

Name _____

Date _____

“TO BUILD A FIRE” BY JACK LONDON

READING COMPREHENSION

1. What did the dog instinctively understand that the man did not?
2. Why does the man “shy like a horse” from certain parts of the trail?
3. When the man sits down to eat his biscuits, what does he discover?
4. When he falls in the river, the man curses his bad luck. Where does he place the blame?
5. After he falls into the water, he builds a fire. What happens to the fire and why?
6. What happens to the man when he finally lights all of his matches at once?

7. How does the dog know to leave and head to the camp?

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTIONS

8. Why is the protagonist referred to as “the man” as opposed to being given a name?

9. London writes, “He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances.” What is the difference between knowledge and instinct?

10. The narrator says, “there was no keen intimacy between the dog and the man.” How might the story have been different if there *were* keen intimacy between the man and his canine?