Woodsong

By

Gary Paulsen

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed
Woodsong
By Gary Paulsen

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Suggestions and Expectations

This sixty-five page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Most chapters of the novel study focus on one or two chapters of Woodsong and are comprised of four 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 which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include overcoming difficulty, courage and endurance, the environment, and personal growth.
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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. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create similes
14. Identification of a cliffhanger

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. Identify the climax of the novel
4. Five W’s Chart

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Protagonists and antagonists
3. Relating personal experiences

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of 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. Design an Information Card
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Synopsis

Gary Paulsen, the three-time Newbery Honor author, is no stranger to adventure. He has flown off the back of a dogsled and down a frozen waterfall to near disaster, and waited for a giant bear to seal his fate with one slap of a claw. He has led a team of sled dogs toward the Alaskan Mountain Range in an Iditarod – the grueling, 1180 mile dogsled race – hallucinating from lack of sleep, but determined to finish.

Here in vivid detail, Paulsen recounts several of the remarkable experiences that shaped his life and inspired his award-winning writing. [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.
### Woodsong
*By Gary Paulsen*

#### Student Checklist

Student Name: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade / Level</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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Woodsong

By Gary Paulsen

Name: ___________________________
Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels or works of nonfiction features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *Woodsong* is actually Gary Paulsen, the author of this exciting book. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>paradox</th>
<th>tandem</th>
<th>precise</th>
<th>intent</th>
<th>predator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preconceived</td>
<td>carcass</td>
<td>clambering</td>
<td>frequent</td>
<td>virtually</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Do you think it was Jon’s _____________ to make everyone think he was left-handed?

2. The children were upset to see the _____________ of a deer lying beside the trail.

3. Everyone thought it was quite a _____________ that such a talented team had never won a championship.

4. Gary Paulsen spent _____________ all of his time hunting.

5. The old trapper harnessed his dog team in ____________.
6. My aunt and uncle were ____________ visitors of the local museum.

7. The children were all ______________ to see Santa Claus.

8. Do you think she had any _____________ idea of who the burglar was?

9. It is critical for an architect to be extremely ________________.

10. The grizzly bear is an especially ferocious ________________.

Questions

1. What is the setting of Chapter One?

[Response Blank]

2. Chapter One begins with an example of foreshadowing (a literary device in which the author provides clues as to upcoming events). Find an example of foreshadowing in the opening paragraphs.

[Response Blank]

3. The author believed in the fairy tale version of the forest until he was ___ years old.

Good to Know – The Gangline

The gangline is a single line to which each dog is attached, usually in pairs, and it keeps the dogs in a tight formation ahead of the sled. This is better for forested areas or narrow trails, and is the typical harness system used in sled dog races such as the Iditarod or Yukon Quest. (http://www.athropolis.com/arctic-facts/fact-dogs-hitch.htm)

4. At first the deer and the wolves didn’t even notice the author and his dog team. T or F

5. What event slowed the deer down enough that the wolves were able to catch up to it?

[Response Blank]
6. What did the man do to interrupt the wolves and what was the result?

7. Describe your impression of the first chapter?

Language Activities

A. Investigate: Brush Wolves

The author explains that the wolves he saw in this chapter were not the big timber wolves that the north country is so famous for, but brush wolves. Brush wolves are described in this chapter as being smaller than timber wolves, weighing about 40-50 pounds each. Your task is to do an investigation of this sometimes misunderstood creature. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, research the brush wolf and record three fascinating facts from your research to share with your classmates.

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B. Choose ten words from this chapter with two or more syllables. Indicate the syllables by drawing a line between each syllable. Example: good / bye.
Minnesota: The Setting for the Novel’s First Half
Extension Activity

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 chapter of *Woodsong*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.