

Buck learns how to survive essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In *The Call Of The Wild*, Jack London, the author, focuses on the extreme changes that need to be made to survive in the wild. Buck, a St. Bernard and Scotch half-breed dog, is used to show the changes made and is removed from his home and placed in the wild.

After living in the wild for quite awhile, Buck learns how to survive by watching other dogs, learning from his own experiences, and by being forced to learn. Even though Buck connects with his instincts, his ability to survive in the wild is learned. Buck learns many survival skills by watching other dogs. One experience that proves Buck learns by watching other dogs, is when Buck watches Pike steal bacon when Perrault is not looking.

“ He watched and learned. When he saw Pike... slyly steal a slice of bacon when Perrault’s back was turned, he duplicated the performance the following day, getting away with the whole chunk... Dub... who was always getting caught was punished for Buck’s misdeed” (pg. 20-21). Buck watches Pike steal bacon and quickly learns, copying the same procedure the next day.

While Buck gets to keep and eat the extra food, Dub must pay the consequences. Another way Buck learns by watching other dogs is by watching the other dogs dig holes to sleep in at night. While looking for them, Buck accidentally steps into Billee’s hole and learns that he too should dig a hole for himself. “ Another lesson... Buck confidently selected a spot, and with much fuss and waste effort proceeded to dig a hole for himself” (pg.

17). Though it was hard at first, Buck learns quickly and succeeds. Without watching the other dogs, Buck would not have learned these lessons, which are important to survive in the wild. Another way Buck learns his ability to survive in the wild is by learning from his own experiences.

One experience is when Buck first starts to pull the sled. “ Buck had been purposely placed between Dave and Sol-leks so that he might receive instruction... they were equally apt teachers, never allowing him to linger long in error, and enforcing their teaching with their sharp teeth” (pg. 19). When Buck pulls the sled for the first time, he is placed between Dave and Sol-leks so that they might help him learn. When Buck does something wrong, Dave or Sol-leks bite or nip him. Another one of Buck’s experiences is when he approaches Sol-leks on his blind side.

“ He was called Sol-leks... He had one peculiarity which Buck was unlucky enough to discover. He did not like to be approached on his blind side. Of this offence Buck was unwittingly guilty, and the first knowledge he had of his indiscretion was when Sol-leks whirled upon him and slashed his shoulder to the bone for three inches up and down” (pg. 16).

Unfortunately, Buck had to learn that Sol-leks did not like to be approached on his blind side by himself. And because Buck approached him on his blind side, Buck was punished even though he didn’t know. By learning from his own experiences, Buck’s ability to survive in the wild is improved. A last way Buck learns how to survive in the wild is by being forced to learn. One experience in which Buck is forced to learn is when he learns the law of fang.

He watches Curly, a friendly dog, be beaten up and torn into pieces by another husky. While she is trying to sniff another husky, it attacks her without warning, ripping her face from eye to jaw. Once Curly went down, the other dogs came in and made matters worse violently finishing her off. “ So that was the way. No fair play.

Once down, that way the end of you. Well, he would see to it that he never went down” (pg. 14). The law of fang, though unsaid and unwritten, is clear to all dogs. Buck learns that in the wild there is no sympathy and that once you go down in a fight, you will die. Another experience that further proves Buck is forced to learn his ability to survive in the wild is when he learns the law of club.

Buck tries to repeatedly attack a man until a man with a club beats him. “ He was beaten (he knew that); but he was not broken. He saw... that he stood no chance against a man with a club. He had learned the lesson, and in all his after life he never forgot it” (pg.

9). Though also unsaid and also unwritten, the law of club is also clear to all dogs but unfortunately, all dogs must learn it through their own experiences. Buck learns that he cannot fight a man with a club because he will always lose. Without being forced to learn these lessons, Buck would not survive in the wild and would die immediately if he went into a fight or continued to attack many people. In conclusion, although Buck already knows some ways of how to survive in the wild, his instincts do not play a big role in the novel and his ability to survive in the wild is learned. By watching the other dogs,

learning from his own experiences, and being forced to learn, Buck learns how to survive in the wild.

And because of all the help from other dogs and/or people, Buck's ability to survive in the wild is not innate.