

Prestwick PowerPacks™

Practical Activities for Comprehension and Key Skills



Hatchet

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity I: Survival Quiz**Pre-Reading****Quiz: How well would you survive in the wilderness?**

Survival is an important motif in this novel. The main character must rely on the skills and knowledge he possesses to survive while stranded in the wilderness. If you were in this situation, how well would you be able to survive? Complete the following **SURVIVAL QUIZ** to check your skills.

SURVIVAL QUIZ

- Y N I have slept out under the stars before without a tent.
- Y N I can set up a tent by myself.
- Y N I can hunt.
- Y N I could build a fort using just sticks and other objects found in the wilderness.
- Y N I can think straight when I'm hungry.
- Y N I can use a compass.
- Y N I can determine direction based on the rising and setting sun.
- Y N I have been hunting before.
- Y N I could create a bow and arrow from objects typically found in the wilderness.
- Y N I have caught a fish with my bare hands before.
- Y N I have been fishing.
- Y N I know what to do when I see a bear.
- Y N I know basic first aid.
- Y N I know CPR.
- Y N I know how to collect water in the wilderness.
- Y N I know what to do in the event of a snake bite.
- Y N I can recognize poisonous from non-poisonous snakes.
- Y N I have experience traveling on my own or making large decisions for myself.
- Y N I can recognize the symptoms of a heart attack.
- Y N I can find food sources in the forest (edible berries, plants, etc.)

Tally up all your Y's and N's.

- 1-10 Y's: You have much to learn about wilderness survival. Pay close attention to Brian's survival skills, in case you ever need them.
- 11-15 Y's: You know quite a bit about wilderness survival but can stand to learn some more.
- 16-20 Y's: Wow! Have you thought about writing adventure stories? You would rival the story's hero, Brian, in survival skills.

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Activity I: Making Predictions/ Character**Chapters 1-3**

With your group:

1. Read from page 1 through the first third of page 3, to the line that reads: "The secret." Stop reading, and discuss as a group:
 - What do you think the secret is? Why do you think this?

2. Read to the first half of page 6. Stop before you reach the sentence: "Now the plane..." Discuss the following questions:
 - What is Brian's problem so far?
 - How does the author develop (or tell us about) Brian's character?
 - What kind of person is the pilot?
 - How do we know?

3. Now read to the middle of page 7. Stop before you reach the sentence, "His mother..." Discuss the questions:
 - What do you think is happening to the pilot?
 - How do you know?

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4. Now read from the second half of page 7 to the sentence that begins “Because it was...” on page 9.

This section is called a **flashback**. In a flashback, the author reverts back to a past event.

With your groups, answer the following questions:

- Why do you think the author uses a flashback here?
- Describe the relationship between Brian and his mother—how does he feel about her?
- What does she give him?
- Why do you think she chooses this as a present?
- Do you think Brian may have preferred a different present?

5. Now read to the end of chapter 1.

• What is the problem Brian is experiencing? Write a paragraph in your journal about a time when you felt most afraid. You do not have to share your journal with your group, but you may do so if you wish and have time.

6. Now read to the bottom of page 21.

When you reach this part, discuss the following:

- Brian says he has two choices.
- What are the two choices?
- What would you do?

7. Now read to the end of chapter 3, (page 28).

As a group, draw a picture or a series of comic squares that illustrate how Brian landed the plane. Also discuss the question:

At the bottom of page 28, it says that a color “exploded in his mind with the pain.”

- How would you describe this color?
- Why?

Literature can come alive for us when we hear it read aloud. When read with proper emotion and speed, passages become more interesting and vivid, and the listener can better imagine the characters and their actions. In small groups, you will read and “perform” a scene from the novel by reading it aloud with feeling.

To prepare for your performance, your group should reread your passage silently. Then, assign equal portions of the text to each member of the group. Practice your parts by reading them aloud with your group while emphasizing emotion and varying your reading speed. Concentrate on your voice instead of gestures or facial expressions to convey moods, such as joy, excitement, anger, worry, disappointment, and fear. Remember that changing your volume can help show emotion; you might raise your voice to a near-shout or lower it to a whisper depending on what is happening in the text. Experiment with your pace, or reading speed, as well by speeding up at exciting parts and slowing down at calmer ones.

