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***Hatchet***

BY GARY PAULSEN



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All references come from the Simon Pulse Paperback edition of *Hatchet*, copyright 1987.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pre-Reading

### Character Traits

**Objectives:**     Understanding character traits  
                      Identifying character traits in the protagonist

#### Activity

Character is defined by distinctive traits, qualities, or attributes. *Courage* is considered by most people to be a *good* character trait, while *dishonesty* is considered to be an undesirable character trait.

In literature, the character traits a fictional character possesses are usually illustrated for the reader by the actions of the character in a story. In a coming-of-age novel, the protagonist, or main character in the story, develops character traits as he or she grows or matures throughout the story.

For example, in the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the protagonist is Huck Finn. Huck and a runaway slave named Jim are traveling down the Mississippi River on a raft. At the beginning of the journey, Huck does not view Jim as a man. He sees Jim simply as a slave. As the journey down the river progresses, Huck's understanding of Jim deepens. Huck comes to **respect** Jim. Huck develops and demonstrates character traits such as **tolerance, acceptance, decency, and courtesy**.

*Hatchet*, like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, is a coming-of-age story. The protagonist in the story develops *good* character traits as the story progresses. To recognize these character traits in the story, it is important to first understand each character trait.

In small groups, complete **Part I** of the following **Character Traits Questionnaire**. First, read and discuss the **Definitions of Character Traits** listed at the top of the questionnaire.

Then, discuss each situation described in the questions and, as a group, decide which character traits are illustrated. Remember that character traits can be both positive and negative. A person can be *honest* or *dishonest*. List any character traits you think apply.

Finally, list the reasons for your choices in the space provided below the question. The first one is done for you as an example.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapters 1 – 3****Vocabulary**

**Objectives:**     Defining vocabulary words using context clues  
                         Writing a story correctly using vocabulary words

**Activity**

Based on the context clues in Chapters 1 – 3, define the following vocabulary words relating to airplanes. You should not need a dictionary to complete this Activity.

- Find the airplane term on the page indicated on the chart.
- Read the sentence before and after the term.
- Write a definition of the meaning of the term.
- The first one is done for you as an example.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapters 4 – 6****Reading Check**

**Objective:** Complete each of the following sentences with the correct details from the story

**Activity**

Brian reflects on his life before and after the crash, thinking:

“If you keep walking back from good luck... you’ll come to bad luck.”

In one or two short paragraphs, cite incidents from the story that support Brian’s observation. Consider the following before you begin:

1. What good luck does Brian experience?

---

---

2. What bad luck has he had?

---

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapters 4 – 6

### Writing

**Objectives:** Understanding how flashbacks provide the reader with necessary background information  
Inferring the thoughts and feelings of a character

#### Activity

In the following example of a flashback, Brian recalls seeing his mother with another man. This flashback reveals Brian's Secret to the reader.

Terry had just turned to smile at him about something and Brian looked over Terry's head and saw her.  
His mother.

She was sitting in a station wagon, a strange wagon. He saw her and she did not see him. Brian was going to wave or call out, but something stopped him. There was a man in the car.

- Review the full text of the flashback in the above example and the flashback on pages 8 and 9, when Brian recalls his last conversation with his mother.
- Imagine that Brian can radio his mother and decides to tell her that he knows her "Secret." Write out the conversation that might follow.
- Be sure to use proper radio etiquette in the dialogue. Review pages 18, 19, and 20 for information on radio etiquette.

The conversation might begin as follows:

**Mother:** Brian, can you hear me?

**Brian:** Roger. You're supposed to say over when you end the transmission. Over.

**Mother:** [*giggling*] Roger. It is so good to hear your voice. Are you hurt? Over.

**Brian:** No. Over.

**Mother:** What's wrong? Aren't you glad to hear my voice? Over.

**Brian:** Yes, of course. It's just that...



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapters 10 – 15

### Plot

**Objectives:**     Defining conflict  
                         Identifying conflict in specific incidents from the text  
                         Understanding the efforts of the protagonist to resolve conflict

#### Activity

There are five basic types of conflict, which can propel the action in a story:

- **Person versus Fate, Nature, or God:** A character must face what seems to be an uncontrollable problem. For example, a boy must deal with his mother's terminal illness.
- **Person versus Person:** A character has a conflict with another character. For example, a small boy must deal with a large, aggressive classmate.
- **Person versus Self:** A character struggles within himself or herself about how to think and behave. For example, a young boy must struggle within himself to find the courage to face the problems in his life.

Brian faces two types of conflict in this novel. He must struggle with himself to find the courage and self-discipline to survive alone in the wilderness, and he must deal with many different elements of nature.

Complete the following **Conflicts Diagrams**. Find three passages in Chapters 10 – 15 illustrating **Person vs. Self** and three passages illustrating **Person vs. Nature, Fate, or God**.

State the conflict Brian must face. In one or two sentences, explain how Brian resolves this conflict and the extent to which he is successful. The first one is done for you as an example.