

Teacher's Guide

Aligned to the Common Core State Standards

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Notes to the Teacher

*The activities and handouts in this Teacher's Guide are meant to supplement your students' reading of **Summer of the Wolves** by Polly Carlson-Voiles. You are free to use the pages as you'd like and to copy them for your students. You are also welcome to share them with colleagues.*

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Summary

Orphaned twelve-year-old Nika and her seven-year-old brother Randall leave a California foster home to visit a long-lost uncle in the wilderness lake country of Northern Minnesota. A letter from their uncle sets them on a journey in a small floatplane over the thick green forest canopy, to spend the summer with him on a wilderness island. Nika, of all people, knows not to get her heart set on anything, but as she follows her uncle in his job studying wolves, Nika stumbles upon a relationship with an orphaned wolf pup that makes her feel — for the first time since her mother died — whole again. Here in these woods, with this wolf, none of the hard things in her past can reach her. With vivid details about wolf behavior and a deep sense of interconnectedness with nature, this captivating first novel illuminates the intricacies of family while searching for the fine balance between caring for wild animals and leaving them alone.

Directions for the Pre-reading

Activity RI.5.2, SL.6.1b, d, SL.6.6

1. Label the four corners or walls of your classroom with an A, B, C, and D.
2. Distribute Student Handout: *Four Corners Activity*. Explain that in the novel, **Summer of the Wolves**, the main characters have many tough choices to make.
3. Have students answer each question on their own handouts.
4. Divide students into groups of four.
5. Give groups two minutes to discuss Scenario 1 and agree on an option. Tell groups to be ready to defend their choice.
6. Read the Scenario 1 out loud (or project it on a screen). Then tell each group to send one person to the corner that represents their choice for Scenario 1.
7. Have group representatives explain and defend their choices.
8. Repeat steps 2 – 7 for Scenarios 2 - 4.
9. Ask students to think about some tough choices they have had to make in their lives. What helped them make a decision? Do they think they made the right choices?



Pre-Reading Activity

Student Handout: Four Corners Activity

In your groups, read each scenario and discuss the choices. Then choose one option and be prepared to defend your choice.

Scenario 1: You and your brother have been living with a foster mom whom you really like. She has just told you that she is sick and can no longer take care of you. You are devastated. What do you do?

- A. Move in with your best friend and have your brother move in with his best friend.
- B. Move together to a new foster family.
- C. Move together to another state to live with an uncle you have never met.
- D. Tell your foster mom that you will take care of her by getting a job after school, cooking for her, and doing all the housework and laundry.

In one sentence, explain why you chose the answer you did:

Scenario 2: You are walking in the woods when you find an abandoned wolf pup that is only hours old. What do you do?

- A. Leave the pup and let nature take its course.
- B. Pick up the pup and notify a zoo, nature center, or wildlife rescue group.
- C. Take the pup home and care for it until it is old enough to live on its own.
- D. Try to find a wild wolf pack and leave the pup near the pack.

In one sentence, explain why you chose the answer you did:



Scenario 3: You are a wolf who lives in an enclosure. You are cared for by a kind woman who feeds you well. One day there is a strong storm that crushes part of the fence and leaves an opening in the enclosure. What do you do?

- A. Stay in the enclosure and wait for the kind woman to fix the fence.
- B. Run and keep running in fear as you try to escape the storm.
- C. Try to find a new wolf pack.
- D. Stay in an area you are familiar with and try to scavenge at night.

In one sentence, explain why you chose the answer you did:

Scenario 4: Your mom is going to visit your grandma Saturday. Right before she leaves, she tells you to make sure to walk the dog. You spend the day playing video games and texting friends. As you hear your mom's car pulling up in the driveway, you realize you completely forgot to walk the dog. What do you do?

- A. When she asks, tell her you did it. (You'll make sure to walk him tomorrow.)
- B. Confess that you forgot even though you know she's going to be very angry.
- C. Grab the leash and meet her at the door with a sheepish grin.
- D. Hold your stomach and start moaning as she walks in so she thinks you don't feel good.
(And will hopefully overlook your forgetfulness.)

In one sentence, explain why you chose the answer you did:



Expanding Vocabulary

Chapters 1 – 4 RL.6.4, L.6.4a

DIRECTIONS: Read each sentence from *Summer of the Wolves*. Use the context of each sentence, and a dictionary if necessary, to decide which of the definitions in the box makes the most sense to replace the underlined word. Write that definition in the blank. Then, complete the final comprehension question or task.

traveled together in a group	widespread injury or death
warm, hooded, waterproof jacket	enjoy something without hurrying
decreased little by little in number or size	huge
floats on an aircraft that allow it to land and take off in water	cringing in fear
close watch	unchanging tone

1. *A rare sense of peace and exhilaration washed over her, and she stopped smack in the middle of the sidewalk to savor the moment. (p. 4)*

From this sentence, **savor** might mean _____.

Which of the following would probably be something you would savor?

- a. your brother's unwashed socks b. a tasty cupcake c. a freezing, cold shower

2. *Rookie leaned against Nika's leg the entire time, and she wrapped her arms around his immense neck. (p. 12)*

From this sentence, **immense** might mean _____.

Which of the following could be described as immense?

- a. a humpback whale b. a starfish c. a river otter

3. *There was stuff her uncle had had them buy at a camping store—bug repellent, . . . hats, pants, and hooded jackets called anoraks, the clothes still bearing tags. (p. 19)*

From this sentence, **anoraks** are probably _____.

You would most likely need to wear an anorak in which of these places?

- a. Hawaii b. San Francisco c. Alaska

4. *As they sailed above, Nika settled into the monotone of engine sound. (p. 20)*

From this passage, **monotone** might mean _____.

If you listened to an entire speech given in a monotone voice, you would most likely find it:

- a. exciting and interesting. b. difficult to pay attention. c. extremely funny.



5. Loaded up, they all **caravanned** past a couple of boats and a screen house, then up a stretch of log steps wedged into the hillside. (p. 37)

From this sentence, **caravanned** might mean _____.

What is one advantage to caravanning when traveling?

What is one disadvantage?

6. She ran **cowering** through slashing water, through bending and breaking trees. (p. 49)

From this passage, **cowering** probably means _____.

Which of the following would most likely cause a puppy to cower?

- a. another puppy
- b. its owner's voice
- c. a thunderstorm

7. Maki shouted back to Nika as the plane turned in a new direction, then revved up until the **pontoons** pulled free from the water and the plane lifted into the air. (p. 52)

From this passage, **pontoons** are probably _____.

Using the Internet or your library, look up what a airplane with pontoons looks like. Sketch it in the space below.

8. "He also does **surveillance** for fires. They asked him to do a run today." (p.54)

From this sentence, **surveillance** probably means _____.

A good synonym for surveillance might be:

- a. rescue.
- b. study.
- c. observation.

9. "[W]olf numbers in all of the lower forty-eight states had **dwindled** to just a few hundred . . ." (p.58)

From this sentence, **dwindled** probably means _____.

A good antonym for dwindled would be:

- a. diminished.
- b. stopped.
- c. increased.

10. Behind him she could see a tunnel, possibly the wolf's den. . . She glanced quickly around for signs of **carnage**. Nothing. (p.65)

From this sentence, **carnage** probably means _____.

Something that might cause carnage could be:

- a. a major earthquake.
- b. a fall off a skateboard.
- c. too much homework.



Chapter Response Questions

Chapters 1 - 2

Examining the Plot RL.6.1

1. Why do Nika and Randall live with Meg?
2. How does Meg treat Nika and her brother? How does Nika feel about Meg?
3. How does Nika react to the news that she and Randall are going to Minnesota? How does Randall react?
4. Why has their Uncle never contacted Nika and Randall before?

Identifying Setting RL.6.5

The **setting** of a novel refers to its time period and location. It usually changes as the story unfolds. Compare the settings in Chapters 1 and 2 of *Summer of the Wolves*.

Chapter 1

City and state:

Time of year:

Passage from the book that describes the setting:

Chapter 2

State and region (north, south, east, or west):

Name of lake and islands where Nika will live (see map at front of book):

Passage from the book that describes the setting:

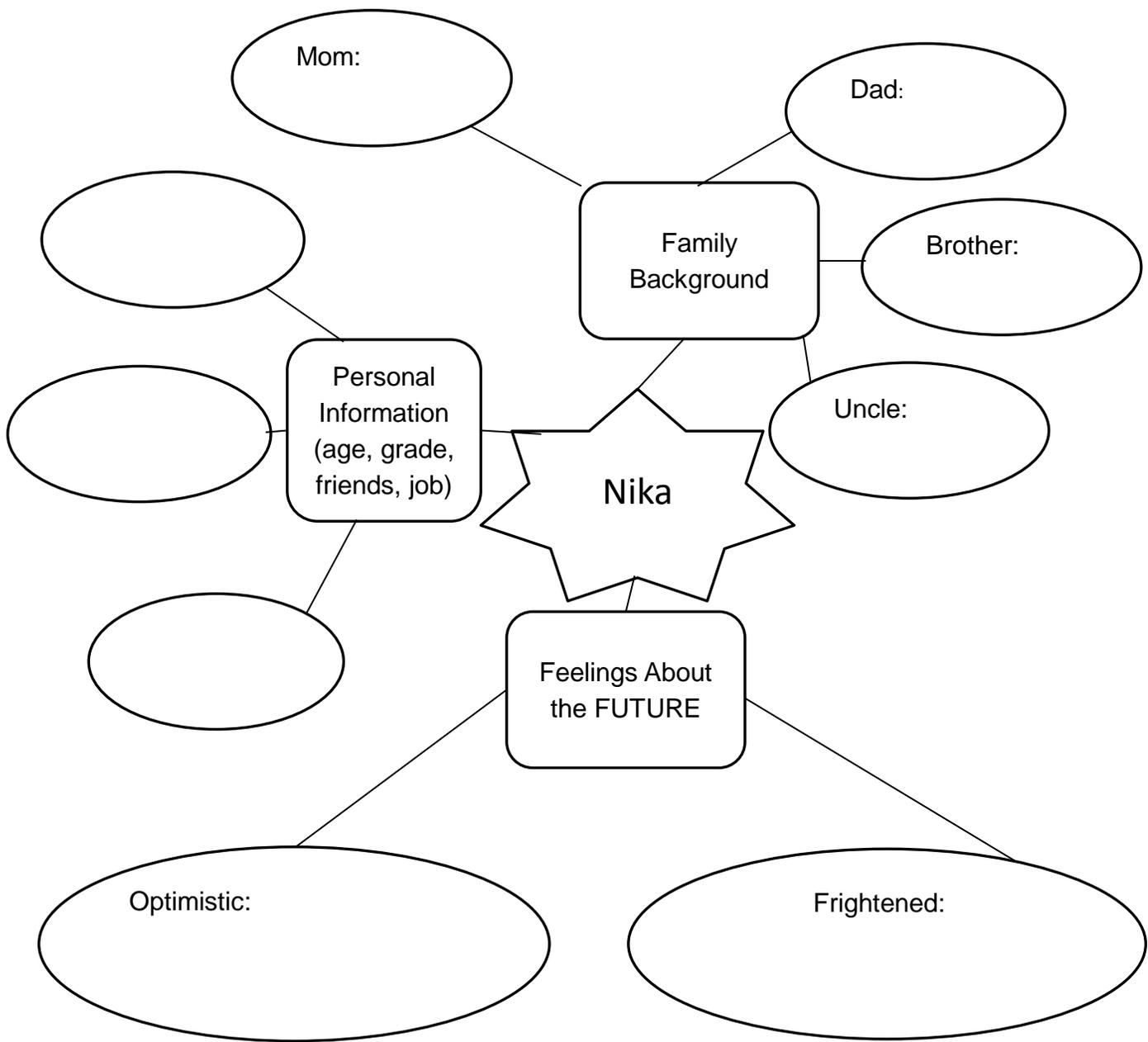
5. How do you think Nika will adapt to the new setting? What do you think will be most challenging?
6. How would you adapt to a setting like Nika finds in Chapter 2?



