

# Northwind



By

Gary Paulsen

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

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**About the author:** Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit [novelstudies.org](http://novelstudies.org).

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## Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each of the ten chapters of the novel study focuses one or two chapters of **Northwind** and is comprised of the following activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A portfolio cover (page 7) as well as a Checklist (page 6) are included so that students may keep track of their completed work.

**Every activity need not be completed by all students.**

### Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to:

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases... including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story, **and many others.**

**Themes** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include Norway of the Middle Ages; Norse mythology; survival; epic journeys; man versus nature; coming of age; courage and endurance; inner growth.

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## List of Skills

### Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. Identification of root words

### Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

### Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

### Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experiences

### Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write about personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

### Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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## Synopsis

This stunning New York Times Bestseller from the survival story master, set along a rugged coastline centuries ago, does for the ocean what *Hatchet* does for the woods, as it relates the story of a young person's battle to stay alive against the odds, where the high seas meet a coastal wilderness.

When a deadly plague reaches the small fish camp where he lives, an orphan named Leif is forced to take to the water in a cedar canoe. He flees northward, following a wild, fjord-riven shore, navigating from one danger to the next, unsure of his destination. Yet the deeper into his journey he paddles, the closer he comes to his truest self as he connects to "the heartbeat of the ocean . . . the pulse of the sea." With hints of Nordic mythology and an irresistible narrative pull, ***Northwind*** is Gary Paulsen at his captivating, adventuresome best. [Courtesy of the Publisher]

## Author Biography

Gary Paulsen

Gary Paulsen, was a renowned author of novels for young people, born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Three of Gary Paulsen's novels have been acclaimed as Newbery Honor Books: **Hatchet**, **Dogsong**, and **The Winter Room**. **The River** is Gary's exciting sequel to **Hatchet**. His other novels include: **Brian's Winter** (sequel), **Brian's Return** (sequel), **Canyons**, **The Crossing**, **Dancing Carl**, **The Island**, **Popcorn Days** and **Buttermilk Nights**, **Sentries**, **Tracker**, **Woodsong**, **The Legend of Red Horse Canyon**, **Escape From Fire Mountain**, **Danger on Midnight River**. Gary Paulsen was an avid outdoors-man who competed in the Iditarod, a dog sled race across Alaska. He also frequently sailed the Pacific Ocean.



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## Student Checklist

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment	Grade/Level	Comments

# Northwind



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Men Who Have Lost Their Shadows



### Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Northwind* is Leif, a courageous young Scandanavian boy who lived centuries ago. Think back on some of your favorite characters from novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. Who would you say is your *most favorite* character ever? What made you select this person?




### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

Valhalla	tendrils	indescribable	gore
cessation	exceedingly	bile	dissipated

1. With the \_\_\_\_\_ of noise at the work site, neighbors were finally able to sleep.
2. With the rising of the sun, the fog finally \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The beautiful sunset was absolutely \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The men stood as the \_\_\_\_\_ of fog rolled back and forth.
5. After cleaning the fish, our minnow pail was filled with the leftover \_\_\_\_\_.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ means “the hall of the fallen”.
7. When the flu first hit her, she could feel the \_\_\_\_\_ rise in her throat.
8. “I was \_\_\_\_\_ happy to see my cousin arrive safely,” Marjorie said.



## Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of the story at the beginning of the first chapter.


2. What is meant by the title, “Men Who Have Lost Their Shadows”?


### 3. Cholera

It is likely that the men in wooden ship had contracted cholera, a deadly and terrible disease – even to this day. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, research a couple of facts about this dreaded disease.


4. By their actions, the four men that exited the ship were sentencing the villagers to death. How was this so?


5. How would you describe the atmosphere created by the author in this chapter?  
How did you feel as you read this chapter?


6. Who did the villagers believe the four men from the ship were? What had caused them to reach this state?


7. What did Old Carl do to try to ensure the survival of some members of the village? What flaw was there in his plan?


8. What do we learn of Leif's character in this chapter?


## Language Activities



### A. Your Favorite Genre Of Books

***Northwind*** might be classified as a historical fiction novel for Young Readers. What genre of books do you enjoy the most? (i.e. mystery, humor, biography, romance, fantasy, historical fiction, science fiction, poetry, etc.) Why do you especially enjoy this type of book?




**B.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from this chapter is: *with the smell clawing into their every breath.*



What is being compared in this example?

--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) a Viking ship


b) a seal


## C. Foreshadowing

Chapter One may contain an important literary device called **foreshadowing**. Foreshadowing is defined *as a warning or indication of a future event*. How might the concluding sentences of Chapter One be an example of this device? If it is an example of foreshadowing, predict what might happen next.



