Lawn Boy

By

Gary Paulsen

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed
Lawn Boy
By Gary Paulsen

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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 *Lawn Boy* and is comprised of 4 different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language and Extension Activities

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking.

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.

Students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included as well as a **Student Checklist**.

**Themes and topics** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include initiative and enterprise, perseverance, owning a business, the stock market and investment.

Additional icons provided by [http://atyourservice.com.cy](http://atyourservice.com.cy)
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## List of Skills

### Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Identify *personification*
8. Identify foreshadowing
9. Use of singular / plural nouns
10. Listing compound words
11. Identifying parts of speech
12. Determining alphabetical order
13. Identification of root words
14. Identify/create *similes*
15. Identification of a *cliffhanger*
16. Identification of a metaphor

### Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

### Plot Activities

1. Complete a *sequence chart* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify the climax of the novel
4. Five W's Chart

### Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists/Antagonists
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Comparing two Characters

### Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Conduct an interview
4. Write a letter to a friend
5. Write about personal feelings
6. Complete an observation chart
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. Design an Information Card
I set out to mow some lawns with Grandpa’s old riding lawn mower. One client was Arnold the stockbroker, who offered to teach me about: The beauty of capitalism. Supply and demand. Diversified labor. Distributing the wealth. “It’s groovy, man,” Arnold said.

The grass grew, and so did business. Arnold invested my money in many things. One of them was a prizefighter. All of a sudden I was the sponsor of my very own fighter, Joey Pow. That’s when my summer got really interesting.

Gary Paulsen’s comic story about a summer job becomes a slapstick lesson in business as one boy turns a mountain of grass into a mountain of cash. [The Publisher]

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 outdoorsman who competed in the Iditarod, a dog sled race across Alaska. He also frequently sails the Pacific Ocean.
# Lawn Boy
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Student Checklist

**Student Name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade / Level</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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Lawn Boy

By Gary Paulsen

Name:
Lawn Boy
By Gary Paulsen

Chapters 1 - 2

Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *Lawn Boy* is an enterprising young boy who goes through a number of extremely unusual experiences as the story unfolds. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels that 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sprouted</th>
<th>connection</th>
<th>clutch</th>
<th>leverage</th>
<th>hesitated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>logic</td>
<td>throttle</td>
<td>admission</td>
<td>capitalism</td>
<td>economy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Having the seat of the mower so close to the steering wheel gave the driver better ____________ when driving it.

2. Even though the ____________ was pushed to the max, the mower still refused to go very fast.

3. The flowers in Grandma’s garden ____________ to a magnificent height after the rainstorm.

4. When driving a car with a manual transmission, it is important that one learn how to operate the ____________ properly when shifting gears.
5. My brother ____________ only briefly when he learned that he would have to lead the expedition into the jungle.

6. Carol’s ability to spin that yoyo simply defies ____________.

7. ____________ is defined as an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of goods.

8. If the ____________ does not improve soon, many more people will be out of work.

9. The mayor’s ____________ that he accepted bribes was a real bombshell.

10. “Does anyone here see the ______________ between hard work and rewards?” Mr. Jackson asked.

Questions

1. What is the setting of this novel?

2. What was unusual about Grandma’s way of communicating?

3. Describe how the main character came to possess a lawn mower.

4. Grandma described her husband as a:
   a) hoarder        b) tinkerer
   c) gardener       d) mechanic
5. Chapter One ends on a rather suspenseful note when the author states, “And that was how it all started.”
   
   a) What event is the author referring to as having got it all started?

   b) What do you think it was that got started by this seemingly simple event?

   c) Investigate: Some would see the conclusion to Chapter One as being an example of a literary device known as foreshadowing. What is foreshadowing, and how might this statement be an example of it?

6. Think of one good adjective which would accurately describe the personality of the main character. ________________

7. What previous event had made the men of the neighborhood rather eager to hire a kid to cut their grass?

8. Why didn’t he tell his parents about all the money he earned on that first day?

Good to Know

Eden Prairie, Minnesota is a real town. It is located 12 miles (19 km) southwest of downtown Minneapolis and is the 13th largest city in Minnesota. Its population stands at about 60,000 people.
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 PAN can also form the word NAP. 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.

The words in the left-hand column are found in Chapters 1 and 2 of our novel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Anagram</th>
<th>Clue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brake</td>
<td>One who works in a kitchen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lever</td>
<td>Frolic; spree.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pedals</td>
<td>Ceased to be active.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple</td>
<td>Forces.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cost</td>
<td>Narrow beds.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ears</td>
<td>Long time periods</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

B. Place the following words from this chapter in alphabetical order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>1.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>economic</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expansion</td>
<td>3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>enough</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everywhere</td>
<td>5.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fancy</td>
<td>6.</td>
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<tr>
<td>elm</td>
<td>7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>funny</td>
<td>8.</td>
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<tr>
<td>eat</td>
<td>9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cut</td>
<td>10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eight</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
C. **Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. In Chapter One the author states, “The mower seemed to give a happy leap forward…” In this sentence the mower is given human characteristics (it gives a *happy* leap forward).

a) Why do you think personification is a literary device used by many authors?


b) Create your own example of personification.


D. **Cliffhanger**

A **cliffhanger** is a popular device used by both writers of novels and movies. The conclusion to Chapter 2 is an excellent example of this.

What is a cliffhanger?


Why do you think it is so popular with writers like Gary Paulsen?


Extension Activities

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel.

Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first two chapters of Lawn Boy. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.