Examining a Character RL.6.3

Authors develop believable and likable characters by giving the reader information about their background, family life, personality traits, and feelings. We learn about the characters in a novel by examining what they think, feel, say, and do, as well as what others say and think about them.

Complete the following character web to describe what we know about Nika so far in the novel. For the two *Feelings About the Future*, copy a specific passage from the book that supports the given adjective.





Determining Point of View RL.6.6

The **point of view** of a story refers to the perspective from which the story is told. Some stories are told in **first person point of view**, where the narrator is also a character in the story. In first person point of view, every event of the story must be told through this narrator's eyes and the narrator uses the pronouns "I" and "me."

Other stories are told in **third person point of the view** where the narrator is NOT one of the characters. Instead, the narrator tells readers what characters think and feel. Sometimes in third person point of view, the narrator focuses on one character, and we learn only what that character thinks and feels.

7. What is the point of view of *Summer of the Wolves*? How do you know?

8. From what character's perspective are we, as readers, seeing the story?

9. Read this passage from page 26:

In a pileup at the window, Nika and Randall stared through a full turn of the sky as the plane swept down closer to the ground. It felt as if they might fall right out of the plane. Finally, they could see what had looked like rocks was a pack of wolves stretched out like dogs napping in the yard.

Now rewrite this passage from first person point of view where the narrator is Nika.

10. What are some advantages to telling a story in first person? What are some advantages to telling the story in third person?

11. The author, Polly Carlson-Voiles, explains that she once wrote all of *Summer of the Wolves* in first person and then changed it all to third person. Why do you think she did this?



Chapter Response Questions

Chapters 3 - 4

Examining the Plot RL.6.1, RL.6.2

1. Find and copy a passage from the book that shows how Nika feels when she is around her uncle. Why do you think she feels this way?
2. Find and copy a passage from the book that shows how Nika feels when she is around Pearl. Is she more comfortable with Pearl than Ian? Why?
3. Reread pages 37 – 39 that describe the path from the dock to Pearl’s house. Then, on your own paper, draw a simple sketch of this path. Include and label the following descriptive phrases: *log steps wedged into the hillside, elbow-high bushes, massive trunks of linebacker-size trees, open ground carpeted with reddish-brown needles, clean skirt of rock*
4. Where will Nika be living? Where will Randall live? How does Nika feel about this separation?
5. Why does Ian study wolves? How does Ian track the wolves?
6. What does Ian think happened to the dead wolf?
7. What do you think Ian pulled out from under his shirt?

Exploring Similes RL.6.4, L.6.5a

The author, Polly Carlson-Voiles, use **similes** to compare two unlike things and create vivid images in the minds of readers. Similes use the words “like” or “as” in their comparisons. Reread and analyze the following similes.

8. *But her [Nika’s] stomach still churned like a cement mixer. (p. 33)*

Underline the two things being compared. Based on this simile, how is Nika feeling?

9. *Pearl’s eyes were blue, like small pieces of sky. (p. 35)*

Underline the two things being compared. Why do you think the author uses this comparison instead of just saying, *Pearl’s eyes were blue*?

10. *Nika hated people talking about what had happened to her family. It made her feel like a run-over animal lying in the street . . . (p.38)*

Underline the two things being compared. How does this comparison help the reader better understand how Nika feels about being an orphan?



11. *“Wind in the tops of the pines,” the older woman said. Almost like ocean surf, it came and went like breathing. (p.38)*

Underline the two things being compared. In your opinion, is this an effective comparison, why or why not?

12. *The rock ledge they walked across looked melted at the edges. It was as broad as a parking lot with veins of rust-colored rock winding through. (p. 38)*

Underline the two things being compared. Draw the image that the simile brings to mind.

Examining the Structure of a Novel RL.6.5

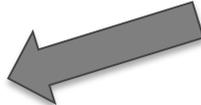
Before each chapter, the author includes a short narrative about a wolf. Reread these narratives on pages 1, 13, 31, and 49. Then complete the following Plot Summary Chart.

The wolf pup is pulled from a collapsed den.



A woman feeds the pup with _____. The woman is _____ and the pup sleeps _____.

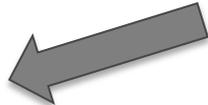
The wolf grows into an adult and the color of her coat is now _____



The wolf lives behind a _____ and tries to get out by _____.



One day in spring there is a big storm. Trees _____ and the den is _____.



A white pine tree falls and the wolf _____. The wolf is now free and _____.



13. What do you think will happen to this wolf now that she is free?

14. From which point of view (first or third) is this story of the wolf told from? From whose perspective?

15. How might this second storyline reflect the main story of Nika and her brother?

16. Why do you think that the author included a second storyline?

**Analyzing Scientific Text** RST.6-8.1, RST.6-8.2, RI.6.1, RI.6.2

The International Wolf Center, located in Ely, Minnesota, is an educational center that seeks to tell the public about wolves. In addition to exhibits and videos about wolves, the center has a wolf enclosure that is home to a resident wolf pack! Read the following text from the International Wolf Center about wolf packs. Then respond to the questions.

Wolf Packs

Wolves live in family groups called packs. A pack is usually made up of a male parent, a female parent and their pups from the last few years. Usually, four to six pups are born together in a litter. The pups in a litter are called litter mates. Their first home is usually a den, which can be a small cave or a hole dug in the ground. It must be big enough to shelter the mother and pups from weather and protect the pups from other animals that may want to hurt them. Packs sometimes use the same den for several years, or they may find a new den each year.

Pups grow inside their mother for about 63 days before they are born. At birth, they weigh only one pound, and their eyes are closed. Pups grow quickly. About 10 to 14 days after they are born, they open their eyes. By two weeks of age, the pups can waddle, and about a week after that, they may come out of the den for the first time. At first, they live only on milk from their mother. By three weeks of age, they start eating meat. Since pups are too young to hunt, adult wolves bring meat to them in their stomachs. The pups lick around the mouth of the adult when it returns from the hunt, and the food comes back up into the adult's mouth. This sounds terrible to us, but wolf pups love it! The pups eat the regurgitated meat within seconds. Any pup who is less aggressive than his or her brothers and sisters gets less food. If pups are too persistent in their begging for food, adult wolves may growl to warn them to stop. The adults may also leave the area in an attempt to avoid the pups.

All the wolves in a pack help take care of the pups. When the pups are very small, other pack members bring food to the mother so she does not have to leave the den. When the pups are a little larger, pack members take turns bringing them food, playing with them and even baby-sitting. Once the pups are about eight weeks old, the adults leave the den and take the pups to a rendezvous site. In this open area, the wolves gather to sleep, play, eat and just hang out. Until the pups are old enough to go with the adults, they stay at the rendezvous site. Often, one of the adult wolves stays with the pups to watch over them.

Wolf pups love to play. The pups will play with each other and their older brothers and sisters, stalking and pouncing on each other. This type of play will help them all their lives, as it is practice for stalking and killing prey and learning the social interactions of the pack.

Pups will also play with "toys" like bones, feathers or the skins of dead animals. They "kill" the toys over and over again and carry them around as trophies. As they get larger, they will use the skills they learned from this play as they begin to hunt small animals, like rabbits. When pups are six months old, they will start hunting larger animals with the rest of the pack.

17. How are wolf packs like human families? How are they different?
18. On your own paper, write a one-paragraph summary of this text.
19. Do you think Khan will suffer from not having been raised in a wolf pack? Why or why not?



Expanding Vocabulary

Chapters 5 – 8 RL.6.4, L.6.4A

DIRECTIONS: Use the page numbers to look up each word in *Summer of the Wolves*. From the clues in each sentence, match the vocabulary word on the left with the correct definition on the right.

Vocabulary Terms

1. _____ conflicted (p. 69)
2. _____ gaped (p. 70)
3. _____ agile (p. 71)
4. _____ extracted (p. 75)
5. _____ wafted (p. 83)
6. _____ regal (p. 100)
7. _____ inlet (p. 102)
8. _____ rampaging (p. 104)
9. _____ dilapidated (p. 118)
10. _____ puckered (p. 120)

Definitions

- a. royal; characteristic of a king or queen
- b. acting violently
- c. confused because of competing wants
- d. narrow stretch of water between two islands
- e. floated gently through the air
- f. stared at with an open mouth
- g. gathered into wrinkles
- h. able to move quickly and with skill
- i. in disrepair
- j. pulled something out with force

DIRECTIONS: Now, find a vocabulary term on the left that fits in each sentence below.

11. When her cub was shot, the bear went _____ wildly through the trees, knocking into things and tossing its head angrily.
12. The sweet smell of homemade cookies _____ through the open window.
13. Even with her mouth numb, Joanne could feel a tug when the dentist _____ her tooth.
14. Tim's grandma was surprisingly _____ for her age and often went dancing on Fridays.
15. Sam had to guide the boat carefully through the shallow waters of the _____.
16. When Sarah tried on her hippy costume, her little brother just stood there and _____, his mouth open and his eyes wide in shock at how different she looked.
17. The beach house her mom had rented looked old and _____; Kai wasn't excited that they'd be spending the summer in that rundown place.
18. Mari was _____ about whether she should tell her best friend the truth or not since she knew that it would hurt her friend's feelings.
19. Putting on her mom's old tiara, Lisa felt so _____, almost like a princess.
20. Before she sewed up the edges of the dress, she _____ the material to give it a wrinkled look.



Chapter Response Questions

Chapters 5 - 6

Examining the Plot RL.6.1, RL.6.2

1. Summarize what has happened to the silvery-tan wolf in the two prologues on page 83.
2. Why is Ian conflicted about taking the wolf pup? Why will the wolf pup never live wild again?
3. List 4 - 6 daily chores that Nika must perform to take care of the wolf pup.
4. On page 82, Ian says: “*You know, Nika, a wolf pup is not a pet; not a dog. However much we get him to accept us, he’s still a wild animal, with the needs of a wild animal.*” What do you think Ian means by the “needs of a wild animal”? What might Ian be warning Nika about?
5. How does Nika react to the presence of Lorna? Why do you think Nika reacts so strongly?
6. How does Nika feel about how well Randall has adjusted to his new life. Cite a passage as evidence.

Identifying Personification L.6.5

Authors sometimes use **personification**—giving non-human objects human qualities—to better describe something or to emphasize a point. Consider the following examples of personification from ***Summer of the Wolves***.

7. *Waves beat a rhythm on the hull of the boat.* (p. 44)

Circle the word that shows the personification. (In other words, what action is being done by a non-human object?)

8. *The stiff new pants whispered as she followed Ian down from Pearl’s cabin.* (p. 52)

Underline what is being personified. What human action are the pants doing? How is this effective?

9. *Dr. Dave left, and night folded slowly around the island.* (p. 77)

Underline what is being personified. The author could have written, “Dr. Dave left, and it turned to night slowly.”

