



Novel Guide for Gifted and Advanced Readers



This guide is appropriate for use with gifted and advanced readers. It addresses their affective and cognitive needs through questions that can be used for discussion. Depending on the length of the book, students should read the entire book before conducting the bibliotherapy lesson, the **Group Discussion** using the higher order questions and the **After Discussion** activities. Students should be given the **Before Discussion** activities to complete during their time while reading the book. If the book is exceptionally long, you may need to modify this lesson plan. See **Novel Guide: Notes for Implementing** for additional procedures and recommendations.

Book Title: *Hatchet*

Author: Gary Paulsen

Interest Level: 5th -8th grade

Lexile: 1020L

Length: 181

Guide developed by: Michelle Tipton

Summary Brian Robeson, a 13 year old boy, is traveling to visit his father for the summer in Canada when the Cessna he is riding in crashes after the pilot has a heart attack. The story is about how he survives alone in the Canadian wilderness with only his hatchet that his mother had given him as a present. He has to rely on knowledge from things he had watched on television or only read about in order to persevere and live alone in the woods.

Conceptual Connections

Conceptual Lens: Survival

Other Key Concepts: change, needs

Essential Understandings:

- Living things have certain basic needs in order to survive.
- Survival brings change.

Essential Questions:

- What do living things need to survive?
- How does your attitude affect your ability to survive?
- How does survival bring change in the physical or mental state of an individual?
- What is the difference between surviving and thriving?
- How may change be necessary to survive?

Affective Focus (Bibliotherapy)

Introductory Activity/Hook

All living things have certain basic needs in order to survive. Introduce Maslow's hierarchy of needs to the students. Have students make a chart a list items into needs/wants.

Menu of Bibliotherapy Questions

Identification:

- Where does Brian find shelter? Why does he consider this find lucky?
- What did Brian do for food? Water?
- What wild visitor helps Brian figure out how to make fire? How exactly did he make the fire?
- What did the fire mean to him?
- What tools was Brian able to make?
- As Brian learns to survive in the wilderness, he discovers that he is very different from the person he was when he began his trip. What are the differences in the way the new Brian thinks?
- How does Brian's attitude affect the things he feels he needs or wants?

Catharsis:

- How did Brian feel when he realized that he may never be found?
- Why did Brian feel about the fire emotionally?
- How do the accomplishments of building successful tools for hunting make Brian feel?
- What do you think Brian was feeling when he tells himself that self-pity doesn't work?
- How would you feel if you were Brian? Would you be positive, in-despair, focused? Explain.

Insight:

- How do you feel when you don't have what you want?
- How do you feel when you don't have what you need? Is there a difference?
- How does it make you feel when you give others what they want or need?

Universalization/Follow up Activity

Students will contact the school counselor, a local food bank, and other local organizations to research the needs of their community. They will then organize a service learning project such as a can food drive, gather gently used coats/shoes, school supplies for the next school year, or whatever they feel is the greatest need at the time in the community.

Reading Comprehension: Independent Work and Group Discussion

To foster strong reading comprehension, literacy skills, and love of literature, students need to read critically, respond to what they read with text-based evidence, develop a robust vocabulary, and engage in high level discussion with peers. The following activities address these components.

Before Group Discussion (Activities for students to complete independently)

A. Knowledge and Comprehension Questions related to the novel. Students use sticky notes to locate answers in the text as they read. Teacher may use student's answers for a grade.

Knowledge Questions

- What is the setting of the story?
- How does the tornado change his "home"?
- When does Brian give up hope that he will be found?
- Describe Brian's new home in the woods.
- What is the secret that haunts Brian throughout the story?
- How did Brian change once he learned to hunt?
- How did the survival kit from the plane change Brian?
- How long did he have to survive alone in the woods?

Comprehension Questions

- "If you keep walking back from good luck, he thought, you'll come to bad luck". What does Brian mean by this statement?
- Brian recalls a lesson from his English teacher about motivation. What was this lesson and how did it help Brian?
- Why does Brian spend so much time rebuilding his shelter after the tornado?
- Explain the following situation: Brian blamed his mom for the awful situation he was in, but in fact, she made it possible for him to survive.
- How is Brian's fear both helpful and hurtful to him? How does he deal with his fear?
- How does Brian feel about his mother? How does Brian feel about the secret?
- Why does Brian call *fire* his friend?

B. Vocabulary Study: Students will complete the following activities with vocabulary from the novel. The activities may be used for a grade, but should also be included in the discussion.

- Students look up the word in the dictionary or online, noting the definition that best fits how the word is used in the passage. Also, determine possible synonyms and evaluate the author's use of the word in the passage.
- Students will complete a graphic organizer provided by the teacher.

