

Unit Overview: Parent Guide

Hatchet, Grade 6

What is the goal of this unit?

- Your child will read fiction and nonfiction texts to understand how positive thinking, slowing down to think clearly, problem solving, and constant vigilance support survival in the face of grave danger and overwhelming odds. Your child will analyze survival stories and take away life lessons based on those stories.

What topics and skills is your sixth grader learning in this unit?

- Survival
- Problem solving
- Character analysis
- Research
- Informational writing

What tasks will your child engage in to help them consider the topics and skills of this unit?

- **Culminating Writing Task:** Your child will bring together all her learning near the end of the unit by writing an essay that answers the questions: Select an event from *Hatchet*. What did Brian do to aid or hinder his survival? Does *Hatchet* have instructional value as a survival guide?
- **Extension Task:** Your child will extend her learning by researching a survival story and identifying the main character trait which led to survival. Then with a group, your child will groups create a multimedia presentation to summarize the survival story and present and defend the identified character trait.

Your child will read these texts:

Text Title	Author/Source	How it is used in the Unit
<i>Hatchet</i>	Gary Paulsen	Main text of the unit
"Your Story: Are You a Survivor?"	National Geographic	Student text
"The 25 Most Incredible Survival Stories of All Time"	Tim MacWelch from Outdoorlife.com	Read Aloud
"What Would Peter Do?"	Peter Kummerfeldt (OutdoorSafe Inc.)	Student text

<i>New York State Conservationist (April 2012)</i>	Kelly Stang	Student text
"Survival by the Numbers"	Peter Kummerfeldt (OutdoorSafe, Inc.)	Student text
<i>Snow Fall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek</i>	John Branch from The New York Times	Read Aloud

Ideas for discussing survival

- What does it mean to survive?
- What are some different situations in everyday life where people have to survive?
- What can we learn from survival stories?
- How do you solve problems that you face?
- Why is it important to think positively?

Want to deepen your and your child's knowledge on the topic being studied?

Here is a suggested book list:

Title	Author
<i>Victory</i>	Susan Cooper
<i>Nation</i>	Terry Pratchett
<i>Dogson</i>	Gary Paulsen
<i>The Black Cat</i>	Scott O'Dell

What does independent reading look like at home?

Independent reading gives your child the opportunity to read and interact with books that are on her reading level and that address topics that she chooses. Supporting independent reading at home helps build your child's confidence with reading, her reading stamina and reading achievement, and will help her do better in school.

Here are some ways you can encourage independent reading at home:

- Let your child pick out books that she finds interesting
- Prioritize reading. Protect time every day for reading (weekends and school breaks too!). Before bedtime is a great time to read.
- Read together

- Read aloud
- Discuss your child's reading. Ask questions like:
 - Tell me about what you read today.
 - What did you like about it?
 - What didn't you like about it?
 - What did you learn?
 - What questions do you have about what you read?
 - What didn't you understand about what you read?
 - What do you want to learn more about after reading?
 - How does what you've read connect to other things you've read?