Why is the current sentence on page 77 more effective?

10. *The moon floated through the tall trees beyond the porch.* (p.85)

Underline what is being personified. Draw a simple sketch to show the image that this sentence creates in your mind.



Investigating Wolf Development: Creating a Timeline RST.6-8.1, RST.6-8.4

For her school project, Nika is documenting the developmental changes in Khan. Create a similar project by completing the following Timeline of Khan’s Development. This is an ongoing project which you will complete as you read *Summer of the Wolves*. For Chapters 5 – 6, add details to the neonatal period below.

TIMELINE OF KHAN’S DEVELOPMENT

Neonatal Period: Birth to Eyes Open (around 14 days)

Wolf pups:

- have dark fur, rounded heads and can’t regulate own body temperature.
- are blind with closed eyes, deaf with small ears, and a “pugged” nose with little if any sense of smell but a good sense of taste and touch.
- are limited to sucking and licking; can whine and yelp.
- will feed four or five times a day for periods of three to five minutes.
- will gain 2.6 lbs per week (females) and 3.3 lbs per week (males).

Details about Khan in this stage:



Sketch of Khan

Transitional Period: Eye Opening to about 21 Days

Wolf pups

- have their eyes open, which are blue, at 11-15 days but their eyesight is not fully developed and pups cannot perceive forms until weeks later.
- can eat small pieces of regurgitated meat.
- begin to stand and walk; have vocalizations that include growls, whimpering and squeaks, first high-pitched attempts at howling.
- weigh 3.5 lbs.

Details about Khan in this stage:



Sketch of Khan



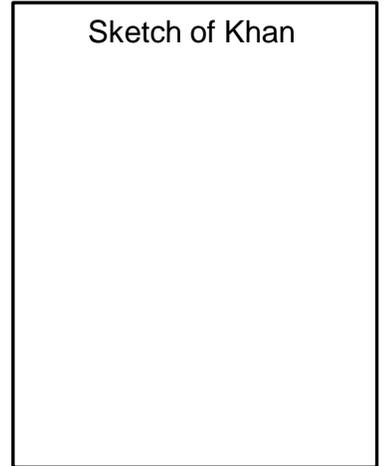
Socialization Period: 3 weeks to 11 weeks

Wolf pups

- begin appearing outside of the den and playing near the entrance.
- have ears that begin to raise at approximately 27 days and their hearing improves significantly.
- have canines and premolar teeth present.
- have disproportionately large feet and head.
- are in the gradual process of weaning, feeds on regurgitated food or morsels provided by adults.
- grow adult hair around nose and eyes.
- have disproportionately large feet and head.
- are gaining short, high-pitched howls.
- begin dominance and play fighting.



Sketch of Khan



Details about Khan in this stage:

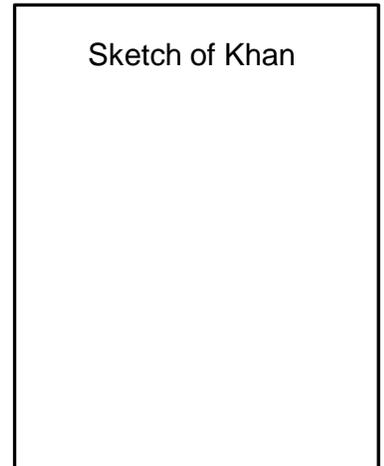
Period of Rapid Growth: 12 weeks to 27 weeks

Wolf pups

- have eyes turning from blue to yellow gold.
- gain approximately 1.3 lbs. per week.
- show winter fur.
- begin to accompany adults on hunts.



Sketch of Khan



Details about Khan in this stage:



Chapter Response Questions

Chapters 7 - 8

Examining the Plot RL.6.1, RL.6.2

1. Who is Claire Cameron? Why do you think Nika is uncomfortable when Claire asks what will happen to the pup in the fall?
2. Why doesn't Nika trust Lorna? Why do you think Ian insists on having Lorna watch the pup while Nika goes to town with him?
3. Describe Bristo and his "hobby." Who do you think he is looking for when Nika sees him on the beach?
4. How is the silvery-tan wolf related to the main storyline?
5. Add details about Khan to your *Timeline of Khan's Development*.

Discovering Symbolism RL.6.4

A **symbol** is something (an object, name, place, or person) that stands for something else. Authors often use symbols to communicate a deeper meaning. Examine the following possible symbols in ***Summer of the Wolves***.

Background Information about The Blue Wolf and Ghengis Khan

Ghengis Khan was a Mongolian leader of the 13th century. Through massive military campaigns, he united the nomadic tribes of northeast Asia and created the Mongol Empire, the largest empire ever to exist. His legacy is both negative and positive. On the one hand, he led vicious military attacks on nomadic tribes throughout Asia, brutally massacring whole villages. On the other hand, he was a good emperor, promoting religious tolerance among his people as well as creating a universal writing system. The Mongol people still regard Genghis Khan as the father of Mongolia or the Blue Wolf, a reference to Mongolian mythological story of Shan Yu, which says that the Mongol people are descendants of a blue gray wolf.

6. Given the history of Ghengis Khan and the Blue Wolf, why might the author have chosen Khan as the name for the wolf pup?
7. What do you think the name Khan symbolizes to Nika?
8. Do you think it is good name for this wolf pup? Why or why not?



The Eagle (Excerpts from *Summer of the Wolves*)

[The silvery-tan wolf] swam toward a nearby island. Overhead an eagle circled, screeching. Its shadow slipped across the body of the fleeing wolf. (p. 107)

The bird lifted high in the air, dipped its pure white head, then shot downward, hitting the water with its talons extended. As the eagle pulled from the lake, shedding a curtain of water, a fish more than half the length of its body hung from its grasp. With long swoops of its powerful wings, the bird carried its prize to the nest. (p.116).

9. In the United States, the eagle has long been a symbol of freedom and independence. In what way is the eagle a symbol of freedom in the story of the silvery-tan wolf?
10. What is symbolic about the fact that eagle's shadow "slipped across the body of the fleeing wolf"?
11. What do you think the eagle's nest symbolizes to Nika?

Exploring the Theme of Freedom RL.6.2

The author, Carlson-Voiles, explores the notion of freedom from various angles.

In her corner she [the silvery-tan wolf] began to dig. Each day she dug with new energy. Her large paws became dark with dirt. And in the night, the rich dark smells of earth called her to dig some more. (p. 83)

One morning the man staggered toward the pen barking out harsh words. . . The wolf hid in her corner, then clawed her way deeper into the hole she'd dug, frantic and afraid. Her strong paws flew. Suddenly, air rushed into the tunnel. She slipped her body through, out into the sweet sharp smells of freedom. (p.95)

12. The silvery-tan wolf has lived in an enclosure her whole life. Why is she so eager to get out of this one?
13. What challenges could she encounter now that she is free?

Well, I should let nature take its course. . . Usually I would. But it isn't a usual situation, the mother being shot." He seemed uncertain. . . "Even if we take him, he still might die. He'll never live wild again." (p.70)

14. What does Ian mean when he says that the wolf pup will "never live wild again"?
15. Considering that the wolf pup will never live in wild and will never experience true freedom, do you think Ian made the right decision? Why or why not?



There was no sound in Nika's dream. She and her mom and Randall were sitting on the ground beside a waterfall in smog-filled southern California heat . . . Nika ran to be the first one in. She smiled as she rolled in the comforting arms of the water. Then through the underwater blue she saw her mom swim away, her outline lost in a blur of water. In just a second of time, her mom was gone.

16. Why do you think Nika is dreaming about this? What does it show about Nika?
17. Since Nika's mom died, in what ways have Nika and Randall lost their freedom?
18. Will Nika ever have the freedom to be a child again and live a normal life?

Writing from a Point of View W.6.3

Randall has had a much different experience so far in Minnesota than Nika. Write a letter to Meg from the point of view of Randall. Include the following:

- an opening where you state whether you are enjoying your visit to northern Minnesota
- a summary of where you are living and who you live with
- a description of the activities that you enjoy taking part in
- a reflection of how you think Nika is adjusting



Expanding Vocabulary

Chapters 9 – 12 RL.6.4, L.6.4a,c

DIRECTIONS: Complete the following Vocabulary Map. Use the example to help you.

Vocabulary Map

Word	Sentence from book in which the word appears	A short definition	Illustration of word OR a connection to my life
exasperated (p.125)	<i>"He isn't very tame, is he?" Lorna threw her hands up in an exasperated gesture.</i>	angry or frustrated	I've often felt <u>exasperated</u> when my little brother uses my stuff without asking.
crestfallen (p.126)			
predatory (p.127)			
weaning (p.134)			
canine (p.135)			



Word	Sentence from book in which the word appears	A short definition	Illustration of word OR a connection to my life
gangly (p.141)			
regurgitate (p.142)			
rendezvous (p.157)			
uninhabited (p.168)			
cavalry (p.169)			
tainted (p.172)			



Chapter Response Questions

Chapters 9 - 10

Examining the Plot RL.6.1

1. Why is Nika so angry at Lorna? Do you think Nika is justified in her anger? Why or why not?
2. What do you think Thomas saw on the eagle's nest island? What clues does the author give you as to what he saw?
3. How does Nika react to the news that Bristo found the wire cutters?
4. Why does Nika have mixed feelings about the construction of a fenced area for Khan?
5. Who is Elinor? How does Khan react to her and the other volunteers?
6. Add details about Khan to your *Timeline of Khan's Development*.

Analyzing Significant Passages RL.6.4

In any novel, there are some passages that are particularly significant; in other words, these passages stand out and tell the reader something important about a character or about a theme of the novel. Read these pivotal passages and respond to the accompanying questions.

7. *Releasing the animals felt good. In a way, it was like setting herself free.* (p. 133)
 - Prior to moving to Minnesota, in what way was Nika caged like Bristo's animals?
 - Why do you think Nika feels free when she releases the animals?
 - Why is this a pivotal passage in the novel? What does it show us about how Nika is changing?
8. *And when she was with him, touching his springy undercoat, rubbing his oversize feet, she felt whole in a way that she hadn't felt since her mom died.* (p. 134)
 - Why do you think caring for Khan makes Nika "feel whole"?
 - In what ways has Nika grown since she started caring for Khan?
 - Why is this a pivotal passage in the novel?
9. *Her feelings of trust for Ian had started to sprout small pale roots, but now they felt like they'd been ripped from the ground.* (p. 148)
 - Why does Nika feel betrayed by Ian?
 - What does this passage tell us about Nika and her ability to trust adults?
 - Why is this a pivotal passage in the novel?



Writing Dialogue W.6.3b

Nika wants so badly to stand up for herself and share her frustrations, but at times she is at a loss for words. Reread the page numbers below. Then infer what Nika is feeling and complete the dialogues to show what you think Nika should have said in each situation.

Pages 125-126

Lorna: *Anyway, what happened was, well, first I tried to get him to snuggle, or eat. I tried to play with him, but he kept creeping away!*

Nika: Ian, I told you Lorna couldn't take care of Khan! Khan needs _____
_____.

Lorna: *Later I accidentally knocked over my empty pop can, and I guess it clattered. Anyway, that's when he squeezed behind there.*

Nika: Oh, Lorna, I thought you had studied wolves! You should know that _____
_____.

Page 145

Ian: *I've been thinking about the clearing up on the ridge, just beyond those trees edging the house. . . It would give Khan a pretty open area to run and burn off some energy. . . . It'll just be temporary.*

Nika: What do mean by temporary, Ian? When Khan grows up, I want him to _____
_____.

Page 147

Ian: *Wait on feeding Khan. I want Elinor to give him the meat today, and Will and Abby will watch. Elinor is going to give them an orientation about wolf pup development.*

Nika: Wait a minute, Ian! I've been caring for Khan since we found him. It's not fair that _____
_____.



Analyzing Scientific Text RST.6-8.1, RST.6-8.2, RI.6.1, RI.6.6

Read the following text about wolf territory. Then respond to the accompanying questions.

TITLE: _____

Most wolves live within and defend a home range known as a territory. A wolf spends much of its life hunting, traveling and raising pups within that territory. Occasionally, an individual wolf or the entire pack may wander out of the territory exploring or searching for food.

Wolf packs are generally very protective of their territory, and pack members will urinate, leaving their scent throughout the territory to indicate “ownership” of the area. If other wolves come into the resident pack’s territory, the resident pack may chase the intruders out or fight with them. Wolves have been known to kill each other over territory.

Wolf pack territory averages roughly 10 square miles per wolf in the pack. Territory ranges in size from 25 square miles or less to over 1,000 square miles, depending on the number of wolves in the pack and the amount of food available. Because wolves generally hunt within the boundaries of their territory, a large enough population of prey animals needs to exist within that territory to sustain the pack over time. The territory can be likened to a refrigerator: it holds the food for the family. Larger packs of wolves often need to have larger territories than smaller packs because they need more area in which to find food. Wolf packs, large or small, may not travel as far (and therefore have a smaller territory) if there is a high density of prey available.

The maximum number of wolves or wolf packs an area can support over time is known as its carrying capacity. The extent to which a wolf pack will defend its territory can be correlated with food availability. If the resident pack is having difficulty finding enough food, this stress may cause them to be especially aggressive in keeping out invaders who might compete for food. Territory boundary disputes with neighboring packs may escalate during times of food stress. Territory size and configuration may also fluctuate over time.

The factors, such as food and space, that cause wolf population numbers to increase or decrease over time are known as limiting factors. By the time young wolves reach two or three years of age, they are likely to leave their home pack’s territory. This is called dispersal. Scientists think they may be searching for a mate or better access to food. Sometimes a young wolf will wander as many as 500 miles or more from home and then return to the pack. In other cases, a wolf may “disperse,” or leave the pack, and never return. A dispersing wolf faces many challenges, including the hardship of hunting alone and avoiding detection by other wolves that may kill the disperser for invading their territory.

10. Why does the author compare a wolf’s territory to a refrigerator? In your opinion, is this a good comparison? Why or why not?
11. When might a wolf pack get aggressive?
12. According to the author, why do wolf population numbers change?
13. Consider how the author organized this text by completing this basic outline:
 - I. Introduction
 - II. How wolves mark their territories
 - III. _____
 - IV. _____
 - V. Factors that cause a wolf population to change.
14. Think of a good title for this passage. Write your title in the space above the text.



Chapter Response Questions

Chapters 11 - 12

Examining the Plot RL.6.1, RL.6.2

1. Why do you think the silvery-tan wolf is always hungry? Who do you think the loud men are?
2. Examine the map at the beginning of the novel. Locate Ian and Pearl's house. Then find the pen that Ian builds for Khan. Next, find the route that you think Nika takes when she and Khan adventure to the beach. Finally, reread the prologues about the silvery-tan wolf and hypothesize where she is.
3. How does Nika feel after her first trip to the beach? Cite a passage as evidence.
4. Summarize what happened to Khan when Nika couldn't find him.
5. Add details about Khan to your *Timeline of Khan's Development*.

Using Descriptive Language W.6.3d

Carlson-Voiles invokes all of the reader's senses while describing Khan's first trip to the beach with Nika. Reread page 158. Then imagine that YOU are Khan, and you are experiencing being outside of your pen for the first time. Complete the sentences to describe what you hear, smell, see, feel, and taste.

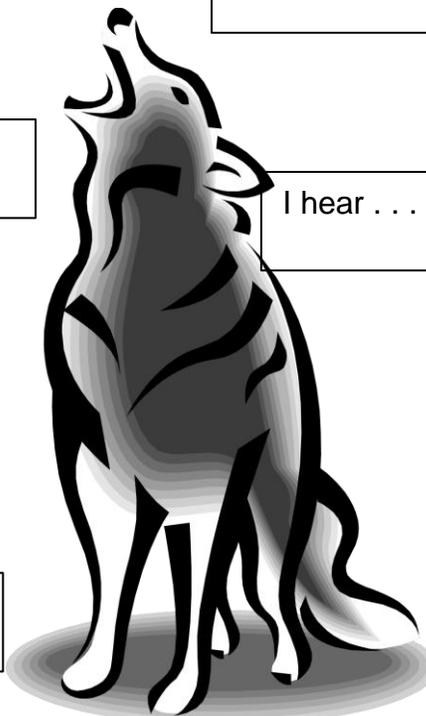
I smell

I see

I taste. . . .

I hear

With my paws I feel





Comparing Two Characters W.6.2

In many ways, Khan and Nika have had similar journeys. Reflect on how their characters have had parallel experiences by filling in the comparison chart below. Make sure to give specific examples from the text to show how Nika is similar to Khan.

Khan		Nika
Khan is an orphan.	→	Nika is an orphan.
Khan is taken to a new home to be raised.	→	
Khan is fearful of new people, like Lorna.	→	
Khan is becoming more independent and assertive.	→	
Khan is growing and changing.	→	

Now, write a full paragraph in which you describe the parallels (or similarities) between Nika and Khan. Your paragraph should:

- contain a topic sentence.
- show at least three ways that the characters are alike.
- include examples and passages from the book to support your position.
- end with a strong concluding sentence.



Chapter Response Questions

Chapters 13 - 14

Examining the Plot RL.6.1, RL.6.2

1. How does Nika feel after doing research in the library about keeping wolves as pets? Why do you think she feels this way?
2. Why do Thomas and Nika decide not to tell anybody about what they saw on the island?
3. How does Nika feel about going on a canoe trip with Ian?
4. What news does Ian give while they are sitting by the fire? What is Nika's reaction?
5. Describe the Nika's mood at the end of Chapter 14. Why do you think she is feeling this way? Do you think she has a right to feel this way? Why or why not?
6. Add details about Khan to your *Timeline of Khan's Development*.

Understanding Literary Devices: Flashbacks RL.6.5

A flashback is a scene that interrupts the narrative, or story, to tell about an event that happened before the story occurred. Flashbacks allow an author to give the reader background information on a character.

Turn to page 195 and begin reading the flashback that starts with the passage, "*Nika pulled the photo album from her shelf . . .*" and that ends on page 196 with the words "*dying in a munitions accident overseas.*"

6. What do we learn about Nika's life when her mom was alive from this flashback?
7. What is the mood (or feeling) of this flashback? Remember that mood is the general feeling of a certain scene and is usually described by an adjective like anxious, relaxed, upbeat, or gloomy. Copy down one passage from this flashback that made you choose that adjective.
8. How is the mood of the flashback different from the mood of the narrative around it? In other words, how is Nika feeling before she start remembering her life with her mom? Does the flashback change the mood at all? How?
9. What do you think is the purpose of this flashback? In other words, why does the author go into such detail instead of simply saying something like, "Nika looked at some photos of her family when her mom was alive and remembered some fun things they had done"?



Examining the Development of Point of View RL.6.6

In these chapters, Carlson-Voiles introduces readers to Luna, the silvery-tan wolf whose story has been told in little bits and pieces between the chapters of Nika's story. Now readers are seeing events from two perspectives sometimes: Luna's and Nika's.

In the boxes below, draw Nika and Luna. Then, complete the statements in the thought bubbles to show how each of the characters view that scene on Eagle Island differently. Make sure to write your statements in first person, using the pronouns "I" and "me." Also make sure to pull some details from the book to show how Nika and Luna would have felt about seeing the other for the first time.

When I first saw Luna, I felt . . .

When I first saw the girl in the boat, I felt. . .

Nika

Luna

Analyzing an Authors Words RL.6.4

Authors choose their words very carefully when they write, as they try to convey certain images and feelings. Carlson-Voiles does a masterful job of finding words and phrases that allow the reader to picture Nika's world and feel what she's feeling.

On page 184, Nika is reading about wolves in the library and realizing just how difficult it would be to bring Khan home with her to Pasadena. To describe Nika's reaction, Carlson-Voiles writes, "*Nika felt her whole world slide sideways.*"

1. What do you think the author means by this? In other words, how does Nika feel at this moment?
2. Can you relate to this feeling? Why or why not?



On page 195, the author makes this comparison: *“At times like this her grief hovered in the room like a dark winged creature.”*

1. Based on this description, how do you think Nika feels at this moment?
2. How does this sentence make you feel when you read it?
3. Can you relate to this feeling? Why or why not?

On page 202, during their camping trip, Nika *“tripped and went over on her back like a flipped turtle, her legs waving in the air.”*

1. What part of this sentence gives the reader the best image of what Nika looks like?
2. Do you think the sentence would have been as effective if the author had left out “like a flipped turtle” and simply said she fell on her back with her legs waving in the air? Explain your answer.



Chapter Response Questions

Chapters 15 - 16

Examining the Plot RL.6.1

1. Do you think it is wise that Thomas is feeding Luna? Explain.
2. On their camping trip, Nika learns why Ian hasn't ever been part of their lives. Describe her reaction to his explanation.
3. Why was the camping trip good for Nika? Why do you think Ian insisted that Nika get away from Khan for awhile?
4. After they returned from the camping trip, why do you think Randall "*looked smaller and sad, his confidence melted for some unknown reason*"? (p. 226)
5. What plans does Ian have for Khan? Describe how Nika reacts to this plan. Do you think she is justified in her reaction? Why or why not?

Using Descriptive Language L.6.5

Through her use of descriptive language, Carlson-Voiles paints beautiful images in the mind of her reader. Reread the following description of the aurora borealis.

The sky was flowing with shivering scarves of pastel-colored light. Greens, pinks, pale yellow – there were ribbons unfolding, a swelling glimmer as the horizon pulsed and faded. There were skittering falls of light . . . The light oozed and shuddered, a show just for the three of them. Each time one section of the northern sky faded, another tumbled with new light shapes. . . It was like being in church, Nika thought, or an art museum. You whispered because voices would disturb the beauty. . . The sky was singing, and she loved the song. (p. 218 – 219)

1. On your own paper, draw a simple sketch of the image that this passage creates in your mind.
2. Underline three examples of personification. Choose one example and explain what is being personified.
3. Circle an example of a simile. What two things are being compared?



Analyzing Symbols RL.6.4

Recall that symbols represent something else. Consider the following symbols in these chapters.

