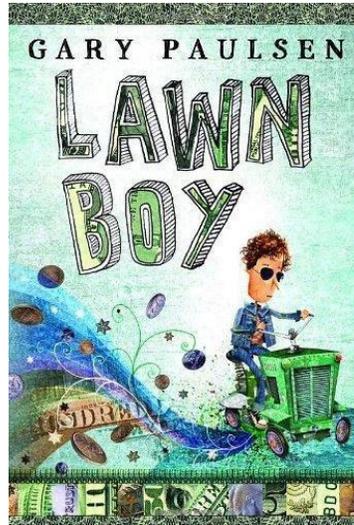


# Lawn Boy



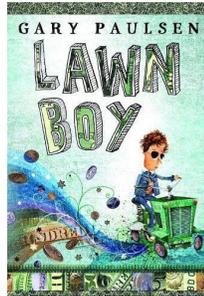
By

Gary Paulsen

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

# Lawn Boy

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 .....	53

**About the author:** Nat Reed has been a member of the teaching profession for more than 30 years. He is presently a full-time professor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program. For more information on his work and literature, please visit the websites [www.reedpublications.org](http://www.reedpublications.org) and [www.novelstudies.org](http://www.novelstudies.org).

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# Lawn Boy

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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>

# Lawn Boy

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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

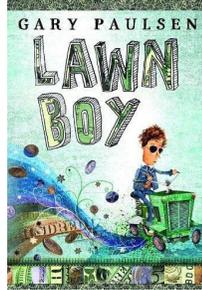
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Complete an Observation Chart
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write about personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

### Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Design an Information Card

# Lawn Boy

By Gary Paulsen



## Synopsis

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]

## Author Biography

*Gary Paulsen*

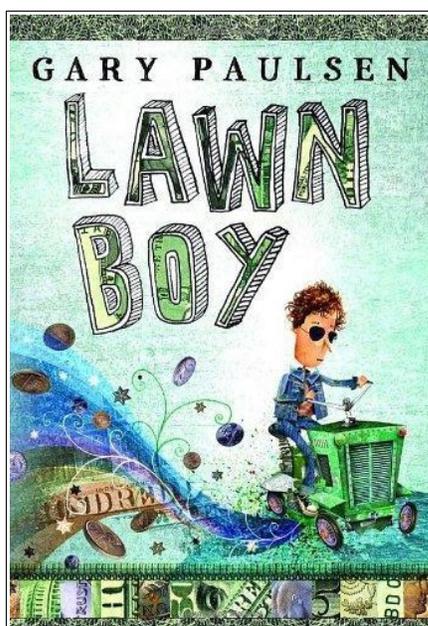
Gary Paulsen, a renowned author of novels for young people, presently lives in New Mexico. Three of Gary Paulsen's novels have been acclaimed as Newbery Honor Books: **Hatchet**, **Dogsong**, and **The Winter Room**. **The River** is Gary's exciting sequel to **Hatchet**. His other novels include: **Brian's 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 outdoorsman who competed in the Iditarod, a dog sled race across Alaska. He also frequently sails the Pacific Ocean.



# Lawn Boy

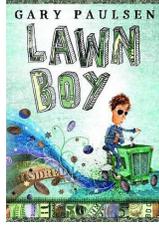


*By Gary Paulsen*

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.

sprouted	connection	clutch	leverage	hesitated
logic	throttle	admission	capitalism	economy

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 13<sup>th</sup> largest city in Minnesota. Its population stands at about 60,000 people.



## 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 **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.

Word	Anagram	Clue
brake		One who works in a kitchen
lever		Frolic; spree.
pedals		Ceased to be active.
simple		Forces.
cost		Narrow beds.
ears		Long time periods

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

economic	1.
expansion	2.
enough	3.
everywhere	4.
fancy	5.
elm	6.
funny	7.
eat	8.
cut	9.
eight	10.

**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.

1	2
3	4
5	6