

Alicia Estrada  
Dr. Mary Warner  
ENGL 112B  
11/27/2012

### Unit of Study: Survival/Adventure

#### Rationale

As I began this unit of study, it became very important to me to focus on the opportunity to better my craft, and pick something I have used previously in my classroom. When writing this Unit, my focus was on improving the way my students will interact with text, increasing the different types of media utilized to allow students practice and exposure to technology, as well as expanding on the opportunity to use deeper thinking when reading together. As a Special Education teacher, it is always important to find texts that can catch students attention and get them to enjoy reading, if even for a short amount of time. Over the past three years, I have had opportunities to read a few texts with my students, and I have come to enjoy Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet*. I have found my students easily connect with the plot and characters in this text, and can really get into the text.

*Hatchet* follows the struggle of Brian Robeson, a thirteen year old boy, who is stranded in the Canadian woods following a plane crash. While stranded, Brian is struggling with his parents divorce, and a secret he kept from his father regarding his mother and another man prior to the divorce. Brian encounters many misfortunes due to his lack of knowledge of survival skills and has to be creative in ensuring his survival through the adventures and misadventures he encounters.

The best Adventure stories, according to Nilson and Donelson, include a likable protagonist that readers can connect to; adventure readers can imagine happening to them; efficient characterization; an interesting setting that enhances the story; and finally, action that

draws readers into the plot within the first few pages (86). *Hatchet* follows one main character, Brian. Students can connect to him, as he is dealing with a divorce of his parents. Also, Brian also feels this sense of hopelessness at times, which adolescents may feel in relation to situations they find that are new to them. Despite feelings of hopelessness, Brian shows determination with his continuous will to survive, which could be a positive for students having difficulty with situations they find themselves in. Many students can imagine being a plane crash and being stranded somewhere, as it is portrayed in current media, such as movies and music videos. Often times when I read this with students, I get a lot of groans when we have to stop, as they want to know what happens next. The setting of the Canadian woods is believable, and many students can connect to this setting, having visited a forest, or going camping at one time in their lives. Lastly, the plane crash at the beginning of the book really grabs readers and gets them wanting more. Having followed many of these characteristics of good adventure stories, *Hatchet* proves to be a great read for all students, and even better when thinking about hard to hook readers, such as my students in a Special Day Class setting.

### Launching the Unit

1. Before Reading the text, Students will watch a teacher selected episode of Man vs. Wild from Discovery.com and think about the following discussion questions.
  - a. Imagine that you were Bear. What would YOU do? How would YOU feel?
  - b. What was most shocking for you to watch Bear do?
  - c. Would you do the things Bear had to do to Survive? Why or Why not?
  - d. Discuss some of the important things you need to do when you are stranded.
2. Students will also study the Author, Gary Paulsen. We will read the biography together from Ickes and Sciranko's *A guide for using Hatchet in the Classroom*, and follow it up with a trip to the Computer lab, where students will utilize Technology and Research methods to find a few pieces of information on Gary Paulsen, such as a picture, two facts, his

birthday, and one other book he has written. This search can be made to be more complicated, depending on students ability levels.

### Centerpiece Work: Hatchet

1. Vocabulary Builder- Vocabulary building is important for students to interact with text and unfamiliar concepts that may come up in the reading. To make text comprehensible for all students, EL's or Special Needs, "it is important to give learners scaffolds before reading to help set a purpose for reading, to spend time assessing prior knowledge, to make connections from known to new, and emphasize new key vocabulary" (McCall, 1). As a teacher, when we fail to plan for new vocabulary, we don't set students up for success with new texts. To build vocabulary, Teachers have many options, such as pre-defining and frontloading with pictures for students, or even having students utilize dictionary skills to find them. For my Unit, my students will be responsible for locating the term, and as a team, teacher and student will define the term together. Students will create a small poster for their term, and demonstrate understanding by sharing a picture of the word in action. Lists can be picked by teachers prior to reading, or Ickes and Sciranko offer lists for each section, located in *A Guide for Using Hatchet in the Classroom* (8).

