

When selecting chapters from *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen to read with reluctant (readers) - high school students, it's important to focus on chapters that highlight key moments of the story, are rich in themes, and are engaging yet not overwhelming. Here are some chapters that would be particularly effective:

1. Chapter 1 – The Crash

- **Why?** This chapter sets the tone for the entire novel. It introduces the main character, Brian Robeson, and the life-altering event of the plane crash. It's a tense, dramatic moment that will grab the students' attention right away. The vivid descriptions of the crash can be both exciting and emotional, helping to foster engagement with the story. This chapter also introduces the central conflict (survival), which is an essential theme throughout the book.

2. Chapter 4 – Brian's First Night

- **Why?** This chapter provides a powerful look at Brian's immediate reaction to being stranded in the wilderness. The combination of fear, panic, and a sense of helplessness will resonate with struggling readers, as many students can relate to moments of crisis. It also begins to explore Brian's inner struggle with self-pity, which can prompt important discussions about emotional growth and resilience.

3. Chapter 7 – The First Real Meal

- **Why?** In this chapter, Brian begins to adjust to his new reality and figures out how to find food. It's a crucial moment of survival and personal growth. The chapter is a good example of Brian's resourcefulness, and it offers an opportunity to talk about themes of perseverance, problem-solving, and adaptability. The language is also more straightforward, which can help struggling readers focus on understanding the content.

4. Chapter 12 – The Porcupine

- **Why?** This chapter features a key event in Brian's survival process. After being attacked by a porcupine, he has to contend with pain and frustration. It's a great chapter for highlighting Brian's resilience in the face of adversity. The physical challenge he faces also metaphorically mirrors the emotional struggles he's going through, and it's a moment when the students can empathize with his feelings.

5. Chapter 13 – The Bear

- **Why?** This chapter offers an important moment where Brian encounters a bear. It's another pivotal scene that underscores his growth and ability to manage his fear. The chapter builds tension and suspense, but also shows how Brian is starting to accept his surroundings and the dangers of nature. It's a key turning point in the story when Brian starts feeling more competent in the wilderness.

6. Chapter 18 – Brian's Rescue

- **Why?** Although the final chapter of the book may be too long to cover in one sitting, this chapter offers a satisfying conclusion. It shows Brian's emotional and physical transformation after being rescued. The contrast between his earlier feelings of helplessness and his newfound strength is a powerful way to discuss themes of growth, survival, and resilience.

Key Themes to Highlight with These Chapters:

- **Survival and Self-Reliance:** The selected chapters all illustrate Brian's gradual development into a self-reliant and resourceful survivor. Discussing these moments can help students appreciate the process of adapting to challenging circumstances.
- **Emotional Growth:** Students can reflect on Brian's emotional arc, especially how he moves from self-pity to determination. This provides an opportunity to discuss mental health, resilience, and how people cope with stress and trauma.
- **Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking:** The chapters focus on Brian figuring out how to meet his basic needs, making them good examples for teaching critical thinking, decision-making, and resourcefulness.

By selecting these chapters, you can help students connect with the text on both an emotional and intellectual level, while also keeping the reading manageable and engaging.