

Hatchet



By

Gary Paulsen

A Novel Study
By Nat Reed

Hatchet



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Gary Paulsen, a renowned author of novels for young people, presently lives in New Mexico. Three of Gary Paulsen's novels have been acclaimed as Newbery Honor Books: **Hatchet**, **Dogsong**, and **The Winter Room**. A sequel to **Hatchet**, entitled **The River**, has also been published. (**The River** is a sequel to **Hatchet**).

Some of his other novels include:

Brian's Winter (sequel)
Brian's Return (sequel)
The Crossing
Dancing Carl
The Island
The Winter Room
Tracker
Woodsong
The Legend of Red Horse Canyon
Escape From Fire Mountain
Danger on Midnight River.

Gary Paulsen is an avid outdoorsman who competed in the Iditarod, a dog sled race across Alaska. He also frequently sails the Pacific Ocean.

About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Preface

The activities, questions and exercises included in this novel study program are meant to supplement the reading and enjoyment of this excellent novel. The program incorporates both pre-reading and post-reading activities which address:

- Concept development
- Vocabulary enrichment
- Reading and writing skills
- Research and problem solving strategies.

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- d) drawing inferences from the text;
- e) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. Most activities in this novel study have been designed for individual or small group work. However, the Discussion and Creative Writing suggestions lend themselves to whole group sharing, evaluation, and reflection. The number and variety of activities allow the teacher much choice and discretion. Research components of the unit lend themselves to working in collaboration with the school librarian.

Themes which are in integral part of the novel include:

- Ecology and the environment (northern Canada)
- Perseverance in the face of adversity
- Divorce.

Both the novel and this program can be utilized as part of a larger thematic unit of study.

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Possible Concepts Which Could be Taught From Hatchet

Listed below are several concepts which could be taught in conjunction with the novel. The definitions are meant as suggestions – the teacher may wish to make alterations.

1. **CRISIS** – a time of intense difficulty or danger
2. **CHARACTER** – the qualities of an individual which make that person distinctive (different from others).
- 3/4. **SETTING** – that place and time in which a story or event takes place.
5. **RESOURCES** – something or someone to which one can turn to for help or support to achieve one's purpose.
6. **CONFLICT** – struggle between opposing forces or powers
7. **PANIC** – sudden and overpowering fear, especially when affecting a large number of people at the same time
- 8/9. **PERSEVERANCE** – persistence in any purpose or enterprise in spite of discouraging circumstances.
- 10/11. **PATIENCE** – the quality or habit of enduring with little complaint.
12. **DISCOURAGEMENT** – the disheartening or dampening of someone's courage.
13. **RESOLVE** – to make up one's mind to a course of conduct or action.
14. **ENVIRONMENT** – the collection of all external and internal conditions affecting the existence, growth and welfare of organisms.
- 15/16. **COINCIDENCE** – a circumstance agreeing with another, often implying accident.
17. **STRENGTH** – the quality or property of being strong and able to sustain the application of force without yielding or breaking.
18. **SELF PITY** – feeling of grief or pain awakened by one's own misfortunes.
19. **CLIMAX** – a progressive increase in force throughout a rhetorical or musical passage culminating at the close.

Student Exercises



Chapter 1

Vocabulary

The following Word Box identifies a number of words from Chapter One which may be new to some readers. Look up the meaning of any unfamiliar words in the dictionary, then from the sentences beneath the Word Box fill in the blank with the word which gives the correct meaning to each sentence.

extension	initial	contract	discomfort	designed
consumed	slewed	stout	complicated	audible

1. The airplane was so noisy that the pilot's voice was barely_____.
2. The canoe was fastened to the trailer by a _____rope.
3. An aircraft is _____ to brave the roughest weather.
4. After an _____ burst of anger, Brian came to accept the fact.
5. The Cessna 406 _____ dangerously in the high winds.
6. Brian _____ too many berries.
7. The pilot felt his chest _____ with a sharp pain.
8. The steering column became an _____ of his body.
9. The Secret made Brian's life very _____.
10. The hard airplane seats were a source of extreme _____ to all the passengers.

Literary Device

Personification is a device used by writers in which nonhuman objects are granted human attributes. An example of personification can be found early in this Chapter. What object is being personified? What mood does this device create?

Reading

1. Why was conversation almost impossible during the plane trip?

2. Describe the pilot's appearance and personality from what we already know of him.

3. In what town did the plane trip begin?

--

4. What was Brian's father's profession?

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5. Why do you think Brian objected to his mother referring to his father as his ***father***, rather than his ***dad***?

6. What did Brian mean when he said that having a hatchet in his belt would look *hokey*?

7. What *crisis* does Brian face at the very end of this chapter?

8. What details does the introduction establish about the setting and main character?

Activities

1. Pilot Interview.

Interview a person who has his/her pilot's license and have the pilot briefly explain the important instruments used in flying a plane and the general procedure followed by the pilot when landing and taking off. Record your interview by one of the following methods: a) audio/visual b) audio c) written.



