



Pushing the Limits of Persistence Suggested Reading and Discussion Questions

To persist is to endure. To last over time - even against the odds. Examples are everywhere: A persistent person weathers physical, emotional, or environmental setbacks and keeps trying. Elements that persist in the world around us connect us to a certain place, to an event, or to our past. We can read history in canyons carved by unstoppable rivers. Enduring artifacts and memories can wrench or lift our hearts. Put simply, PERSISTENCE expands the human experience in myriad ways.

Hatchet

Gary Paulsen, Fiction-young adult. Thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson, haunted by his secret knowledge of his mother's infidelity, is traveling by single-engine plane to visit his father for the first time since the divorce. When the plane crashes, he is alone in the Canadian wilderness with nothing but his clothing, a tattered windbreaker, and the hatchet his mother had given him as a present. At first consumed by despair and self-pity, Brian slowly learns survival skills—how to make a shelter for himself, how to hunt and fish and forage for food, how to make a fire—and even finds the courage to start over from scratch when a tornado ravages his campsite. When Brian is finally rescued after fifty-four days in the wild, he emerges from his ordeal with new patience and maturity, and a greater understanding of himself and his parents. *amazon.com*

- What inner traits does Brian develop to survive in the wilderness? To which of those qualities do you most attribute his survival?
- How does Brian's relationship to nature change during this novel? What lessons does he learn about the natural world?
- *Hatchet* is a coming-of-age story—in the extreme. Once rescued and returned to civilization, how has Brian's experience and persistence changed him? In what way is he a different boy than the one who stepped on the plane at the beginning of the story?

