

## Grade 8 Summer Reading Assignment

To my incoming Grade 8 students,

Congratulations! You've made it through another academic year and can now look forward to a restful and relaxing summer before entering your FINAL year of elementary school. However, as I always tell you; first the work-then the play. It is always important to practice our skills, whether that be in training in sports or academics, so that we don't lose them over time.

Summer reading is an integral part of retaining and enhancing your reading, writing, and comprehension skills over the three month break. It is also a mandatory part of your education. Consequently, your summer reading assignment must be completed for a grade to be entered at the start of school in September. Below you will find a reading comprehension packet that will accompany your reading of the novel I have selected for you. The novel is called "Hatchet" by Gary Paulson. It was published way back in 1987 (ancient times, I know), but, like all good literature, its themes are timeless and have reached many different generations of readers.

The novel is about a 13 year old boy named Brian who is on his way to visit his father when the plane he is travelling in crashes in the wilderness. Brian must learn to survive the harsh environment alone as well as deal with the emotional challenges of his parents getting a divorce. It is a riveting story about adapting to change, persevering through difficult times, and the importance of relying on God through life's struggles and tribulations.

You must approach the reading of this book properly. You should read each chapter carefully, pause to reflect on what you read, then complete that chapter's section in the reading packet before moving to the next chapter. It is NOT advised to read the entire book and then go back and complete the entire packet as a whole as this is not the most effective way of gaining FULL comprehension of the text.

Students will be expected to turn in their summer reading packet on the **FIRST day of school** in September. We will be discussing the book as part of our first unit in Grade 8 Reading class. The packet will be graded out of a total of **70 marks** broken down as follows:

Section 1) Vocabulary Words and Definitions: 15 points (30 words/half a point each)

Section 2) Chapter Comprehension: 40 points (2 points each chapter+epilogue=20x2)

Section 3) Long answer writing prompt: 15 points ( grammar, punctuation, text citations)

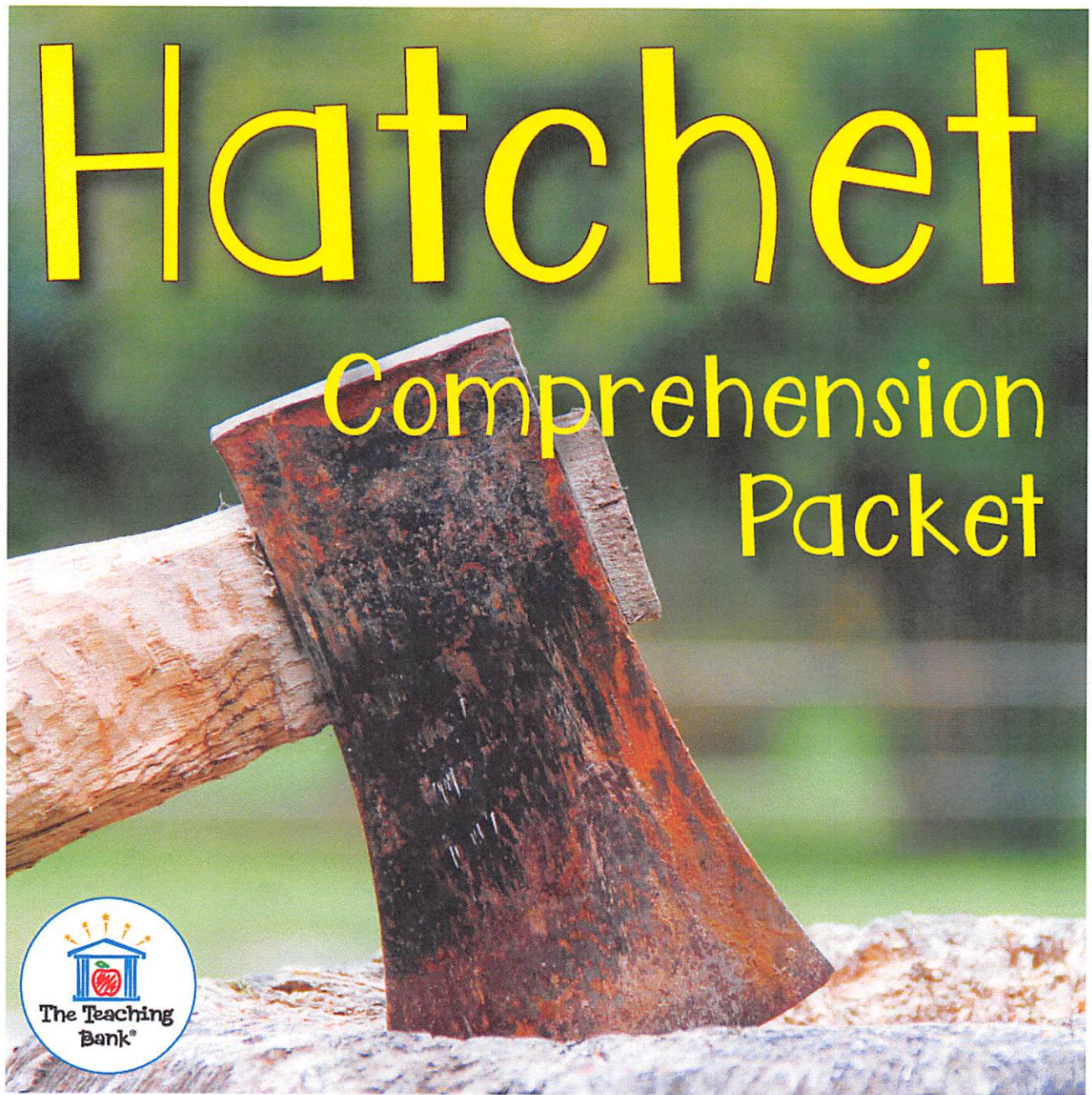
Copies of the book belonging to MQP library will be handed out during the last week of school for students to take home. Students must bring the book back in the same shape it was sent home in or their summer reading assignment will not be graded. Students may purchase their own book online if they choose. I will also be providing a PDF version of the book online through Google Classroom if they prefer to read it electronically rather than hard copy. There is also a free online audio reading of the book available on Youtube and I will post the link in Google Classroom. The audio book should be listened to only AFTER reading the entire book. It is NOT a quick way to circumvent the actual practice of sitting down and reading all 192 pages of the book.

