

My Side
of the
Mountain



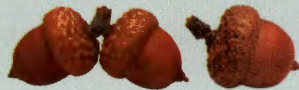
California
Standards

Standards to
Achieve

Reading

- Inferences/
generalizations
(R2.4)

Living on the Land



In *My Side of the Mountain*, a boy chooses to “live on the land” in a forest. His **survival** depends on being able to use what he finds in nature to meet his needs.

Think about what those needs would be.

A person living on the land would need to give a lot of attention to food, clothing, and shelter. How would someone go about **harvesting** food from edible plants in the area? How much work would it be to build up a **cache** of food that would last through the winter? Or to create a **storehouse** where food would not spoil or be eaten by wild animals?

Naturally, a forest dweller would also need a place to live. What kind of shelter would that person **fashion** out of materials found in the woods? What qualities in a shelter would help keep out a **harsh** winter? What would make the warmest clothing?

There is one more need to think about. Even if food, shelter, and clothing were taken care of, a person would need to keep from being lonely. What kind of friendship might someone find in the forest?







MEET THE AUTHOR

Jean Craighead George

Jean Craighead George's family lived in Washington, D.C., and her father often took her and her brothers into the surrounding countryside to teach them about plants and animals. She also learned some of the survival skills that Sam Gribbley uses, including building a lean-to, and making a fishhook and line out of wood and wood fiber. Of her writing, George says, "I write for children. Children are still in love with the wonders of nature, and I am too."



Among over seventy other books dealing with nature, George has extended the story of *My Side of the Mountain* in two sequels: *On the Far Side of the Mountain* and *Frightful's Mountain*.



