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Pre-Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

The best way to travel

In the most northern state of the USA you’ll see every type of modern transport. But during the winter months the state of Alaska becomes one of the coldest parts of the world. Temperatures fall as low as –50˚C. Car engines can freeze and even if your car starts, the snow and ice on the road can make travel impossible. When the weather is like this, the best way to travel is with a team of huskies pulling you. That’s according to people like Geoff Roland who prefer travelling by dog sledge. ‘Huskies might not be as fast as a modern snowmobile but they are better for the environment. The journey is also much quieter than by snowmobile. It’s what makes travel through the wilderness so enjoyable.’

When Geoff was younger he took part in the *Iditarod*. The word *Iditarod* originally comes from an old native American word meaning ‘a faraway place’ but nowadays it’s the name of the world’s longest dog sledge race which takes place in Alaska each spring. The 1,600 kilometre route follows the old roads which the original Indians once used. As years passed, aeroplanes and snowmobiles became more common and people started to forget about the old trails. But in 1973 a group of people started the race in order to maintain Alaska’s history and its traditional form of transport. Some people criticise the *Iditarod* because they think it’s cruel for the dogs but Geoff disagrees: ‘Huskies are natural racers. I think they’re much happier when they’re in front of the sledge.’

cruel(adj) /kruːəl/ causing pain to people or animals