

This guide was prepared using the Dell Yearling edition, © 1983. Other editions may differ.

SYNOPSIS

Chap. 1: In 1768, the father of eleven-year-old Matthew Hallowell builds a cabin in the Maine wilderness at the mouth of the Penobscot River and anticipates a new settlement. In summer, Matt remains behind when his father returns to Quincy, Massachusetts, on a six-week journey to fetch Matt's mother, sister Sarah, and soon-to-be-born second sibling. Mr. Hallowell's parting gifts are Matt's grandfather's silver watch and use of the family rifle. Alone until August, Matt marks the days by notching sticks. Meanwhile, he guards the cabin and tends corn and pumpkins.

Chap. 2: Although Matt senses someone near, he finds solitude pleasant at first. He seals chinks in the walls with creek clay, feeds the fire, and protects the garden. Silence makes him long for someone to talk to, even his sister.

Chap. 3: While skinning a rabbit, Matt welcomes Ben, a white trapper. Out of caution, Matt lies about expecting his father at any moment, but serves the man supper. Ben says that most Indians have moved on, but that the Penobscot return annually to harvest clams. After telling about capture by the Iroquois, he stays the night, then sets out for the interior to trap beaver. Matt worries that Ben will remain and expect free meals. The next morning, Matt discovers that Ben stole the rifle, Matt's only weapon.

Chap. 4: In July, Matt goes fishing and leaves the door unbarred. A large animal—probably a bear—wrecks the house and devours flour, molasses, and salt. He realizes that he must subsist on fish without salt.

Chap. 5: Matt decides to rob the bee tree on Loon Pond. During his climb, a swarm attacks him. He loses a boot in the mud and trips while dashing to the pond. A gentle old Indian rescues him, removes the stingers, and treats the swelling with bitter medicine that makes Matt sleep.

Chap. 6: A week before his thirteenth birthday, Matt awakens refreshed. His rescuer, Saknis, returns and introduces him to Attean, his belligerent grandson of the Beaver clan. Attean calls Matt foolish for climbing the bee tree. Matt hobbles on a sprained leg to the table, where Saknis left stew and corn bread. Saknis brings a homemade crutch and new moccasins. Matt offers him *Robinson Crusoe*, one of the two books his family owns. Too late, he realizes that Saknis cannot read. Because the old man values literacy, he offers fresh game if Matt will teach Attean to read. Because whites require Indians to sign treaties, Attean needs to learn the language to prevent whites from stealing valuable hunting lands.

Chap. 7: Even though Attean is unwilling, the lessons begin the next day. Matt introduces Attean to *Robinson Crusoe* and points to words beginning with A. Attean scowls and points out an A. Because the lessons may take a year, Attean flees in disgust.

Chap. 8: Matt relates the story of Robinson Crusoe.

Attean concludes that the story depicts ignorance of survivalism, which is the Indian's philosophy of life. He notes that Crusoe retrieves useful items from the wreckage; Indians make their own supplies and tools. Matt agrees that Crusoe might have been happier if he were more like Indians.

Chap. 9: A few days later, Attean introduces Matt to survival skills. Matt shapes snares out of saplings and roots. The lessons continue, with Attean still contemptuous of literacy. The readings of *Robinson Crusoe* reach the episode of the cannibal feast. Attean detests Friday's enslavement to a white man. Matt agrees that the author casts Defoe as tutor and Friday as an unskilled, subservient savage.

Chap. 10: The next day, Attean asks for another episode after Matt explains that Friday is Crusoe's friend, not a slave. Attean invites Matt to spear fish. Matt fails to spear a fish and loses his only hook when the fish breaks the line. With a superior air, Attean demonstrates how to carve hooks from twigs, kindle a fire, and cook fish on a twig.

Chap. 11: In August, Matt weeds the garden, a chore that Attean considers squaw work. He and his dog Aremus lead Matt to a beaver dam; the beaver is Attean's family symbol, which is carved on trees in the clan hunting ground. Attean helps Matt study trail markers and slice spruce chewing gum from a tree.

Chap. 12: Matt tries out a bow and arrows, but his new weapon is inaccurate. Attean uses ash for the bow and fat as a polish, then makes four birch arrows and twists animal sinew into bowstring.

Chap. 13: During a hunt, Attean finds a fox caught in an iron trap. He complains that bad Indians copy the white trapping method. Because Attean is crossing the turtle clan's land, he must leave the fox to bite off its foot. White hunting methods embarrass Matt. Daily, Attean introduces more of the wild and supplies Matt with a spicy bulb for stew and a rain cape. Matt picks up native words.

Chap. 14: Attean tells the story of *Robinson Crusoe* to his Indian friends. Matt relates stories about Noah, David and Goliath, Samson, and Joseph. Attean matches them with the lore of Gluskabe and the Great Spirit. Matt wonders why Indians already have a story about the flood.

Chap. 15: At the dam, the boys locate a bear cub. Matt distracts a female bear by hurling a dead rabbit at her nose while Attean shoots an arrow between her eyes. Both boys stab the bear. Attean apologizes to the female for making an orphan of the cub. When he fetches squaws to salvage meat and hide, Matt realizes that Indians waste nothing and never kill for sport.

Chap. 16: While Matt ponders his father's delay, Attean decorates himself with a string of bear claws. He takes Matt by canoe to the stockaded village for a feast, where Saknis honors his bravery. Tradition forces Attean to decline because he is the hunter. Matt smokes a pipe, tells how they killed the bear, and enjoys a clown and dancers. That night,

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as the dancing continues, he sleeps in an empty wigwam.

Chap. 17: The next morning, Matt awakens to find the women weaving and grinding grain and the men hunting deer. Attean remains behind because he has no gun. Attean's grandmother disapproves of Matt because whites murdered and scalped Attean's mother and because Attean's father died trying to avenge her death. Matt recalls that the Massachusetts governor paid a bounty on Indian scalps. Saknis believes that Indians must coexist with settlers. Matt doubts that he will receive another invitation to the village.

Chap. 18: Late in September, Matt wonders why his family has not returned. He finds Aremus caught in a trap. In trying to release the dog, Matt tears his hand. He hurries to the village and learns that Attean and the other males are hunting. Attean's grandmother treats Matt's hand, offers him corn bread, then sends Marie, Attean's sister, to help rescue the dog.

Chap. 19: Two days later, Attean's grandmother serves stew to Matt, Attean, and Saknis. On a tour of the village, Matt studies how women pound corn kernels, dry berries, and weave birchbark baskets. While playing a game of discs with other boys, he loses his shirt. They play ball, then return the shirt. Attean's grandmother gives Matt a piece of cake. On the canoe trip home, Matt knows he has been accepted by clan members.

Chap. 20: A week later, Attean leaves on a vision quest to find his manitou, an inner spirit that allies him with all creation. By fasting, bathing, and taking purgative medicine, he prepares for a special dream, which comes after singing and prayer. Attean cannot be a hunter until manitou comes. Matt sympathizes with the test of manhood, which means everything to Attean.

Chap. 21: In late October, Attean, at last a full-fledged brave with shaved scalp and braided topknot, returns with a gun, which Saknis bought with beaver skins. The Beaver clan prepares to go north on a winter hunt. They must abandon the summer camp because whites have encroached on their territory and made game scarce. The Indians intend to separate from whites. Saknis invites Matt to join the clan as a foster grandson. Matt realizes that Saknis worries that Mr. Hallowell will not return. Matt maintains his belief that the family has been only temporarily delayed. He thanks Saknis, but remains with whites. He shakes Saknis's hand; Attean leaves without a word. As they depart, Matt wonders if he might have become an Indian if he had been captured in childhood.