MEET THE ILLUSTRATOR

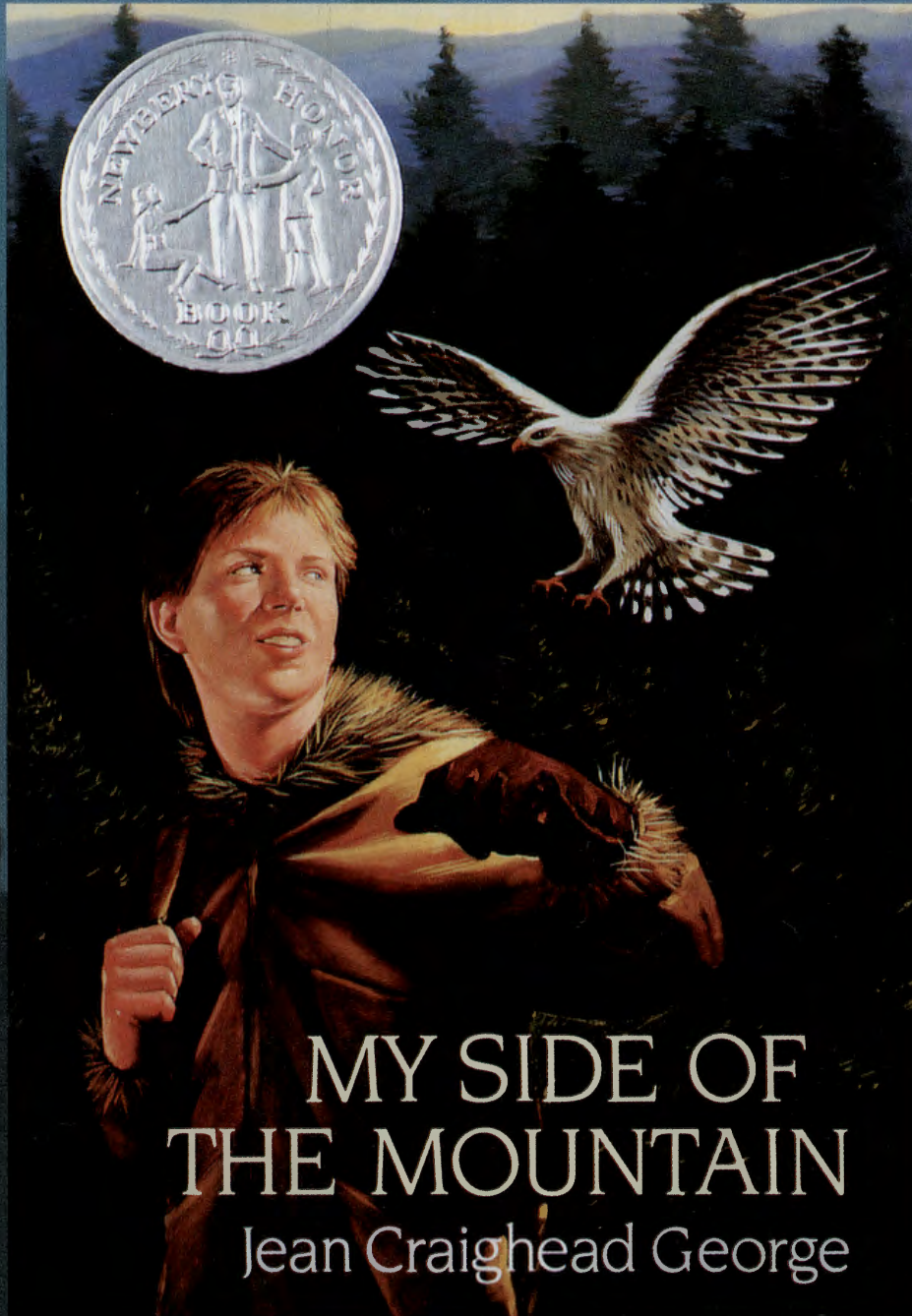
Gary Aagaard

Gary Aagaard grew up in Seattle, Washington. He remembers being energetic as a child and full of curiosity. To illustrate *My Side of the Mountain*, Aagaard traveled to upstate New York, where the story takes place. There he took pictures of the outdoors, using a friend's son as a model for Sam. Aagaard currently lives in New York City.

Internet



Learn more about Jean Craighead George and Gary Aagaard at Education Place. www.eduplace.com/kids

