

Read Words in Context

READ!

Racers on Four Paws

Every March, teams of sled dogs **compete** in a special race called the Iditarod [I-dit-er-ohd]. They pull a sled over more than a thousand miles of ice and snow across Alaska from Anchorage to Nome. The fastest team wins.

Winning depends on having a good team of dogs. Most drivers **prefer** huskies, since this breed of dog has a lot of energy. A race as hard as the Iditarod would **exhaust** weaker dogs.

The dogs and their human drivers train all year. They need to **maintain** good health and fitness so that they're ready for this difficult race.

The dog at the head of the team is the lead dog. During the race, drivers **assume** that their lead dog will follow their commands right away. If the lead dog **hesitates**, the other dogs will be confused. They might become upset or **annoyed**.

Drivers are careful not to **endanger** the dogs. They look for dangerous patches of ice. They watch the team for signs of trouble. Limping or a drooping head may **indicate** that a dog is injured or sick. The driver must not **neglect** a dog that needs help.

There are several rest stops along the way. At a rest stop, the driver will **release** the dogs from their harnesses. The driver and dogs **seize** the opportunity to eat and rest. The resting time **relieves** the lead dog from its job for a while.

After this rest, the team gets back to the race and **advances** over the icy trail. The first teams may reach the finish line in about ten days.

Dog-sled racing **fascinates** many people. They become fans of one driver and team and are there every year to cheer them on!



Vocabulary Words

advance	indicate
annoy	maintain
assume	neglect
compete	prefer
endanger	release
exhaust	relieve
fascinate	seize
hesitate	

Word Learning Tip!

A **verb** is a word that shows actions or feelings. Often a verb comes right after a noun or pronoun. Sometimes you can spot a verb because it ends in *-s*, *-ed*, or *-ing*. Sometimes a verb has a helping word such as *may*, *can*, *could*, *shall*, *should*, *will*, or *would* in front of it. You can use these clues to learn new words.

Vocabulary Building Strategy

Use Context Clues When you come across a verb you do not know, look at the context. Often, you will find clues that help you understand what someone or something is doing or feeling. These clues will help you determine the meaning of the unfamiliar verb.