

*Hatchet*. A 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Literacy Focus Unit  
created by  
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## FEATURED SELECTION

*Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen. New York: Bradbury Press, 1987.

*Hatchet* is a Newbery Honor winning story that begins at a fourth grade level and focuses around the adventures and misfortunes of a boy named Brian. While flying to see his dad in the Canadian Oil Fields, the pilot of the plane Brian is flying has a heart attack. Brian must land the plane in the forest. Because of his situation, Brian is forced to learn to survive in the wilderness. He faces many dangers including hunger, animal attacks, and even a tornado. With no other choice, Brian is forced to adapt and make the most of what he has to survive.

## RELATED MATERIALS

*Brian's Winter* by Gary Paulsen. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1996. 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Level.

For those who have read *Hatchet*, they know that Brian is rescued and survives his time in the wilderness. Have you ever wondered if he wasn't rescued what would have happened? This is an alternate ending to the *Hatchet* that looks at the possibility that Brian wasn't rescued and he just survive the winter in the Canadian wilderness.

*Brian's Return* by Gary Paulsen. New York: Random House, 1999. 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Level.

In *Hatchet* and *Brian's Winter*, Brian survives life in the wild. In *Brian's Return*, he faces a new struggle called high school. As he comes back into society, he feels more alone than ever and decides he must go back to the wilderness to really find himself again.

*The Last Wilderness: Images of the Canadian Wild* by Freeman Patterson. Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1994. All Ages.

This book provides students with a real life glimpse into the Canadian Wilderness that Brian was trapped in. It is mostly made up of pictures but it also has some dialogue describing some of the photography.

*Paradise Creek: A True Story of Adventure in the Canadian Wilderness* by David Scott. Ics Books, 1996. 4<sup>th</sup> Grade and up Level.

This is a story about two men who are dropped off in the Canadian Wilderness in search of a cabin that they are supposed to stay in. It offers students another look at how two men are forced to survive in the wild, but this time it is a true story.

*Wilderness Survival* by Gregory J. Davenport. PA: Stackpole Books, 1998. All Ages.

This book offers survival tips to students so they can see what kind of techniques would need to be used in real life to survive in the wilderness. This allows them to see what Brian might have had to do to stay alive.

## **GOALS**

- Students will look at Brian and understand the various reasons why he might have been scared.
- Students will understand what characteristics make up the Canadian Wilderness.
- Students will learn what it means to be self-dependent and rely solely on oneself.
- Students will learn the importance of modern conveniences.
- Students will learn various techniques for survival in the wilderness.

## **STANDARDS**

- 4.1.3: Use knowledge of root words to determine the meaning of unknown words within a passage.
- 4.1.6: Distinguish and interpret words with multiple meanings by using context clues.
- 4.2.1: Use the organization of informational text to strengthen comprehension.
- 4.2.3: Make and confirm predictions about text by using prior knowledge and ideas presented in the text itself, including illustrations, titles, topic sentences, important words, foreshadowing clues and direct quotations.

- 4.3.2: Identify the main events of the plot, including their causes and the effects of each event on the future actions, and the major theme from the story action.
- 4.3.3: Use knowledge of the situation, setting, and character's traits, motivations, and feelings to determine the causes for that character's actions.

## **UNIT PLAN**

### **Pre-Reading**

Activity: Teacher brings in short video of Canadian wildlife and wilderness. The teacher also has a wildlife expert (DNR officer, local parks worker) come in and discuss the different types of wildlife one might encounter if they were stranded in the wilderness and what one would have to do to survive. The students will do a quickwrite of what they might be scared of if they were stranded in the wild alone with nothing but a hatchet.

Introduce Key Words: Turbulence, Pulverize, Horde, Persistent, Stabilize, Survival, Consuming, Depression, Exasperation, Cessna

Grouping: whole group

### **Reading**

Activity: The teacher will read the first chapter aloud to introduce the book to students. As the teacher reads through the first chapter, he/she will stop to look at the main points that shape the novel such as the plane crash and the fact that Brian is alone now. Assessment will be done based on whether or not the students get the assigned readings done for the day. The teacher will be able to assess if they read or not by reading the journal responses the students will write after reading each chapter and describing what they thought about the chapter.

Accommodations: For struggling readers, develop a word wall with difficult words in the book that we will go over. Create an outline of the chapters for them to read prior to reading the chapter so they know the main points to look for.

