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INTRODUCTION

Read through any curricular documents, and you will find that the work expected of students is expressed using such academic terminology as *describe*, *determine*, *develop*, *support* and *cite*. Requirements such as these cannot be met via the comprehension-question worksheets and culminating quizzes that have long been the staples of literature guides designed for classroom use. The primary objective of those traditional activities was to make sure that students were keeping track of what was happening in the section of the novel that they had just read. Very little rigour and synthesis was asked of students – and usually none until the entire novel was read.

From a teacher's standpoint, this style of classroom analysis misses multiple opportunities to delve deeply into the details that make a specific piece of literature a classic. From a student's standpoint, this way to reflect on literature is monotonous and inflexible, and it fails to nurture the momentum experienced when one is invested in a compelling work of art. That is why the guides in the *Rigorous Reading* series aim to do much more: they aim to transform the reading of a great novel into a journey of discovery for students.

Instead of merely asking students what happened in any given section, this resource asks questions that require closer reading and deeper analysis – questions such as, "Why did the author choose to include this information?" and "How does this information further the plot or offer more insight into the themes, characters, settings, etc.?" And instead of waiting until the end of the novel to put the pieces of the puzzle in place, students will learn to add to and alter their understanding of the novel *as they are reading it*. The various activities in this resource systematically prompt students to consider and appreciate the many ingredients the author has combined to form the novel as a whole.

A CUSTOM RESOURCE

This in-depth guide has been written specifically for Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet*. The lessons and activities have been structured and scaffolded to maximise the experience of reading and teaching this novel.

To prepare your students for their reading of *Hatchet*, utilise the **novel information** and **pre-reading activities** included on pages 7–9 of this guide. Included in this section is information about the book and its author, along with activities designed to acclimate students to the themes and/or concepts present in the book they are about to read.

This resource provides activities that help foster comprehension and reinforce knowledge of literary elements as students read *Hatchet*. These **section activities** allow students the opportunity to process short sections of the novel individually, laying a strong foundation for their ability to engage more deeply with the chapters to come. For each section of the novel, students will complete individual and collaborative activities that encourage close reading, referencing textual evidence and drawing their own conclusions about the text.

Additionally, this resource provides students with another avenue through which they can reflect on recurring literary elements, while also connecting personally with the novel. Each student maintains his or her own **Interactive Novel Log**, using it as a way to consider and then reconsider various aspects of the novel.

Upon completion of the entire novel, students can synthesise their ideas about the novel by completing several individual and/or collaborative **post-reading activities** (pages 56–72). This section of the resource includes such larger assignments as group projects and essay assignments.

On pages 73–74, **vocabulary** lists are provided for each section of the novel, along with suggestions for ways to teach vocabulary during reading and after completing the novel. Also included is a glossary of literary terms on page 75.

At the end of this guide, an **answer key** is provided for activities that require specific answers.

Key Notes

For a description of Interactive Novel Logs and how to use them in your classroom, see page 5 of this guide.

An ideal way to use this resource would be to follow the complete lesson plan given on page 6 of this guide.

The use of multiple texts can help build and extend knowledge about a theme or topic. It can also illustrate the similarities and differences in how multiple authors approach similar content or how an individual author approaches multiple novels. See the bottom of page 7 for suggestions about using *Hatchet* as part of a text set.

When teaching other novels in your classroom, consider using the specific ideas and also the general approach presented in this resource. Ask students to mine small sections of a novel for clues to theme and characterisation. Examine the craft, structure and purpose of selected passages. Explore inferences and encourage connections.

This guide is designed for use in years 5–8. This levelling has been determined through the consideration of various educational metrics. However, teacher discretion should be used to determine if the novel and guide are appropriate for lower or higher years, as well.

KEEPING NOVEL LOGS

Great works of literature are complex texts, and complex texts are multi-layered. They enrich and reveal as they go along. Successful readers are those who “go along” with the novel, too. Interactive Novel Logs give students a place and a space to record their thoughts and observations as they journey through the book. After each section of the novel is read, students use their Interactive Novel Logs to track the introduction and development of such literary elements as plot, setting, theme, characterisation, craft and structure, while also choosing their own ways to connect the novel to their own life experiences.