Chap. 22: Four days later, Attean asks Matt if he has changed his mind. By refusing to leave, Matt earns Attean's respect. He brings Matt snowshoes, maple sugar, and Aremus. The clan goes west where there will be no need of reading and writing. Attean honors his "white brother"; Matt gives him the heirloom silver watch.

Chap. 23: That winter, Matt survives in the forest. He cuts a blanket into breeches and fashions rabbit skin mittens and hat. For his family, he makes trenchers, bowls, a brush, broom, cradle, coverlet, and doll. He regrets that Sarah will not meet Marie.

Chap. 24: Shortly before Christmas, snow threatens. Matt hauls extra firewood and whittles a shovel. Set free on snowshoes, he enjoys the white landscape. He sits by the fire and reads *Robinson Crusoe*.

Chap. 25: Three days later, his family, recovered from typhus, arrive by sled after waiting three weeks at the trading post for a guide. The infant died five days after birth. Mr. Hal-

lowell unloads foods, quilts, and a new outfit for Matt. His mother admires his maturity and good health. Mr. Hallowell expects three new families by spring and envisions a mill, town, and school. Matt is sad that settlers drive Indians away from New England.

TIME LINE

- 1602** The English explore Massachusetts.
1620 Pilgrims land at Plymouth.
1630 John Winthrop leads Puritans to Massachusetts.
1675-76 Colonists win King Philip's War against the Indians.
1691 Madokawando and Penobscot braves attack British settlements in Maine.
1700s early The Penobscot ally with French traders.
1723 The Penobscot and other Abenaki tribes attack English colonies.
1754 French and Indian War begins.
1757 Matt Hallowell is born.
1760 British troops capture Montreal; George III becomes king.
1763 French and Indian War ends; France cedes Canada to Britain.
1768 The Hallowells purchase land in the Maine wilderness at the mouth of the Penobscot River.
1769 Mr. Hallowell and Matt leave Quincy, Massachusetts, and build a cabin in Maine.
June Mr. Hallowell leaves Matt and returns for his family in Quincy.
July Matt meets Saknis and Attean.
August Mr. Hallowell fails to return.
late October Saknis invites Matt to join the Beaver clan. Matt earns Attean's respect by choosing to wait for his father's return from Massachusetts. The tribe departs.
November The Hallowells, recovered from typhus, wait at the trading post for a guide.
mid-December The Hallowells join Matt at the cabin.

AUTHOR SKETCH

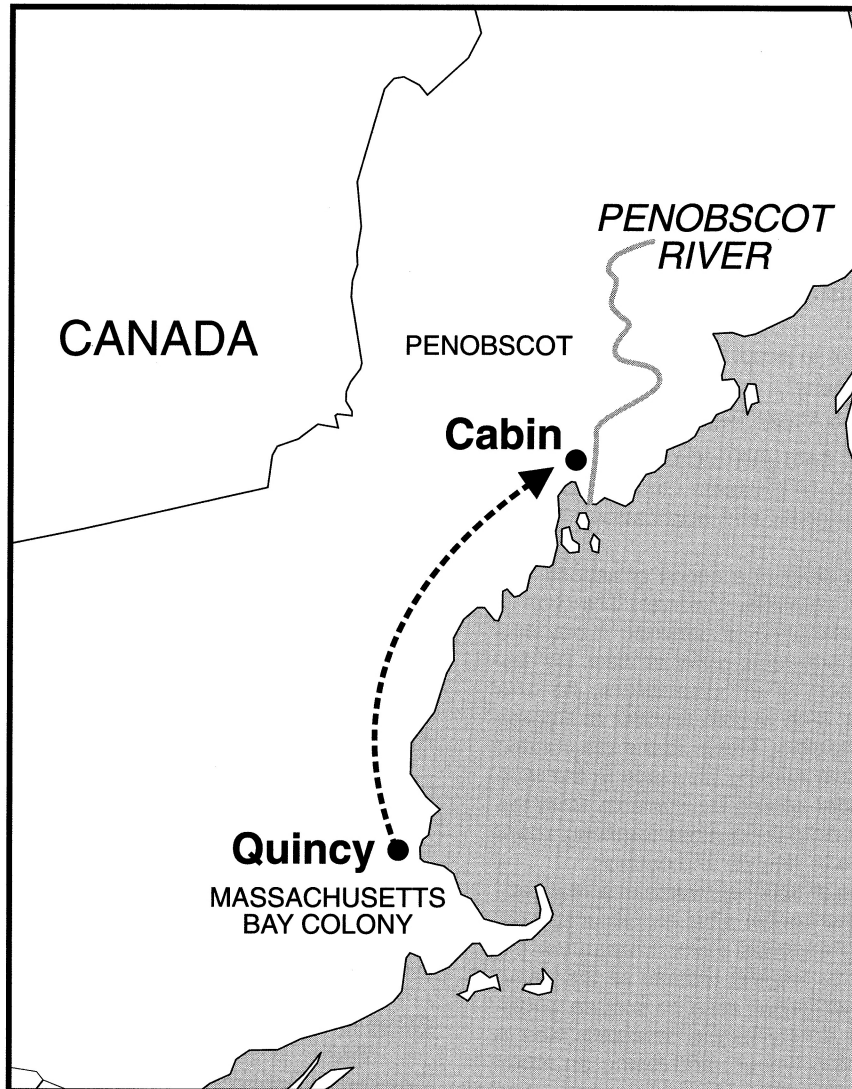
Winner of the Newbery Award for young adult fiction in 1963 and 1967, Elizabeth George Speare, a native New Englander, lives in Fairfield, Connecticut. Born November 21, 1908, in Melrose, Massachusetts, she is the daughter of engineer Harry Allan and Demetria Simmons George, a lively woman who treated Speare and her brother to visits and concerts in and around Boston as well as hikes, picnics, and summers at the beach. Unstructured time allowed Speare to read, think, and dream up plots for books.

A scribbler from childhood, Speare always intended to write, but postponed her ambition until she graduated from Smith College, acquired an M. A. from Boston University, and taught high school English for five years at Rockland and Auburn, Massachusetts. She married industrial engineer Alden Speare in 1936, moved to Wethersfield, Connecticut, and raised two children—Alden, Jr., and Mary Elizabeth—to junior high age before recording her stories. In addition to eight books she contributed articles to *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Horn Book*, *Woman's Day*, *American Heritage*, and *Today's Health*.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Speare completed a first book in 1957 and won an ALA citation for it and all her subsequent works. Later awards

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include two International Board on Books for Young People citations, Society of Colonial Wars award, American Institute of Graphic Arts Children's Books award, New England Round Table award, NCTE Teacher's Choice and Booklist Children's Reviewers Choice selections, *School Library Journal* award, New York Times Outstanding Book, Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, and Christopher Award. Her success with historical fiction derives from an immersion in pre-Revolutionary New England heritage, which she observes as relatively unchanged since the arrival of the Pilgrims.