Simply put, there are no excuses for failing to read a book less than 200 pages over three months with individual copies/online versions provided to each student free of charge. Therefore, I expect this reading package to be fully completed to a standard expected of a student soon to be entering high school. If you have any questions about the book or the packet, just email me at [Michael.Nardone@maryqueenofpeaceschool.com](mailto:Michael.Nardone@maryqueenofpeaceschool.com) and I will help you.

I look forward to seeing all of you in September to discuss this novel and start our journey together in reading class!

Your teacher,

Mr. Nardone  
MQP School  
Grade 7/8 Science and Health  
Grade 8 Reading



“Hatchet”

By Gary Paulson

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# HATCHET

## VOCABULARY WORDS AND DEFINITIONS

Chapters	Page #	Word	Definition
Chapters 1-2	7	wincing	
	13	turbulence	
	22	rebelled	
Chapters 3-4	33	clammy	
	34	haze	
	35	desperation	
Chapters 5-6	43	frantic	
	46	motivated	
	60	ruefully	
Chapters 7-8	67	crude	
	75	gingerly	
	78	cross	
Chapters 9-10	84	smoldered	
	86	consuming	
	94	dormant	
Chapters 11-12	102	gnarled	
	109	persistent	
	111	abrupt	
Chapters 13-14	118	infuriating	
	119	exulted	
	121	rectify	
Chapters 15-16	130	exasperated	
	144	grimacing	
	145	massive	
Chapters 17-18	150	incessant	
	153	chipper	
	168	instinctive	
Chapter 19 and Epilogue	173	marveling	
	178	unwittingly	
	180	furor	

# HATCHET BY GARY PAULSEN



**On-Going Activities:** (while you read the whole book):

- At the end of each chapter, answer the corresponding question(s).
- Pick one word to summarize the chapter (think concepts, main idea, or theme); then tell why you picked that word.
- Describe the main character, and how you think he has changed in each chapter.

**Chapter 1:** Describe the important elements of the story. First, tell the setting of this story, including the time, place, and circumstance. Next, describe the characters, including what kind of person they seem to be. Also, describe what you see as the immediate problem as well as the bigger, long-term problem in the story.

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**Chapter 2:** Describe the struggle or conflict, both the internal and the external. Remember to also describe the character and any changes you notice in him.