Grouping: individual, buddy reading

### **Responding**

Activity: While reading the novel, students will write in their writer's notebooks. They will discuss their thoughts on the chapter that was assigned for that day. One topic will be based on prediction of what they think Brian will have to do to survive after the crash. Another topic will be how they think he will react when he enters society

again. One more topic would be to put themselves in Brian's situation, what would they do? A fourth topic would be if the students could have one modern appliance to have with them if they got stranded, what would it be and why? Assessment will be based on how in depth the students go with their responses. If they are vague, it will be obvious they didn't read the chapter. The teacher will look for different types of writing such as predicting, comparing and contrasting, and application. Another activity that the teacher will do as the students read through the novel will be to have the students keep a survival guide. This can be done inside their writer's notebooks or in a separate notebook. The students will write down their own tips for survival for each animal or problem that Brian encounters. As they come to it in the book, they will write their solution in their "survival guide".

Grouping: Individual

### **Exploring**

Activity: Students will think of various habitats and research all the characteristics about that habitat. They will look at wildlife, weather, what grows in the habitat etc. After doing their research, students will complete a Venn Diagram comparing their habitat with the Canadian Wilderness that Brian is stranded in. They will compare and contrast characteristics that Gary Paulsen uses in the novel. Students will then share their findings with the class and present on their habitat and explain their characteristics. The teacher will create a rubric for this outlining what is expected during the presentations (time, detail, equal participation, etc.).

Grouping: partners

### **Applying**

Activity: Students will pick a part in the story that was their favorite and draw a picture that they think captures the scene. The teacher will hang these on the wall to demonstrate different parts of the story visually. After that, the students will break into small groups and in their groups they will discuss the various survival strategies they had been writing about in their journals. They will design a mini survival guide in their groups and when they are finished, the class as a whole will come up with a class survival guide by combining all their ideas into a big guide. The class will make copies of this survival guide and hand them out to the other classes in the elementary. Assessment will be done by evaluating involvement and cooperation. As a class, they can lose points for recess or free time etc.

Grouping: individual, small groups, whole group

## TIME SCHEDULE

<p>Day 1</p> <p>Video/Vocabulary/ Quickwrite Intro. to book w/ speaker Ch. 1 For tomorrow Read Ch. 2</p>	<p>Day 2</p> <p>Ch. 2</p> <p>Talk about notebooks and survival guides.</p>	<p>Day 3</p> <p>Ch. 3</p> <p>External/internal conflict</p>	<p>Day 4</p> <p>Ch. 4</p>	<p>Day 5</p> <p>Ch. 5</p> <p>Adaptations made by Brian up till this point</p>
<p>Day 6</p> <p>Ch. 6</p>	<p>Day 7</p> <p>Ch. 7</p> <p>Discuss any Questions so far/vocab.</p>	<p>Day 8</p> <p>Teacher reads Ch. 8</p>	<p>Day 9</p> <p>Ch. 9</p> <p>Turn in notebooks for checking up till this point.</p>	<p>Day 10</p> <p>Ch. 10</p> <p>Hand back notebooks</p>
<p>Day 11</p> <p>Ch. 11</p>	<p>Day 12</p> <p>Ch. 12</p> <p>Talk about habitat activity and give partners</p>	<p>Day 13</p> <p>Ch. 13</p> <p>Work on habitat research</p>	<p>Day 14</p> <p>Ch. 14</p> <p>Work on habitat research</p>	<p>Day 15</p> <p>Teacher reads Ch. 15</p> <p>Give presentations</p>
<p>Day 16</p> <p>Teacher Reads Ch. 16</p> <p>Give Presentations</p>	<p>Day 17</p> <p>Ch. 17</p> <p>As a class, do a timeline of important events up to this point</p>	<p>Day 18</p> <p>Ch. 18</p> <p>Have students write in their journals what they think will happen in the last chapter</p>	<p>Day 19</p> <p>Ch. 19</p> <p>Finish book Get into small groups and discuss survival guide tips. Organize class guide.</p>	<p>Day 20</p> <p>Finish class survival guide and pass around school. Watch the movie that goes with the book on a Friday.</p>

## **ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST**

- Journal entries complete
- Individual survival guides
- Complete/clear presentations
- Drawing of favorite part in the story
- Small groups/class survival guide

## **IDEAS TAKEN FROM:**

<http://www.mce.k12tn.net/survival/hatchet/hatchet.htm>

<http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/hatch/hatchettg.htm>

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/homepage.html/103-4192405-7715836>