Critics value Speare's careful research, which requires a year or more of gathering material before she frames a book. She meets reader's needs by applying historically accurate detail as well as compelling narrative. The Newbery committee records a unanimous vote for her most famous work, *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, the story of a West Indies native who befriends an elderly Quaker woman accused of witchcraft. Speare's manuscripts reside in Boston University's Mugar Memorial Library. Her works are available on disc recording, cassette, and sound filmstrip.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To discuss isolation and self-reliance

2. To describe the physical, mental, and emotional effects of coping in a different ethnic community
3. To characterize the value of self-control, skill, and daring
4. To acknowledge the importance of learning from mistakes
5. To outline the relationship between humans and nature
6. To discuss the importance of foster parents to an orphan
7. To account for the author's emphasis on nature
8. To characterize courage
9. To contrast moments of elation with frustration, fear, and despair
10. To note the value of determination during difficult times

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To recount how Attean makes a bow and arrows
2. To explain why the clan honors a hunter
3. To evaluate changes in Matt as hunter, trapper, friend, and teacher
4. To explain the antipathy between Indians and white trappers and settlers
5. To analyze the scene in which Matt throws the dead rab-

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bit at the bear

6. To assess Attean's Indian vision quest for manitou
7. To contrast the cabin and wigwam as settings
8. To contrast Matt's confidence before and after his ordeal in the woods
9. To explain the effects of the seasons on Matt and the tribe
10. To discuss the significance of the sign of the turtle
11. To account for Attean's calling Matt a brother
12. To define Ben's part in warning Matt about the dangers of the woods
13. To evaluate Saknis's offer to adopt Matt
14. To analyze the closing scene
15. To isolate moments when Attean feels contempt for Matt

LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of Elizabeth George Speare's style, present the following terms and applications to this novel:

third person narrative a story or a series of actions told from the vantage point of an objective observer. *The Sign of the Beaver* examines the relationships between a boy and Indians from a sympathetic, non-racist point of view. By displaying the skills and needs of all characters, no one becomes a conquering hero. Matt is both teacher of English and student of fishing and hunting; Attean is the disgruntled student of English and a brave earning his place in the tribe through bravery and traditional search for manitou. Both the Hallowells and Saknis are in difficult positions requiring adaptation to a permanent change in lifestyle and outlook.

historic milieu the setting of fictional events in a real period of history. Matt lives on the frontier after his father locates the family in a cabin on the Penobscot River. Living near the Penobscot tribe, he learns to respect Indians at the same time that the tribe must move farther west to acquire undisturbed hunting grounds. The difficulties the Hallowells face in separating from Matt, suffering typhus, and losing an infant attest to the challenge of settling the Massachusetts colony and living in the wild. References to treaties derive from the first attempts at legal settlement between colonists and indigenous peoples.

symbol a concrete object that stands for a complex or abstract idea or relationship. To Attean the animal symbols designating clans are important social and legal strictures on behavior. He values his place in the tribe and welcomes the rigors he must undergo to become a man. Matt learns enough about Penobscot values to congratulate his friend on achievement.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

The milieu of *The Sign of the Beaver* is crucial to the story. The action opens in the Maine wild as colonists begin to move farther west from the settlements the English established on the shore in the early seventeenth century. After the Hallowells buy land on the Penobscot River, they must separate temporarily. It is the weakening of family ties that puts Matt in danger. Alone, he confronts a thief, wild animals, lost food supplies, and bees. When he proves unequal to the dangers of the woods, Penobscot Indians befriend him and treat him for bee sting.

By learning woods lore from Attean, Matt accomplishes two important tasks. He learns to protect himself in the

woods and to make his own supplies and weapons. Also, he develops an intercultural understanding of forest Indians, their religion and philosophy, and the threat that settlers pose to their survival in the woods. By competing with Attean on his own terms, Matt acquires stature with the boy, his grandparents, other Penobscot boys, and the tribe and learns private details about the deaths of Attean's parents. The height of his acculturation as friend of the Indians occurs the night he sleeps soundly in a wigwam while a celebration continues at the fireside.

Matt's continued success alone arrives at a crucial time, when he enters his teens. By not only surviving the winter, but even enjoying freedom on the snow in snowshoes, he develops into a more mature, thoughtful person by the time his family returns. Their hardships at the trading post add a dimension of daring to the plot by demonstrating the personality types that flourish in the wild. The poignant conclusion to the story further honors Matt for his sensitivity to the Penobscot and their quandary in leaving forever traditional hunting grounds to seek autonomy far from white settlers.

CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

For more information about the Native Americans, colonial America, wilderness survival, and other subjects and issues deriving from the novel, consult these sources:

Books

- Kieran Doherty, *Puritans, Pilgrims, and Merchants: Founders of the Northeastern Colonies*
Jean Craighead George, *One Day in the Woods*
Trudy Griffin-Pierce, *Encyclopedia of Native Americans*
Deborah Kent, *Maine*
Gilbert Legay, *Atlas of the North American Indian*
Lotsee Patterson and Mary Ellen Snodgrass, *Indian Terms of the Americas*
Tamara L. Roleff, ed., *Native American Rights (Current Controversies)*
Elizabeth George Speare, *Child Life in New England, 1790-1840*

Computer Software

American Indian 2.0 (Facts on File)

Internet

- "DISCovering Multicultural America,"
<galenet.gale.com:8888>.
"Interracial Adoption,"
<ww2.netnitco.net/users/tank/adopt3.htm>.
"Massachusetts Bay Colony Charter,"
<www.sec.state.ri.us/rihist/richart.htm>.
"Penobscot: A People and Their River,"
<www.clf.org/pubs/penob.htm>.
"Penobscot Indians,"
<www.knight.org/advent/cathen/11644a.htm>.
"Typhus," <www.ento.vt.edu/IHS/typhus.html>.

Videos

- Cry in the Wild* (MGM/UA)
Education of Little Tree (Paramount)
My Side of the Mountain (Paramount)
Native American History (TMW Media Group)
Native American Influences on the United States (TMW Media Group)

THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in Elizabeth George Speare's *The Sign of the Beaver* should include these aspects:

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Themes

- responsibility
- loss
- acceptance
- rescue
- friendship
- nature
- anxiety
- reunion
- maturity

Motifs

- coping with absence or loss of parents
- learning the Indian lifestyle
- mastering elements of survivalism
- achieving an intercultural friendship
- accepting the hardships created by colonialism

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have a particular meaning in this novel. Explain each. Chapter and page numbers pinpoint the context in which the item appears.

