

Today you will read passages from two novels about characters who are learning to survive in the wilderness. The first passage is from the novel *Brian's Winter* by Gary Paulsen, and the second passage is from the novel *Call of the Wild* by Jack London. As you read these passages, you will answer questions and think about how the texts reveal theme and character. After you read, you will write an analytical essay about the excerpts.

Read the passage from *Brian's Winter*. Then answer the questions.

from Brian's Winter

by Gary Paulsen

- 1 Then the bear came.
- 2 Brian had come to know bears as well as he knew wolves or birds. They were usually alone—unless it was a female with cubs—and they were absolutely, totally devoted to eating. He had seen them several times while picking berries, raking the bushes with their teeth to pull the fruit off—and a goodly number of leaves as well, which they spit out before swallowing the berries—and, as with the wolves, they seemed to get along with him.
- 3 That is to say Brian would see them eating and he would move away and let them pick where they wanted while he found another location. It worked for the bears, he thought, smiling, and it worked for him, and this thinking evolved into what Brian thought of as an understanding between him and the bears: Since he left them alone, they would leave him alone.
- 4 Unfortunately the bears did not know that it was an agreement, and Brian was suffering under the misunderstanding that, as in some imaginary politically correct society, everything was working out.
- 5 All of this made him totally unprepared for the reality of the woods. To wit: Bears and wolves did what they wanted to do, and Brian had to fit in.
- 6 He was literally awakened to the facts one morning during the two-week warm spell. Brian had been sleeping soundly and woke to the clunking sound of metal on rock. His mind and ears were tuned to all the natural sounds around him and there was no sound in nature of metal on stone. It snapped him awake in midbreath.
- 7 He was sleeping with his head in the opening of the shelter and he had his face out and when he opened his eyes he saw what appeared to be a wall of black-brown fur directly in front of him.
- 8 He thought he might be dreaming and shook his head but it didn't go away and he realized in the same moment that he was looking at the rear end of a bear. No, he

thought with a clinical logic that surprised him—I am looking at the very *large* rear end of a very *large* bear.

- 9 The bear had come to Brian's camp—smelling the gut-smell of the dead rabbit, and the cooking odor from the pot. The bear did not see it as Brian's camp or territory. There was a food smell, it was hungry, it was time to eat.
- 10 It had found the pot and knife by the fire where Brian had left them and scooped them outside. Brian had washed them both in the lake when he finished eating, but the smell of food was still in the air. Working around the side of the opening, the bear had bumped the pan against a rock at the same moment that it had settled its rump in the entrance of Brian's shelter.
- 11 Brian pulled back a foot. "Hey—get out of there!" he yelled, and kicked the bear in the rear.
- 12 He was not certain what he expected. Perhaps that the bear would turn and realize its mistake and then sheepishly trundle away. Or that the bear would just run off.
- 13 With no hesitation, not even the smallest part of a second's delay, the bear turned and ripped the entire log side off the shelter with one sweep of a front paw and a moist "*whouuuff*" out of its nostrils.
- 14 Brian found himself looking up at the bear, turned now to look down on the boy, and with another snort the bear swung its left paw again and scooped Brian out of the hollow of the rock and flung him end over end for twenty feet. Then the bear slipped forward and used both front paws to pack Brian in a kind of ball and whap him down to the edge of the water, where he lay, dazed, thinking in some way that he was still back in the shelter.
- 15 The bear stopped and studied Brian for a long minute, then turned back to ransacking the camp, looking for where that delicious smell had come from. It sat back on its haunches and felt the air with its nostrils, located another faint odor stream and followed it down to the edge of the water where the fish pool lay. It dug in the water—not more than ten feet from where Brian now lay, trying to figure out if his arms and legs were still all attached to where they had been before—and pulled up the rabbit skull, still with bits of meat on it, and swallowed it whole. It dug around in the water again and found the guts and ate them and went back to rummaging around in the pool, and when nothing more could be found the bear looked once more at Brian, at the camp, and then walked away without looking back.
- 16 Other than some minor scratches where the bear's claws had slightly scraped him—it was more a boxing action than a clawing one—Brian was in one piece. He was still jolted and confused about just exactly which end was up, but most of all he was grateful.
- 17 He knew that the bear could have done much more damage than it had. He had seen a bear tear a stump out of the ground like a giant tooth when it was looking for grubworms and ants. This bear could just as easily have killed him, and had actually held back.
- 18 But as the day progressed Brian found himself stiffening, and by the time he was ready for bed his whole body ached and he knew he would be covered with bruises from the encounter.