2. While Reading- Teachers can choose to break the chapters up as needed. For this unit, in my classroom, students will read a chapter daily and respond to the following activities for each:

a. Story board/Jot dots: An activity where students create four-five events/details from the chapter and then create a picture to illustrate them. A great activity to keep students aware of what has already been read, as well as creating a graphic novel of Hatchet.

b. Journal Response: For each chapter, as it presents itself, students will have the opportunity to connect the text to their own feelings or actions, as they would act in Brian's situation. For suggestions, check with Ickes and Sciranko's guide (43). Some ideas are:

a. Pretend you can have five items if stranded. What would they be and why would you want them. Think: Do you really need the ipod?

b. What would you do if you were Brian and your shelter was ruined?

c. You are Brian in the airplane. How do you react? What do YOU do?

3. Final Project: Have students pick a wrap up project from one of the following choices (Ickes and Sciranko, 36)

- a. Design a new book cover with Summary on back and two scenes inside with brief descriptions.
- b. Character Diary- Pick FIVE important events and Write five journal entries as Brian, illustrating how he felt at the time of the event you have chosen.
- c. A one woman/man show- create a short script of an important event in the text and prepare a performance for the class.
- d. Write another misadventure for Brian. Research the Canadian wilderness and the animals Brian may have encountered that are not in the text. Use this information to write another scene for *Hatchet*.
- e. Create a Character flag for Brian. It must have at least 5 symbols to represent Brian. be specific when choosing colors and themes from the text to illustrate.

Expanding on Centerpiece following text

1. Poetry- Students will read the following Poem and begin to make connections from Reading to poetry. To understand the poem, Students and teacher will engage in discussion, picking apart the poetry line by line.

Robert Frost *Desert Places*

Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast  
 In a field I looked into going past,  
 And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,  
 But a few weeds and stubble showing last.  
 The woods around it have it--it is theirs.  
 All animals are smothered in their lairs.  
 I am too absent-spirited to count;  
 The loneliness includes me unawares.  
 And lonely as it is that loneliness  
 Will be more lonely ere it will be less--  
 A blanker whiteness of benighted snow  
 With no expression, nothing to express.  
 They cannot scare me with their empty spaces  
 Between stars--on stars where no human race is.  
 I have it in me so much nearer home  
 To scare myself with my own desert places.

2. Song- Teacher and Students will listen to song and together, in discussion format, list ways this relates to Brian in *Hatchet*.

Pat Benatar *Invincible*

This bloody road remains a mystery  
This sudden darkness fills the air  
What are we waiting for?  
Won't anybody help us?  
What are we waiting for?

We can't afford to be innocent  
Stand up and face the enemy  
It's a do or die situation  
We will be invincible

This shattered dream you cannot justify  
We're gonna scream until we're satisfied  
What are we running for?  
We've got the right to be angry  
What are we running for?  
When there's no where we can run to anymore

We can't afford to be innocent  
Stand up and face the enemy  
It's a do or die situation  
We will be invincible  
And with the power of conviction  
There is no sacrifice  
It's a do or die situation  
We will be invincible

Won't anybody help us?  
What are we running for?  
When there's nowhere, no where we can run to anymore

We can't afford to be innocent  
Stand up and face the enemy  
It's a do or die situation  
We will be invincible

And with the power of conviction  
There is no sacrifice  
It's a do or die situation  
We will be invincible

Yeah, yeah  
Yeah, yeah

We can't afford to be innocent  
 Stand up and face the enemy  
 It's a do or die situation  
 We will be invincible

3. Movie comparison to text- Teacher will show Mark Griffiths *A Cry in the Wild*, produced in 1990. The movie is based on Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet*, and has great opportunity to show students that books are better than the movies, and a discussion will follow about the mistakes seen in the movie.