1. "I'll take your old blunderbuss with me," his father had said. "This one aims truer." (Chap. 1, p. 4)
(Mr. Hallowell increases Matt's chances of survival alone by leaving him the matchlock, a rifle equipped with a slow-burning cord that ignites the charge. Mr. Hallowell takes the blunderbuss, a short firearm with a large diameter bore and flared muzzle.)
2. Still, one could not entirely forget all those horrid tales. (Chap. 2, p. 9)
(Matt recalls accounts of Indian atrocities against white settlers. Some were true or based on truth. Others were invented or grossly exaggerated. Stories of murder, torture, and captivity flourished during and after the French and Indian Wars, which raged from 1754-1763. The intervention of the French in Anglo-Indian relations caused tribes to take sides against white colonists and against Indians who supported colonists. The Indians had their own tales of incidents, such as the slaying of Attean's mother for the scalp bounty.)
3. "Mighty fine piece," he said. "Worth a passel of beaver." (Chap. 3, p. 13)
(In frontier areas, regular currency was scarce, but beaver pelts were much in demand for hats. Ben demonstrates how the value of an object was often equated to the number of beaver pelts it was worth. The increasing scarcity of beaver for trade is one reason that Saknis's village leaves Maine permanently.)
4. Especially he hated the Jesuit priests who had egged the redskins on, and he had once been part of an expedition that broke into a chapel and smashed the popish idols. (Chap. 3, p. 16)
(Ben recalls the intervention of Jesuits, members of the Roman Catholic Society of Jesus, founded by St. Ignatius Loyola in 1534 to promote missionary and educational work. French Jesuit priests explored North America in the mid-sixteenth century, converted Indians, and taught them French. Attean's sister's baptism is evident in her adoption of a Christian name, Marie, after a "father" baptized her.)
5. The Indian boy's black eyes held no expression whatever. Unlike the old man, he was naked except for a

breechcloth held up by a string at his waist. (Chap. 6, p. 28)

(Attean wears a typical garment for summer—a single piece of leather, skin, or woven cloth one foot wide and four-six feet long. The wearer passed the cloth between the legs and over a belt at front and back. The loose ends, sometimes fringed, stitched, beaded, or quilled, hung down as decoration and for modesty. The breechcloth protected the genitals.)

6. The other book was his own, the only one he had ever possessed, *Robinson Crusoe*. (Chap. 6, p. 30)
(Book ownership did not spread to all levels of society until printing became cheap. Thus, Matt's pride in owning Daniel Defoe's novel is a mark of his family's economic status and their value of learning. The story, published in 1719, details the adventures of Crusoe, sole survivor of a shipwreck off Venezuela, as he learns to survive during 28 years on an otherwise uninhabited island. After a number of years alone, he discovers that cannibals come to the island for ritual feasts and rescues Friday from a gruesome death.)
7. In Adam's fall
We sinned all. (Chap. 7, p. 32)
(This is the opening line of the New England Primer, the standard primary school textbook for teaching the alphabet and reading. In keeping with the colony's Puritan beginnings, the primer incorporated a high degree of religious moralizing with letter instruction. The couplet expresses the concept of original sin: All persons are burdened from birth by humanity's first sin, the eating of the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden. For this sin, God cast Adam and Eve out into the world to survive on their own.)
8. He did not have paper or ink. He found a ribbon of birchbark in a corner and tore off a strip and sharpened a stick to a point. (Chap. 7, p. 33)
(The bark of birch trees peels naturally away from the trunk in thin, smooth, papery strips. It was a versatile and useful material for Indians in baskets, canoes, torches, waterproof cooking containers, bandages, rain gear, and decoration.)
9. All around him in a circle rose the dim shapes of cabins and cone-shaped wigwams. (Chap. 16, p. 78)
(The Penobscot are members of the Abenaki nation, who constructed permanent domed huts from arched frameworks of poles lashed together with basswood, walnut, slippery elm, or hickory bark to form a 15-foot oval or circular dome. The maker covered the frame in bark, rush mats, or hides. Attean's family and friends live in both bark cabins and cone-shaped wigwams. The wigwam in which Matt sleeps has walls of woven matting; a small hole in the roof allows smoke to escape and can be waterproofed with a flap during heavy rains. In winter, the resident covered the bottom edge of the wigwam in a layer of dirt and sod to keep out wind. Floors were layered in mats and platforms, under which the family stored bags of meal and baskets of food. Overhead, deer jerky and root crops remained safe from mice. Unlike the tepee, the wigwam is not portable.)
10. Was manitou another word for moose? (Chap. 20, p. 107)
(Manitou is the divine spirit who comes to an Indian dur-

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ing a vision quest. To find manitou, Attean must purify himself, then withdraw to the forest and wait until the spirit contacts him.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages from the novel.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. Describe the Penobscot village and daily life of residents.

(The Penobscot village lies within a stockade deep in the Maine woods, with bark cabins and cone-shaped wigwams arranged in a circle, a sacred configuration replicating cycles of nature. Matt observes that heaps of clamshells and animal bones litter the ground. The wigwams are ramshackle and flimsy, the people's clothes are dingy and faded, and the village itself is shabby and cluttered, a testament to the Beaver clan's declining prosperity. The status quo makes all the more valuable Saknis's charity and sharing.)

Matt observes that daily life hums with the rhythm of "squaw work." The women tend to daily living chores—drying food and animal pelts, pounding and grinding corn, weaving baskets and mats, and sewing garments. It is women who tend his injury. Children play, dogs abound, and very old men sit and smoke. The rest of the men often spend their days away hunting.)

2. How do Indians help Matt survive?

(Unable to provide for his needs, especially after Ben steals the rifle and an animal ransacks supplies, Matt has slim prospects for survival once the warm abundance of summer ceases. But the Beaver clan, especially Attean, helps Matt learn survival skills. From them, he extracts the necessities from natural resources that surround him. After making the shift from helpless victim to sturdy woodsman, Matt is less fearful that his family is late returning from Massachusetts.)

The transformation is gradual. First, Saknis rescues Matt from a bee attack and offers him a pair of moccasins. In exchange for reading lessons, Attean provides Matt with a steady supply of fresh meat. Throughout the summer, Attean instructs Matt in hunting, trapping, fishing, canoeing, and woodsmanship. The lessons free Matt from dependence on manufactured goods. From observing women in the village, Matt learns to preserve food and to fashion necessities. Finally, Saknis gives Matt snowshoes, the key to winter survival.)

3. Why does Saknis value reading?

(As more whites come to Indian territory, Saknis observes the need to interact. While Indians make a treaty verbally and confirm it by ceremonial pipe smoking, whites prepare written treaties that Indians can't read. The Indians sign these treaties to show friendship and peaceful intent, but without understanding that the signing cedes hunting grounds forever to whites. Because of their innocence of deeds and land ownership, the written words betray the Indians' intentions.)

To prevent loss of territory to whites, Saknis is determined that Attean become the first of a new generation of literate Penobscot. Thus, when the time comes for his tribe to sign a treaty, they will know what they are

signing because they can trust Attean. With obvious hope for the future, Saknis exclaims, "Attean learn to read white man's signs. Attean not give away hunting ground.")

4. How does Matt gain Attean's respect?

(Matt attempts to overcome Attean's disdain for white men's ways by becoming proficient in the skills that Attean respects—hunting, fishing, trapping, canoeing, shooting a bow, and self-sufficiency in the woods. Matt is realistic in his respect for Penobscot customs and beliefs, which may keep him alive until his family returns. On a childish level, he fantasizes situations in which he heroically rescues Attean from grave danger, thus ending his humiliating dependence on a boy his own age.)

Matt earns some respect from Attean for evidence of character—a swift defensive reaction toward the threatening bear, for his efforts to help Aremus, and for participating in the boys' rough games. Matt secures full respect by insisting that he must wait for his father, choosing a perilous, independent course rather than security with the Beaver people. The choice has surprising effects on their relationship. "After all the brave deeds he had dreamed of to win this boy's respect, he had gained it at last just by doing nothing, just by staying here and refusing to leave.")

5. Describe the differences between Indian and white delineation of work.

(Attean would not consider doing any type of unmanly work. For him, certain tasks—such as hunting and fighting—are reserved for men, while other chores are strictly "squaw work." Women's tasks include farming and food preparation. Some tasks fall into a gray area, notably, treating wounds and other aspects of medical care.)

