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Jean Craighead George

Born in 1919, Jean Carolyn Craighead—later George—grew up in Washington D.C. Most things in George’s early life were centered around nature. Her family would spend weekends camping in the woods near Washington. As a child, George’s first pet was a turkey vulture. She often spent time climbing trees to study owls, making fish hooks from twigs, and gathering edible plants. She also developed a love of literature early on and began writing when she was in the third grade.



George studied at Penn State University. She left the school with a degree in science and literature. By the 1940s she was working as a reporter for the Washington Post.

In 1944 she married John Lothur George. When her children were born, George renewed her love of nature and brought many wild animals into her home, about 173 in total. Among them were tarantulas, sea gulls and owls. The animals inspired characters in her stories.

In 1948 she worked with her husband to publish *Vulpes the Red Fox*. This was followed up by *Vision the Mink* in 1949 and *Masked Prowler, The Story of a Raccoon* in 1950. The couple worked on projects together up to 1956.

George published *My Side of the Mountain* in 1959. It became one of her first major works. The book was a 1960 Newbery Honor Book. George continued to write, publishing 24 books between 1959 and 1971. In 1972 she published *Julie of the Wolves*, which won the Newbery Medal and the American Library Association’s award.

George passed away at the age of 92 in 2012. She was admitted into the New York State Writers Hall of Fame in 2016.

• Author Jean Craighead George was a journalist for the Washington Post. She spent time as a member of the White House Press Corps.

Did You Know?

- George was a very productive author. She wrote over 100 books during her life.
- George has received over 20 awards for her writing. She won the Newbery Medal for her story *Julie of the Wolves*.



Chapters One to Three

Answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. Look at the cover of the novel. What sort of feelings does the cover make you think about?

2. Read the story summary on the back of the book. Does the story sound exciting to you? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

Choose a word from the list that means the same or nearly the same as the underlined word.

Be careful - a couple are a bit tricky!

sparked	quieted	insistent	defeat
freezing	spills	covered	cozy

1. I made a snug cave in the tree that I now call home.
2. The air coming in is bitter cold.
3. Sam’s voice was hushed by the tons of snow.
4. Inspired by The Baron’s fun, Sam poked his head into the tree and whistled.
5. Water pours down the boulders and cascades into the valley below.
6. Sam eats his pancakes smothered in blueberry jam.
7. The manuals Sam read were emphatic about where fish lived.
8. With fire, Sam thought he could conquer the Catskills.



Chapters Eight to Ten

1. Fill in each blank with the correct word from these Chapters.

- a) I still can’t believe animals don’t understand why delicious food is in such a _____ spot.
- b) A _____ arose in the darkness.
- c) The weasel flew right out at me, landed on my shoulder and gave me a _____. I shall never forget.
- d) The weasel vanished under the _____ cover of trillium and bloodroot leaves.
- e) The weasel stood his ground and _____ me.

2. Complete each sentence with a word from the list.

purr	provoke	wonder	chirped	astonishment
------	---------	--------	---------	--------------

- a) _____ filled me as I realized he was absolutely unafraid.
- b) The weasel’s scream of anger became a _____ of peace.
- c) “Baron Weasel,” I said in _____.
- d) I poked a stick in the hole at the base of the rock trying to _____ him.
- e) A cricket _____, a catbird scratched the leaves.



Chapter Eleven

Answer each question with a complete sentence.

1. What does Sam use to make tannic acid?

2. What does Sam want to make for Frightful? What is it used for?

3. What is one of Sam’s favorite meals? What are the ingredients?

4. What makes Sam scream and scare the deer away?

5. What is the threat Sam says comes with the easy living of summer? Why do you think Sam feels this way?

6. Why does Sam think The Baron is hard to understand?

Journaling Prompt

Sam spends a lot of time trying to train his pet peregrine falcon. He shares a couple of tips along the way. These include the need for jesses, and the fact that Frightful might go wild if she eats what she catches. Do some research of your own about training falcons. Share what you find in a few paragraphs.



