

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Hatchet

by Gary Paulsen

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Chapter One

1. Brian is keeping a secret from his father. Many people find it difficult to keep secrets from the people they love. In a similar situation, how good are you at keeping secrets? Do you believe that keeping secrets is ever justified?
2. Brian receives a hatchet as a gift from his mother. He thinks it is “hokey.” Can you think of a time when you pretended to like a totally inappropriate gift? If you didn’t pretend to like it, what did you do?
3. Write a letter to the pilot’s wife from Brian. In the letter, express Brian’s regret at her husband’s death. Do you think expressing your sorrow helps the grieving person?

Chapter Two

4. Most students in today’s schools learn CPR in a health class. Assume the pilot is out of the plane lying on the runway. What steps would you take in a situation like this to help revive the pilot?

Response Journal

5. Brian's call for help is unsuccessful because it is very short, and he doesn't know what to say. Write the call for help Brian could have made if he had time to prepare and knew all of the pertinent information.

Chapter Three

6. In this chapter, Brian has a close call. Can you think of a time when you or someone you know barely escaped from a risky situation?

Chapter Four

7. Brian doesn't want his friend Terry to see his mother with another man. Assume Terry does see them and mentions it to Brian. Write the dialogue that might take place.
8. If you could pack a small bag of necessities for Brian, what would it include? Remember, it is a small bag and can hold only five or six items. State why you would include the items that you put in the bag.
9. You are a friend of Brian's from summer camp. If Brian were your friend and he expressed his concern to you about his parents' divorce, what advice would you give him?

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10. Brian's head injury makes it difficult for him to keep track of time. Have you ever suffered an injury that disoriented you in time or place? What was it? How long did it take you to return to normal? Describe what the confusion felt like.

Chapter Five

11. Brian tries to think positively and stay motivated. Football coaches often stress the importance of a winning attitude and the competitive spirit. Write about a sports event you observed or participated in when staying positive and motivated contributed to winning the game.
12. Do you think it is believable that the search planes are unable to find Brian? Are there any wildernesses left that were empty of human life? Where are they? Would you like to be in a place that has no other humans around?

Chapter Six

13. If you could have only one friend with you in a life-and-death survival situation like the one Brian faces, which of your friends would you want with you? Write about the qualities this person has that would make him or her a valuable companion.
14. Brian is lucky to have survived the plane crash. How much of an element do you think luck plays in one's life? Describe a time in your life in which luck, not skill, helped you.

Response Journal

15. Because he is always hungry, Brian thinks constantly about food. Make up a dinner menu consisting of your favorite foods. Describe each dish in detail, including how it looks, smells, tastes, and even feels. Make it sound good enough to make someone hungry.

16. The rising and setting sun helps Brian to fix north, south, east, and west. How good are you in distinguishing directional points?

17. Unfortunately for Brian, the cherries didn't come with instructions to eat only a few. Imagine you are sponsoring a pie-eating contest as a fundraiser for a charity. Make a flier encouraging your friends to participate as contestants. Include all of the necessary information; include a claim at the end that you and your organization have no responsibility for sickness caused by the contestants' eating too much.

Chapter Seven

18. Despite his fear of the bear, Brian goes back for more berries. Courage, it has been said, is not being *without* fear, because every reasonable person has fear. Courage is doing what has to be done even though one is afraid. Can you think of a time in your life when you overcame fear? It might be a small fear, such as fear of public speaking, fear of the first day of school, or fear of forgetting your homework, or it could be a much larger fear.

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19. From early childhood, we learn to solve little problems in our lives. Brian solves his problem with the cherries by eating less. Assume you are helping the kindergarten teacher for the afternoon, and one little child can't open his or her snack crackers. How would you help this child learn to solve the problem by using what is available in the classroom? Remember, it won't help the anyone at all if you solve the problem for the child.
20. In the morning, Brian looks at his reflection in the lake and is shocked, but rather than trying to clean up, he slaps away his reflection in the water. We all have a morning routine in which we brush our teeth, eat our breakfast, and so on. Can you think of any time or times when you have skipped steps in your routine? How did the change make you feel?
21. Brian wonders if the bear is surprised to see him at the raspberry patch. Assuming bears can talk and have dinner together like humans, write a dialogue between the bear and her mate discussing the events of their day.

1st Bear: Barry, you'll never guess what kind of weird thing I saw today.

Mate: Tell me about it, Betty.

1st Bear: It didn't have ...