#### 4. Literature Circles

Students in small groups of 3-4 pick and read texts of their choosing, in which they also discuss the connection to *Hatchet* to the classroom. Start with a Book pass to show possible texts and begin creating interest lists for each. From those, narrow it down to groups of 4 for each book students choose. A great resource for creating Literature Circles comes from Harvey Daniels, in *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in book clubs and Reading Groups*. Daniels text illustrates positive examples and extensive suggestions for how to set them up at all grade levels. Daniels views "kid driven independent reading, rather than teacher driven leveled groups, the most promising path towards passionate, lifelong learning (28)". As a teacher, much of what we read together has been teacher selected. By utilizing literature circles, I not only expand on a text we have read together, I allow students to pick independent texts and show students that reading is not just for the classroom. Presentations of these texts also may spark a student's interest in a text they may have otherwise ignored.

#### Possible Texts that Expand on Adventure/Survival:

##### a. *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, Scott O'Dell.

"A story of survival, based upon the true story of a girl who was left upon an island near the coast of Southern California. She lived there for 18 years, alone. While she waited for rescue, she kept herself alive by

building shelter, finding food, and fighting her enemies--the wild dogs"  
(source: ScottODell.com)

b. *My Side of the Mountain*, Jean Craighead George.

"Sam Gribley is terribly unhappy living in New York City with his family, so he runs away to the Catskill Mountains to live in the woods—all by himself. With only a penknife, a ball of cord, forty dollars, and some flint and steel, he intends to survive on his own. Sam learns about courage, danger, and independence during his year in the wilderness, a year that changes his life forever.: (This summary and all following summaries were taken from Amazon.com book pages)

c. *Brian's Winter*, Gary Paulsen

In *Hatchet*, 13-year-old Brian Robeson learned to survive alone in the Canadian wilderness, armed only with his 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 build on his survival skills to face his deadliest enemy--a northern winter. (Amazon)

d. *Flight #116 is Down*, Caroline B. Cooney

An award-winning dramatic thriller finds a young girl confronting her fears and making heroic efforts at the terrifying scene of a crashed 747 (Amazon)

e. *What Could Go wrong?*, Willo Davis Roberts

When cousins Gracie, Charlie and Eddie are invited to fly to San Francisco to visit their Aunt Molly, Gracie's mother decides they may go, musing "What could go wrong?" If only she had known about the man in the Hawaiian shirt carrying a newspaper with a mysterious code written on it. Or about the bomb threat that forces the plane to make an unscheduled landing in Portland. Or about the strange disappearance of Mrs. Basker, a kind, old lady who befriends the children on the airplane. Since it is her first plane trip, Gracie wonders if her imagination is teasing her; then she realizes that she and her cousins are inadvertently involved in an exciting, frightening adventure. Lively prose and strong characterizations make an ordinary event--a first plane ride--into an extraordinary backdrop for a mystery. (Amazon)

f. *The Cay*, Theodore Taylor

This award-winning novel remains a powerful classic of prejudice, love, and survival. In 1942, 11-year-old Phillip Enright lives with his parents on the Dutch island of Curacao, but when the war moves too close for comfort, his mother decides to travel with him back to the safety of Virginia. When their boat is torpedoed, however, Phillip is blinded and finds himself adrift on a life raft with an old black man and a cat. They eventually land on a deserted island. Phillip is suspicious of "the large Negro," but soon grows to trust--and ultimately love--the patient and generous Timothy. Dedicated to "Dr. King's Dream," *The Cay* has a clear message that friendship is colorblind; it is also a terrific adventure story of a young, newly blinded man learning to survive on an uninhabited island (Amazon)

g. *Hunger Games*, Suzanne Collins

In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. The Capitol is harsh and cruel and keeps the districts in line by forcing them all to send one boy and one girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death on live TV. Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives alone with her mother and younger sister, regards it as a death sentence when she is forced to represent her district in the Games. But Katniss has been close to dead and survival, for her, is second nature. Without really meaning to, she becomes a contender. But if she is to win, she will have to start making choices that weigh survival against humanity and life against love. (Amazon)

Unit Wrap up

Once students have finished *Hatchet* as a class, as well as Literature Circles and analysis of poetry and music, they will present their connections from Literature Circles. It should be clear that students found some similarities between characters in both books they read, as well as pointing out differences. Wrap up would also include students picking one of the books they didn't read during lit circles and making a pledge to read it independently. To extend to writing, students can be encouraged to create an adventure story of their own, thinking about what may happen after a plane crash, or a boat sinking.