Chapters 1 to 3

Survival Plan

Sam Gibley runs away from home to live alone in the wilderness of the Catskill Mountains. He only brings a few things with him, including lots of information of the outdoors. One thing he didn't bring along was a survival plan. This leads Sam into trouble a couple of times. For example, on the first night Sam isn't able to get a fire going. This forces Sam to spend a cold, scary night alone.

If Sam had had a survival plan with some backups in place, he may have been able to avoid these problems. Put yourself in Sam's shoes. Make a plan to survive the wild. Your plan should have a description of things you will bring with you. Make a list of some chores and actions you would need to do. Include anything you may need to learn before heading into the woods. The plan should have backups in case your first plans don't work out. Also include some actions you will take to deal with emergencies.



Chapters 1 to 7

Tool Time

Sam makes many tools on his own, like the whittled wooden hook he used to catch fish. Come up with your own idea for a tool you would need to survive in the wild. This could be a knife, a hammer or a fishing pole. It could be anything else you think you could make on your own using things you find in the woods.

Describe how you would forage for items you will need. Describe the process you would use to build your tool. If you get stuck, look through the book for some ideas. Sam spends a lot of time laying out how and why he does what he does. These descriptions could give a good example.

Make some quick sketches of your tool to show the process of building it. These should be similar to the ones that are shown in the book. As in the book, write a brief description of the steps in the process and write each piece of the tool in your sketches.

Don't worry too much about making these drawings perfect. Be creative and have fun making your creation.



Word Search Puzzle

Find the following words from the story. The words are written horizontally, vertically, diagonally, and some are written backwards.

abandoned	dale	hearth	snares
acorns	deadfall	hemlock	swarm
bandit	draws	migration	tanning
barometer	edible	pondered	venison
blizzard	fatigue	rustle	wilderness

e	l	a	d	e	n	o	i	t	a	r	g	i	m
p	w	b	e	d	a	f	o	n	u	d	r		
o	e	a	l	i	o	t	e	n	p	s	z	e	a
n	c	n	z	b	l	y	e	e	d	a	w		
d	m	d	u	l	r	a	m	l	r	r	k	d	s
e	k	o	s	e	d	u	c	n	u	a	z	f	h
r	c	n	f	g	v	n	s	g	p	n	d	a	b
e	o	e	b	s	r	e	q	t	b	s	q	l	y
d	l	d	j	m	s	g	n	r	l	o	k	l	r
q	m	h	s	n	t	e	e	i	n	e	i	a	e
b	e	p	r	i	v	t	n	m	s	w	g	j	u
h	h	o	d	h	e	l	c	r	q	o	j	z	g
t	c	n	g	m	s	s	v	y	e	x	n	r	i
a	a	t	o	d	i	a	i	k	y	d	w	x	t
b	o	r	i	t	n	k	v	p	f	u	l	r	a
x	a	w	j	v	x	h	t	r	a	e	h	i	f
b	l	i	z	z	a	r	d	d	r	o	w	s	w



Comprehension Quiz

Answer each question in a complete sentence.

- How many siblings does Sam Gibley have? 25

- Name three things Sam takes with him when he leaves New York. 2

- Sam tells his father that he's going to live in the woods. Describe Sam's father's reaction to this. Why does he react this way? 3

- What is Sam's main concern throughout the book, other than food and shelter? 3

- How does Sam learn much of what he knows about survival? 1

- Who spends the night in Sam's camp, who Sam never speaks with? 1

- What does Sam name the man he finds lost in the woods? 1

SUBTOTAL: /12

Putting Down Roots

In this story, Sam Gibley makes a life for himself in the wilderness. Sam also builds relationships with many people he meets. Think of this as Sam "putting down roots" in a new place. Use this organizer to list the relationships that Sam made. These will be with both humans and animals. Identify the nature of these relationships.



NAME: _____



Chapters Eight to Ten

Answer each question with a complete sentence.

- How does Sam describe the difference between a human and an animal moving through the forest?

- Who is the man who arrives at Sam's camp?