Loon

Close to them on the lake they heard the familiar haunting two-tone call hang above the surface of the darkening water. Then came the two-tone answer. It didn't matter how many times Nika heard loons – the mysterious music always thrilled her. . . . Soon eight or ten loons flew down one by one to land on the water. The night was so quiet, they could hear each splash as birds joined the group. The loons drifted together as the plate-size moon rose up behind the black outline of the trees on the other side of the lake. (p. 215)

1. What do you think the group of loons symbolize to Nika?
2. Why do you think that Nika feels so drawn to these loons?

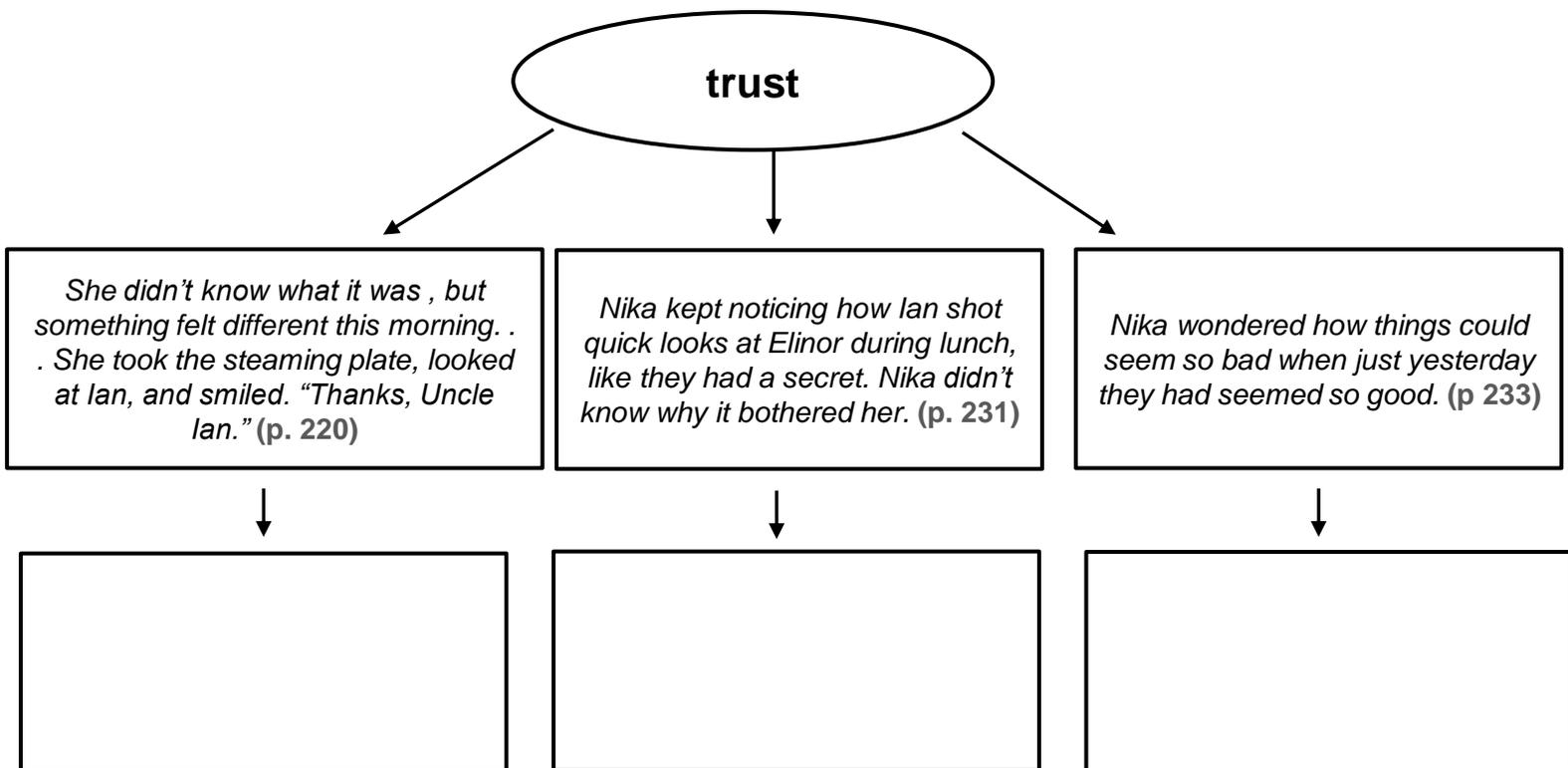
Aurora Borealis

“Northern lights,” Ian said. “The aurora borealis. . . . It’s caused by energy that streams with charged particles coming from the sun. They flow through twisted bundles of magnetic fields connecting with the upper atmosphere. . . . But it doesn’t much matter what causes them, does it? They’re incredible.” (p. 218 – 219)

3. What is the experience of seeing the aurora borealis for the first time like for Nika?
4. What do you think the aurora borealis might symbolize to Nika? Why?

Analyzing the Theme of Trust RL.6.2

Since her mother died, Nika has had a tough time trusting anyone. Examine the following passages. Then explain how they relate to the theme of trust.





Interpreting the Significance of a Dream RL.6.5

At the end of Chapter 16, Nika is greatly conflicted about the best scenario for the futures of Khan and Luna. When she finally falls asleep, she has a vivid dream. Reread the following passage.

She had been sitting on the floor in the corner of a huge high-ceilinged room. . . . Everyone in the large crowd was standing around taking turns talking. Then the mood changed and everyone hugged. She couldn't make out their words, but she thought, They don't need me here. I have nothing to say. Then a large black wolf entered the door on the far side of the room. . . . The wolf began to weave calmly through the crowd, his eyes and ears alert as he walked. He was coming straight toward her. After he arrived beside her, he turned and faced the crowd, standing as still as stone. . . . She rose to her feet, steadying herself with one hand on [the black wolf's] back. When she was standing, she realized how big he was, his back at waist height. . . . Suddenly she understood she was supposed to speak. Her voice felt clear and strong. People listened. She knew the wolf had come just for her. . . . And she once again sank her hand into the fur over his shoulders, feeling changed somehow. (p. 238 - 239)

This dream can be interpreted in different ways. Perhaps it is a message for Nika about the future of Khan or perhaps its significance is to show Nika that she does have a voice in the world. In at least one paragraph, explain what *you* think the significance of this dream is and what impact it will have on Nika.



Researching a Wolf and Writing an Autobiography W.6.3, W.6.7

The highlight of visiting the International Wolf Center in northern Minnesota is observing the resident wolves in the outside enclosure. These wolves were brought to the center because for various reasons they could not survive in the wild. The Center attempts to create an environment for the wolves that is similar to their natural habitat. As such, they socialize the wolves by having them live together in a pack. There are currently four wolves in the exhibit enclosure.

Aidan



Denali



Luna



Boltz



When wolves live in packs, some of wolves are more dominant than others. In the wild, the most dominant wolves (sometimes called the alpha wolves) are usually the genetic parents of the cubs in a pack. Younger wolves show their respect to the dominant wolves by allowing the alpha wolves to be the first to eat, and by lowering their eyes or heads to the alpha wolves. In the enclosure at the International Wolf Center, it is usually the older wolves that take on the dominant role. The dominant wolves establish and maintain their dominance using body language, such as pinning, standing over each other, tail position, ear position, and many more communications.

Choose one of the four wolves above to research and follow. Read at least five logs to learn about the background of your wolf at: <http://www.wolf.org/visit/meet-our-wolves>. If you choose to research Denali or Aidan, read some early logs at: <http://www.wolf.org/wolf/denali/?archYear=2008&archMonth=5> and <http://www.wolf.org/wolf/aidan/?archYear=2008&archMonth=5>.

Next, watch how your wolf interacts by viewing one of the weekly wolf videos from the Center at: <http://www.wolf.org/visit/meet-our-wolves/wolfvideos/>. Finally, check on the webcam to see what your wolf is doing right now!

Using all the information you have gathered, write a *Wolf Autobiography*. This should be written from the point of view of your wolf. Include the following:

- an engaging opening where you introduce yourself and explain how you came to be in the Exhibit Pack and who you are related to.
- a description of your pack mates and how you relate to them (dominance order).
- some things you like to do during the day.
- something you'd like people who come to visit you to know about you and your pack.
- an illustration of yourself.



Chapter Response Questions

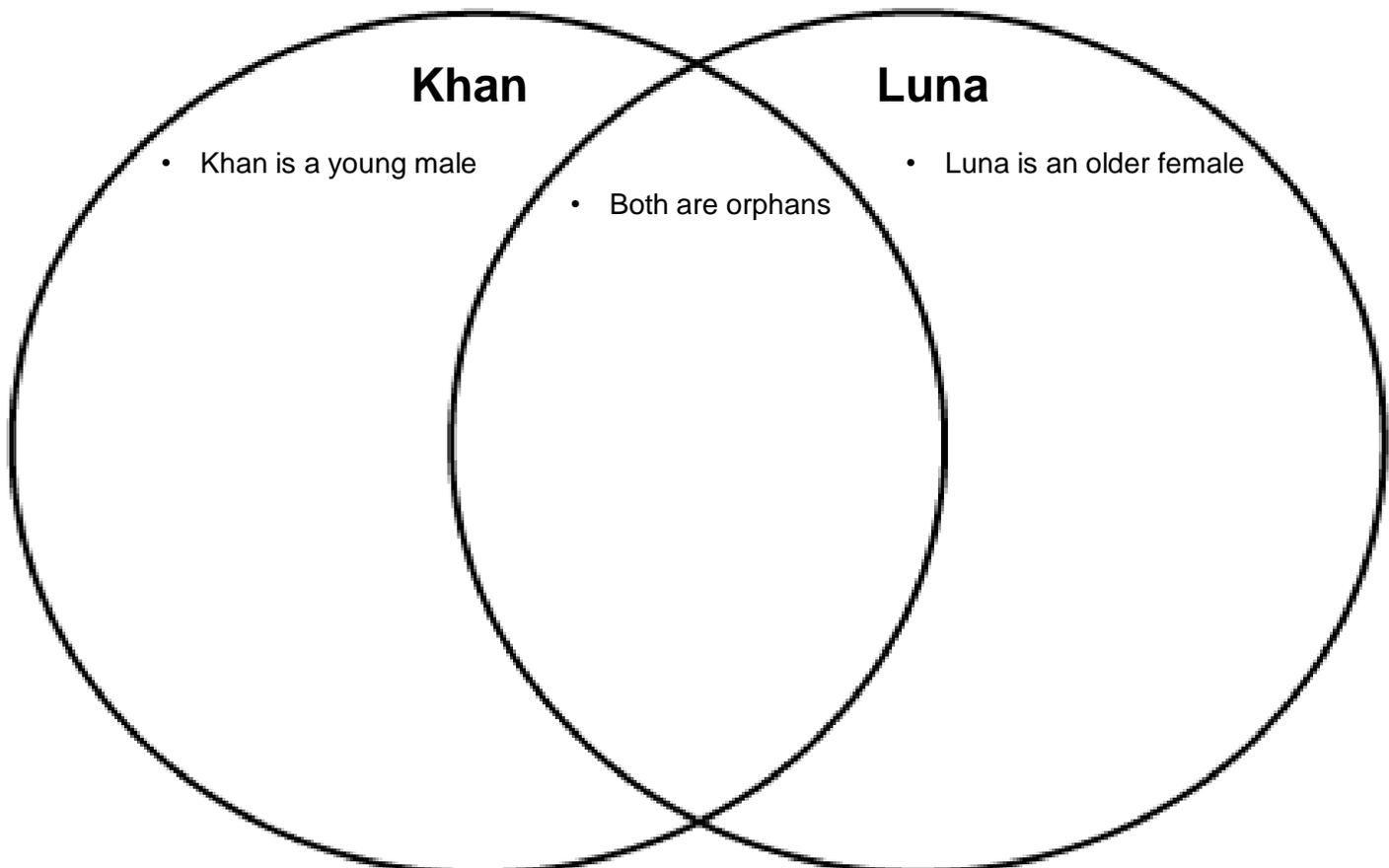
Chapters 17 - 18

Examining the Plot RL.6.1

1. What is significant about the silvery-tan wolf's response to the two humans on page 241?
2. Why do you think Ian takes Nika to the Center? What does Nika think about the new enclosure for Khan?
3. Describe Nika and Thomas's "magical" experience on the island in Chapter 16. What do they learn about Luna?
4. Summarize what happens to Nika, Thomas, and Luna in Chapter 17.
5. What is significant about the last line in Chapter 17: *They were home.*
6. Add details about Khan to your *Timeline of Khan's Development.*

Comparing Characters RL.6.3

As the novel unfolds, we learn more about Luna and her background. Compare Luna and Khan by completing this Venn Diagram. In the left circle, write characteristics unique to Khan. In the right circle, write characteristics unique to Luna. In the center, write characteristics common to both of them.