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# Unit of Study: Adventure and Survival

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Alicia Estrada

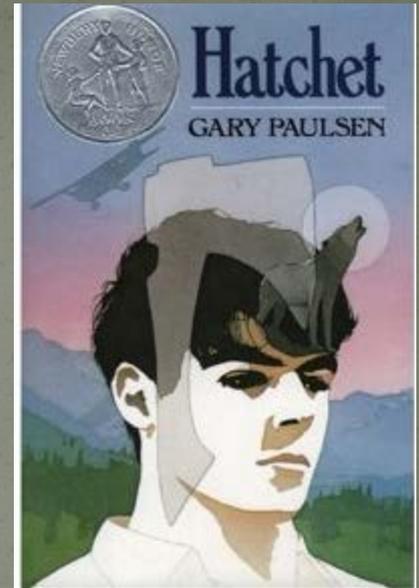
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# *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen

*Hatchet* follows the struggle of Brian Robeson, a thirteen year old boy, who is stranded in the Canadian woods following a plane crash. While stranded, Brian is struggling with his parents divorce, and a secret he kept from his father regarding his mother and another man prior to the divorce. Brian encounters many misfortunes due to his lack of knowledge of survival skills and has to be creative in ensuring his survival through the misadventures he encounters.



**CENTERPIECE!**

# Rationale

The best Adventure stories, according to Nilson and Donelson in *Literature for Today's Young Adults*

## GRAB THOSE READERS!

• include a likable protagonist that readers can connect to.

• Brian Robeson- typical teenager struggling with Divorce.

• adventure readers can imagine happening to them

• A plane crash and being stranded ALONE!

• efficient characterization

• Its not just fun free time for Brian, he struggles and things happen!

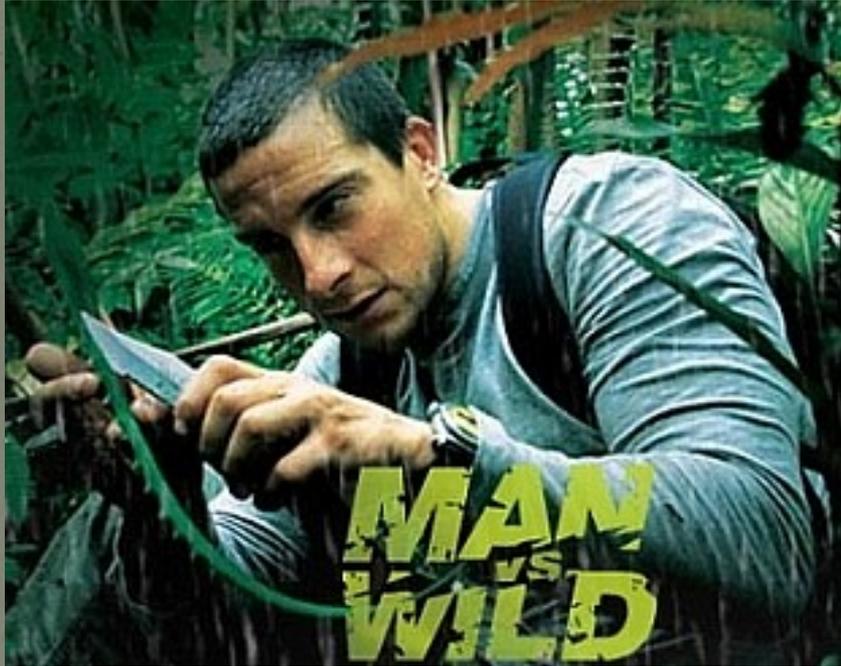
• an interesting setting that enhances the story

• Canadian Woods- Great for the boys and those who have been camping before!