- 19 He would have to find some way to protect himself, some weapon. The fire worked well when it was burning, but it had burned down. His hatchet and knife would have done nothing more than make the bear really angry—something he did not like to think about—and his bow was good only for smaller game. He had never tried to shoot anything bigger than a foolbird or rabbit with it and doubted that the bow would push the arrow deep enough to do anything but—again—make the bear really mad.
- 20 He bundled in his bag that night, the end of the two weeks of warm weather. He kept putting wood on the fire, half afraid the bear would come back. All the while he tried to think of a solution.
- 21 But in reality, the bear was not his primary adversary. Nor was the wolf, nor any animal. Brian had become his own worst enemy because in all the business of hunting, fishing and surviving he had forgotten the primary rule: *Always, always* pay attention to what was happening. Everything in nature means something and he had missed the warnings that summer was ending, had in many ways already ended, and what was coming would be the most dangerous thing he had faced since the plane crash.

Passage from *BRIAN'S WINTER* by Gary Paulsen. Used by permission of Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

Item 1—

Part A:

What is the meaning of the word **adversary** as it is used in paragraph 21 of the passage from *Brian's Winter*?

- A. problem's solution
- B. indication of trouble
- C. opposing force
- D. source of irritation

Part B:

Which phrase from paragraph 21 **best** helps clarify the meaning of **adversary**?

- A. "own worst enemy"
- B. "the primary rule"
- C. "missed the warnings"
- D. "most dangerous thing"

(Key: C, A; ES: RL8.1.2, RL8.4.1, L8.4.1)

Item 2—

Create a summary of the passage from *Brian's Winter* by dragging **four** statements from the list of events and dropping them in chronological order into the table titled Summary.

List of Events	
	Brian is sore as he gets into his bag that night.
	Brian attempts to scare away the bear that wakes him up.
	The bear is more powerful than Brian thinks.
	Brian believes that he has learned to co-exist with the bears.
	Brian takes a serious risk.
	Brian thinks about solutions to his major problem.
	The bear tosses Brian and eats the scraps of Brian's meal.
	The bear looks at Brian and walks away
	The bear sits back and sniffs the air.

Summary	
1	
2	
3	
4	

(Key: 4, 2, 7, 6; ES: RL8.1.2, RL8.2.4)

Item 3—

Part A:

In the passage from *Brian's Winter*, Brian comes to a major realization at the end of the passage. Which statement **best** describes his realization?

- A. He needs to avoid confronting wild animals.
- B. He needs to prepare for the perils of winter.
- C. He needs to create a better way to store food.
- D. He needs to find a new, safer shelter.

Part B:

Which detail **best** supports the answer in Part A?

- A. "The bear...turned back to ransacking the camp, looking for where that delicious smell had come from." (paragraph 15)
- B. "He would have to find some way to protect himself, some weapon." (paragraph 19)
- C. "He kept putting wood on the fire, half afraid the bear would come back." (paragraph 20)
- D. "...he had missed the warnings that summer was ending...and what was coming would be the most dangerous thing he had faced...." (paragraph 21)

(Key: B, D; ES: RL8.1.2, RL8.3.1, RL8.3.2)

Read the passage from *Call of the Wild*. Then answer the questions.

Call of the Wild

by Jack London

- 1 That night Buck faced the great problem of sleeping. The tent, illumined by a candle, glowed warmly in the midst of the white plain; and when he, as a matter of course, entered it, both Perrault and Francois bombarded him with curses and cooking utensils, till he recovered from his consternation and fled ignominiously into the outer cold. A chill wind was blowing that nipped him sharply and bit with especial venom into his wounded shoulder. He lay down on the snow and attempted to sleep, but the frost soon drove him shivering to his feet. Miserable and disconsolate, he wandered about among the many tents, only to find that one place was as cold as another. Here and there savage dogs rushed upon him, but he bristled his neck-hair and snarled (for he was learning fast), and they let him go his way unmolested.

- 2 Finally an idea came to him. He would return and see how his own team-mates were making out. To his astonishment, they had disappeared. Again he wandered about through the great camp, looking for them, and again he returned. Were they in the tent? No, that could not be, else he would not have been driven out. Then where could they possibly be? With drooping tail and shivering body, very forlorn indeed, he aimlessly circled the tent. Suddenly the snow gave way beneath his fore legs and he sank down. Something wriggled under his feet. He sprang back, bristling and snarling, fearful of the unseen and unknown. But a friendly little yelp reassured him, and he went back to investigate. A whiff of warm air ascended to his nostrils, and there, curled up under the snow in a snug ball, lay Billee. He whined placatingly, squirmed and wriggled to show his good will and intentions, and even ventured, as a bribe for peace, to lick Buck's face with his warm wet tongue.

- 3 Another lesson. So that was the way they did it, eh? Buck confidently selected a spot, and with much fuss and waste effort proceeded to dig a hole for himself. In a trice the heat from his body filled the confined space and he was asleep. The day had been long and arduous, and he slept soundly and comfortably, though he growled and barked and wrestled with bad dreams.