Interpreting Mood RL.6.4

A *mood* refers to the general feeling in a novel (or in part of novel, like a chapter). For instance, the mood of a chapter could be described as fearful, anxious, somber, light-hearted, serious, or suspenseful. An author usually conveys various moods throughout a novel and sometimes even within a chapter.

1. Reread pages 248 – 250 describing Thomas and Nika’s interaction with Luna. Describe the mood of this scene. Then cite one passage from this scene that depicts the mood.

Mood of scene:

Passage depicting mood:

2. Now reread pages 254 – 256 when Bristo goes after Luna. Describe the mood of this scene. Cite a passage from this scene that depicts this mood.

Mood of scene:

Passage depicting mood:

Analyzing Emotions RL.6.5

Nika experiences a range of emotions in Chapter 18. Complete this graphic organizer to explore these emotions.

When Nika first sees Bristo on page 253, she feels _____.	→	Passage showing this emotion:
When Nika finds Luna after Luna has been shot on page 256, she feels _____.	→	Passage showing this emotion:
When Nika holds Luna on page 257, she feels _____.	→	Passage showing this emotion:
As Nika waits with Luna during the story on page 260 she feels _____.	→	Related passage from page:



Drawing Parallels between the Novel and a Children’s Story RL.6.9, RI.6.1

On page 155, the author likens the story of Nika and Thomas on the island to the stories of *Hansel and Gretel* and the *Little Red Riding Hood*. Recall these two stories. Then draw parallels between the novel and the children's’ stories by completing the following T-Charts.

Hansel and Gretel	Chapter 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main characters are a boy and girl.• The main characters are abandoned in woods by parents and leave crumbs to find their way back.• The main characters encounter a mean witch in the woods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nika and Thomas are primary characters in chapter.••

Little Red Riding Hood	Chapter 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A little girl walks in the woods to deliver food to grandma.• A big bad wolf tricks her by dressing up as her grandma.• The wolf eats the little girl.• A lumberjack comes along, kills the wolf, and saves the girl and her grandmother.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••••



Chapter Response Questions

Chapters 19 - 20

Examining the Plot RL.6.1

1. What is Ian's reaction to learning that Nika and Thomas have been feeding Luna? Why?
2. How does the man at the newspaper office react when he sees Nika? Do you think he has a good reason to react this way? Why or why not?
3. What is Ian's surprise for Nika and Randall? How do their reactions differ? Why do you think they react to this news differently?
4. What punishment did Sheriff Dunn give to Thomas and Nika for letting all of Bristo's animals go? Do you think it was a fair punishment? Why or why not?
5. Add details about Khan's development to your *Timeline of Khan's Development* handout.

Analyzing a Character: Thomas RL.6.3

Remember that authors develop characters through actions, dialogue, description, and their interactions with other characters. Thomas is a minor character (not a main, or major, character) who befriends Nika and helps her learn some things about wolves and even herself. Complete the diagram below by finding passages from the book on the page numbers provided that show us different aspects of Thomas's character. Then, write at least one adjective that you think describes Thomas based on the passage you wrote down.

p. 291, passage:

Adjective:



p. 257-258, passage:

Adjective:

p. 184-191, passage:

Adjective:

**USING REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS L.6.1b**

Reflexive pronouns refer back, or reflect back (like a mirror), to the subject of the sentence. There are eight reflexive pronouns and they are listed in the box.

Notice how this reflexive pronoun is used in this sentence from *Summer of the Wolves* :

Reflexive Pronouns

myself	ourselves
yourself	yourselves
himself/herself/itself	themselves

Nika took in a long breath, then exhaled slowly to calm herself, as Meg had taught her. (p. 33)

Read these sentences from *Summer of the Wolves* and circle the reflexive pronoun. Then, underline the noun or pronoun it reflects back to.

1. Ian busied himself loosening the tangle of ropes she'd made on the post. (p. 47)
2. He loved the fact that wolves have families, but he spent his time wandering around the world all by himself. (p. 59)
3. No way was she staying by herself with a wolf nearby! (p. 60)
4. Lorna gazed at Ian, carefully arranging herself against the wall. (p. 88)
5. The silvery-tan wolf pulled herself up on the rocks of the small island. (p. 123)
6. She stood with her arms wrapped around herself. (p. 126)
7. When Khan threw himself onto the ground next to Randall and fell asleep, Randal grinned, waving at Nika and pointing down at the resting pup as she walked around cleaning up scat. (p. 198)
8. She surprised herself, speaking up like this. (p. 293)

DISSECTING PLOT RL.6.5, W.6.9

As a story unfolds, different scenes and events can play important roles in pushing the plot forward. One such moment in a story is called the **crisis**. The crisis occurs (usually well into the book) when the main character is faced with a difficult challenge, a minor disaster, or a really tough choice—which then forces her to see her own situation in a whole new light. The crisis usually occurs slightly before the climax of the story, when the protagonist must actually confront whatever her biggest conflict is.

Look over the list of recent events that have just occurred in the story. Choose which one you think is the crisis. Then, write a paragraph on your own paper that explains why you think this is a key moment for Nika, how it is a challenge or minor disaster for her, and how it has forced her to look at things differently. Make sure to use examples from the story to support your reasoning.

1. Nika learns that Khan will be moving to the Center.
2. Ian announces he has bought a new home for Ian and Nika to share with him.
3. Nika learns that Khan will be introduced to Luna and that Nika will no longer be allowed in the pen with him.
4. Ian doesn't stand up for Nika at Sheriff Dunn's office when she explains why she freed the animals.



Chapter Response Questions

Chapters 21 - 22

Examining the Plot RL.6.1, RL.6.2

1. What's bothering Nika at the beginning of Chapter 21? How does Ian react when Nika tells him how she feels?
2. Why do you think Nika takes her sleeping bag out to sleep with Khan?
3. What does Luna give Khan at the end of Chapter 21? What does this act signify?
4. Why does Nika decide to leave? Do you think she is making a good decision?
5. What do Nika and Elinor learn about Luna's original owner?
6. Add details about Khan's development to your *Timeline of Khan's Development* handout.

Writing a Letter to Nika W.6.9

Ian has repeatedly asked Nika not to take Khan out of his pen without a leash. And yet in Chapter 21, Nika can't resist taking him for a run one last time since she figures "*she'd never have another opportunity in her whole life.*" (p. 304)

Knowing how much Nika loves Khan and how she might never get to spend this kind of time with him again, but also knowing the dangers of letting him out to run free on the island, do you think she made the right decision?

Write a letter to Nika in which you either support her decision or argue that she should not have taken the wolf out. Make sure your letter

- has a proper greeting, such as "Dear Nika."
- clearly explains your position. You might start your letter by saying, "I completely understand why you wanted to take Khan for a run . . ." or with the sentence, "I don't think you should have taken Khan for a run."
- has at least two examples from the story to back up your position.
- is well written and free of spelling and grammatical errors.
- ends with a proper closing, such as "Sincerely," and your name.



Comparing Differing Points of View RL.6.1, RL.6.6

Ian and Nika disagree about many things including Khan's future, Luna, and even Bristo. Using their argument on pages 302 and 303, fill in the following speech bubbles to show how each character feels about these subjects. Make sure your responses are written in first person (using the pronouns "I" and "me") and summarize the main way these characters feel.

NIKA

Khan should be able to run free sometimes like a wild wolf!

IAN

You don't understand. . .

IAN

You released all of Bristo's animals! That wasn't okay, Nika!

NIKA

You don't understand. . .

IAN

You fed, Luna, a wild wolf, who was then almost shot!

NIKA

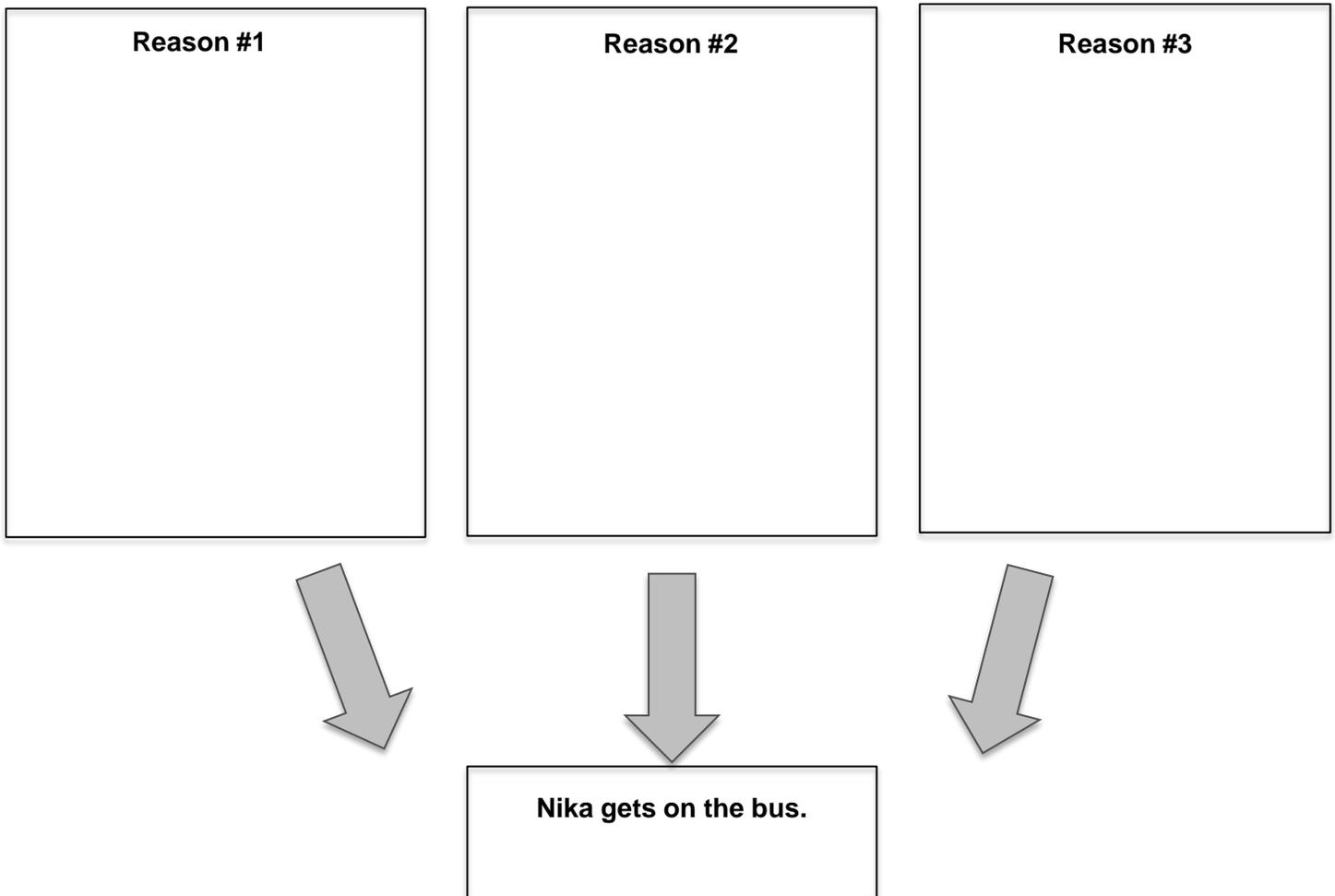
You don't understand. . .