<b>Prediction:</b>

## D. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates Buried Treasures.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain is the first four lines of the famous poem, ***The Viking***, written by the renowned poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*He makes his living robbing folks,  
He raids and loots and burns.  
The people are afraid of him,  
And dread his soon return.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A – B – C – B**. Other rhyming schemes include: ABAB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBA, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the topics established in the first chapter of our novel.

### The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

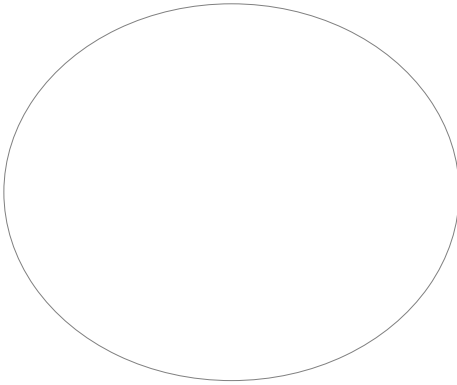
Title: \_\_\_\_\_


**E.** Next to each pair of words indicate whether each is an example of a Synonym (S). Antonym (A), or Homophone (H).

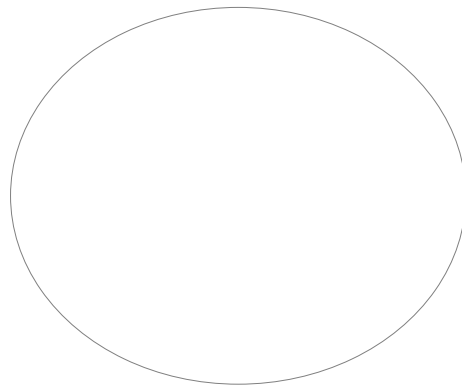
1	joyous - ecstatic		6	misery - anguish	
2	remember - forget		7	bow - stern	
3	cove - bayou		8	dissipated - restored	
4	week - weak		9	sea - see	
5	sickness - fortitude		10	indescribable - unspeakable	

## F. 5 Ws and an H.

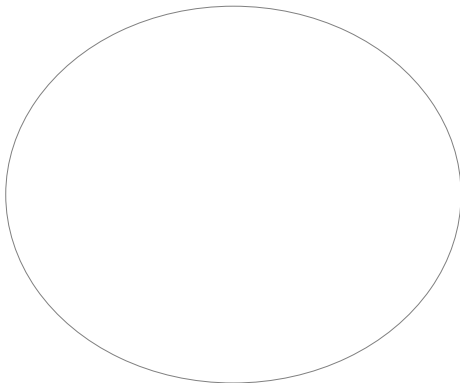
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



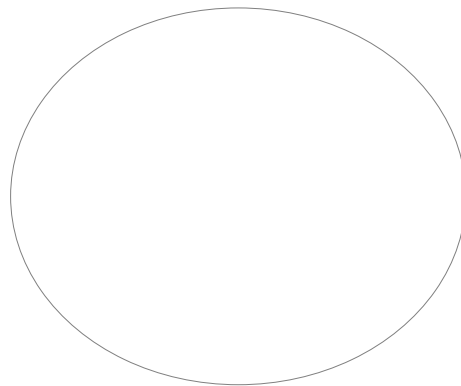
**WHO?**



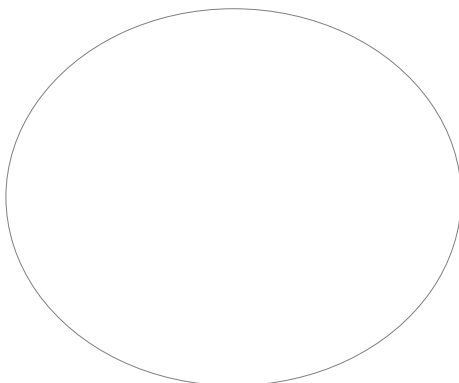
**WHAT?**



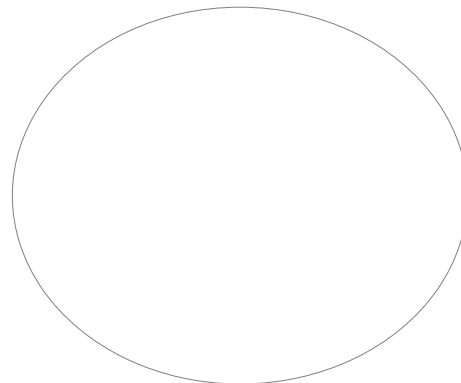
**WHEN?**



**WHERE?**



**WHY?**



**HOW?**

## Extension Activity



### Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in this section our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6