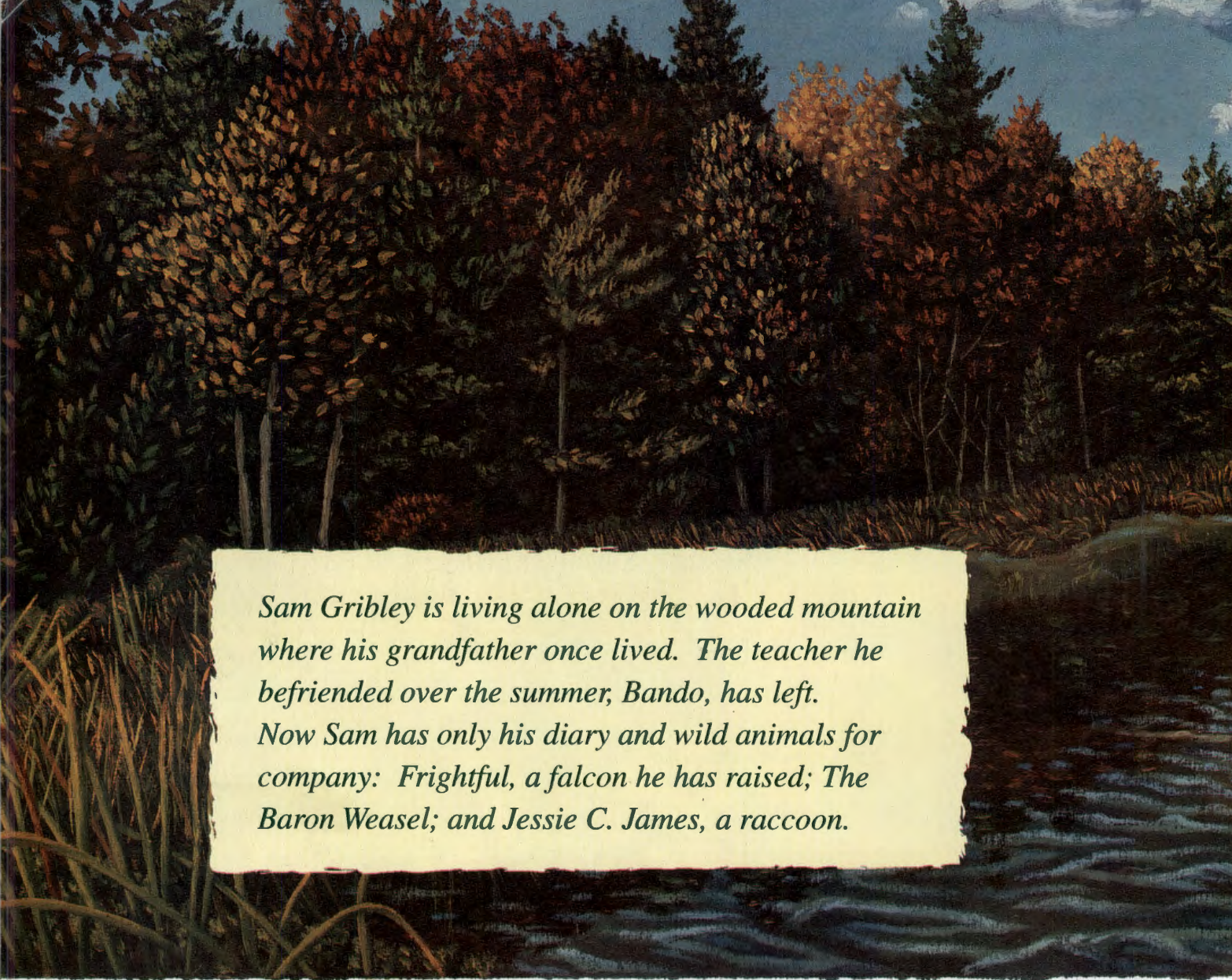


MY SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

Jean Craighead George

Strategy Focus

Sam Gribble is living alone in a mountain forest. As you read, summarize how Sam solves his problems and interacts with animals.



Sam Gribley is living alone on the wooded mountain where his grandfather once lived. The teacher he befriended over the summer, Bando, has left. Now Sam has only his diary and wild animals for company: Frightful, a falcon he has raised; The Baron Weasel; and Jessie C. James, a raccoon.

IN WHICH

The Autumn Provides Food and Loneliness

September blazed a trail into the mountains. First she burned the grasses. The grasses seeded and were harvested by the mice and the winds.

Then she sent the squirrels and chipmunks running boldly through the forest, collecting and hiding nuts.

Then she frosted the aspen leaves and left them sunshine yellow.

Then she gathered the birds together in flocks, and the mountaintop was full of songs and twitterings and flashing wings. The birds were ready to move to the south.



And I, Sam Gribley, felt just wonderful, just wonderful.

I pushed the raft down the stream and gathered arrowleaf bulbs, cattail tubers, bulrush roots, and the nutlike tubers of the sedges.

And then the crop of crickets appeared and Frightful hopped all over the meadow snagging them in her great talons and eating them. I tried them, because I had heard they are good. I think it was another species of cricket that was meant. I think the field cricket would taste excellent if you were starving. I was not starving, so I preferred to listen to them. I abandoned the crickets and went back to the goodness of the earth.

I smoked fish and rabbit, dug wild onions by the pouchful, and raced September for her crop.



“October 15

“Today The Baron Weasel looked moldy. I couldn’t get near enough to see what was the matter with him, but it occurs to me that he might be changing his summer fur for his white winter mantle. If he is, it is an itchy process. He scratches a lot.”

Seeing The Baron changing his mantle for winter awoke the first fears in me. I wrote that note on a little birch bark, curled up on my bed, and shivered.

The snow and the cold and the long lifeless months are ahead, I thought. The wind was blowing hard and cool across the mountain. I lit my candle, took out the rabbit and squirrel hides I had been saving, and began rubbing and kneading them to softness.

The Baron was getting a new suit for winter. I must have one too. Some fur underwear, some mittens, fur-lined socks.

