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 **Prestwick House**
Activity Pack
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Heart of Darkness
BY JOSEPH CONRAD



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All references come from the Simon Pulse Paperback edition of *Hatchet*, copyright 1987.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Character Traits

Objectives: Understanding character traits
 Identifying character traits in the protagonist

Activity

Character is defined by distinctive traits, qualities, or attributes. *Courage* is considered by most people to be a *good* character trait, while *dishonesty* is considered to be an undesirable character trait.

In literature, the character traits a fictional character possesses are usually illustrated for the reader by the actions of the character in a story. In a coming-of-age novel, the protagonist, or main character in the story, develops character traits as he or she grows or matures throughout the story.

For example, in the novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the protagonist is Huck Finn. Huck and a runaway slave named Jim are traveling down the Mississippi River on a raft. At the beginning of the journey, Huck does not view Jim as a man. He sees Jim simply as a slave. As the journey down the river progresses, Huck's understanding of Jim deepens. Huck comes to **respect** Jim. Huck develops and demonstrates character traits such as **tolerance, acceptance, decency, and courtesy**.

Hatchet, like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, is a coming-of-age story. The protagonist in the story develops *good* character traits as the story progresses. To recognize these character traits in the story, it is important to first understand each character trait.

In small groups, complete **Part I** of the following **Character Traits Questionnaire**. First, read and discuss the **Definitions of Character Traits** listed at the top of the questionnaire.

Then, discuss each situation described in the questions and, as a group, decide which character traits are illustrated. Remember that character traits can be both positive and negative. A person can be *honest* or *dishonest*. List any character traits you think apply.

Finally, list the reasons for your choices in the space provided below the question. The first one is done for you as an example.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 1 – 3**Vocabulary**

Objectives: Defining vocabulary words using context clues
 Writing a story correctly using vocabulary words

Activity

Based on the context clues in Chapters 1 – 3, define the following vocabulary words relating to airplanes. You should not need a dictionary to complete this Activity.

- Find the airplane term on the page indicated on the chart.
- Read the sentence before and after the term.
- Write a definition of the meaning of the term.
- The first one is done for you as an example.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 1 – 3

Style

Objectives: Recognizing that the author varies sentence length to help establish mood
Identifying the ideas that are emphasized by the author's use of short sentences

Activity

One technique a writer uses to emphasize ideas in a story is to vary the length of the sentences. Long sentences can convey a peaceful mood or establish a complex thought. When the author switches from long sentences to short ones, the mood may change to one of urgency, fear, tension, or excitement. In addition, authors sometimes use short sentences to emphasize an idea or to stress an important point. The following examples from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* illustrate each of these techniques.

Example One:

THAT WAS TOM'S great secret—the scheme to return home with his brother pirates and attend their own funerals. They had paddled over to the Missouri shore on a log, at dusk on Saturday, landing five or six miles below the village; they had slept in the woods at the edge of the town till nearly daylight, and had then crept through back lanes and alleys and finished their sleep in the gallery of the church among a chaos of invalided benches.

Although Tom and his fellow pirates are running away from home, the mood of the above passage is one of calmness. The actions flow together in a long sentence, which mimics the slow, peaceful river.

Example Two:

In the following passage, Huck is secretly watching thieves examine their loot. The shorter sentences help to heighten the tension.

A noise fell upon his ear. He was all attention in an instant. The alley door closed softly. He sprang to the corner of the brick stone. The next moment two men brushed by him, and one seemed to have something under his arm. It must be that box! So they were going to remove the treasure. Why call Tom now?

Example Three:

Tom and Becky are exploring a dark cave, looking for a way out. They think they hear the sounds of rescuers, so they try to move toward the sounds through the darkness. Notice how the short sentence, “No bottom,” emphasizes the danger Tom and the others face in the dark cave.

