



The Serum Run (B1 - Lower Intermediate)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Have you ever travelled to anywhere extremely cold in winter? If so, where?
2. What are the major difficulties for anyone living in a remote town with a very cold climate?
3. What do you know about Alaska?

B – Listen and answer

Read these incomplete statements. Then listen (without reading) and complete them.

1. In the winter of 1924-25, there were about _____ people living in Nome, Alaska.
2. An antitoxin was needed because the disease diphtheria had already killed _____.
3. It couldn't be transported to Nome by road or air because of the bad _____.
4. The antitoxin was transported to the town of Nenana, which is _____ miles from Nome.
5. From there it was taken to Nome by a dog-sled relay of _____ men and about _____ dogs.
6. The journey was completed in just over _____ days.
7. The antitoxin was delivered on _____, 1925.
8. Statues of one of the dogs now stand in Anchorage, Alaska, and New York's _____.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. Why are the winters in Nome so cold?
2. How did the diphtheria antitoxin arrive in Nenana?
3. How far did each team travel before handing the antitoxin to the next team?
4. What is the driver of a dog sled called?
5. What happened to some of the men and dogs during the journey?
6. What other problem did the teams have besides the severe cold? Why?
7. Why was it so surprising that the relay had taken 127.5 hours to arrive in Nome?
8. Why do some think Leonhard Seppala and his dog Togo were the real heroes of the race?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change verb tense, or change from singular to plural.)

1. We came to live in this village because the _____ countryside is so beautiful.
2. Thanks to widespread vaccination, many serious _____ of the past are now rare in Europe.
3. _____ were traditionally made from strips of wood. Today some are made from aluminium.
4. The advertisement says these boots will _____ the harsh winter conditions in Canada.
5. The band was _____ of a vocalist, a drummer, a rhythm guitarist and a bass player.
6. When the hotel receptionist _____ us our room key, he also gave us a useful map of the city.

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam? (Paper 1, Reading: Part 6)

Write one word only in each space.

The discovery in Siberia of ancient wooden sleds near to the bones of dogs ¹_____ led scientists to believe that man has used dogs to pull sleds over snow and ice ²_____ at least 8000 years. Dog sleds have long been used ³_____ indigenous peoples in Alaska and parts of Canada, too.

Another name for dog-sledding is 'mushing'. ⁴_____ is thought that this comes from the French word 'marcher' which ⁵_____ to walk, march, or move. The first European mushers were French explorers and hunters who began to colonise Canada in the 1600s. They learnt dog-sledding from the native Iroquois hunters who, at the time, ⁶_____ already used dogs for transport for many centuries.

F – Write about it

Write about a heroic rescue operation that took place in your country. Mention:

- where/when it took place;
 - who/what was in danger;
 - who carried out the rescue;
 - how it was carried out;
 - how the rescue was celebrated.
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Answers: The Serum Run (B1)

B – Listen and answer

1. 1,400 2. four children 3. weather conditions 4. 675 5. 20 – 150 6. five 7. 1st February 8. Central Park

C – Read and answer

1. Because Nome is in the Arctic region of Alaska. 2. It arrived by rail from Anchorage.
3. Between around 18 and 40 miles. 4. A musher. 5. Some of the men suffered from frost-bite and some of the dogs died. 6. They also had the problem of visibility, which was reduced almost to zero because of the snow and wind. 7. Because until then the fastest recorded time for this route by dog sled was nine days. 8. Because they travelled the longest and most dangerous part of the route.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. surrounding 2. diseases 3. dog sleds 4. endure 5. made up 6. handed

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam?

1. has 2. for 3. by 4. It 5. means 6. had