



HATCHET

Teacher's Pre & Post Trip Information

Grades: 4-6

Theme: Brian's experiences in the book, *Hatchet* (by Gary Paulsen), can teach us many lessons about survival skills.

Objectives:

- Students will discuss what Brian learned about survival.
- Students will practice outdoor living skills, including survival shelters, flint and steel fire building and orienteering.
- Students will be able to describe how to build survival shelters, flint and steel fires and orienteering.

Learning Plan:

Topics: outdoor survival, natural resources, animal signs, and orienteering

Student activities: discussion of book events, measuring pace, learning to use a compass, completing a compass course, flint and steel fire making, practice building a survival shelter.

Learning Area	Goal #	Standard	Level and Benchmark
Science	11	A	2a, 2b, 2d, 3c
	12	B	2a-b, 3a-b
	13	A	2a-c
	13	B	2a-c, 3b
Language Arts	1	B	2d, 3d
	4	A	2a-c, 3c-d
	4	B	2b
Social Sciences	17	C	2a, 2c, 3a
Mathematics	6	B	2, 3a
	6	C	2a-b, 3a-b
	7	A	2a, 3a-b
	7	B	2a, 3
Physical Education	21	A	2a-c, 3a, 3c
	21	B	2,3

Vocabulary:

- **Respect**-to honor, to show concern for
- **Preserve**-to keep safe, to save or protect
- **Habitat**-the arrangement of food, water and shelter and space suitable to an animal's needs
- **Camouflage**-color, tones, patterns, shapes or behavior that enable an organism to blend in with its surroundings.
- **Scat**-the droppings of animals
- **Tracks**-the footprints of an animal
- **Resource**- a part of the environment that is seen as useful
- **Finding a Bearing**- using a compass to determine the direction (measured in degrees) that you want to travel
- **Pacing**- a method for estimating distance; a pace can be counted as 2 steps, each time your right or left foot hits the ground, or counted as 1 step
- **Debris shelter**- a survival shelter built from natural materials (sticks, leaves, grass, mud, etc.)
- **Flint and Steel**- a method for making a spark to start a fire
- **Tinder**- anything that will light directly from a match, ember or spark
- **Kindling**- small pieces of wood that will ignite directly from the tinder

Supplemental Activities:

The following activities are suggestions for use in the classroom before and/or after the school program. Not all are appropriate for all age groups. Feel free to adapt them for your students' abilities.

Writing activities:

- Write about a time you've been in a situation where nature frightened you. How did you overcome your fear?
- Write about a time that you had to keep trying, for a long time, making many mistakes, before you were successful at something.
- If you were to talk to the author, what questions would you ask him about the book? You can send letters to Gary Paulsen at:
Gary Paulsen
c/o Children's Publicity
1540 Broadway
New York, NY 10036
(<http://www.randomhouse.com/features/GaryPaulsen>)
- Brian's "secret" troubles him through *Hatchet*. It is a secret from which Brian cannot escape, even in the Canadian wilderness. Write an essay at least one-half page long. Your essay should address the following questions: What is Brian's secret? How did Brian learn about the secret? Why do you think the author included the secret in this book about survival in the wilderness? Do you think the secret makes *Hatchet* a better book? Why or why not?
(www.scholar.lib.vt.edu)

- Through several "encounters" with wild animals (like the porcupine), Brian learns sometimes-painful lessons about the natural world he could hardly learn in the city. In an essay at least one-half page long, write about Brian's animal encounters, explaining some of the lessons he learned from the experiences. Your essay should include what happened during the other animal encounters and answer these questions: How do you think you would have reacted to the animals if you had been in Brian's shoes? What would you have done? (www.scholar.lib.vt.edu)

Research Activities:

- Brian had to learn to survive by eating whatever he could find that was edible in the wild. Research edible and poisonous plants in your area. Suggestions: Poison Hemlock, Poison Ivy, Poison Parsnip, dandelion, cattail, acorns, pine trees. Always watch out for poisonous plants that look like edible ones. Be sure you know what it is before you put it in your mouth.
- Do a short research paper on one of the plants or animals Brian met such as choke cherries or grouse.

Social Studies Activities:

- Draw an imaginary map labeling locations mentioned in the story, such as the site of the crash, where Brian built his shelter, where he met the moose, etc. (www.library.uncc.edu)
- The pilot who found Brian was a fur buyer mapping Cree trapping camps. Do some research to find out where these camps might be and locate on a map of Canada where you think Brian's plane crashed. (www.library.uncc.edu)

Geography Activities:

- Examine the various climate zones of Canada. What is timberline and why do trees not grow above timberline? What types of plants grow on the tundra and why is it important to preserve these plants? (www.scholar.lib.vt.edu)

Fine Arts:

- Make a missing person poster for Brian. Include some important information such as his physical description and where he was last seen. (www.library.uncc.edu)
- Make a collage about Brian's survival experience.
- Using a shoebox and other various materials of your choice, make a diorama showing a scene from the book.
- Divide the class into small groups. Brainstorm about items you might need to survive in the wilderness of Canada. Agree on a list of twenty items and list them in order of importance. Now narrow it down to twelve items. Using construction paper make a replica of your survival kit. After the kits are made compare them to the survival kit that Brian found on the plane. (www.eduref.org)

Suggested Readings:

• **Brian's Winter**

Gary Paulsen

In *Hatchet*, 13-year-old Brian learned to survive alone in the Canadian wilderness, armed with only a hatchet. He was rescued at the end of the summer. *Brian's Winter* begins where *Hatchet* might have ended--Brian is not rescued, but must rely on his survival skills to face his deadliest enemy--a northern winter.

• **Finding Your Way Without Map or Compass**

Harold Gatty

Today's adventurers will learn how to find their way in the wilderness, in towns, in the desert, in snow-covered areas—even on the ocean—by observing birds, animals, weather patterns, vegetation, shifting sands, patterns of snowfields, and the positions of the sun, moon and stars.

- **Peterson Field Guide to Animal Tracks**

Includes descriptions of the habits, habitats, tracks, signs, and ranges of all the mammals of North America, as well as of selected birds, reptiles, amphibians, and insects.

- **The River**

Gary Paulsen

Because of his success surviving alone in the wilderness for fifty-four days, fifteen-year-old Brian, profoundly changed by his time in the wild, is asked to undergo a similar experience to help scientists learn more about the psychology of survival.

- **The Sign of the Beaver**

Elizabeth George Speare

Left alone to guard the family's wilderness home in eighteenth-century Maine, a boy is hard-pressed to survive until local Indians teach him their skills.

- **Tracks in the Wild**

Betty Bowen

Explores the habits and behavior of thirteen Northwood's animals by discussing the various tracks and signs left by them.

- **Tracks, Scats, and Signs**

Leslie Dendy

What is that snooping around your campfire? Now you can learn who has been snooping around your den with this take-along guide to animal tracks, scats, & signs.

- **Whose Tracks Are These? A Clue Book of Familiar Forest Animals**

Jim Nail

A brief picture book guessing game. The tracks of six common forest creatures are described, along with some of their habits and eating preferences.

Additional Resources:

DNR Education Website: <http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/education/index.htm>

- Educational supplements (CD-ROMs for students and teachers, educational trunks, posters, books, etc.)
- ENTICE workshop schedule
- Project WET, Project WILD, and Project Learning Tree
- Contests and grants

Audubon Illinois Wildlife Series Display Boards

- Butterflies and Moths
- Amazing Bats
- Illinois Owls

See www.champaigncountyaudubon.org for a list of resources for loan housed at the Education Center at the Homer Lake Forest Preserve.