

Tracker



By

Gary Paulsen

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

Tracker

By Gary Paulsen



Table of Contents

Suggestions and Expectations	3
List of Skills	4
Synopsis / Author Biography	5
Student Checklist	6
Reproducible Student Booklet	7
Answer Key	60

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.

Copyright © 2015 Nat Reed
Revisions Completed in 2025
All rights reserved by author.
Permission to copy for single classroom use only.
Electronic distribution limited to single classroom use only.
Not for public display.

Tracker

By Gary Paulsen



Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on 1 or 2 chapters of *Tracker* and is comprised of five of the following activities:

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

A **portfolio cover** (p.7) as well as a **Checklist** (p.6) are included so that students may 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 perseverance, coping with the death of a loved one, deer, conservation of nature, hunting, coming of age.

Tracker

By Gary Paulsen

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/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

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 a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

Art Activities

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

Tracker

By Gary Paulsen



Synopsis

For John Borne's family, hunting has nothing to do with sport or manliness. It's a matter of survival. Every fall John and his grandfather go off into the woods to shoot the deer that puts meat on the table over the long Minnesota winter.

But this year John's grandfather is dying, and John must hunt alone. John tracks a doe for two days, but as he closes in on his prey he realizes he cannot shoot her. For John, the hunt is no longer about killing, but about life. [The Publisher]

Author Biography

Gary Paulsen

Gary Paulsen, a renowned author of novels for young people, presently lives in New Mexico. 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 is an avid outdoors-man who competed in the Iditarod, a dog sled race across Alaska. He also frequently sails the Pacific Ocean.

Tracker



By Gary Paulsen

Name:

Tracker

By Gary Paulsen
Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Tracker* is thirteen year old John Borne who lives in the Minnesota wilderness with his grandparents. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

texture	kerosene	concentrate	stock
slab	chemicals	slaughter	chores

1. John went out to the barn to tend to the _____ right after breakfast.
2. Agatha filled the lamps with _____.
3. The cook served each of the men a great _____ of bacon for lunch.
4. John knew that a weasel would be sure to _____ all of their chickens if it got into their coop.
5. John finished his _____ before the sun was even up.
6. The pharmacist knew a great deal about the effect of various _____ on the human body.
7. The _____ of denim is much coarser than silk.
8. Feeling totally exhausted, John forced himself to _____ on completing each task.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story for much of the first chapter?

2. John's grandfather found out he had cancer in a hospital in the city of _____.

3. John claims that his grandmother spoke as if she was just about to break into poetry. How do you think the following statement might be an example of this: *Cold breakfast sits hard, and a hard breakfast won't warm you on a snowy morning?* (You may wish to brainstorm ideas with a classmate before answering.)

4. What had happened to John's parents?

5. John says, *Crying changed nothing*. Do you think that John is right in assuming that crying is a waste of time? Please defend your answer.

6. How was the deer hunt going to be different that year?

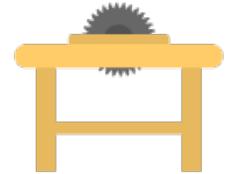
7. Near the end of the chapter John says that it is impossible to be sad when there is work to do. Why do think this is so often the case?

Language Activities



A. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first chapter of *Tracker*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
lamp		A part of the hand.
rifle		Pilot.
time		A tiny arachnid.
snow		Possesses.
wrong		Adult.
death		Despised.
plane		Group; team; committee.

Now find two additional words from the first chapter which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

Word	Anagram	Clue

Good to Know ~ Amazing Facts About Deer

Did you know that ...

- ... most deer are born with white spots but lose them within a year?
- ... deer take their first steps within half an hour of their birth?
- ... young deer stay with their mother for about a year?
- ... during the mating season male deer will often use their antlers to fight for the attention of female deer?
- ... male deer grow new antlers each year?



B. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's one such example: from Chapter One: ... *the hot sweet smell of it...*



Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

The howl of a timber wolf.	
A blizzard.	
Your choice.	