Materials needed for each student:

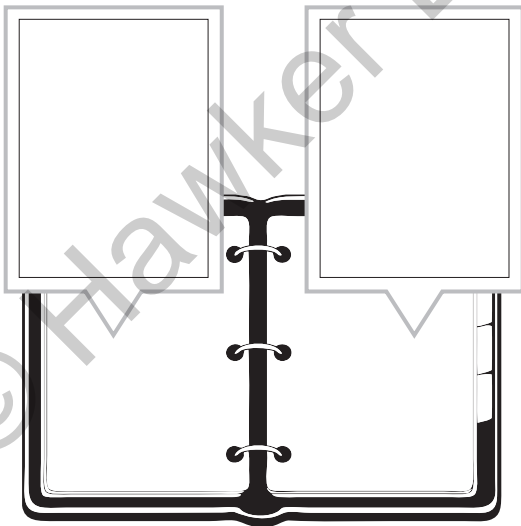
- ✦ a three-ring binder or presentation folder
- ✦ a blank sheet of plain paper with holes punched for the title page
- ✦ two or three sheets of blank lined paper for the Table of Contents
- ✦ several extra sheets of paper (both lined and plain) for student’s responses to the “Ideas for Your Interactive Log” prompts at the end of each section

Key Notes

One Interactive Novel Log can be kept for multiple novels, in which case a larger three-ring binder will be needed. If it will be used only for the activities included in this guide for *Hatchet*, a smaller binder or presentation folder will be adequate.

Assembling the Interactive Novel Log:

1. On the plain paper, allow students to design and decorate their own title page. Have them write “Interactive Novel Log” and “*Hatchet*” in the middle of the page. They should include their name and class at the bottom.
2. Add blank lined paper for the Table of Contents. Have students write “Table of Contents” at the top. They will add to this list as they create new pages.



3. Before reading each section of the novel, photocopy and distribute new copies of the Interactive Novel Log worksheets (pages 10–15). Directions for completing these activities can be found in the “Teacher Instructions” that begin Section I.
4. For the final activity in each section, photocopy and distribute the “Section Log-In” page for the section. Follow the directions given. Students select one or more of the four topics in the “Ideas for Your Interactive Log” section and create an Interactive Novel Log page that responds to that topic.

5. After the class has completed the entire novel and the post-reading activities, you may wish to have students include the “My Book Rating” worksheet (page 72) as a final entry in their Interactive Novel Logs.

NOVEL INFORMATION

Book Summary

As *Hatchet* begins, 13-year-old Brian Robeson is flying in a small plane over the Canadian wilderness. He is on his way from his mother's house to his father's, a trip he feels he should not have to take. If it weren't for his mother's terrible secret, his family would be happy and together.

Brian's bitterness turns to fear when the pilot suffers a sudden and fatal heart attack. Now completely alone, Brian is forced to crash-land into a lake. He survives but is stranded in the wilderness with no tools, save a hatchet clipped to his belt, a gift from his mother.

Brian begins the painstaking process of trying to survive. His searches for food, shelter and warmth lead to many small triumphs and even more near disasters. As the days and weeks pass without rescue, Brian undergoes a personal transformation. He learns to adapt his thoughts and actions to his new environment. By the time Brian is rescued, he is forever altered by his experience.

Originally published in 1987, *Hatchet* earned a Newbery Honour award in 1988. Its topics and themes include survival, adaptation, personal growth, respect for the environment and the fickle nature of luck.

About the Author

Born on 17 May 1939, Gary Paulsen has led a life of adventure and literature. By 14, he joined a travelling carnival; and his many early occupations included being a truck driver, a farm hand, a sailor and an engineer. In the early to mid 1980s, Paulsen twice competed in the Iditarod, a dog-sled race through the harsh winter wilderness of Alaska.

It was at the age of 26 that Paulsen first began to write. Once he did, he became incredibly prolific. He writes every day, often for up to 18 hours a day; and in his career, he has written approximately 200 novels! He enjoyed his first success with the 1985 publication of *Dogsong*, which was named a Newbery Honour Book. Other highlights include 1987's *Hatchet* and 1989's *The Winter Room*, both of which were also named Newbery Honour Books. In 1997, he was awarded the Margaret Edwards Award from the American Library Association for his lifetime contributions to young-adult literature.

Make It a Text Set!

The following novels can form ideal text sets with *Hatchet*. (**Note:** Vet books in advance to ensure they are appropriate for your students.)

Other Novels by Gary Paulsen	Novels by Other Authors
<i>The River</i> (1991)	<i>My Side of the Mountain</i> by Jean Craighead George
<i>Brian's Winter</i> (1996)	<i>Julie of the Wolves</i> by Jean Craighead George
<i>Brian's Return</i> (1999)	<i>Survivor Kid</i> by Denise Long (nonfiction)