

## **GRADE 8 English Language Arts Reading and Responding: Lesson 4**

Read aloud to the students the material that is printed in **boldface type** inside the boxes. Information in regular type inside the boxes and all information outside the boxes should **not** be read to students. Possible student responses are included in parentheses after the questions.

Any directions that ask you to do something, such as to turn to a page or to hand out materials to students, will have an arrow symbol (  $\Rightarrow$  ) by them.

### *Purpose of Lesson 4:*

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- read a nonfictional passage,
- practice test-taking strategies,
- practice using context clues to increase vocabulary, and
- summarize each paragraph.

### *Equipment/Materials Needed:*

- Student Worksheets Reading and Responding Lesson 4 – 1 and 4- 2
- Pencils

### *Preparations before beginning Lesson 4:*

A portion of the passage “The Race” will be read aloud during Lesson 4. It is found on page 46.

*LESSON 4: Reading and Responding*

After your introductory remarks, say:

**Your teacher sometimes gives you instructions and then says, “Turn the page you may begin work now.” You turn the page, but how do you begin? What do you do first? Then what do you do next?**

**Well, today we are going to answer those questions. It is important to know not only what to do, but also what to do first! We are going to read a short passage and develop a set of tricks or techniques to help you be successful. We will also develop some techniques to use when answering questions at the end of a reading passage.**

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 4 – 1.

Then say:

**Look over the reading selection. Don’t try to read it yet...just look at it. Pause.**

**What is the title?** (Response: “The Race”)

**Notice that there is a paragraph above the title. Isn’t that location a little unusual?** (Response: yes)

**Do you notice anything else unusual about this paragraph above the title?**

(Response: It is printed in italics.)

**Will you need to read this paragraph later on?**

(Response: yes)

**Look at the story itself. How many paragraphs are in it? Pause.**

(Response: three)

**Does this passage contain dialogue? Pause.**

(Response: no)

**Do you see any boldface type or italics in the passage itself?**

(Response: no)

Say:

**Sometimes students start reading without being ready. When they start reading without preplanning, the selection seems more difficult to read and understand. If you just jump into the reading, you may not really know what the passage is about. Let's begin at the top of the page with that introductory paragraph printed in italics, and go step by step through today's lesson.**

**That information above the title and the fact that it is printed in italics means you had better read it. Do not skip this part! In fact, this information is necessary in order to understand the passage.**

**Follow along on your paper as I read the introductory paragraph aloud.**

Read the italicized information. Read slowly. Students should look at their papers and follow the printed text.

Say:

**That introductory paragraph is full of information and details. Tell me a detail from the introductory paragraph.**

Pause to allow students time to answer.

(Responses might include: The Iditarod is an annual (yearly) event; goes from Anchorage to Nome; about 75 teams participate each year; inspired by a 1925 race to deliver the serum for a diphtheria outbreak.)

**You are *almost* ready to begin reading the passage! Is the passage you will read fiction or nonfiction? You need to know this information before you begin reading.**

Pause to allow students to answer.

If a student seems to be stuck, say: "The answer is in that introductory paragraph above the title."

(Response: nonfiction. The introductory paragraph's last sentence tells us this selection is a true account.)

Say:

**While it may seem like this procedure takes a great deal of time, it really doesn't. You will move through each of these steps more quickly because you will be working independently. Just be sure not to skip any steps!**

**Now you are ready to read "The Race." Read the selection to yourself to find out about this particular race. When you have finished reading, sit quietly while we wait to continue our lesson.**

Pause to allow students time to read the selection.

Then say:

**Here's a trick to use before you begin answering the questions.**

**Look back at the first paragraph. Ask yourself what was the purpose or the main idea of this paragraph. Read the first paragraph now. Pause.**

**What did you learn from this paragraph?**

(Possible responses: The Iditarod is 1,000 miles long; Susan Butcher was in the race; there was a snowstorm; she got lost; her dogs ran off without her; she found them.)

**Good. Do the same thing for the second paragraph. Ask yourself what was important about this paragraph? Read the second paragraph now. Pause.**

**So, what makes the second paragraph important? What did you learn from the second paragraph?**

(Possible responses: The temperature was subzero; it took days to run the race; she drove at night.)

Students may mention the "ancient spirits howling in the dark."

Susan could be describing the night sounds she hears, or she might be referring to sounds in her imagination that represent those people who had earlier traveled this trail.

Then say:

**What about the last paragraph? What's important in this paragraph? Look quickly to see what it is about. Read the last paragraph now. Pause.**

**What makes the last paragraph important?**

(Possible response: Susan and the dogs are exhausted by the last day; she's in fifth place; she tries to catch up, but she loses.)