Matt observes the Penobscot women closely at their daily chores. He realizes he must learn many of their skills in addition to Attean's in order to survive alone. "He knew well enough that Attean was scornful of the squaw work the white boy had to do, but Attean didn't have to worry about what he was going to eat next day.")

Questions 6-8 (Interpretive Level)

6. What impact do whites have on the Penobscot?

(Colonization dooms the traditional Penobscot way of life. As white settlement spreads, hunting areas decline; game within remaining areas becomes scarce through whites' wasteful hunting and trapping practices. Indians cannot pay for trade goods like guns with money, for they have none; their wampum has devalued. And "white traders [are] demanding more skins than the woods could provide." Matt can see that the Beaver village is shabby, its inhabitants short of possessions.)

As hunting grounds pass into white settlements and farms, the Beaver people's way of life becomes unsustainable. It can be dangerous to live near whites, as demonstrated by Attean's mother's death because white men want her scalp. The Beaver people must move from their traditional territory to locate permanent hunting grounds far from white encroachment.)

7. How do Indians and whites differ in views toward nature and land?

(Compared with Indians, whites are careless about what and how they kill. Whites slay animals for sport, or solely for pelts, even to the point of depleting valuable species

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of game. In contrast, Matt often observes, "In Attean's world everything that was killed must be used"—every scrap. Attean shows his people's respect for the creatures they hunt, and their concern for the resource. Reverently, he apologizes to the bear for killing her when she had a cub. He will not trap beaver while the kits are young.

The white concept of individual land ownership is alien to the Penobscot. Matt's father buys his land and owns it exclusively. To such a transaction, Attean replies: "How can man own land? Land same as air. Land for all people to live on. For beaver and deer. Does deer own land?" His question has an obvious answer that refutes Matt's concept of deeded property.)

8. Compare the self-sufficiency of Robinson Crusoe, Matt, Mr. Hollowell, and Attean. (Ironically, it is Attean—the parallel to Friday—who is consummately self-sufficient, while Matt, "a puny sort of Robinson Crusoe," tags along behind, learning from the "savage." Matt concludes that this situation is far more realistic than Defoe's invention. Attean is able to fashion what he needs from natural resources. Crusoe, on the other hand, salvages carpenter's chest, nails, two barrels of bullets, and a dozen hatchets from the ship. Without these, his survival is tenuous. Compared with Crusoe, Matt and his father built their entire cabin and its furniture with one axe, an adz, and no nails. In many ways they are more self-sufficient than Crusoe. As Matt learns from Attean, he vastly increases his survival skills, surpassing Crusoe and Mr. Hollowell.)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. In what ways do cultural attitudes change? (At first, Matt reflects attitudes based on tales he has heard that Indians are savage, heathen, and dangerous. He finds Attean rude, scornful, and contemptuous. But, impressed by Attean's skills, he gradually comes to respect Penobscot ways of life. He admires their regard for nature, their kindness and willingness to share, the "boisterous comradeship in the village," and, above all, their stewardship rather than ownership of land. In the end, Matt understands why white captives, given the choice, might not want to leave Indian life to return to the white world. Attean is contemptuous of white ways and treats Matt with little respect. But as Matt gamely learns the skills Attean teaches, helps Aremus, and participates in village activities, the Penobscot boy begins to respect and admire one white individual. His grandmother, too, is initially hostile and hates all whites because a white man killed Attean's mother and mutilated her scalp. But the grandmother changes her mind when Matt rescues Aremus. This concern for an Indian dog erases the prejudice that all whites are killers. In a surprise shift of attitude, she welcomes Matt to the village.)
10. How is a vision quest important to Attean? (A vision quest is a religious event—a private, one-on-one journey into self. Boys entering manhood commune with a supreme deity through the ordeal of fasting and solitude. After purifying their bodies in a sweat lodge or through purgative drinks, they strip, rub down with dried sage or herbs, and go into seclusion for several days while abstaining from food, water, and human contact.

By breathing sweetgrass smoke or incense and waiting for a vision of the spirit world, Attean would be approaching a supreme moment in his oneness with God. The occasion is so momentous that some males abandon childhood names and adopt a name derived from an experience or dream.)

Questions 11-14 (Creative Level)

11. Prioritize various examples of everyday lessons in safety, manners, food procurement, and Indian philosophy in terms of Matt's need for survival.
12. Create a scene in which Attean learns a valuable skill from the Hollowells, such as treatment of illness, making cider, pegging wood siding, or adding and subtracting sums of money or figuring square footage.
13. Read aloud from Joseph Bruchac's *Bowman's Store: A Journey to Myself*. Parallel his intent and style in describing a racist society with the hostility of Attean's grandmother toward whites.
14. Contrast the *New England Primer* with Sequoyah's Cherokee syllabary. Explain why users were proficient in writing Cherokee after only a few days' study.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Art

1. Design a page from an illustrated Penobscot dictionary, a surveyor's map of Maine, a sign marking Turtle hunting grounds, multiple views of a musket or rifle, a biography of Daniel Defoe, a sign pointing the way to the trading post, an epitaph for Attean's parents, a news feature about new trapping grounds in Ohio, an illustrated entry on bees or the forest Indians of North America for an encyclopedia or science book, a guide to stretching and drying hides, a chart featuring tracks of common forest animals, a description of how maple sugar is made, and a schematic drawing of an Indian town.
2. Draw a book jacket or poster emphasizing the beauties of the Maine woods, pumpkins and corn growing among stumps, fishing in a stream, practice with a homemade bow and arrows, a visit to a beaver dam, chinking a cabin wall, cooking fish over a flame, dancing with the Beaver clan, and riding in the canoe with Attean and Aremus.

Cinema

View various films about young people who make difficult decisions, e. g. *The Member of the Wedding*, *Kim*, *This Boy's Life*, *Sunder, J. T.*, *The Secret Garden*, *Little Women*, *Jane Eyre*, *Paper Moon*, *Life with Father*, *My Side of the Mountain*, *I Remember Mama*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Daughters of the Dust*. Discuss why filmmakers focus on young people and their problems with coming of age.

Drama and Speech

Compose a short speech in which you describe the role of survival skills in the lives of these characters: Ben, Saknis, Attean's father and mother, the governor of Massachusetts, Jesuit priests, Aremus, Mrs. Hollowell, Mr. Hollowell, Matt, new settlers, the Beaver and Turtle clans, fox in the trap, boys with whom Matt plays ball, bear cubs and their mothers, Marie, and Attean.

Education

1. Explain how to teach people survival skills. List important

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- practical information about staying dry and warm, avoiding dangers, studying trail signs, and staying near familiar territory. Name unusual places to look for food, such as in burrows or in streams or bogs. List basic survival gear, particularly snowshoes, sled, thongs, knives, bone needle and sinew, moccasins, mittens, hat, fire-making tools, and a weapon and ammunition.
2. Create a bulletin board illustrating the education of Attean and Matt. Use a Venn diagram to show what each needs to know about coping with the woods, meeting strangers, learning to read, hunting, living among settlers, respecting another clan's hunting grounds, playing and celebrating, making weapons, and making treaties.
 3. Characterize Saknis's various roles, including as grandfather and clan leader. Why does he value Matt's learning more than Attean? How does Saknis's understanding of racial differences contrast with Attean's limited experience with whites? Why does Matt fear for the tribe?
 4. Compose an informal essay on teaching children self-reliance. List activities illustrating patience, knowledge, and survival skills. Describe how Matt adapts to observing a trail, killing animals for food, and finding his way in the wild. Discuss the lessons he learns about collecting honey, keeping a fire, guarding the cabin, making a bow and arrows, walking on snowshoes, robbing a bee tree, and shutting the door against predators.

Geography

Create a web site or bulletin board contrasting settings described or mentioned in the text. Include Indian hunting grounds in New England, Pacific Ocean, Canada, the Penobscot River, Quincy, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Maine.

History and Social Studies

1. Comment on scarcity of game when white people overpopulate the land.
2. Summarize the background elements of the story, particularly literacy, woods lore, the making of moccasins, Jesuit missions, typhus, the vision quest for manitou, vengeance, ethnic allegiance, survivalism, and the dislocation of New England tribes after hunters, trappers, and settlers alter nature's balance.
3. How does the author characterize Indians in a changing society? Why do the villagers move away in winter? Why do they decide not to return? Why does Ben think most Indians have fled to Canada? Why is Attean wrong about spurning literacy? How do settlers misunderstand the Indian notion of land ownership and hunting rights?
4. Survey New England history. What methods did early visitors use to learn native American languages and traditions? When did white settlers begin displacing native Americans? How were trappers influential? Approximately how far does Mr. Hallowell travel from Maine to Massachusetts and back? Who were the Iroquois? Why are they important to New England history? Why are Jesuits significant to Indian history? What wars preceded the time span of the novel?
5. Report on the theme of respect for nature. Discuss the humility of Attean in addressing a fish and a dead bear. Explain why Indians never hunt for sport and why Attean insists that Matt keep the mauled rabbit. Describe the freedom Matt feels as he faces winter on snowshoes in a forest he appreciates and respects. How does Attean honor animals?
6. Compose an extended definition of clan answering these questions: What unspoken laws govern hunting grounds? Why are symbols important to the Beaver and Turtle clans? Why are mutual rights respected on both sides? How do white settlers and trappers violate the Indian respect for land and hunting rights?
7. Make a time line of important treaties that Indians signed with white authorities.

Journalism

Compose a series of magazine features on a settler's lifestyle, including how to build a cabin and loft, how to chink the walls against the cold, how to make windows, how to light a cabin, where to store firewood, how to open a door into a snowbank, and where to store produce during a long winter.

Language Arts

1. Contrast Robinson Crusoe's survival and that of Matt. How does Friday differ from Attean? Explain how Matt's point of view alters after he lives his own Crusoe-like adventure with Attean. What could Matt and Attean teach Defoe about survival in the wild? How does Attean use survival skills during his quest for manitou?
2. Draw a character web connecting members of the Hallowell family, Attean and his grandparents, Marie, Aramus, the Beaver clan, Ben, the Turtle clan, white trappers, Jesuit priests, and the coming three families. Where do the fox, bear, bear cub, otter, deer, moose, porcupine, rabbits, fish, crows, and other animals belong on this chart?
3. Explain briefly the purpose of the silver watch. Why does Mr. Hallowell give it to Matt? Why is the watch more valuable than the compass? Why is the watch an appropriate gift for Attean? How does the watch compare with the rifle as a symbol of maturity? How does the watch compare with the snowshoes as a symbol of survival?
4. Apply a Freytag diagram to the novel. Label parts of the plot that form exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Why does this clear delineation of action lend itself well to radio, audio cassette, or the stage? What problems would a producer have in staging *The Sign of the Beaver* as a play, opera, TV miniseries, or outdoor musical drama?
5. Read aloud other descriptions of coming of age. Include Theodora Kroeber's *Ishi*, Conrad Richter's *The Light in the Forest*, James and Christopher Collier's *My Brother Sam Is Dead*, Forrest Carter's *The Education of Little Tree*, John Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks*, Robert Newton Peck's *A Day No Pigs Would Die*, Paula Fox's *Slave Dancer*, Scott O'Dell's *Sing Down the Moon* and *The Island of the Blue Dolphin*, Theodore Taylor's *The Cay* and *Timothy of the Cay*, Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, Carson McCullers's *A Member of the Wedding*, Gary Paulsen's *Dogsong* and *Harris and Me*, Cynthia Rylant's *Missing May*, Yoko Kawashima Watkins's *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*, Paul Zindel's *The Pigman*, S. E. Hinton's *That Was Then, This Is Now*, and John Steinbeck's *The Red Pony*. Discuss the importance of early training in a strong survivor like Attean.

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6. Make flash cards or posters illustrating important words and phrases from the novel.
7. Using examples from the book, locate skillful or colorful turns of phrase. Find examples of intense emotion, sense impressions, simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, alliteration, cacophony, dialogue, realistic detail, dialect, symbolism, verse, and foreshadowing.
8. Account for the importance of these terms to the plot: Gluskabe, Great Spirit, Christian name, Noah, David and Goliath, Samson, Jesuit priests, manitou, "In Adam's fall/We sinned all," popish idols, coat of many colors, and baptized.

Music

Play a recording of the Shaker hymn "Tis a Gift to Be Simple." Discuss how the words apply to Saknis, Attean, Attean's grandmother, the Hallowells, the trapper, and Matt.

Psychology

1. Characterize the effects of isolation, loneliness, insecurity, disillusion, disease, death of a child, danger, terror, threat of mauling, frustration, defeat, deceit, theft, and tension on characters in the story. Why does village hospitality gratify Matt? How does he know that some villagers do not welcome him? How does he gain respect from Attean's grandmother? Saknis? Marie? Attean? his parents?
2. Role-play interaction between a main character and a white hunter, teacher, Jesuit missionary, guide, trading post merchant, white trapper, host at a celebratory feast, dancer, ball player, gambler, healer, or seeker of manitou. Explain how the book would change if the main characters had been girls.

Science and Health

1. Discuss your response to Matt's meals of rabbit, dried wild blueberries, corn bread, Indian cake, fish stew with corn, otter, bear, and soup made from jerky and pumpkin. Why does Matt mention few greens or fruits? What kind of dishes could he make from dried pumpkin? from acorns?
2. Summarize a history of the study and treatment of typhus. Name serious outbreaks of the disease.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Write several conversations that are only implied, such as Attean's receipt of a rifle, Mr. and Mrs. Hallowell's dismay at the death of their infant, Attean's grandmother's interest in Matt, Marie's explanation of how she helped Matt free Aremus and how Attean examined the broken paw, Ben's stories about trapping and living among Indians, Attean's description to Saknis of the arrival of his manitou, Sarah's interest in Matt's winter alone in Maine, the surveyor's explanation of how to reach the Hallowells' lot, Saknis's discussion with Attean's father of Attean's mother's death, and Saknis's insistence that Attean take fresh game each day he goes to the cabin for a reading lesson.
2. Explain why Attean's quest for manitou requires that he eat nothing, purge his body, and sleep in a temporary hut. What does manitou mean to him? Why does he go alone? What changes affect his life and appearance after he receives manitou? How does the gun change his life among the clan males? Why does he hold Marie and other squaws in contempt?
3. Draw settings for a movie version of *The Sign of the Beaver*. Show the placement of actors, music, costumes, props, sound effects, and lighting. Include changes in the seasons, the building of a fire, an attack by a female bear, the Indian feast and dance, Matt sleeping alone in a wigwam, receiving manitou, Attean telling hunting stories by the fire, Matt demonstrating how to chew spruce gum, Marie helping to free Aremus from the trap, Sarah examining the cabin, Attean dressing to display manhood, playing ball and gambling with Indian boys, and the arrival of the Hallowells to the cabin.
4. Contrast female characters in terms of action, control, and range of chores and skills, such as making moccasins. Include Attean's grandmother, Indian women of the Beaver clan, Marie, Sarah, Attean's mother, and Mrs. Hallowell. Why does Attean's father risk his life to avenge his dead wife? How does Mr. Hallowell protect his wife? Why does Matt believe that his mother can teach Attean to write?
5. Create and discuss a list of images from the novel that appeal to the five senses, for instance "When Matt and the dog went outside at bedtime the chilly whiteness reached over his moccasins and closed around his bare ankles."
6. Analyze the reciprocity that undergirds Matt's friendship with Saknis, Attean, Attean's grandmother, Marie, Sarah, the Hallowells, and Ben. Explain why Attean gives Matt the dog. How does Matt profit by learning to survive alone?
7. Make a time line of events in the story. Stress moments of emotional and physical stress, for example, Matt and Attean's joint attack on the bear, Attean's return with shaven head and topknot, Mr. Hallowell's departure from the cabin, Matt's immersion in gardening, Matt's recovery from multiple bee stings, Attean's refusal to accept Defoe's story of enslavement, Ben's intent to spend the night at the cabin, the destruction in the cabin, and Matt's loss of his only fish hook.
8. Compose a first person account of a visit to a frontier trading post. What items would be in great demand? What do the Hallowells buy and pack on their sled? How would the Hallowells locate a guide to accompany them into Maine? Why would a weak infant not survive the journey from Massachusetts?
9. Write a theme in which you explain the role of a minor character, especially the boys who play ball with Matt and Attean, Sarah, Mrs. Hallowell, Friday, Robinson Crusoe, the governor of Massachusetts, white trappers, the Turtle clan, and the village women of the Beaver clan. How do these people affect Matt's survival and contentment while he awaits his father's return from Massachusetts and returns to family-style living in the cabin? Account for Matt's loyalty to the white way of life.
10. Discuss the theme of challenge. Why is Attean disgusted by English lessons? What is the best way to teach the alphabet to an adult? Why does Matt perform poorly while fishing in the stream with Attean? Why does the thought of winter alone in the cabin no longer terrify Matt? How does Matt alter his clothing to cope with cold?

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ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Make a thorough list of items necessary for a movie version of the book. Besides each item, explain its importance to the plot.
2. List scenes that reflect Saknis' wisdom and caution in dealing with white people.
3. Compose a scene in which Matt encounters Attean in adulthood.
4. Make a character list and explain the relationship of each to Matt.

OTHER WORKS BY ELIZABETH GEORGE SPEARE

Abby, Julia and the Cows (1958)
The Bronze Bow (1962)
Calico Captive (1957)
Child Life in New England, 1790-1840 (1961)
Ice Glen (1967)
Life in Colonial America (1963)
The Prospering (1967)
The Witch of Blackbird Pond (1959)

RELATED READING

Toni Cade Bambara, "Blues Ain't No Mockin' Bird"
William Bell, *Crabbe*
Thomas Berger, *Little Big Man*
Hal Borland, *When the Legends Die*
Joseph Bruchac, *Bowman's Store: A Journey to Myself*
Caroline B. Cooney, *The Face on the Milk Carton*
Robert Cormier, *I Am the Cheese*
Michael Dorris, *Yellow Raft on Blue Water*
Jean Craighead George, *Julie of the Wolves* and *My Side of the Mountain*
Stephen Gould, *Jumper*
Robin Lee Graham, *Dove*
Virginia Hamilton, *The House of Dies Drear*
Robert Heinlein, *Citizen of the Galaxy*, *Have Spacesuit, Will Travel*, and *Tunnel in the Sky*
Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona*
Theodora Kroeber, *Ishi*
Lois Lowry, *The Giver*
Gary Paulsen, *Hatchet*, *The River*, and *Brian's Winter*
Wilson Rawls, *Where the Red Fern Grows*
Conrad Richter, *The Light in the Forest*
S.L. Rottman, *Rough Waters*
Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*
Kurt Vonnegut, "D. P."
Yoko Kawashima Watkins, *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*
Jessamyn West, *Except for Me and Thee*
Johann Wyss, *Swiss Family Robinson*

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VOCABULARY TEST

Using the phrases that follow, complete each sentence below. You will have answers left over.

adz	dangling	fragile	nkweniss	stockade
blazes	deadfall	heathen	Penobscot	stout thongs
blunderbuss	deeds	live coal	pewter	surveyor's map
cedar splints	distaste	manitou	puncheon table	touchhole
chilly	expression	mortar	scornful	treaty
chinking	fierce Iroquois	Muster Day	sensible	wampum

1. He had climbed the roof to fasten down the cedar _____ with long poles, and dragged up pine boughs to cover them.
2. His father had spread out the _____ and traced the boundaries of the land he had purchased in Maine territory.
3. Inside there were shelves along one wall and a sturdy _____ with two stools.
4. Matt poked in the _____ with the metal pick.
5. Once he had been taken captive by the _____, who were set on putting him to torture, but he had been too smart for them and escaped in the night.
6. They were handsome and new, of moosehide, dark and glistening with grease, tied with _____ that were long enough to wrap about his ankles.
7. White man not make _____ with pipe.
8. He would feel mighty silly trying to explain it to a _____.
9. Why, Matt and his father had come up here to Maine with one axe and an _____.
10. But my father always made _____ on the trees with his knife.
11. This was noisier than any celebration Matt had ever seen in Quincy, even on _____.
12. Two women were pounding corn in a huge _____ made from a tree trunk, their arms alternately rising and falling.
13. Now _____ no good to pay for gun.
14. Every Indian boy must have a _____.
15. In the woods Attean had once pointed out to him a _____, constructed of heavy logs so intricately balanced that they would fall with deadly accuracy on an animal that attempted to steal the bait inside.
16. After all the brave _____ he had dreamed of to win this boy's respect, he had gained it at last just by doing nothing, just by staying here and refusing to leave.
17. Matt looked with _____ at the rabbit, almost covered by the bear's heavy paw, the fur matted and bloody.
18. For a moment hot sparks of anger drove every _____ thought out of his head.
19. Now he lifted it out and held it in his hand, the way he had held it when his father had given it to him, as though it were a _____ bird's egg.
20. For much of the day he was content to be alone, tramping through the woods or sitting on the bank of the creek _____ his fishline.
21. Although the cabin was finished, his father had left him the endless task of _____ the spaces between the logs with clay from the creek bank.
22. "I'll take your old _____ with me," his father had said.
23. He knew well enough that Attean was _____ of the squaw work the white boy had to do, but Attean didn't have to worry about what he was going to eat the next day.
24. "When Matt and the dog went outside at bedtime the _____ whiteness reached over his moccasins and closed around his bare ankles.
25. The Indian boy's black eyes held no _____ whatever.

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Sentence Completion (30 points)

Supply a term to complete each of the following statements.

