Hatchet Study Guide Questions

1. Why is Brian visiting his father in Canada? How does Brian feel about his mother?

2. Why was Brian wearing a hatchet in his belt when he boarded the plane?

3. What is Brian’s plan for landing the plane? What conclusions can you draw about Brian from the actions he takes before the crash?

4. What did Brian do immediately after the plane landed? What happened to him?

5. At first, why did Brian believe he would be rescued soon? Why did he change his opinion?

6. What lesson does Brian recall from Mr. Perpich, his English teacher? How does that lesson help Brian as he sits beside the lake?

7. Where does Brian find shelter? Why does he consider the find lucky?

8. What did Brian observe in his surroundings?

9. What does Brian see among the raspberry bushes? How does the bear’s behavior surprise him? What does he learn from this experience?

10. What wild visitor helps Brian figure out how to build a fire? How? What does the fire mean to Brian? What added responsibility did the fire impose upon him?

11. What do you think Brian means when he tells himself that self-pity doesn’t work? Why did he feel it was important to have things to do?

12. What tools does Brian make and for what does he use them? How does this accomplishment make Brian feel about himself and his situation?

13. How did he Brian feel after the search plane traveled away from his campsite?

14. What mistakes did Brian catalogue after his first forty-seven days? Why did he conclude that mistakes had greater significance in the wilderness?

15. How did Brian learn that skunks were neither cute nor funny?

16. Why did Brian make a food shelf? What kinds of food did he eat? How did he get his first meat?

17. The author spends more than two chapters describing Brian’s trip out to the plane and back. What effect does this description have on the reader? Why was he overjoyed to see the tail of the plane sticking out of the water?

18. What problems did Brian have to overcome to retrieve the contents of the plane?

19. Why might Brian have mixed feelings about using some of the items in the survival pack? What were the most significant items in the survival pack?

20. How did the pilot discover Brian? Explain Brian’s response to the pilot. Were you surprised by it?