

Plan a circle: “To Build a Fire”

Jack London (1908) · public-domain short story · grades 8–11 · ~1 week / two meetings. Rights: Public domain.
Kit section 5 (group agreement & calendar), scaffolded for this text. Students fill the group, calendar, and roles.

Text, group, and target

Text / author / edition	“To Build a Fire” — Jack London (1908). _____ (edition)
Group / period / dates	
Grade / TEKS target (p. 3)	English I · §110.36 — 6(A): theme through characterization/plot; 5(C,D): commentary and summary; 1(D): student-led discussion.
Learning intention	We are learning to explain how the man’s choices and the setting reveal a theme about nature and human pride.
Success criteria	I bring one open question, cite two details with locations, respond to a peer, and name how my thinking changed.

Reading map & calendar

Chunk	Read through	Meeting date · leader
1	The man sets out at 75-below despite the old-timer’s warning, and breaks through the ice.	
2	The failed fires, the growing panic, and the ending — the dog moves on.	

Members & first-meeting jobs (p. 7 roles)

Member	First job	Rotates to (next meeting)

Text-specific discussion questions (open — more than one answer)

- **Predict:** After the man ignores the old-timer’s advice, what will the cold force him to face? What clue supports it?
- **Question:** Why might London give the dog instincts the man lacks? What does that contrast argue?
- **Clarify:** What does “the trouble with him was that he was without imagination” mean for his fate?
- **Summarize:** Order the man’s attempts to survive after he gets wet, without opinion.
- **Interpret the theme:** How do the man’s choices and the setting reveal a theme about nature vs. pride? Use two details.

Optional Jigsaw lenses (p. 4): *Character* (the man and the dog) · *Setting* (the Yukon cold as antagonist) · *Plot* (the chain of small errors) · *Theme* (instinct vs. arrogance) · *Language* (repetition of temperature and warnings).

Reading notes: "To Build a Fire"

Name: _____ · Home group: _____ · Section: "To Build a Fire," _____ · Expert lens: _____

Everyone prepares. Read the whole assigned section. Write or draw three important ideas, two supporting details with locations, and one summary in your own words. Keep interpretation separate from summary.

Questions

What needs clarification?
What could the group explore?

3 · Important ideas

Character choices, conflicts, themes, or central ideas.

1.

2.

3.

Vocabulary

Word + location + meaning or clue.
Mark anything still uncertain.

2 · Supporting details

Short quote or accurate paraphrase + page/paragraph + what it shows.

1.

2.

1 · Summary in my own words

Bring to the circle

My interpretation: These details suggest _____

Synthesis (connect two lenses): _____

After discussion: My thinking changed / became clearer because _____

TEKS evidence: 6(C,D) supported inference; 7(A) theme through characters/events; 1(D) response to a peer. · Pair with the PlotPoint "To Build a Fire" room.