Vocabulary Words

- cowering (p. 1)
- keening (p. 32)
- save (p. 61)
- rivulets (p.66)
- exulted (p.119)
- seared (p.123)
- incessant (p. 150)
- boughs (p. 151)
- stymied (p. 156)
- eddy (p.159)

Group Discussion: Teacher-facilitated small group discussion. Teacher may choose to provide students with a set of the questions prior to the discussion. Students should also be encouraged to create their own questions.

Higher-Level Questions (using Bloom's categories):

1. Application

- Brian's time in the woods taught him to really hear and see his surroundings. What are sights or sounds in your daily life that you may overlook or ignore?
- What would you miss the most if you were alone in the wilderness?
- Do you have any survival skills that would help if you were to be lost in the woods? Explain. What skills would you need to survive?
- When Brian retrieves the survival kit from the plane, he finds many things to make his survival easier. Do you think that he should use/save those items? Why?

2. Analysis

- Brian makes a plan for landing the plane. What conclusions can you make about Brian because of the actions he takes before the crash?
- There are times that Brian suffers from great despair. How does Brian deal with those moments?
- Brian thought that his father didn't understand the reason for the divorce because he didn't know the secret. How did the secret hurt Brian possibly more than it did his parents?
- Compare the old Brian before the crash with the new Brian at the end of the story. How has he changed?

3. Evaluation

- How do you think that Brian's attitude and perseverance helped or hurt his survival?
- Was Brian's predicament a situation of luck or something different entirely? Explain your answer.
- What impressed you most about Brian?
- What does this story tell you about human needs?
- Do you think Hatchet is an appropriate title for the story?

4. Synthesis

- If Brian could prepare a survival kit with 10 items of his choice, what would he take with him into the wilderness?
- Would it have been better for everyone if Brian had told his father the secret or talked to his mother about it? Why or why not? How could it have changed things?
- How could the life lessons Brian learned through this experience help him with other situations later in life?
- How would have Brian's struggle to survive changed if he had refused the hatchet that his mother had given him?

After Group Discussion: Activities for students to complete with a partner, in a small group, or individually. Activities may be used for a grade.

A. Connections to the Curriculum: Students will make connections to a curriculum area (math, science, social studies, language arts, art, or careers) using one of the concepts from the story. The product should reflect creativity as well as critical thinking.

- **Language Arts-** (1.) Students will reread the directions for “how to” make one of the tools that Brian used during his ordeal, how to fish with a spear, or build a shelter. Then students will write their own directions for doing something in which they are the expert.
(2.) Make a diary to express how Brian was feeling throughout his struggle in the wilderness. Create at least 6 entries.
(3.) Create a presentation of a survival kit with only ten things that you would need if you were going to stay alone in the wilderness for two months. All ten items would need to fit into a large suitcase.
- **Social Studies-** Using google maps, students will investigate the area in which Brian was forced to survive. Students will start in Hampton, New York and make their way to Lac des Ouefs, Canada. They will also label this area on a paper map to learn about the geography.
- **Science/Health-** (1.) Students will research two of the foods that Brian lived on in the wilderness and make some sort of visual presentation. Such as the animals from the story such as porcupine, moose, black bear, kingfisher, sunfish, perch, bluegill, snapping turtle, skunk, snowshoe, cottontail, ruffed grouse, or the hazelnut, raspberry, and chokecherry plant.
(2.) Students research a heart attack, coronary thrombosis to understand what happened to the pilot. They will report what actually happens inside the heart, the cause, the symptoms, the treatment, and statistics.
(3.) Students will research tornadoes, the cause and effects and weather patterns.
- **Art-** (1.) Chapters 6-12 offer descriptions in great detail of the scenery from Brian’s perspective. Students will illustrate this scenery. (2.) Illustrate a new cover for the book.
(3.) Create a missing persons poster for Brian.
- **Careers-** Students will research a career of their choice from the book such as pilots, game wardens, forestry, mechanical engineer, oil-workers, lawyers.
- **Language Arts/Creative Drama-** (1.) Students will work in pairs to act out the directions from the how-to papers. One student will read the directions and the other will do the actions. (2.) Students perform a newscast where they interview Brian’s mom or dad and report him missing.

B. Creative Reading: Using the following list of creative products, students will complete a project reflecting their personal connection with the novel (students may determine their own creative product with the approval of the teacher):

1. Create a puppet play based on a favorite scene in the story
2. Create a poem based on the novel, a character, or favorite scene
3. Illustrate a favorite scene(s) from the story
4. Create a story board of the plot of the story
5. Write a screen play based on the story
6. Create a new ending for the story
7. Create a map of the location(s) of the story
8. Create a mural representative of the story and characters
9. Extend the story into a sequel
10. Rewrite a portion of the story from another character’s perspective
11. Rewrite the story in another time or culture
12. Create an online product: infographic, video, character blog, etc.
13. Write a song that one or more of the characters might sing
14. Create an interpretative dance for the story
15. Student idea for a creative product related to the story