• action that draws readers into the plot within the first few pages (86).

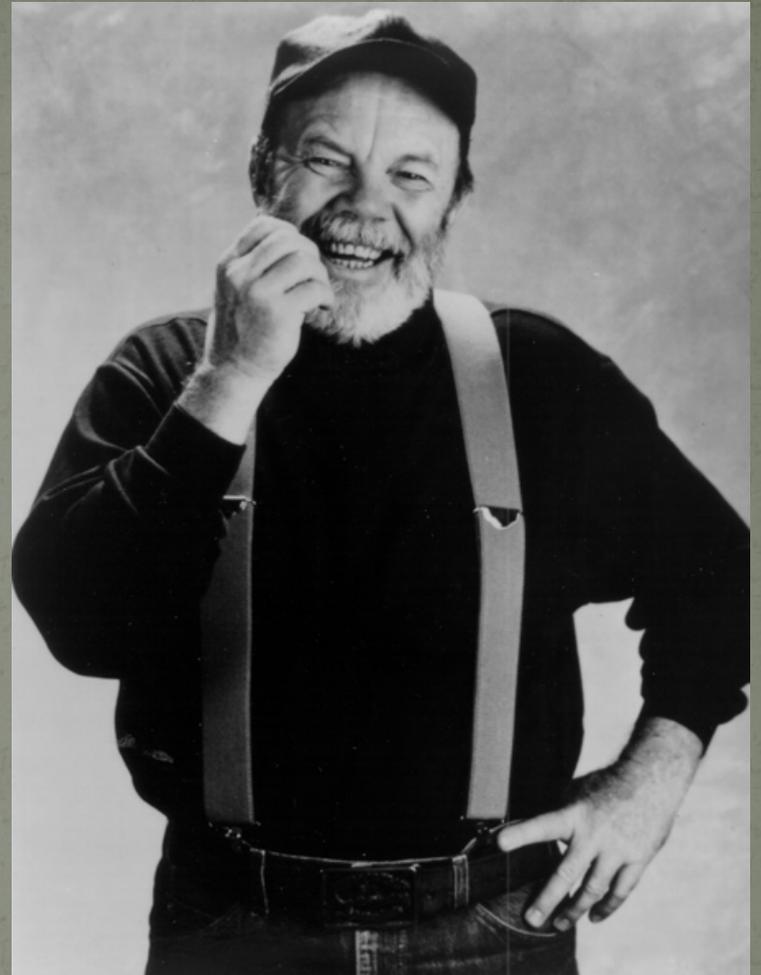
• Plane Crash and Heart attack in THE BEGINNING!?!?! Heck Yes!

# Launching the Unit!



[http://www.tvrage.com/Man\\_vs\\_Wild](http://www.tvrage.com/Man_vs_Wild)

Thinking and creating  
Background Knowledge!



[http://www.utk.edu/tntoday/wp-content/uploads/gary\\_paulsen.jpg](http://www.utk.edu/tntoday/wp-content/uploads/gary_paulsen.jpg)

# Teaching *Hatchet*

## Vocabulary

Build! Build! Build! Set the stage for unfamiliar concepts and create understanding for Readers. Especially Struggling Readers!

Vocabulary Defining and Illustrating

## Reading the Text

Foster Comprehension and Boost understanding!

Storyboard/Jot Dots for each chapter  
Journal Entries along the Way to connect

## Final projects!

- a. Design a new book cover
- b. Character Diary-
- c. A one woman/man show-
- d. Write another misadventure for Brian.
- e. Create a Character flag for Brian.