Focusing on the Elements of Story RL.6.1, RL.6.5

As a story nears its climax and resolution, tension and conflict increase for the main character. Think of all the different ways that Nika is feeling pressure and uncertainty in these chapters, and how all of these feelings eventually lead her to buy a bus ticket back to California.

Fill in the diagram below with at least three different reasons that you think make Nika decide she wants to leave Minnesota. For each reason that you list, copy one passage from the book that clearly illustrates Nika’s feelings—sadness, anger, uncertainty, loss, etc.





Chapter Response Questions

Chapters 23 - 24

Examining the Plot RL.6.1, RL.6.2

1. Summarize the scene where Khan and Luna meet for the first time in their new enclosure.
2. Describe how Nika feels as she watches Khan and Luna meet for the first time.
3. Why does Nika decide to leave?

Finding a Resolution: Creating a Postcard RL.6.2

Reread the Epilogue on pages 339 - 340. Then create a postcard from Nika to Meg. On the front, draw a picture that shows where Nika, Randall, and Khan end up at the end of the book. On the back, tell Meg (from Nika's point of view) how you feel about your new life and what you think the future may hold for you.

Front of Post Card

Back of Post Card



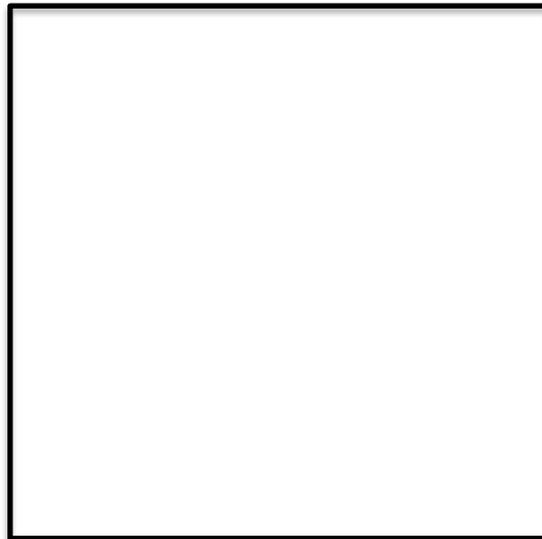
Meg Little
1253 Roses Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 90042



Analyzing A Key Scene RL6.5

When Nika is on the bus, she sees a little girl riding with her mom and brother. Watching this younger girl and reading Meg's letter force Nika to come to some important realizations about her relationships with Ian and Randall, as well as understand where she belongs in the world.

Use the details given on pages 332 - 333, to draw a picture of Nika and the young girl below. Then, fill in the statement on the left-hand side to show Nika's thoughts BEFORE she sees the young girl and reads Meg's letter. Fill in the statement on the right-hand side to show Nika's thoughts AFTER she sees the young girl.



Nika and the young girl on the bus

4. What does Meg say in her letter that enables Nika to “see the truth inside”? (p.336) What is that truth?
5. Why do you think Nika gives the young girl her cookies?
6. On page 336, Nika tells the young girl, “Don’t give up. Take care.” What do you think Nika means by that? How do you think Nika relates to (or sees herself) in this younger girl?
7. What does Nika mean when she says: “When you only had a few pieces left in a puzzle, once you saw those last pieces, you knew exactly where they fit”? (p. 338)



Documenting Change in a Character RL6.3

Throughout *Summer of the Wolves*, Nika changes and grows. Reflect on this growth by adding three events to this timeline that are instrumental in Nika's growth (these can be from any chapter). Describe each event and explain how it shows a change in Nike. Include an illustration for each event, as well as a passage from the book.



Nika has to leave Pasadena and Meg's house.



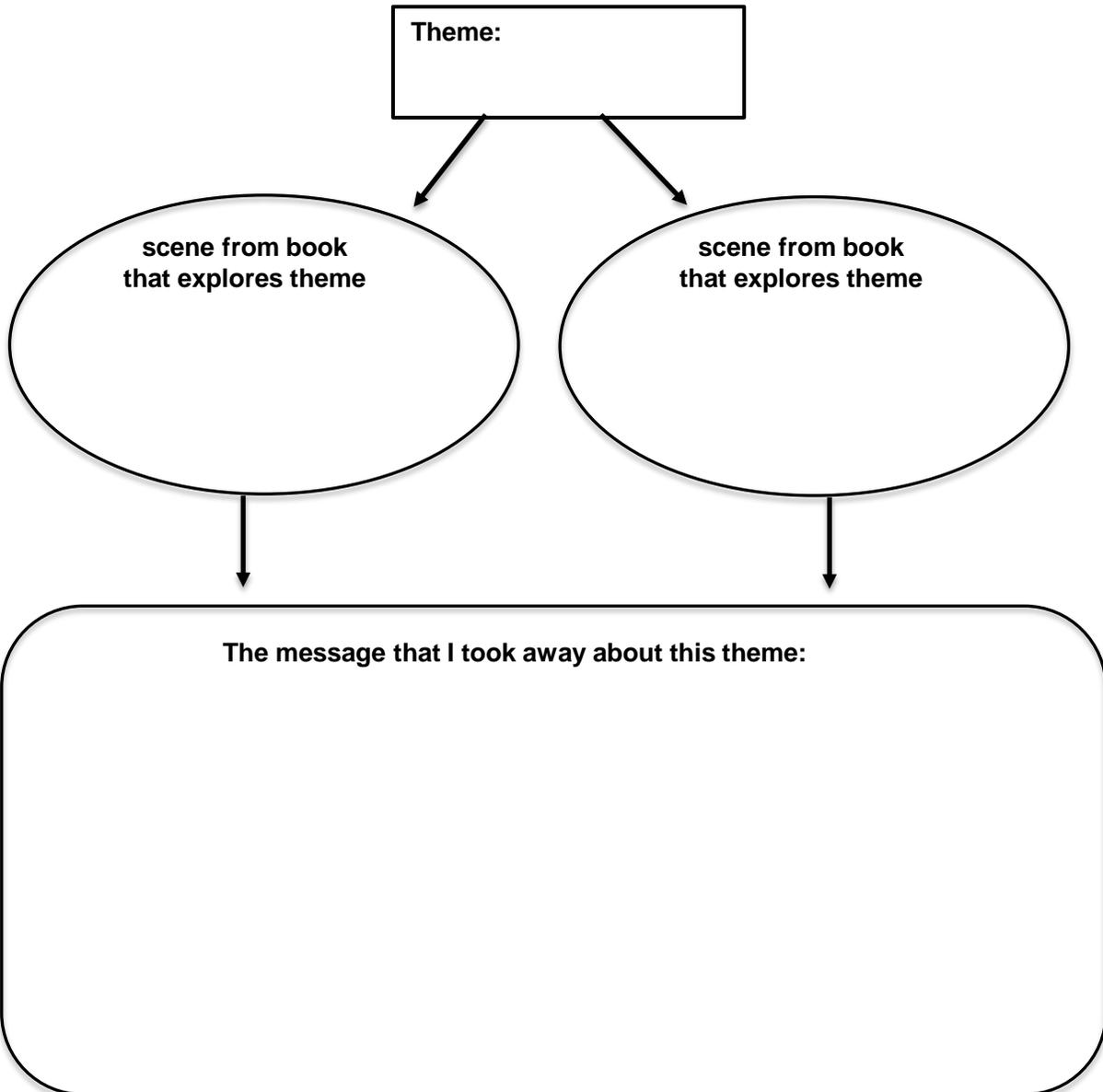
Nika decides to stay in Minnesota and live with Ian and Randall.



Interpreting a Theme of a Novel RL.6.3

Summer of the Wolves touches on many themes. Some of these themes were intentional, developed and well thought-out by the author Polly Carlson–Voiles. Other themes may have arisen from *your* interpretation of the novel and represent your take away from the book. Think about the themes of this novel. Then choose a theme (you can pick one from the box below or use one of your own) and complete the graphic organizer.

Possible Themes from <i>Summer of the Wolves</i>		
independence	dependence	freedom
trust	loss and grief	friendship
growth	family	making choices



Vocabulary Answers

Answers to “How Wolf Savvy Are You?” (p. 6)

1.B; 2.A; 3.C; 4.C; 5.B;
6.B; 7.B; 8.B; 9.B; 10.A

Chapters 1 - 4

1. enjoying something without hurrying; b.
2. huge; a.
3. warm, hooded, waterproof jacket, c..
4. unchanging tone; c.
5. travel together in a group; answers will vary but might include *you won't get lost or hard to stay together.*
6. cringing in fear; c.
7. floats on an aircraft that allows it to land and take off in water
8. close watch; c.
9. decreased little by little in number or size; c.
10. widespread injury or death; a.

Chapters 5 - 8

1. c.
2. f.
3. h.
4. j.
5. e.
6. a.
7. d.
8. b.
9. i.
10. e.
11. rampaging
12. wafted
13. extracted
14. agile
15. inlet

16. gaped
17. dilapidated
18. conflicted
19. regal
20. puckered

Chapters 9 - 12

1. **crestfallen:** *Lorna pointed to the den box, a crestfallen look taking the place of her smile.;* disappointed or humiliated
2. **predatory:** *Ian said headshaking was a predatory skill wolves needed as adults, that a shake could snap the necks of small prey.;* relating to animals that survive by preying on others
3. **weaning:** *Ian said they would be weaning him off the bottle soon.;* stopping the feeding of a baby a mother's milk
4. **canine:** *“I think it's about time to introduce Khan to another canine.”;* a dog
5. **gangly:** *She loved the moments when his gangly body stretched across her lap sucking the formula down in a few strong pulls.;* lanky and awkward
6. **regurgitate:** *Pups licked at their mouths and they would regurgitate.;* bring food up from the stomach
7. **rendezvous:** *“This will be our rendezvous spot, like wild pups have,” she told him.;* meeting
8. **uninhabited:** *Then she headed down to the uninhabited end of the island.;* with no one living there

9. **cavalry:** *“Thought you might need the cavalry,” he said with a lopsided smile.;* military troops that serve on horseback
10. **tainted:** *The smell of skunk floated around Khan in a balloon of tainted air.;* polluted or contaminated

Chapters 13 - 16

1. unexpected meeting; neutral or slightly negative; a.
2. long, difficult journey; slightly negative; b.
3. remote, isolated; slightly negative; a.
4. made a low humming sound; c.
5. tawny; b.
6. weapons and ammunition; c.
7. in a way that submits to others; b.
8. overland routes connecting two bodies of water; *answers will vary but may include that you have to carry your belongings*
9. narrowed; c.