- How does Sam feel about the weasel's reaction to being trapped? Why?

- How long did it take Frightful to learn to balance on Sam's fist?

- According to Sam, what is the best way to preserve extra food?

- How is Sam able to get a deer? How long does it take him to prepare it for smoking? How long does it take him to get the hide ready for tanning?

EASY MARKING



In these Chapters, Sam hides from a couple of people. In both cases, Sam says he is afraid the people might take him back home. Why do you think Sam would have this reaction to other people? Do you think his reactions copy the reactions of the animals around him? Write your response in a journal entry and share your thoughts with a partner.

1.
Sam says it's like the difference between the explosion of a cap pistol and a cannon.

2.
The man who arrives at Sam's camp is a fire warden.

3.
Sam is filled with wonder and says he'll never forget the "lecture" the animal gives him. He feels this way because the weasel is completely unafraid of him, unlike most other animals.

4.
It took an afternoon and a night.

5.
Sam says the best way to preserve food is to slowly smoke meat until it is dried out, using a hard wood like hickory.

6.
Sam steals the deer, which was shot by a poacher. It takes him many, many days to get the venison and deer hide ready.

Vocabulary

Across

- puffballs
- elderberries
- frayed
- botanical gardens
- tanning
- personable
- sparrow
- Frightful

Down

- bone
- lure
- spearhead
- abundance
- The Baron
- tannic acid
- acorns

- Frightful
- process
- stump
- meat
- whistle
- whistle
- food
- whistle
- meat

j) fist

k) breakfast

- thrilled
- whistle
- come
- steely
- recognition
- feather
- word

s) tubers

t) mentally



1.
Sam uses water and an old oak stump to make tannic acid.

2.
Sam wants to make jesses, leg straps and leashes for Frightful so the bird can be tethered for training.

3.
One of Sam's favorite meals is Frog soup. The ingredients are frog, wild onions, lily buds, and wild carrots, all thickened with acorn flour.

4.
Sam is bitten on the leg by The Baron, making him yell in pain.

5.
Sam sees the hikers and vacationers as a threat. Answers will vary.

6.
Sam leaves food for The Baron, but he doesn't eat it. Sam says most animals would stick around if you feed them, but The Baron doesn't eat anything he leaves out.

My Side of the Mountain – Gr. 5-6

- **RSL.5.1** Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RSL.5.2** Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.
- **RSL.5.3** Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.
- **RSL.5.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.
- **RSL.5.5** Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.
- **RSL.5.6** Describe how a narrator’s or speaker’s point of view influences how events are described.
- **RSL.5.9** Compare and contrast stories in the same genre on their approaches to similar themes and topics.
- **RSL.5.10** By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 4–5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
- **RSL.6.1** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RSL.6.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- **RSL.6.3** Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
- **RSL.6.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
- **RSL.6.5** Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
- **RSL.6.6** Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
- **RSL.6.10** By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
- **RSFS.5.3** Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. **A)** Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.
- **RSFS.5.4** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. **A)** Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. **B)** Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. **C)** Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
- **WS.5.1** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. **A)** Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer’s purpose. **B)** Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details. **C)** Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses. **D)** Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.
- **WS.5.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. **A)** Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting, illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. **B)** Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic. **C)** Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses. **D)** Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. **E)** Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.
- **WS.5.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally. **B)** Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations. **C)** Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events. **D)** Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely. **E)** Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- **WS.5.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **WS.5.7** Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- **WS.5.8** Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.
- **WS.5.9** Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.
- **WS.6.1** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. **A)** Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly. **B)** Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. **C)** Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons. **D)** Establish and maintain a formal style. **E)** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.
- **WS.6.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. **A)** Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting, graphics, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. **B)** Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. **C)** Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. **D)** Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. **E)** Establish and maintain a formal style. **F)** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.
- **WS.6.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. **A)** Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. **B)** Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. **C)** Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another. **D)** Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events. **E)** Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- **WS.6.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **WS.6.7** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
- **WS.6.8** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.
- **WS.6.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. **A)** Apply *grade 6 Reading standards* to literature. **B)** Apply *grade 6 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction.