

To Build a Fire

Jack London

Which understands the cold more accurately—the man or the dog—and what kind of knowledge does each possess?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	The dog knows without a thermometer
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	To Build a Fire
START	At the man's heels trotted a dog, a big native husky
END	It merely obeyed the mysterious prompting that arose from the deep crypts of its being.
PASSAGE ID	sec-tbf-02

THE MOVE

Compare instinctive knowledge with conscious judgment

WHY THIS PASSAGE

The dog cannot name the temperature or explain a theory of freezing, but its body and instinct register danger more accurately than the man's conscious reasoning. The scene compares two forms of knowledge without simply saying one creature is 'smarter.'

MARK

Underline what the man thinks or decides about the cold. Circle the dog's physical reactions and instinctive impulses. Beside each, write whether it comes from calculation, sensation, or inherited instinct.

NOTICE

- What knowledge can the man verbalize that the dog cannot?
- What danger does the dog respond to that the man keeps minimizing?
- Which kind of knowledge proves more useful in this environment, and why?

THINK

Answer provisionally: Which understands the cold more accurately—the man or the dog—and what kind of knowledge does each possess? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: Which understands the cold more accurately—the man or the dog—and what kind of knowledge does each possess? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	The man has conscious, verbal knowledge—the temperature, route, and plan—while the dog has bodily and instinctive knowledge of what the cold means. In this environment the dog's knowledge is more accurate because it produces safer behavior.
EVIDENCE	Compare what the man can state or calculate with the dog's physical reactions and instinctive reluctance.
WATCH FOR	Do not say the dog is simply 'smarter.' Distinguish kinds of knowledge and explain why one is more useful here.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

STUDENT PAGE · SAME PASSAGE, SAME THINKING

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START ANCHOR	At the man's heels trotted a dog, a big native husky
END ANCHOR	It merely obeyed the mysterious prompting that arose from the deep crypts of its being.

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OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK - Underline what the man thinks or decides about the cold. Circle the dog's physical reactions and instinctive impulses.

Beside each, write whether it comes from calculation, sensation, or inherited instinct.

2. NOTICE - What knowledge can the man verbalize that the dog cannot? What danger does the dog respond to that the man keeps minimizing? Which kind of knowledge proves more useful in this environment, and why?
3. THINK - Answer provisionally: Which understands the cold more accurately—the man or the dog—and what kind of knowledge does each possess?
4. WRITE - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.