After practicing with your group, perform your scene for your classmates. Remember to make your reading full of feeling to keep your audience listening.

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Activity II: Context Clues **Chapters 1-3**

Context clues help you determine the meaning of new words. These clues can be descriptions, actions and reactions, opinions, or direct definitions. They often appear in the same sentence as the unfamiliar word, or within two sentences before or after it. In the example below, we want to know the meaning of the word *lurch*. We need to look for clues, such as descriptions, in the sentence:

“The plane lurched again, hit more turbulence, and Brian felt the nose drop.” (Pg. 14)

Because “Brian felt the nose drop,” something has obviously happened to the plane. Since the plane is an object moving in the air, and the fact that it is “lurching” has made the nose go down, we can guess or infer (make an educated guess) that “lurch” means “to make a quick movement.”

Part 1

The list in the following **VOCABULARY CHART** contains words from the chapters you have read; these words are important to your understanding of the story and will also be useful in your everyday lives. Much of the technical vocabulary has been omitted because though these words may help you to understand the story a little better, they will not be found in many other stories that you read or encountered often in your daily lives (unless you hope to fly a plane one day).

VOCABULARY CHART

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------|---|
| _____ | 1. leveled | A. “_____ he knew that at this angle, this slight angle down, he would fly into the trees.” |
| _____ | 2. momentarily | B. “But in five minutes, they had _____ off at six thousand feet.” |
| _____ | 3. turbulence | C. “The pilot’s words were a hiss, barely _____.” |
| _____ | 4. transmission | D. “He turned his mike off without ending _____ properly.” |
| _____ | 5. audible | E. “There was a great _____ as the wings caught the pines at the side of the clearing and broke back.” |
| _____ | 6. ultimately | F. “The pilot did not move except that his head rolled on a neck impossibly loose as the plane hit a small bit of _____.” |
| _____ | 7. wrenching | G. “The burning in his eyes was forgotten _____ as the vibration of the plane came through the wheel and the pedals.” |

Student's Page

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part 2

Now, use the context clues to write a definition for each word. Then, compare your definitions to the dictionary's definitions to check for accuracy. Correct any of your definitions that contain errors.

1. level: _____

2. momentary: _____

3. turbulence: _____

4. transmission: _____

5. audible: _____

6. ultimate: _____

7. wrenching: _____

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Activity II: Plot**Chapters 4-7**

The plot of a novel is the sequence of events that takes place within it, beginning with the introduction and ending with the conclusion. The plot of a novel is divided into the following sections:

- A. **Introduction:** the setting and the characters' background information—names and personalities; may be either descriptive or brief
- B. **Conflict:** the big problem that the characters spend most of the book trying to solve
- C. **Rising Action:** smaller problems that the characters experience as they try to solve the larger conflict
- D. **Climax:** the turning point; the most exciting, most suspenseful point in the novel
- E. **Falling Action:** the calming action and decrease in tension following the climax
- F. **Resolution:** the conclusion of the story; the outcome

At this point in the novel, you have discovered the introduction, the conflict, and moved into the rising action. In small groups, complete as much of the **PLOT OUTLINE** as possible. Since you have not reached the climax yet, you will leave some of the outline blank. You will rejoin your group and add to your outline after you read other chapters of the novel.

Student's Page

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Name: _____

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Plot Outline

A. Introduction:

B. Conflict:

C. Rising Action:

D. Climax:

E. Falling Action:

F. Resolution: *B*

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity III: Point-of-View**Chapters 4-7**

Hatchet is written in third person limited point-of-view. The narrator explains Brian's actions and many of his thoughts, but the reader does not know everything that he thinks and experiences. We know nothing about what the other characters are thinking and feeling. When you put yourself in a character's place and try to think as the character does, then you develop a better understanding of a character and the reasons for his or her actions.

Reread pages 72-75, when Brian encounters a bear. Brian is afraid and thinks that the bear is going to eat him, but to his surprise, the bear only examines him and then continues eating berries.

Question: Imagine that you are the bear. You encounter Brian and decide to leave him alone. Explain what you think of Brian and why you have no wish to hurt him. This will take some imagination, but it should help you to understand what really happened between Brian and the bear.