The joy of the prisoners was almost overwhelming. Their speed was slow, however, because pitfalls were somewhat common, and had to be guarded against. They shortly came to one and had to stop. It might be three feet deep, it might be a hundred—there was no passing it, at any rate. Tom got down on his breast and reached as far down as he could. No bottom. They must stay there and wait until the searchers came.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 4 – 6**Close Reading and Art Project**

Objective: Using details from the text to create a picture

Activity

Draw, paint, use computer graphics, or cut out pictures from magazines to make a picture of one of the following things:

- the lake on which the plane lands (include the surrounding area)
- the shelter Brian makes
- a catalog of Brian's supplies
- Brian, just after the crash

Rely on specific details from the text as you create your picture.

Name: _____

Date: _____

WORD LIST

funk	rectify	confines	sulfurous	intent
camouflage	stabilize	eddied	dormant	convulse
hefted	flailing	refracts	infuriating	exulted
vital	devastating	corrosive	exasperated	pitchy
regulate	literally	telegraphed	abrupt	intervals

EXCERPTS

1. Even when a bird was seven or eight feet away the arrow would turn without feathers to _____ it and hit brush or a twig.
2. The small fish came closer and closer and he lunged time after time but was always too slow. He tried throwing it, jabbing it, everything but _____ with it, and it didn't work.
3. In the city if he made a mistake usually there was a way to _____ it, make it all right.
4. When he was in the shade of the trees breaking limbs the mosquitos swarmed on him, as usual, but when he came to the fire, or just near the shelter where the smoke _____ and swirled, the insects were gone.
5. He thought if he worked at it and practiced he might hit one of the larger rabbits with an arrow or a spear—never the small ones or the squirrels. They were too small and fast. Then there were the foolbirds. They _____ him to the point where they were close to driving him insane. The birds were everywhere, five and six in a flock, and their _____ was so perfect that it was possible for Brian to sit and rest, leaning against a tree, with one of them standing right in front of him in a willow clump, two feet away—hidden—only to explode into deafening flight just when Brian least expected it.
6. He had to be sure to try and sleep in short _____ so he could keep the fire going, and he tried to think of a way to _____ his sleep but it made him sleepy to think about it and he was just going under again when he heard the sound outside.
7. In the tiny _____ of the shelter the effect was _____. The thick _____ rotten odor filled the small room, heavy, ugly, and stinking. The _____ spray that had hit his face seared into his lungs and eyes, blinding him.
8. It was crude, but it looked effective and seemed to have good balance when he stood outside the shelter and _____ the spear.
9. Finally he actually put the spear in the water and waited until the fish were right in front of it, but still somehow he _____ his motion before he thrust and they saw it and flashed away.
10. To where he wanted to die. He had settled into the gray _____ deeper and still deeper until finally, in the dark, he had gone up on the ridge and taken the hatchet and tried to end it by cutting himself.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 10 – 15

Plot

Objectives: Defining conflict
 Identifying conflict in specific incidents from the text
 Understanding the efforts of the protagonist to resolve conflict

Activity

There are five basic types of conflict, which can propel the action in a story:

- **Person versus Fate, Nature, or God:** A character must face what seems to be an uncontrollable problem. For example, a boy must deal with his mother's terminal illness.
- **Person versus Person:** A character has a conflict with another character. For example, a small boy must deal with a large, aggressive classmate.
- **Person versus Self:** A character struggles within himself or herself about how to think and behave. For example, a young boy must struggle within himself to find the courage to face the problems in his life.

Brian faces two types of conflict in this novel. He must struggle with himself to find the courage and self-discipline to survive alone in the wilderness, and he must deal with many different elements of nature.

Complete the following **Conflicts Diagrams**. Find three passages in Chapters 10 – 15 illustrating **Person vs. Self** and three passages illustrating **Person vs. Nature, Fate, or God**.

State the conflict Brian must face. In one or two sentences, explain how Brian resolves this conflict and the extent to which he is successful. The first one is done for you as an example.