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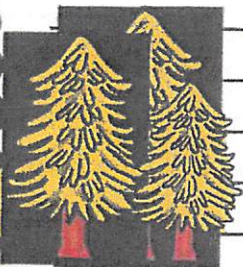
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# HATCHET BY GARY PAULSEN



**Chapter 3:** Describe what happened in this chapter. Pick one word to summarize the chapter and tell why you selected that word. Then draw a picture or storyboard of the events in this chapter.

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**Chapter 4:** What are your thoughts on the flashbacks or memories that Brian was going through in his mind? Brian also focused on his "reality." What is his current reality? What do you think you would do if you were in his place?

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# HATCHET BY GARY PAULSEN



Chapter 5: What do you think about the advice that Brian reflected on from his teacher? Why do you think that “keeping it simple” might help Brian? Remember to note any change you notice in Brian, and one word to summarize the chapter.

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Chapter 6: On page 57, Brian thinks about home and shelter. Compare the similarities and differences of “home” and “shelter”. Describe how they are the same, and how they are different.

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Chapter 7: What do you think of Brian’s reaction when he saw his own reflection in the water?

Share your reaction to his encounter with the bear. What seems important about it? How do you see Brian changing so far in the story?

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# HATCHET BY GARY PAULSEN



Chapter 8: On page 77, Brian figures out that “feeling sorry for yourself doesn’t work.” Why do you think that is the most important survival rule? How did Brian figure out this important lesson?

What do you think the hatchet might represent or symbolize? Why do you think that? Also, note any changes you notice in Brian.

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Chapter 9: On page 87, Brian says, “I have a friend now.” What do you think that is about? Why might he call the fire a “friend”?

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Chapter 10: Brian seems to have come to some important realizations in this chapter. Describe what he realized about fire, about food, and about the searchers. Also describe how he is changing as a person.

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# HATCHET BY GARY PAULSEN



Chapter 11: How is "having things to do" helping Brian? Be sure to describe any significant changes in Brian. Reflect on what kind of person he was at the beginning of the story compared to now. Why do you think he is changing?

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Chapter 12: Describe how Brian envisions his rescue happening. Do you think that it is very realistic? Describe his journey from hope to despair in this chapter. What caused it?

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Chapter 13: Did you wonder how much time had passed as this chapter began? Brian seems to have grown a lot. Describe what you think was a turning point for Brian, when the old Brian died and the new Brian was born. He describes his new hope as "tough hope." What do you think that means?

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# HATCHET BY GARY PAULSEN



Chapter 14: Why do you think that the word “mistakes” is repeated so many times in this chapter? What do you think of Brian’s encounter with the skunk? What lessons do you think he learned?

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Chapter 15: What do you think might be significant about Brian’s “first meat”? On page 136, Brian says that “so much of all living was patience and thinking.” Do you agree with that? Why or why not?

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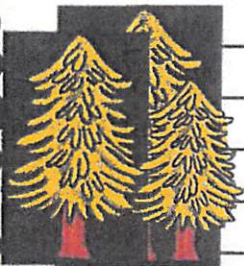
Chapter 16: This feels like a big chapter! There seem to be more breakthroughs for Brian... What do you think about his encounter with the moose? Why do you think he keeps repeating the word “insane”? What do you think about the tornado? Why do you think he described it as “beautiful and terrible at the same time”? Is Brian really back to nothing, back to square one? Why or why not?

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# HATCHET BY GARY PAULSEN



**Chapter 17:** What do you think about Brian's way of life, "first food, then thought, then action"? Describe any further changes you notice in Brian.

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**Chapter 18:** Describe some of the important events from this chapter. How did you feel when Brian lost the hatchet? Why did you feel that way? What do you think the hatchet might represent? Has that changed from what you thought at the beginning of the book?

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**Chapter 19:** Now that Brian has the survival pack that he so desperately wanted, the things inside "changed him." How do you think it changed him? Why do you think he was having such a struggle with that ("up and down feelings")? How did the real rescue compare to the way Brian imagined it? What are your thoughts about and reactions to his rescue?

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# HATCHET BY GARY PAULSEN



Epilogue: An *epilogue* serves as final comments on or a conclusion to what has happened. Share your reactions to the epilogue. Pick one or two words to describe Brian and support why you picked those words with evidence from the text. Also, summarize how this experience changed him.

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