

Guide to Gary Paulsen's *The River*  
**Answer these questions as you read the novel**  
**Chapters 1 to 8**

1. What do Brian's visitors to his home want him to do?
2. Why do the men do this?
3. Why does Brian now enjoy food?
4. What does Brian decide to do about the planeload of supplies?
5. What changes in Brian almost as soon as the plane lands in the wilderness?
6. Why does Brian make that decision?
7. List the first three things that Brian searches for after arriving in the wilderness.
8. What does Derek mean by the word *externalizing*?
9. Explain how the rainstorm affects them.
10. Chapter 8 ends with reference to luck. What do you suppose that means.?

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**Chapters 9 to 15**

1. Why does Brian tell Derek to stay in sight of him?
2. Explain what finding flint has to do with mosquitoes.
3. What do they do because of an old tree?
4. Explain whether Derek and Brian have enough food sources.
5. Explain what they mean by ***lacking tension*** (p. 53).
6. According to the novel, what did the lightning do?
7. Explain why Brian can't use the radio.
8. Explain why Brian became concerned about drinking water.
9. Explain what information about civilization Brian learns from reading the map.
10. Explain what decision Brian makes about Derek.
11. Explain what Brian decides to build.
12. Explain who cut the logs.
13. What does Brian do with his jacket?

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**Chapters 16 to 24**

1. According to the novel, Derek weighs more than Brian. Explain in full sentences why that matters.
2. Explain why Brian leaves a note in the radio case.
3. How well does the raft's launching go? That is, does it float?
4. According to the novel, Brian keeps doing some math. Explain what he is trying to measure.
5. Why is that important?
6. What happens because Brian does not get enough deep sleep?
7. Explain why paddling the raft is like "paddling a brush pile" (p. 105).
8. Explain why Brian says, "All the way. . . . We go all the way together."
9. Explain what the map's contour lines tell Brian about two hills.
10. If Brian had read the map more carefully, what else would the contour lines have told him?