Frightful, who was sitting on the foot post of the bed, yawned, fluffed, and thrust her head into the slate-gray feathers of her back. She slept. I worked for several hours.

I must say here that I was beginning to wonder if I should not go home for the winter and come back again in the spring. Everything in the forest was getting prepared for the harsh months. Jessie Coon James was as fat as a barrel. He came down the tree slowly, his fat falling in a roll over his shoulders. The squirrels were working and storing food. They were building leaf nests. The skunks had burrows and plugged themselves in at dawn with bunches of leaves. No drafts could reach them.

As I thought of the skunks and all the animals preparing themselves against the winter, I realized suddenly that my tree would be as cold as the air if I did not somehow find a way to heat it.

“notes:

“Today I rafted out into the deep pools of the creek to fish. It was a lazy sort of autumn day, the sky clear, the leaves beginning to brighten, the air warm. I stretched out on my back because the fish weren’t biting, and hummed.

“My line jerked and I sat up to pull, but was too late. However, I was not too late to notice that I had drifted into the bank — the very bank where Bando had dug the clay for the jam pots.



“At that moment I knew what I was going to do. I was going to build a fireplace of clay, even fashion a little chimney of clay. It would be small, but enough to warm the tree during the long winter.

“Next day

“I dragged the clay up the mountain to my tree in my second best pair of city pants. I tied the bottoms of the legs, stuffed them full, and as I looked down on my strange cargo, I thought of scarecrows and Halloween. Suddenly I was terribly lonely. The air smelled of leaves and the cool wind from the stream hugged me. The warblers in the trees above me seemed gay and glad about their trip south. I stopped halfway up the mountain and dropped my head. I was lonely and on the verge of tears. Suddenly there was a flash, a pricking sensation on my leg, and I looked down in time to see The Baron leap from my pants to the cover of fern.



“He scared the loneliness right out of me. I ran after him and chased him up the mountain, losing him from time to time in the ferns and crowfeet. We stormed into camp an awful sight, The Baron bouncing and screaming ahead of me, and me dragging that half scarecrow of clay.

“Frightful took one look and flew to the end of her leash. She doesn’t like The Baron, and watches him — well, like a hawk. I don’t like to leave her alone. End notes. Must make fireplace.”

It took three days to get the fireplace worked out so that it didn’t smoke me out of the tree like a bee. It was an enormous problem. In the first place, the chimney sagged because the clay was too heavy to hold itself up, so I had to get some dry grasses to work into it so it could hold its own weight.

I whittled out one of the old knotholes to let the smoke out, and built the chimney down from this. Of course when the clay dried, it pulled away from the tree, and all the smoke poured back in on me.

So I tried sealing the leak with pine pitch, and that worked all right, but then the funnel over the fire bed cracked, and I had to put wooden props under that.

The wooden props burned, and I could see that this wasn’t going to work either; so I went down the mountain to the site of the old Gribley farmhouse and looked around for some iron spikes or some sort of metal.



I took the wooden shovel that I had carved from the board and dug around what I thought must have been the back door or possibly the woodhouse.

I found a hinge, old hand-made nails that would come in handy, and finally, treasure of treasures, the axle of an old wagon. It was much too big. I had no hacksaw to cut it into smaller pieces, and I was not strong enough to heat it and hammer it apart. Besides, I didn't have anything but a small wooden mallet I had made.

I carried my trophies home and sat down before my tree to fix dinner and feed Frightful. The evening was cooling down for a frost. I looked at Frightful's warm feathers. I didn't even have a deer hide for a blanket. I had used the two I had for a door and a pair of pants. I wished that I might grow feathers.

I tossed Frightful off my fist and she flashed through the trees and out over the meadow. She went with a determination strange to her. "She is going to leave," I cried. "I have never seen her fly so wildly." I pushed the smoked fish aside and ran to the meadow. I whistled and whistled and whistled until my mouth was dry and no more whistle came.

