Answer Key – Chapter Questions
Chapter 1 – Into the Primitive
1. What kind of dog is Buck? Buck is part St. Bernard, and part Scotch sheep dog.

2. What is unusual about the narration of this story? It is third person limited narration, through the eyes of Buck who is a dog.

3. Name another book that has similar narration. Answers will vary – but War Horse is similar with the narration through the eyes of a horse.

4. Explain why Buck is called the “undisputed master” of Judge Miller’s place. He is superior to the other dogs of the ranch, and he has the run of the place.

5. What is the setting of the novel? How does the gold rush affect the setting? It begins in Santa Clara Valley, California in 1896, during the gold rush of the Klondike. It then changes to the Yukon which is between Alaska and present-day Canada. The gold rush affects the setting because it made it dangerous for Buck. The demand for sled dogs went through the roof because everyone wanted to get rich quick. He would not have been stolen if there wasn’t a gold rush.

6. Explain why Manual is referred to as an “undesirable acquaintance”. He is a gardener on the ranch. He is involved in the kidnapping. Buck initially trusts him because he knows him.

7. What caused Manual’s downfall? He is a gambler, and he loses more than he wins. His gambling habit makes it difficult to take care of his wife and children, so the kidnapping money is very appealing to him.

8. What happened to Buck when he was put into the stranger’s hands? At first Buck attacks the stranger, but the stranger quickly pulls on the rope around Buck’s neck until Buck passes out. He is then put on a train.

9. Explain how Buck knew he was on a train. He recognizes the train whistle, and remembers the rocking motion of being on a train.

10. Describe the fight between Buck and the kidnapper. Buck woke up to the man going for his throat. Buck bit his hand and did a lot of damage. Buck was thrown down, chocked repeatedly, and put in a cage.

11. What is denied Buck during the next two days? Food and water. What is he determined to do? Never to let anyone put a rope around his neck again.

12. Describe the interaction between Buck and the man in the red sweater. Buck charged the man in the red sweater, who hits him repeatedly with a club. Then the man brings him something to eat. Although he does not want the man to pat his head, he allows it because he realizes he has to submit to the law of the club. He can’t beat the man if he has a club. Where is he now? He is in Seattle, Washington.

13. What is primitive law? It is the idea that “might takes right”. The man won because he had a club.

14. Who are Buck’s new owners? French Canadians named Perrault and Francois. Where was he brought? On a ship called the Narwhal. They are going North to Yukon territory.

15. Who was sold with Buck, and what other dogs did he meet? A newfoundland named Curly was sold with Buck. While on the ship he met a very tough dog named Spitz, and another dog named Dave.

16. Describe the change that is transforming Buck. He is departing from the civilized world and moving into the primitive world.
17. What is the conflict of the novel? Buck will eventually have to decide between the primitive world (answering the call of the wild), or returning to the civilized world.

18. What new experience does the chapter end with? He comes in contact with snow for the first time in his life.