2. Charting the Route.

a) Although we aren't told Brian's exact destination, we do know the general area. Brian is going to visit his father who is working on the oil fields in the Canadian Arctic ("*on the tree line where the tundra started and the forests ended*"). From these two important clues, try to determine more specifically the destination of Brian's flight (i.e. which province or territory, and what specific region of the province/territory?) You may wish to include a map showing Brian's approximate destination.

b) Calculate the approximate distance from Hampton, New York to Brian's destination, and the length of time his journey would take if he was flying at an average air speed of 80 mph (128 km/hr) (this includes stops). (The fact sheet for the Cessna T182 included with this Study Guide might be of assistance in calculating the number of stops which would be necessary.) File a possible **flight plan** to show your route including any possible refueling stops along the way.

3. Heart Attack:

a) List at least six things which happened to the pilot during his heart attack.



b) Either through investigating written material on the subject or by interviewing someone in the medical field, find out what causes a heart attack, and what happens to the human body when a heart attack occurs. Include any first aid measures which might be taken to assist someone having such an attack. From your investigation, do you think the author's description of the pilot's heart attack is realistic?

4. Engineering:

The story mentions that Brian’s father was a **mechanical engineer**. What are the responsibilities of a mechanical engineer? In what possible fields would such an engineer work?

5. Cessna Fact Sheets.

Brian mentions that he is flying in a Cessna 406 airplane.



Check out the two accompanying **Cessna** fact sheets (p11-12). The **Turbo Skylane (Model T182)** is probably very similar to the plane in which Brian was a passenger. Select two criteria from each of the four categories given (**Cruise, Specifications, Takeoff and Landing**) to compare the **Turbo Skylane** with the **Crusader (Model T303)** using the Comparison Framework below. An example is shown.

Criteria	Turbo Skylane	Cessna Crusader
Number of Seats	4	6

T182—TURBO SKYLANE



PERFORMANCE

All performance figures are based on gross weight, standard sea level, no wind conditions, unless otherwise specified.

SPECIFICATIONS

Number of Seats	4	Fuel Capacity (Usable)88 gal
Ramp Weight	3112 lbs	Engine	235 hp
Max. Useful Load	1372 lbs	Baggage Allowance	200 lbs

CRUISE

Note: All range and endurance specifications allow a reserve of 45 minutes at stated power.

Service Ceiling	20,000 ft	Economy Performance (10,000 ft)	
Maximum Performance (10,000 ft)		Cruise speed	110 kts
Cruise Speed	145 kts	Range	920 nm
Range	725 nm	Endurance	8.4 hrs
Endurance	5.1 hrs	Fuel Flow	8.9 gph
Fuel Flow	14.3 gph		

TAKEOFF

Takeoff Ground Roll	790 ft
Over 50 ft obstacle	1475 ft
Rate of Climb	965 ft/min
Climb Gradient	670 ft/nm

LANDING

Demonstrated Crosswind Velocity*	15 kts
Approach Speeds	
Flaps Up	70-80 kts
Flaps Down	49 kts
Landing Ground Roll	590 ft
Over 50 ft Obstacle	1350 ft

* Demonstrated Crosswind Velocity is the velocity of the crosswind component for which adequate control of the airplane during takeoff and landing was actually demonstrated during certification tests. The value shown is not considered to be limiting.

T303—CRUSADER



PERFORMANCE

All performance figures are based on gross weight, standard sea level, no wind conditions, unless otherwise specified.

SPECIFICATIONS

Number of Seats	6	Fuel Capacity (Usable)	153 gal
Ramp Weight	5175 lbs	Engines (two)	250 hp ea.
Max. Useful Load	1870 lbs	Baggage Allowance	590 lbs

Remarks: Factory installed equipment may include weather radar.

CRUISE

Note: All range and endurance specifications allow a reserve of 45 minutes at stated power.

Service Ceiling	25,000 ft	Economy Performance (10,000 ft)	
Single Engine	13,000 ft	Cruise speed	140 kts
Maximum Performance (10,000 ft)		Range	1020 nm
Cruise Speed	178 kts	Endurance	7.4 hrs
Range	835 nm	Fuel Flow	110 lbs/hr
Endurance	4.8 hrs		
Fuel Flow	162 lbs/hr		

TAKEOFF

Takeoff Ground Roll	1275 ft
Over 50 ft obstacle	1750 ft
Accelerate Stop Distance	3185 ft
Rate of Climb (Vy)	1480 ft/min
Single Engine (Vyse)	220 ft/min
Climb Gradient871 ft/nm
Single Engine135 ft/nm

LANDING

Demonstrated Crosswind Velocity*	20 kts
Approach Speeds	
Flaps Up	95 kts
Flaps Down	85 kts
Stall Speeds	
Flaps Up	68 kts
Flaps Down	62 kts
Landing Ground Roll	820 ft
Over 50 ft Obstacle	1450 ft

* Demonstrated Crosswind Velocity is the velocity of the crosswind component for which adequate control of the airplane during takeoff and landing was actually demonstrated during certification tests. The value shown is not considered to be limiting.