- 4 Nor did he open his eyes till roused by the noises of the waking camp. At first he did not know where he was. It had snowed during the night and he was completely buried. The snow walls pressed him on every side, and a great surge of fear swept through him—the fear of the wild thing for the trap. It was a token that he was harking back through his own life to the lives of his forebears; for he was a civilized dog, an unduly civilized dog, and of his own experience knew no trap and so could not of himself fear it. The muscles of his whole body contracted spasmodically and instinctively, the hair on his neck and shoulders stood on end, and with a ferocious snarl he bounded straight up into the blinding day, the snow flying about him in a flashing cloud. Ere he landed on his feet, he saw the white camp spread out before him and knew where he was and remembered all that had passed from the time he went for a stroll with Manuel to the hole he had dug for himself the night before.

- 5 A shout from Francois hailed his appearance. "Wot I say?" the dog-driver cried to Perrault. "Dat Buck for sure learn queek as anyt'ing."
- 6 Perrault nodded gravely. As courier for the Canadian Government, bearing important dispatches, he was anxious to secure the best dogs, and he was particularly gladdened by the possession of Buck.

The passage from *Call of the Wild* by Jack London is in the public domain and can be obtained at Gutenberg.org.

Item 4—

Part A:

What does the word **placatingly** mean as it is used in paragraph 2 of the passage from *Call of the Wild*?

- A. in a warning tone
- B. in an annoying manner
- C. in an attempt to be agreeable
- D. in a way that expresses discomfort

Part B:

Which phrase from the passage provides the **best** clue to the meaning of **placatingly** as it is used in paragraph 2?

- A. "bristling and snarling"
- B. "a whiff of warm air"
- C. "squirmed and wriggled"
- D. "a bribe for peace"

(Key: C, D; ES: RL8.1.2, RL8.4.1, L8.4.1)

Item 5—

Part A:

Which statement **best** reflects a theme of the passage from *Call of the Wild*?

- A. Survival is unlikely when one is new to an environment.
- B. Survival requires adapting to one's surroundings.
- C. One cannot rely on others when learning to survive.
- D. Advanced preparation is necessary for survival.

Part B:

Which **two** details from the article **best** support the answer in Part A?

- A. "Here and there savage dogs rushed upon him, but he bristled his neck-hair and snarled (for he was learning fast), and they let him go his way unmolested." (paragraph 1)
- B. "Again he wandered through the great camp, looking for them, and again he returned." (paragraph 2)
- C. "He sprang back, bristling and snarling, fearful of the unseen and unknown." (paragraph 2)
- D. "Buck confidently selected a spot, and with much fuss and wasted effort proceeded to dig a hole for himself." (paragraph 3)
- E. "It was a token that he was harking back through his own life to the lives of his forebears...." (paragraph 4)
- F. "...he saw the white camp spread out before him and knew where he was..." (paragraph 4)

(Key: B, A, D; ES: RL8.1.1, RL8.2.1)

Item 6—

Part A:

Which statement correctly shows a difference between the beginning and endings of the passages from *Brian's Winter* and *Call of the Wild*?

- A. *Call of the Wild* begins with a former conflict between characters, and *Brian's Winter* ends with a current conflict between characters.
- B. *Brian's Winter* begins by revealing a character's faulty reasoning, and *Call of the Wild* ends with a character's faulty reasoning.
- C. *Call of the Wild* begins with a crisis to be resolved, and *Brian's Winter* ends with a crisis that needs to be resolved.
- D. *Brian's Winter* begins with the thoughts and actions of a character seeking shelter, and *Call of the Wild* ends with the thoughts and actions of a character seeking shelter.

Part B:

Select **one** detail from the passage from *Brian's Winter* and **one** detail from the passage from *Call of the Wild* that **best** support the answer in Part A.

- A. "He had seen them several times while picking berries, raking the bushes with their teeth to pull the fruit off..." (*Brian's Winter* paragraph 2)
- B. "Other than some minor scratches where the bear's claws had slightly scraped him—it was more a boxing action than a clawing one—Brian was in one piece." (*Brian's Winter* paragraph 16)
- C. "Everything in nature means something and he had missed the warnings that summer was ending, had in many ways already ended, and what was coming would be the most dangerous thing he had faced since the plane crash." (*Brian's Winter* paragraph 21)

- D. "The tent, illuminated by a candle, glowed warmly in the midst of the white plain..." (*Call of the Wild* paragraph 1)
- E. "Miserable and disconsolate, he wandered about among the many tents, only to find that one place was as cold as another." (*Call of the Wild* paragraph 1)
- F. "The day had been long and arduous, and he slept soundly and comfortably, though he growled and barked and wrestled with bad dreams." (*Call of the Wild* paragraph 3)

(Key: C, C, E; ES: RL8.1.1, RL8.5.1)

Item 7—

You have read passages from two novels focused on survival in the wilderness.

These passages are from:

- *Brian's Winter* by Gary Paulsen
- *Call of the Wild* by Jack London

Consider how the main character in each excerpt reacts to the incidences that occur, and write an essay in which you analyze how each character's thoughts and actions reveal aspects of his personality.

You do not need to compare and contrast the characters from the two texts. You may consider each one separately. Be sure to include evidence from each passage to support your analysis and understanding.

(ES: RL8.1.1, RL8.3.3)