Vocabulary Answers

Chapters 17 - 20

1. ate something quickly; slightly negative; b.
2. run in long, easy strides; neutral; c.
3. smiled in a smug way; mostly negative; c.
4. steady and firm in purpose; b.
5. secret place for hiding things; *answers will vary*
6. able to see things that are hidden; a.
7. likely to attack; b.
8. asserting ownership of an area; b.
9. paying back; a.

Chapters 21 - 24

1. festering; *sentences will vary*; clean it, or bandage it
2. vaporized; *sentences will vary*; appeared
3. stealth; *sentences will vary*; c.
4. surveyed; *sentences will vary*; a.



Performance Task: Wolves Don't Make Good Pets

RI.6.1, RI.6.7, RI.6.9, W.6.1a-e, W.6.9

TASK Having read about Nika's experiences with Khan and Luna, you are now going to write a letter from Nika's perspective to a boy or girl living in Minnesota who has rescued a wolf pup. This boy or girl wants to raise the pup and then keep it as a pet. You must convince them, using your knowledge of wolves, that this is not a good idea—for them or the wolf. Below are four sources to help you write your letter.

In Part 1, you will review each source and answer the questions that follow.

Then, in Part 2, you will write your letter using what you've gathered from these sources as well as your background knowledge from reading *Summer of the Wolves* by Polly Carlson-Voiles.

Part 1

Sources for Performance Task: Read each source carefully, thinking about what information it gives you about wolves, as well as the challenges a person would face if he or she kept one as a pet. Answer the questions that follow.

Source A: Passage from *Summer of the Wolves* (pages 182-184)

Nika sat down at the second computer to wait, then decided to do a search online. She plugged in three words, Wolf as pet. And waited. Soon the screen was filled up with possibilities. Some of them didn't have anything to do with real wolves. She finally found one called, "So You've Always Wanted a Pet Wolf?" That sounded promising. She double-clicked on the link.

- *Wolves can eat 2-5 pounds of good meat a day over a lifetime of approximately 15 years. A diet of dog food is not good for them.*
- *A wolf pup must not fully imprint on humans but needs some canine contact or else all its social behavior, including natural aggression, will be directed toward humans. . .*
- *They need a pen that is half an acre at least with an 8-to-10-foot overhung fence, preferably buried 3 feet in the ground.*
- *They cannot live in houses. They will tear apart furniture out of curiosity and boredom. . .*

Nika did some quick math. Eighty pounds of meat a month. Looking up a grocery ad on the computer, she guessed that if meat cost three dollars a pound, it would cost at least \$240 a month just for meat, maybe more. Over \$2,800 a year for food, and \$44,800 for food for one wolf in its lifetime, if it lived to be sixteen. . .



Questions for Source A:

1. Underline at least two ways that owning a wolf as a pet would present a challenge.
2. After reading this passage, summarize in one sentence what you think the biggest problem with owning a wolf as a pet would be.

Source B: Wolf-Dog Hybrids, Article From the International Wolf Center Website

Wolf and wolf-dog hybrid ownership by private citizens has long been a contentious issue in the United States. Wolf-dog hybrid (hybrid for short) is a term used to describe an animal that is part wolf and part domestic dog. . . .

Dogs evolved from wolves through a centuries-long process of domestication. Domestication is the process by which a wild animal adapts to living with humans by being selectively bred by humans over thousands of years. Through this process, a dog's behavior, life cycle and physiology have become permanently altered from that of a wolf. . .

Wolves and dogs mature at different rates, which makes the physical and mental development of a hybrid animal unpredictable. When a wolf reaches . . . maturity (anywhere from 1 to 4 years of age), their role in the pack often changes from that of a pup to an adult expected to contribute to the pack. Status becomes much more important, and the animal may begin testing its packmates to achieve a higher-ranking position in the pack. Testing or challenging of packmates can be transferred onto a human "leader" when a wolf is kept in captivity, causing the animal to be perceived as stubborn, bold or even aggressive.

Domestic dogs tend to mature much earlier (6 to 8 months of age) and have significantly fewer hormonal changes, but the challenging behavior still exists, although it is typically less intense in most breeds compared to wolves . . . Additionally, the territorial instinct of wolves to protect their food source . . . through defecation and urination may be transferred to the owner's home. A couch or corner of the room may take the place of a tree or rock. Dogs, on the other hand, through domestication, have lost that instinct to urinate or defecate anywhere they feel is their territory and are easily trained to eliminate in a designated area. . . .

Wolves are social by nature and demand a great amount of attention and interaction from their pack. This expectation translates onto the owner when a wolf is kept in captivity. . . . [W]hile many individuals do make an effort to become educated about the potential outcome of owning a wolf or hybrid, others unfortunately do not. This results in the animals being kept in an environment where their social and behavioral needs are not met. In these situations, the animals frequently spend their days in small cages or tied to chains, with very poor quality of life. When any animal, wild or domestic, is kept in conditions inadequate to their mental and physical needs, there is a safety risk for humans. This risk is almost always preventable through proper preparation before the animal is purchased and continued through responsible care for the animal over the duration of its life.

Source: <http://www.wolf.org/learn/basic-wolf-info/wolves-and-humans/wolf-dog-hybrids/>



Questions for Source B:

1. Underline at least two ways that this article illustrates how owning a wolf or wolf hybrid as a pet would present a challenge.
2. After reading this article, what is one new piece of information that you might tell a person who is thinking of keeping a wolf or wolf-hybrid as a pet?

Source C: Basic Wolf Information, Taken From the International Wolf Center Website

How much do wolf pups weigh?

[Pups] weigh about a pound at birth. By the time the pups are 6 months old, they are almost as big as the adults.

How much do adult wolves weigh?

Adult female gray wolves in northern Minnesota weigh between 50 and 85 pounds, and adult males between 70 and 110 pounds.

How many teeth does an adult wolf have?

Adult gray and red wolves have 42 highly specialized teeth. The canine teeth, or fangs, can be 2 1/2 inches long and are used for puncturing and gripping.

How strong are a wolf's jaws?

The biting capacity of a wolf is 1,000 to 1,500 pounds of pressure per square inch. The strength of a wolf's jaws makes it possible to bite through a moose femur in six to eight bites.

What do wolves eat?

Wolves are carnivores, or meat eaters. Gray wolves prey primarily on ungulates – large, hooved mammals such as white-tailed deer, mule deer, moose, elk, caribou, bison, Dall sheep, musk oxen, and mountain goats. Medium-sized mammals, such as beaver and snowshoe hares, can be an important secondary food source.

How much do wolves eat?

Getting enough to eat is a full-time job for a wolf. When wolves catch and kill a large mammal, they will gorge and then rest while the food is being digested. They will generally consume all but the hide, some of the large bones and skull and the rumen (stomach contents of ungulates) of their prey. Gray wolves can survive on about 2 1/2 pounds of food per wolf per day, but they require about 7 pounds per wolf per day to reproduce successfully.

How fast can wolves run?

Wolves will travel for long distances by trotting at about five miles per hour. They can run at speeds of 36 to 38 miles per hour for short bursts while chasing prey.

Source: <http://www.wolf.org/learn/basic-wolf-info/wolf-faqs/>



Questions for Source C:

1. Underline at least three facts about wolves that would make them difficult to keep as pets.
2. How might the fact that their teeth and jaws are so strong—designed for tearing into prey—make them dangerous pets?
3. The fact that wolves are territorial might make them dangerous pets. Why would this be? What could happen?

Source D: Video of Wolves Interacting With Scientists

Click on the following link to view the short five minute video: [YouTube Video on Wolves](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pi3KPf1LuLM) or type in this address: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pi3KPf1LuLM>

Questions for Source D:

1. What are some of the wolf behaviors you observed? What did those behaviors mean?
2. Why did the one wolf snap at Steve? How did he show the wolf he wasn't there to hurt him?
3. Give one example of the wolf behaviors in this video that might show how they could be dangerous to have as pets.

Part 2

You will now review your sources, take notes, plan, write, and edit your letter.

Your Assignment: You must now write a multi-paragraph letter from the point of view of Nika arguing why wolves and wolf-hybrids are not good pets. You must include information from all of the sources above, as well as what you learned reading *Summer of the Wolves*. Try to give your reader—a boy or girl in Minnesota who has found a wolf pup—as much background as possible on wolves and the challenges of raising them around humans. You can create a fictional name for the person you are writing to, but your letter should then be written in first person (using the pronouns “I” and “me”) from Nika’s perspective.

Your letter will be graded on the following:

Accuracy and Strength of Content: How well did you incorporate information from the four sources into your letter? Did you present enough information and back-up your argument with facts and sound explanations? Did you make it clear the many challenges that would be present should your reader choose to keep that wolf pup as a pet?

Organization: Is your letter organized clearly? Did you begin with a clear statement of purpose and follow it up with your arguments, each of which are supported by facts and information from the sources and the book?

Conventions: How well did you follow the rules of grammar usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling?



Suggested Reading for Teachers and Students

To Learn More About Wolves

Wolf Books for Upper Elementary Age Children:

- Exploring the World of Wolves*, Tracy Read, 2010
- Face to Face with Wolves*, Jim Brandenburg, 2010
- Gray Wolf, Red Wolf*, Dorothy Kinshaw Patent and William Munoz, 1994.
- Journey of the Red Wolf*, Roland Smith 1996
- Once Upon a Wolf: How Wildlife Biologists Fought to Bring Back the Gray Wolf*, Stephen Swinburne and Jim Brandenburg, 2001
- Scruffy: A Wolf Finds his Place in the Pack*, Jim Brandenburg, 2000
- The Way of the Wolf*, L David Mech, 1991
- Wolf Pack: Tracking Wolves in the Wild*, Sylvia A. Johnson and Alice Aamodt, 1987

For All Ages:

- Brother Wolf*, Jim Brandenburg, 1993
- The Hidden Life of Wolves*, Jim and Jamie Dutcher, 2014.
- The Sawtooth Wolves*, Jim Dutcher with Richard Ballantine, 1996
- Wolves of the World: Natural History and Conservation*, Todd K Fuller, 2004.
- The Wolves of Minnesota*, L David Mech, Editor, 2000
- Wild Wolves I Have Known: Stories of Wolf Biologists Favorite Wolves*, Edited by Richard P. Thiel, Allison C. Thiel, and Marianne Strozewski, 2013

The Science of Wolves:

- Wolves: Behavior, Ecology and Conservation*, edited by L David Mech and Luigi Boitani, 2003
- The Wolf: The Ecology and Behavior of an Endangered Species*, L David Mech, 1981



Language Arts Common Core State Standards

Grade Level	Reading of Literature	Reading of Informational Text	Writing	Speaking and Listening	Language Conventions	ELA: Science and Technical Subjects
Grade 5	RL.5.1	RI.5.1	W.5.1a-d	SL.5.1b, d	L.5.4a,c	
	RL.5.2	RI.5.2	W.5.3	SL.5.6	L.5.5a,c	
	RL.5.3	RI.5.7	W.5.7			
	RL.5.4	RI.5.9	W.5.9			
	RL.5.5					
	RL.5.6					
Grade 6	RL.6.1	RI.6.1	W.6.1a-e	SL.6.1b, d	L.6.4a,c	RST.6-8.1
	RL.6.2	RI.6.2	W.6.2	SL.6.6	L.6.5a,c	RST.6-8.2
	RL.6.3	RI.6.6	W.6.3		L.6.1b	RST.6-8.4
	RL.6.4	RI.6.7	W.6.7			
	RL.6.5	RI.6.9	W.6.9			
	RL.6.6					
	RL.6.9					