Say:

**Let's review what we've done today. What did you do before you read the selection?**

(Response: read the introductory (italicized) paragraph; looked at the title; looked at the passage; looked for boldface or italics; looked for pictures or charts and drawings)

**What did you do next?**

(Response: read the passage)

**Yes, after you read the passage what did you do?**

(Response: reviewed the selection one paragraph at a time)

**Now you are ready to answer the questions.**

**1. The snowstorm covering the trail had what effect on Susan and her team?**

**Choice A: the team left without her.**

**Choice B: she lost time because she took a wrong turn.**

**Choice C: huge snowdrifts formed.**

**Choice D: spirits howled in the dark.**

**Okay, we've done the first step. We read the question and the answer choices. What should we do next?**

Pause to allow time for students to answer.

(Responses might include: reread the question; start with Choice A and see whether it is correct; then go to Choices B, C and D to find the answer; scratch off the answers that I know are wrong.)

Then say:

**I think the wisest thing to do is look at the question again and then start eliminating answer choices. Read the question and the four answer choices to yourself right now. Pause.**

**Let's begin with answer Choice A: the team left without her. Did the team leave without her?**

Many students will say yes, but yes is not the answer to the question.

**The team did leave without her, but did the team leave because of the snowstorm? Check back in the first paragraph if you need to. Pause.**

**Tell me why the team ran off without her. Pause.**

(Response: They ran off when she got off the sled to try to help them up a hill.)

**Yes, they ran off, but not because of the snowstorm, so I know the answer is not Choice A. Put a dot by Choice A to show you know it is not correct.**

**Look at Choice B: She lost time because she took a wrong turn.**

**Did Susan lose time and take a wrong turn as a result of the snowstorm? Pause.**

(Response: yes)

**How do you know Choice B is the correct answer? Pause.**

If necessary, tell students to find the part of the story that supports their answer.

(Response: The sentence is in the first paragraph: "Just hours after the start, a snowstorm covered the trail and caused Susan to take a wrong turn and a long detour.")

**It sounds as if you have found the correct answer; but just to be safe, check out Choices C and D.**

**What about Choice C: Huge snowdrifts formed? Is there any support for that answer?**

(Response: No, while snowdrifts probably did form, the story does not show that snowdrifts had any effect on Susan.)

Say:

**Now, look at Choice D: Spirits howled in the dark. Did the spirits howl because of the snowstorm?**

**No, Choice D is not the answer either. The phrase “spirits howled in the night” may be in the story, but it does not answer the question.**

**For each question, you go through a bunch of little steps. Students sometimes want to skip steps. Don’t do that! Skipping steps can often get you a wrong answer! Take your time, do each step, and you should be able to arrive at the correct answer. At least, you can make an educated guess!**

**Let’s continue. Number two: What word best describes Susan?**

- A. honest**
- B. creative**
- C. brave**
- D. sly**

**Let’s go through the steps. Is Susan honest? Think about the passage. Is there anything to show she is honest? Pause. (Response: no)  
Put a dot by *honest*, since we know that’s not the answer.**

Susan probably is honest, but there is nothing in the story about honesty. By the same token, there is nothing to indicate she is dishonest. Students should realize this passage is not about Susan’s moral values.

**Does *creative* describe Susan? Pause.**

(Response: no. There is no support in the passage. She may be creative, but the story is not about her creativity.)

**Put a dot on *creative*, since we know that’s not the answer.**

**Brave. Is Susan brave? Could you describe Susan as brave?**

(Response: yes)

**If you think Susan is brave, then you have to support your decision from the selection. Give me some support for brave. How do you know she is brave?**

(Responses: She went on this dogsled race; she spent days out in the cold with her team; and the last sentence uses a synonym for brave, valiant.)

Then say:

**We still have to look at Choice D: sly. Is Susan sly?**

It is possible that you will get some blank looks from students. This reaction is a problem for students when they encounter a word that may not be familiar to them.

**Suppose you have never even heard the word and you surely don't know what it means? What should you do? Pause.**

Some students might say skip it. With this particular question, since they have already found the correct answer, it is safe to skip. Be sure students are aware of other techniques that should be used when an unfamiliar word is encountered.

**One thing you probably should do is look back in the passage. Skim it to see whether the word *sly* is used. Then, think about Susan's character for a minute. Think about answer, Choice C: brave.**

**You already know it is not Choice A or B. You have narrowed your choices down to C and D. Are you satisfied that the passage shows us Susan is brave? Pause. (Most students will say yes.)**

**Then, you be brave and stick with answer Choice C.**

Then say:

**By the way, *sly* means secretive and deceptive. There's no proof in the story to think Susan was either of those things.**

**Choice D is a wrong answer.**

**Please answer question three by yourself. Read the question carefully; then read all the answer choices carefully. Then go step by step through all four choices before marking your answer.**

**We will review the process and discuss the correct answer when you have finished. Work question three now.**

Pause to allow students time to answer the question.