1. On his race from the bee tree, Matt loses a _____ in the mud.
2. When Attean returns from seeking his _____, he is carrying a new rifle.
3. _____ asks Matt not to mention the baby's death to Mrs. Hallowell.
4. _____ claims he is going to live among Indians.
5. Attean leaves the _____ in the trap because it lies in the territory of the Turtle clan.
6. For the family's first dinner in the cabin, Matt offers _____, which he can mix with pumpkin and season with salt.
7. _____ places his master's foot on his head.
8. _____ uses a blanket to subdue Aremus.
9. The Hallowells complete the journey from Quincy in a _____.
10. One of Matt's chores is to finish _____ the cabin walls.
11. Matt hacks a blanket into the shape of breeches and sews them with a _____ needle.
12. Attean's _____ refuses to let Matt leave until his hand is treated and bandaged.
13. After dancing and feasting, Matt sleeps on a platform in an empty _____.
14. On a walk to the dam, Attean stops at the sight of a _____ cub.
15. Mr. Hallowell always found his way over the trail by marking the trees with _____.

Part II: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| _____ 1. claims that the best trapping is in Ohio. | A. Mr. Hallowell |
| _____ 2. gently removes stingers. | B. Attean |
| _____ 3. was murdered and scalped while collecting bark for baskets. | C. Mrs. Hallowell |
| _____ 4. was baptized by a Jesuit priest. | D. Matt |
| _____ 5. wears hideous paint to the feast. | E. Ben |
| _____ 6. lays out birchbark to serve as writing paper. | F. Saknis |
| _____ 7. never returns after setting out to avenge his wife's death. | G. Attean's father |
| _____ 8. gives Matt corn bread and cake. | H. Marie |
| _____ 9. warns Matt not to shoot at everything that moves. | I. Attean's grandmother |
| _____ 10. feared Matt was starving. | J. Attean's mother |

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Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- 1. Matt estimates that learning to read will take a year.
- 2. Saknis fears that Mr. Hallowell will not return.
- 3. Saknis refers to Marie as his *nkweniss*.
- 4. The animal that wrecks the cabin eats the last of the jerky.
- 5. Matt identifies Aremus by the chewed ear and porcupine quills.
- 6. The look on Attean's face indicates that he found his manitou.
- 7. Matt considers gardening woman's work.
- 8. Because the Hallowells suffer from typhus, they have to wait at the trading post for a guide.
- 9. Robinson Crusoe thinks of himself as king on a Pacific island.
- 10. Losing the disk game costs Attean his shirt.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain why Attean challenges Matt to find the return trail.
2. Describe the search for manitou.
3. Discuss why Saknis admires Matt.

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COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Match the following descriptions with places from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| ___ 1. Matt sits quietly and rests from the rapid walk through the woods. | A. Hallowells' cabin |
| ___ 2. The Hallowells wait for a guide after recovering from typhus. | B. Attean's canoe |
| ___ 3. Mr. Hallowell traces the outlines of the family's lot. | C. York |
| ___ 4. A ship leaves Matt and his father at a settlement. | D. Quincy |
| ___ 5. Boys gamble on the flip of disks. | E. Penobscot River |
| ___ 6. Matt offers Saknis a book. | F. surveyor's map |
| ___ 7. Aremus foams at the mouth. | G. trading post |
| ___ 8. Matt loses his last hook. | H. stream |
| ___ 9. The Hallowells depart a Massachusetts town. | I. Beaver clan's village |
| ___ 10. Robinson Crusoe is born in 1632. | J. trap in Beaver clan territory |

Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to each of the following questions.

1. From what wood does Attean cut a bow?
2. What conveyance brings the Hallowells to the cabin?
3. Who makes the baby a cradle?
4. What business will the new settlers start?
5. How far away will the Hallowells' neighbors live?
6. Who admires Matt's decision to remain at the cabin?
7. What do the boys hit during their game?
8. What gift does Matt give Attean?
9. Who is a *piz wat*?
10. What birthday does Matt celebrate while his father is gone?
11. Who asks for tobacco?
12. What does Attean wear on his first visit to the cabin?
13. Who baptized Marie?
14. Who mourns a dead baby?
15. Who hates whites for scalping Attean's mother?

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Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline a word or phrase to complete each of the following statements.

1. Inside the cabin, Ben admires the (compass, rifle, pewter dishes, hemlock bed).
2. The sign of the beaver indicates (hunters are nearby, the governor of Massachusetts protects the dam, only one clan has hunting rights, Attean's village has moved on).
3. Saknis believes that (*Robinson Crusoe* is a fine gift, moccasins caused Matt to fall in the mud, English will help Attean make treaties, the flood occurred in Bible times).
4. Attean shares (stories of Gluskabe, salve to cure bee sting, fish he cooks on a green twig, his snowshoes).
5. Ben describes the Penobscots as (burs, hostile, good trappers, Canadians).
6. Ben is contemptuous of (the Iroquois, popish idols, stories of Jack the Giant Killer, Friday).
7. Matt distracts the bear by hitting it with a (spear, fish hook, moccasin, dead rabbit).
8. Mr. Hallowell asks Matt to (harvest acorns, say nothing about the baby, study the Bible, pray at mealtime).
9. Attean indicates that (he can't buy a gun with wampum, clam shells are important to the Turtle clan, spearing fish takes practice, he needs to read treaties).
10. Marie explains that her grandmother (hates Aremus, fears the trap was poisoned, disapproves of gambling, sent Attean's father on the war path).

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe how Indians make bows and arrows.
2. Discuss how Matt has changed by winter.
3. Explain how Matt endangers himself by being careless and forgetful.

SIGN OF THE BEAVER

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. cedar splints | 14. manitou |
| 2. surveyor's map | 15. deadfall |
| 3. puncheon table | 16. deeds |
| 4. touchhole | 17. distaste |
| 5. fierce Iroquois | 18. sensible |
| 6. stout thongs | 19. fragile |
| 7. treaty | 20. dangling |
| 8. heathen | 21. chinking |
| 9. adz | 22. blunderbuss |
| 10. blazes | 23. scornful |
| 11. Muster Day | 24. chilly |
| 12. mortar | 25. expression |
| 13. wampum | |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Sentence Completion (30 points)

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. boot | 6. jerky | 11. bone |
| 2. manitou | 7. Friday | 12. grandmother |
| 3. Mr. Hallowell | 8. Marie | 13. wigwam |
| 4. Ben | 9. sled | 14. cub |
| 5. fox | 10. chinking | 15. blazes |

Part II: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. E | 5. D |
| 2. F | 6. G |
| 3. J | 7. I |
| 4. H | 9. A |
| 5. B | 10. C |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. F |
| 3. F | 8. T |
| 4. F | 9. F |
| 5. T | 10. F |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. E |
| 2. G | 7. J |
| 3. F | 8. H |
| 4. E | 9. D |
| 5. I | 10. C |

Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. ash | 6. Attean | 11. Ben |
| 2. sled | 7. deerskin ball | 12. breechcloth |
| 3. Matt | 8. watch | 13. Jesuit priest |
| 4. mill | 9. Aremus | 14. Mrs. Hallowell |
| 5. five miles | 10. 13th | 15. Attean's grandmother |

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- rifle
- only one clan has hunting rights
- English will help Attean make treaties
- stories of Gluskabe
- burs
- popish idols
- dead rabbit
- say nothing about the baby
- he can't buy a gun with wampum
- fears the trap was poisoned

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

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