

Hatchet Study Guide Grade 6
Gary Paulsen

Use this study guide to help you better understand the book. As you read each chapter, answer the following questions. Please do this on looseleaf. Copy the questions and answers. Keep your work neatly stored in a folder. Papers that are badly crumpled will not be accepted in September.

Chapters 1-5 Vocabulary- Define these words and look for them as you read. Does the context in which the word is used match the definition that you found?

amphibious (adj.)	audible (adj.)	hummocks (n.)	turbulence (n.)
wince (v.)	compass (n.)	abating (adj.)	rigid (adj.)
spasm (n.)	grimacing (v.)	massive (adj.)	horizon (n.)
lurched (v.)	tundra (n.)	naturalist (n.)	remnants (n.)
pulverize (v.)	glacial (adj.)	frantic (adj.)	interlaced (v.)

Active Reading Questions

1. Brian uses his skills of observation to take stock of his surroundings. Record what Brian finds out as he checks out his surroundings. Predict how he might use each possession to help him survive. An example is done for you.

<u>Objects Found</u>	<u>Predictions for Use</u>
62 cents in coins	Money is useless in the wilderness.

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Chapter One- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Why was Brian traveling in a bushplane?	
2. Brian was having an especially difficult time accepting his parents' divorce. Explain the reason.	
3. Why did Brian's mother give him a hatchet? How did Brian feel about the gift? What does the fact that he wore it tell us about his feelings towards her?	
4. Summarize the reason Brian was	

<p>“stricken with a white-flash of horror.”</p>	
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Chapter Two- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
<p>1. Evaluate Brian’s first reaction after the pilot’s attack. Was his a normal response? How would you have reacted in a similar situation?</p>	
<p>2. How did Brian know a little about how to fly the plane?</p>	
<p>3. Judge Brian’s decision to wait for the plane to run out of gas.</p>	
<p>4. What plan did Brian envision that would help him to land safely? What did he do to prepare for the landing?</p>	

Chapter Three- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Why did Brian want to find a lake directly in front of him?	
2. Evaluate Brian's ability to handle the controls of the plane. Do you think that a boy his age could realistically land a plane under these circumstances? Explain your opinion.	
3. The author provides a sensory description of the crash landing. Make a list of the sensory details that were used; for example, sights and sounds. One example would be the screams of fear and pain.	
4. Explain what happened to Brian at the end of this chapter.	

Chapter 4- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Describe the secret that was "like a knife cutting into Brian." Why was this thought so upsetting to him?	
2. What new menace plagued Brian with the rising of the sun? How was the problem resolved?	
3. Explain why Brian thought he had both good and bad luck.	
4. Predict what Brian might do to save himself. What would be your first priority?	

Chapter 5- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Brian suffered from great thirst. Why was he reluctant to drink the water? Judge his decision to drink it.	
2. What tool did Brian have with him? How might it be useful?	
3. What thought haunted Brian and caused him to panic?	
4. Relate the lesson that Brian learned from his former English teacher. How did he apply this lesson to his situation?	

Chapters 6-10 Vocabulary- Define these words and look for them as you read. Does the context in which the word is used match the definition that you found?

apparent (adj.) crude (adj.) doze (v.) fierce (adj.)
 gorge (v.) imbedded (v.) indicated (v.) receded (v.)
 blaze (v.) convulse (v.) dormant (adj.) enormous (adj.)
 gratified (adj.) ignite (v.) precious (adj.) smoldered (v.)

Chapter 6- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Brian chose to locate his shelter close to the lake. Explain his reasoning.	
2. Brian was so used to the ready availability of food that he was not prepared to seek it in the wilderness. What did he finally do?	
3. Whom did Brian blame for his predicament? Evaluate his thinking.	
4. Create a word picture of Brian's shelter.	

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Chapter 7- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. What effect did eating so many berries have upon Brian?	
2. Describe the memory that was painful for Brian? Have you ever had a memory that was painful to you? Tell about it.	
3. What sight caused Brian to “do nothing, think nothing”? In your opinion, why wasn’t Brian harmed?	
4. Brian thought that the danger in a city park at night was worse than the danger he faced in the woods. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.	

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Chapter 8- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. What caused Brian to cry until he was all cried out? Have you ever felt this way? Tell about it.	
2. Brian discovered what he believed to be the most important rule of survival. Explain it.	
3. What mistake did Brian make in the use of his hatchet? Why might this have been a costly error?	
4. Brian finally realized a way to make a fire. How did he get his idea?	

Chapter 9- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Describe Brian's first attempts to make fire. Why were they unsuccessful?	
2. How did Brian use his hatchet?	
3. In what way did Brian's past science lessons come in handy? How did he apply this knowledge to his pursuit of fire?	
4. What was Brian's reaction when he finally achieved his goal? Why did this accomplishment make him feel lonely?	

