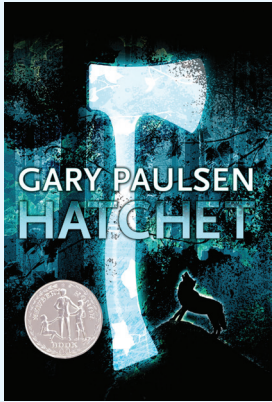# Hatchet

AUTHOR Gary Paulsen

EDITION 1st

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LA BOOKSHELF KX203

VOICETEXT Yes

LEXILE LEVEL 1020L

GRADE EQUIVALENT 5-6

OVERVIEW

This award-winning contemporary classic is the survival story with which all others are compared — and a page-turning, heart-stopping adventure, recipient of the Newbery Honor.

Brian Robertson, sole passenger on a Cessna 406, is on his way to visit his father when the tiny bush plane crashes in the Canadian wilderness. With nothing but his clothing, a tattered windbreaker, and the hatchet his mother had given him as a present, Brian finds himself completely alone. Challenged by his fear and despair — and plagued with the weight of a dreadful secret he's been keeping since his parent's divorce — Brian must tame his inner demons in order to survive. It will take all his know-how and determination, and more courage than he knew he possessed.

SUGGESTED GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

• Poetry Challenge

• Elements of setting

• Venn Diagram

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Gary Paulsen was born on May 17, 1939. The product of a difficult childhood, Paulsen ran away from home at the age of fourteen. His experience in diverse jobs and a wide range of interests have provided the basis for much of his written work. His stories are woven from his personal experiences, and many of them feature outdoor settings and the harmony of nature. Several of his books deal with the theme of survival and human endurance. *Hatchet*, which has become a modern-day classic, won him the Newbery Honor Award.

Paulsen's interest in dog sledding led to his participation in the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. The impact of this experience on his life is brought to life in several of his outstanding books, including *Woodsong* and *Dogsong*, another Newbery Honor Award winner. His close relationship with his dogs and all of nature is delicately blended into his stories about the race, allowing the reader to experience the true feeling of being out on the trail.

Paulsen lives in New Mexico with his wife, artist Ruth Wright Paulsen, who has illustrated several of his books.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

• Relationships with parents and family. How are relationships with different members of your family the same or different?

• What is survival? How do humans survive? How do animals survive? What are some similarities between animals and humans as far as what they need to survive?

• What items would you need to survive if you ended up on a deserted island? Have students come up with a list of 5 or 10 and have a class/group discussion to facilitate conversation.

VOCABULARY

grimace (*verb*) – to twist one's face in order to express displeasure
EXAMPLE: to grimace may look like the face you make when biting into a lemon

transmission (*noun*) – the act of sending a signal or message to a certain destination, usually to communicate
EXAMPLE: a message sent over cable wires is a transmission

visualize (*verb*) – to attempt to see an image or concept inside your mind without it being physically present
EXAMPLE: some athletes may visualize a trophy or prize before a game or match

vicious (*adj*) – a person or thing that is evil or cruel, usually in an intentional way
EXAMPLE: a wild animal that attacks you

Hatchet

flammable (*adj*) – something that is easily set on fire
EXAMPLE: dry wood is flammable

consuming (*verb*)– to use up, destroy, or devour
EXAMPLE: a forest fire can consume all the trees in the area

smolder (*verb*) – to burn or smoke slowly without flames
EXAMPLE: a hot ash or ember that falls out of a fire is smoldering

sputter (*verb*) – making a small explosive sound to signify trouble or a problem
EXAMPLE: the sound someone makes after holding their breath for a long time

emphasize (*verb*) – to stress the importance of something
EXAMPLE: a politician may raise their voice during a speech in order to emphasize a point

encase (*verb*) – to completely surround or enclose with something
EXAMPLE: a new device you purchase may be encased in plastic

LITERARY DEVICES

Describe all below in the context of the story.

Conflict: An issue that is introduced in the rising action, is faced during the climax, and is usually resolved during the falling action.
EXAMPLE: Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. Society

Setting: The time and place in which a story occurs

Plot: The sequence of events in a narrative

Protagonist: The main character of story, novel or a play
EXAMPLE: Katniss Everdeen in *Hunger Games*

Mood: The general feeling or feeling of a narrative

Imagery: The use of multi-sensory language to create visual "images" of actions, objects and ideas.
EXAMPLE: Where the ocean kissed the Southern shore

WRITING PROMPTS

• How important is the hatchet that Brian's mother gave him in this story? Could he survive without it?

• Imagine being in Brian's situation. How would you survive?

• Think of Brian's actions and ideas towards his survival. How did he do things right? Did he do anything that you would never do?

• Imagine Brian's first day back into civilization after being deserted for 54 days. Use senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing) to describe what it would feel like to be back home.

COMMON CORE BIG IDEAS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

SUPPORTING MEDIA

Short film "Hatchet"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z20MO8ZNBL0

Film based on book *A Cry in the Wild* (1990)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMGi3kN1ESI

WAYS TO HELP DIVERSE LEARNERS

• Preview the book/big ideas

• Watch the movie trailer for "A Cry in the Wild"

• Teacher verbally reads the book while students follow along

• Students with print disabilities can read via the audio version

• Allow students to use a scribe or assistive technology for writing prompt response

• Allow students to give an oral report for the writing prompts

RESOURCES

youtube.com

corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/5/

scholastic.com