogs or Wheelers: Dogs placed directly in front of the sled. Their job is to pull the sled out and around corners or trees.

Tow Line: The main line (also referred to as the Gangline) that runs through the center of the team and attaches to the sled. Each dog is joined to the tow line by the tug line and neck line

Tug Line: Line that connects dog’s harness to the tow line.

Neck Line: Line that connects dog’s collar to tow line and between the two collars of a double lead.

Gee: Command for right turn

Haw: Command for left turn

Mush! Hike! All Right!: Commands to start the team

Whoa!: Command used to halt the team, accompanied by heavy pressure on the brake.

Come Gee! Come Haw!: Commands for 180 degree turns in either direction.

Double Lead: Two dogs in front of the team who lead side by side
Line Out!: Command to lead dog to pull the team out straight from the sled. Used mostly while hooking dogs into team or unhooking them.