# Expanding on Centerpiece



<http://www.ioffer.com/i/rental-a-cry-in-the-wild-125020619>

## Robert Frost *Desert Places*

Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast  
In a field I looked into going past,  
And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,  
But a few weeds and stubble showing last.  
The woods around it have it--it is theirs.  
All animals are smothered in their lairs.  
I am too absent-spirited to count;  
The loneliness includes me unawares.  
And lonely as it is that loneliness  
Will be more lonely ere it will be less--  
A blanker whiteness of benighted snow  
With no expression, nothing to express.  
They cannot scare me with their empty spaces  
Between stars--on stars where no human race is.  
I have it in me so much nearer home  
To scare myself with my own desert places.

Pat Benatar,

Invincible



<http://www.last.fm/music/Pat+Benatar/+images/391973>

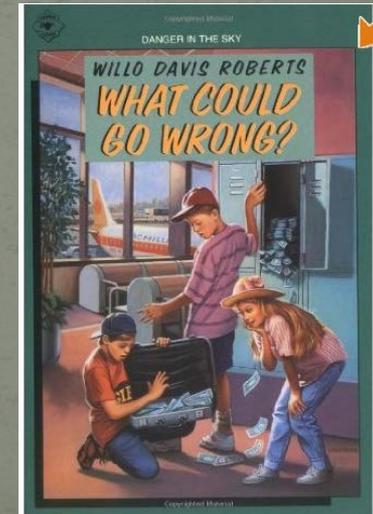
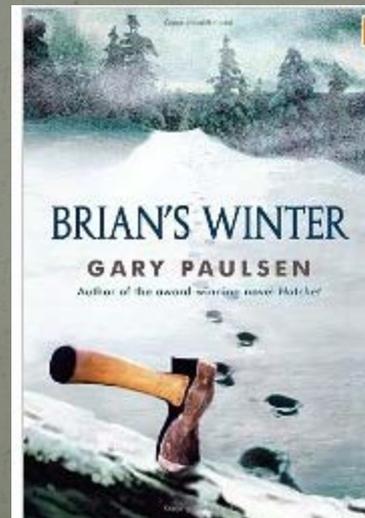
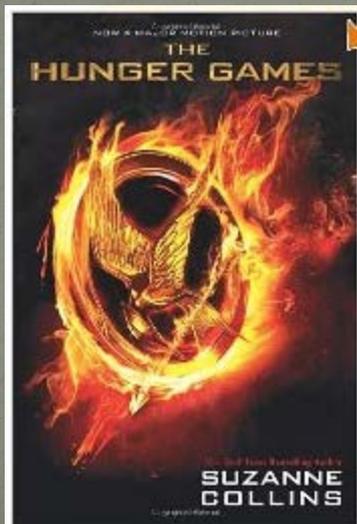
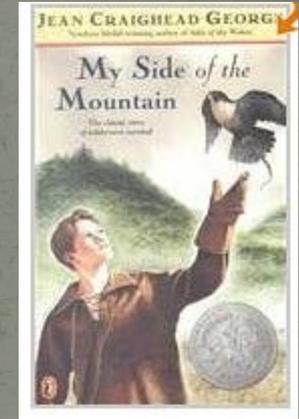
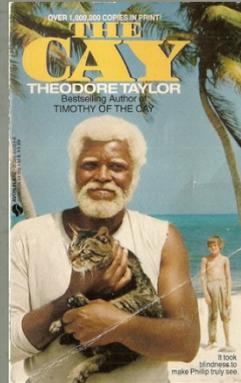
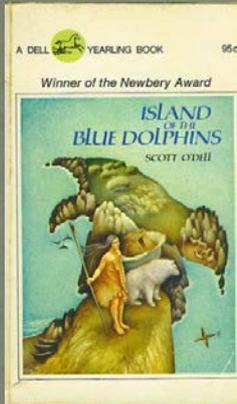
# Literature Circles

3-4 Students

Roles for all

Exposure

Book Pass



All Images from Amazon.com website