Then say:

**Let's walk through question number three together.**

**“The passage says, “This *grueling* race attracts approximately 75 teams each year.” What does the word *grueling* mean?”**

- A. expensive**
- B. extravagant**
- C. exclusive**
- D. exhausting**

**Did you notice anything about the answer choices? Pause.**

(Response: They all started with ex- or they all looked alike.)

**The fact that the answers all look alike means you have to be *extra* careful. It would be easy to make a careless error on this question. Okay. What is the answer? What does *grueling* mean in this passage?**

(Response: Choice D: exhausting.)

**Yes, it is Choice D: exhausting. Selecting the right answer is important, but now tell me why you didn't choose Choice A: expensive.** (Response: There is nothing in the passage about the cost.)

**Why not Choice B: extravagant?**

(Response: *Extravagant* means big and showy and there isn't anything in the story to support that the race was showy.)

**Good, that gets us to Choice C. Why not exclusive?**

(Response: *Exclusive* means for special people, not for everybody; there isn't anything in the story to support that idea.)

**Great! It really will make a difference if you follow this pattern that we have practiced today. Read the question. Look at the answer choices. Then go through them one by one to find the right answer.**

**Going through the steps is worth the time and effort!**

Then say:

**We're going to switch to a different style of question now. Sometimes you have short-answer questions. That type of question requires that you write out an answer in your best handwriting and in complete statements.**

**Look at question four. "What events kept Susan from winning the race?" Write them in chronological order."**

**Now, before you hit the panic button, let's examine the question and see exactly what you need to do. I think you need to circle the "s" on events. Why?**

(Response: because the "s" means plural, which means you have to give more than one event.)

**Good. Some students might overlook that "s" and give only one event. By circling the "s" on your test, you won't make that mistake. What kept Susan from winning the race? What if you don't remember why Susan didn't win the race? What do you do?**

(Response: go back to the selection; reread it)

**That leaves the word *chronological*? What does *chronological* mean?**

(Response: in time order; in the order in which things happened)

Now say:

**Now, let's reread the selection looking for the things that kept Susan from winning. Start at the beginning and quickly read the first paragraph by yourself.**

Pause to allow students to read.

**What events kept Susan from winning the race?**

Allow students to answer orally.

(Responses: A snowstorm covered the trail and caused her to take a wrong turn and a detour; she got off the sled and the dogs ran off; the sled overturned.)

Say:

**Good job. Now, look at the question again. Do you have events with an “s” that tell why Susan didn’t win the race? (Response: yes)  
Are your events in chronological order? Are they in time order?  
(Response: yes)**

**In fact, in this selection the events were in order and all were in the first paragraph. That chronology won’t always happen, but it did in this passage!**

**Now you are ready to write your answer on the answer sheet. Be sure to write in complete sentences. Write legibly.  
Pause to allow time for students to write a response.**

**Today’s lesson has given you practice with both multiple-choice and short-answer questions. On both type questions, be sure you read carefully! Look for key words and clues in the questions to help you find the right answer.**

## Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 4 – 1

*The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race is an annual event in which dogsled drivers (mushers) race from Anchorage to Nome. This grueling race attracts approximately 75 teams each year. The dogsled race was inspired by a 1925 outbreak of diphtheria at one of the remote gold-mining settlements. A team raced to deliver the serum necessary to save lives. Now, read this true account of a young contestant's attempt to win the Iditarod through frozen tundra.*

### THE RACE

Competing in the Iditarod, the 1,000-mile dog sled race held every year in Alaska, was an unforgettable experience for Susan Butcher. Just hours after the start, a snowstorm covered the trail and caused Susan to take a wrong turn and a long detour. Another disaster struck when Susan got off the sled to help the dogs up a hill. With great energy, the whole team took off without her. After chasing the dogs for miles, she found them by a huge snowdrift. The sled had overturned, but the dogs were uninjured.

Susan and her team of dogs endured subzero weather and piercing wind for much of the race. They struggled for many days to cross the frozen land. To make up lost time, Susan drove long into the night. Many times she heard the ancient spirits howling in the dark.

On the final day of the race, Susan and her dogs were exhausted, but determined to finish. With only thirty miles to go, she had moved into fifth place. The push was on. She managed to overtake three of the teams, but the lead team stayed out in front, less than four minutes ahead. Despite a valiant effort, Susan and her team could not catch the leader.

Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 4 – 2

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

1. The snowstorm covering the trail had what effect on Susan and her team?
  - A. The team left without her.
  - B. She lost time because she took a wrong turn.
  - C. Huge snowdrifts formed.
  - D. Spirits howled in the dark.
  
2. What word best describes Susan?
  - A. honest
  - B. creative
  - C. brave
  - D. sly
  
3. The passage says, “This *grueling* race attracts approximately 75 teams each year.” What does the word *grueling* mean?
  - A. expensive
  - B. extravagant
  - C. exclusive
  - D. exhausting
  
4. What events kept Susan from winning the race? Write them in chronological order.

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