

## **Hatchet**

### **Informational Texts: Real Stories of Survival**

Have you ever felt like you weren't going to survive? When thinking about survival, think about something more serious than going without lunch, taking three tests in one day, shopping with your parents, or having to go to a family Christmas party! Think about life-threatening situations, and then keep reading to learn more about real cases of survival.

#### **Steven Callahan**

In January of 1982, Steven Callahan sailed off the Canary Islands (a group of islands off the northwest coast of Africa). He was in a small boat that he had built. After being on the trip for six days, the boat sank. Callahan survived by floating on a life raft and by rationing the three pounds of food and eight pints of water that he had with him. He also had a spear and a still, a device for cleaning seawater so that he could drink it. Without the still, he probably wouldn't have survived.

Callahan had to deal with being very hungry (and eventually becoming malnourished), being extremely sunburned, and facing repeated shark attacks. He even had to fix his raft after it started to leak. After surviving for 76 days, Callahan was rescued; he had traveled about 1,800 miles floating on the raft. He had two very important survival skills: determination and a positive attitude.

#### **Eric LeMarque**

In March of 2003, Eric LeMarque went out to snowboard in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. He mistakenly went off his course and got completely lost when he tried to look for a fresh path of snow. LeMarque didn't have very many supplies with him because he was expecting to snowboard—not have to fight for his life. He didn't have any food or extra clothing, and the battery on his cell phone was dead. One thing that he did have was an MP3 player.

When he first realized that he was lost, LeMarque tried to build a fire. After his attempts to build a fire failed, he decided to start moving, but he went in the wrong direction...moving farther away from safety. For seven days, he had to survive very cold temperatures, being very hungry, and falling into rushing water. When he was rescued, he was so badly frostbitten that both his feet and most of his legs had to be amputated. He also lost 35 pounds.

LeMarque shared that he thought he was hallucinating and thought of his situation as a video game. He told himself over and over that he couldn't give up. He also shared that he used his MP3 player to create a compass, which helped him to move toward safety. He even used his snowboard as an axe to help him make a shelter. LeMarque survived because he was determined to live.

#### **Joe Simpson and Simon Yates**

Joe Simpson and Simon Yates both wanted to climb up the Siula Grande, a mountain that is 21,000 feet high and located in the Andes in Peru, a country in South America. They both made it to the top just fine, but when they started going down, blizzards came, which made it very difficult for the two men to tell where they were going. They had to work together to get back down the mountain, so Simpson and Yates decided to connect themselves with a rope.



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After going down the mountain for a while, Simpson fell and injured his leg and knee, so much so that he could no longer climb.

The two men then came up with a plan. Yates lowered Simpson and waited for a tug on the rope. This tug meant that Simpson was safe, so Yates could climb down himself. Then another blizzard came, and Yates accidentally lowered Simpson into a gap of the mountain; Simpson was dangling in the air. So he could survive, Yates had to cut the rope. Simpson landed in a crevice and used the rest of the rope to lower himself down the mountain. Yates climbed down by himself. After surviving, Simpson shared that he too would have cut the rope. Both men survived because they used quick thinking and teamwork.

### **Bethany Hamilton**

In November of 2003, Bethany Hamilton, a competitive surfer, went to Makua Beach on Kauai in Hawaii to go surfing. She was 13 years old. While surfing, Bethany was attacked by a 12-15 foot-long tiger shark. The shark bit off Hamilton's left arm. After she was attacked, Hamilton paddled over to her family and friends using her other arm, yelling warnings to other surfers and swimmers as she swam by. Her dad used a surf leash to stop the bleeding from her shoulder. Hamilton was only the fourth person in 20 years who lost a part of their body to a shark attack. She was very strong, and she never cried about what happened to her. She had the survival skill of determination.

### **Yossi Ghinsberg**

Yossi Ghinsberg went with three friends to explore the Tuichi River, located in the Amazon Rainforest in Bolivia, a country in South America. The group then realized that they were lost—and they didn't have enough supplies. They decided that they would go off in pairs. Ghinsberg paired up with his friend Kevin, and they floated down the river on a raft. The other pair of friends set off, but were never seen again. Ghinsberg's raft was destroyed after it ran into a rock, and he was separated from Kevin. Ghinsberg spent 19 days wandering the wilderness. After local men found Kevin, they started to look for Ghinsberg, who was found alive. He had survived hunger, injury, leeches and fire ants, jaguars, wild boars, and thunderstorms. Ghinsberg survived because he used his knowledge, his courage, and his strength.

**Now that you have read these true stories of survival, complete the chart on the next page. Once you have completed the chart, select ONE of the following options:**

- A. Select two survivors, and write a compare/contrast paragraph using the information from their passages.
- B. Make a poster that includes the information about two of the survival stories. Make sure you compare and contrast the information from their passages.
- C. Make a poster that highlights the characteristics that someone needs in order to survive life-threatening situations. Give an example from what you read for each of the characteristics.
- D. Write a speech that includes information about the two survivors that you thought were most interesting. Use information from the passages in your speech.
- E. Select two of the survivors, and write two journal entries for each of the survivors. When writing, pretend that you are actually the survivor. Use information from the passages in your journal entries. Include what you think they were thinking and feeling in their situations.



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**Directions:** Use the details from reading the survival stories to complete the following chart. If the information is not given in the passage, just write "not available" in the box.

Survivor	Date of Event	Setting of Event	What He/She/They Survived	How He/She/They Survived	How Long He/She/They Had to Survive	Survival Characteristics Shown
Steven Callahan						
Eric LeMarque						
Simpson and Yates						
Bethany Hamilton						
Yossi Ghinsberg						