Chapter 10- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Fire brought with it many new advantages for Brian. There was, however, a disadvantage. Explain.	
2. How did Brian’s attempts to read the tracks in the sand culminate in an important discovery?	
3. Why did Brian think that “he had never felt so rich somehow”?	
4. Brian chided himself for not focusing on his rescue. Judge his reasoning.	

Ch. 11-15 Vocabulary- Define these words and look for them as you read. Does the context in which the word is used match the definition that you found?

abrupt (adj.)

gnarled (adj.)

bluff (n.)

initially (adv.)

literally (adv.) lunged (v.) corrosive (adj.) exulted (adj.)

carp (n.) impaired (v.) rectify (v.) refract (v.)

sear (v.) sulfurous (adj.) vital (adj.) camouflage (v.)

Chapter 11- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Brian's mind and body had changed. Describe these changes.	
2. Explain Brian's plan for a signal fire.	
3. How did Brian get the idea to catch fish? Evaluate his plan for catching fish.	
4. Many times in this chapter the author writes that "there were things to do." Judge the importance of Brian's having things to keep him occupied.	

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Chapter 12- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. How did Brian make his fishing spear? Why didn't it work for him? Do you think he did a good job?	
2. Analyze Brian's statement: "Maybe it was always that way, discoveries happened because they needed to happen."	
3. Brian's eating habits had changed. What did he notice about himself?	
4. The mood at the end of this chapter was pessimistic and hopeless. Why? How would you have felt if you had been in Brian's situation?	

Chapter 13- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Brian felt like he was a new person. Where and how did this take place?	
2. Explain refraction. How did the understanding of this phenomenon help Brian catch his first fish?	
3. Brian showed ingenuity in this chapter. Cite examples.	
4. What do you think Brian meant when he said that he was full of tough hope?	

Chapter 14- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Judge Brian’s conclusion that mistakes were more serious in his situation than in the city.	
2. According to Brian, what was the “great, single driving influence in nature”?	
3. What lessons did the skunk teach Brian?	
4. Explain Brian’s solution for storing fish.	

Chapter 15- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Describe Brian's method of keeping track of time.	
2. What was it about the foolbirds that drove Brian crazy?	
3. Brian finally figured out the secret to finding the foolbirds. Explain. From Brian's point of view, judge his First Meat.	
4. Why, do you think, was it possible for Brian to do these things that he had never done without anyone teaching him?	

Activity- Cause & Effect- Several of the decisions that Brian makes or actions he takes, lead to either good or bad consequences (effects). Fill in the cause and effect chart with examples of these.

Cause	Effect
EX: Brian decided to hook his hatchet onto his belt before he got on the plane.	EX: Brian had his hatchet in the woods to help him survive. He used the sparks to make fire. He carved a spear, a bow and arrows.

Ch. 16-19 Vocabulary- Define these words and look for them as you read. Does the context in which the word is used match the definition that you found?

- sarcasm camouflage dung boughs bellowed
 stabilize unduly hacks capacity incessant
 stymied ruefully rivets instinctive pronounced

Chapter 16- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Explain why Brian said that dipping his hands in the water was nearly the last act of his life.	
2. Brian was once again alone with just his hatchet. Why didn't he feel the same hopelessness as when he first landed?	
3. After the devastation of the tornado, Brian was able to show some humor. Cite the example.	
4. What did Brian discover while measuring the tornado's damage?	

Chapter 17- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Explain Brian’s remark: “I would be rich, so rich off I could get at the pack.”	
2. Why did Brian build a raft?	
3. What was Brushpile One?	
4. Summarize Brian’s problem at the end of this chapter.	

Chapter 18- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Think of all that happened from the	

time Brian first landed to the time he dropped the hatchet and explain this statement: "For all this time...the hatchet had been everything...the hatchet was, had been him."	
2. What important lesson did Brian quickly remember after dropping the hatchet?	
3. Why did Brian save the pieces of aluminum from the fuselage?	
4. What sight made Brian scream in horror?	

Chapter 19- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Rate the contents of the bag. List the items in order of importance.	
2. Brian felt changed by the rifle and the lighter. In your opinion, why did he dislike the change?	
3. What did Brian decide to do with the food that was inside the survival bag?	
4. Describe how Brian was rescued.	

Activity- As he sets up camp and settles in, Brian uses his hatchet for a variety of purposes and in several different ways. In the left hand column, write down each way in which Brian uses his hatchet. In the right hand column, write down what he gained by using it.



Uses

Gains

Epilogue Chapter- Comprehension and Discussion Questions- Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Question	Answer
1. Some of the changes Brian underwent were permanent. Explain	
2. Guess how Brian's parents felt upon	

learning of his rescue.	
3. Why, do you suppose, did Brian keep the secret about his mother's relationship with another man?	
4. Predict the effect this experience will have on Brian's adult life.	

Enjoy reading this book and be prepared for a test in September!!