C. **Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following is an example taken from Chapter One: *Cold breakfast sits hard...*

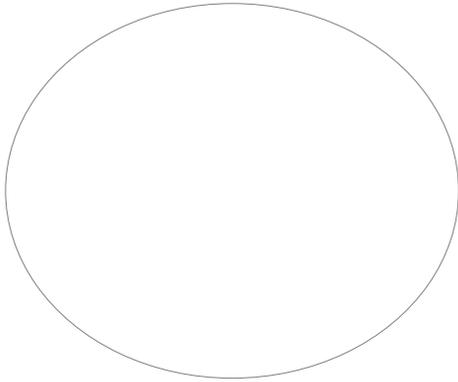
Describe how the breakfast is personified in this example.

Create your own example of personification.

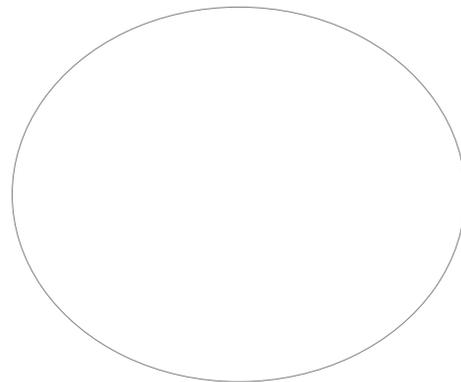
As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.

D. 5 Ws and an H.

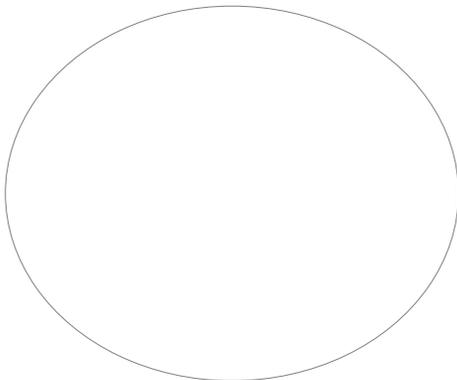
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



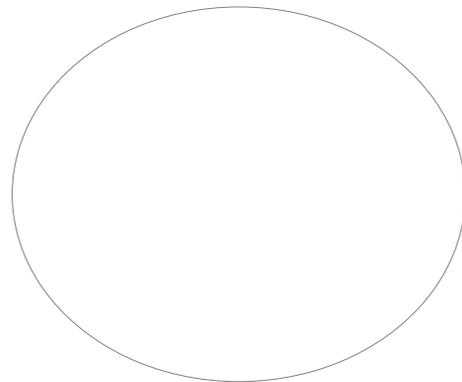
WHO?



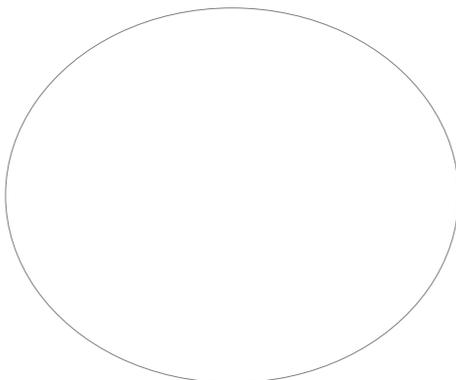
WHAT?



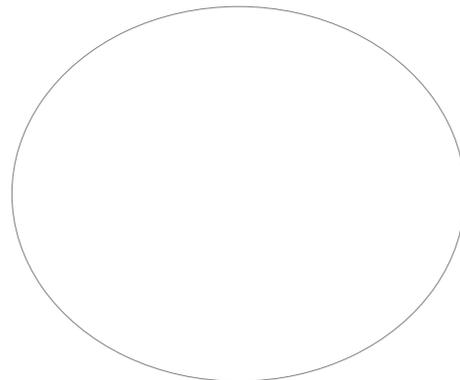
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

E. An Acrostic Poem

There are many forms of poetry available to the aspiring poet other than the rhyming poem. An ACROSTIC poem is one example. In an acrostic poem the first letters of each line are aligned vertically to form a word. The word often is the subject of the poem. Here is an example written by the acclaimed poet, Atrocious Halitosis:

The Firefly

Freaky-looking
Itches me when I touch
Restless at night
Early or late
Fearless
Little
Yellowfly



The Acrostic Poem

Now create your own Acrostic Poem on a subject featured in this novel. Your poem must have at least four lines (and doesn't need to rhyme).

Title: _____

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 the first chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6