I ran onto the big boulder. I could not see her. Wildly I waved the lure. I licked my lips and whistled again. The sun was a cold steely color as it dipped below the mountain. The air was now brisk, and Frightful was gone. I was sure that she had suddenly taken off on the migration; my heart was sore and



pounding. I had enough food, I was sure. Frightful was not absolutely necessary for my survival; but I was now so fond of her. She was more than a bird. I knew I must have her back to talk to and play with if I was going to make it through the winter.

I whistled. Then I heard a cry in the grasses up near the white birches.

In the gathering darkness I saw movement. I think I flew to the spot. And there she was; she had caught herself a bird. I rolled into the grass beside her and clutched her jesses. She didn't intend to leave, but I was going to make sure that she didn't. I grabbed so swiftly that my hand hit a rock and I bruised my knuckles.

The rock was flat and narrow and long; it was the answer to my fireplace. I picked up Frightful in one hand and the stone in the other; and I laughed at the cold steely sun as it slipped out of sight, because I knew I was going to be warm. This flat stone was what I needed to hold up the funnel and finish my fireplace.

And that's what I did with it. I broke it into two pieces, set one on each side under the funnel, lit the fire, closed the flap of the door and listened to the wind bring the first frost to the mountain. I was warm.

Then I noticed something dreadful. Frightful was sitting on the bedpost, her head under her wings. She was toppling. She jerked her head out of her feathers. Her eyes looked glassy. She is sick, I said. I picked her up and stroked her, and we both might have died there if I had not opened the tent flap to get her some water. The cold night air revived her. "Air," I said. "The fire-place used up all the oxygen. I've got to ventilate this place."

We sat out in the cold for a long time because I was more than a little afraid of what our end might have been.

I put out the fire, took the door down and wrapped up in it. Frightful and I slept with the good frost nipping our faces.

"notes:

"I cut out several more knotholes to let air in and out of the tree room. I tried it today. I have Frightful on my fist watching her. It's been about two hours and she hasn't fainted and I haven't gone numb. I can still write and see clearly.

"Test: Frightful's healthy face."

IN WHICH

We All Learn About Halloween

"October 28

"I have been up and down the mountain every day for a week, watching to see if walnuts and hickory nuts are ripe. Today I found the squirrels all over the trees, harvesting them furiously, and so I have decided that ripe or not, I must gather them. It's me or the squirrels.

"I tethered Frightful in the hickory tree while I went to the walnut tree and filled pouches. Frightful protected the hickory nuts. She keeps the squirrels so busy scolding her that they don't have time to take the nuts. They are quite terrified by her. It is a good scheme. I shout and bang the tree and keep them away while I gather.

"I have never seen so many squirrels. They hang from the slender branches, they bounce through the limbs, they seem to come from the whole forest. They must pass messages along to each other — messages that tell what kind of nuts and where the trees are."

A few days later, my storehouse rolling with nuts, I began the race for apples. Entering this race were squirrels, raccoons, and a fat old skunk who looked as if he could eat not another bite. He was ready to sleep his autumn meal off, and I resented him because he did not need my apples. However, I did not toy with him.

I gathered what apples I could, cut some in slices, and dried them on the boulder in the sun. Some I put in the storeroom tree to eat right away. They were a little wormy, but it was wonderful to eat an apple again.

Then one night this was all done, the crop was gathered. I sat down to make a few notes when The Baron came sprinting into sight.

He actually bounced up and licked the edges of my turtle-shell bowl, stormed Frightful, and came to my feet.

"Baron Weasel," I said. "It is nearing Halloween. Are you playing tricks or treats?" I handed him the remains of my turtle soup dinner, and, fascinated, watched him devour it.

"note:

"The Baron chews with his back molars, and chews with a ferocity I have not seen in him before. His eyes gleam, the lips curl back from his white pointed teeth, and he frowns like an angry man. If I move toward him, a rumble starts in his chest that keeps me back. He flashes glances at me. It is indeed strange to be looked in the eye by this fearless wild animal. There is something human about his beady glance. Perhaps because that glance tells me something. It tells me he knows who I am and that he does not want me to come any closer."

The Baron Weasel departed after his feast. Frightful, who was drawn up as skinny as a stick, relaxed and fluffed her feathers, and then I said to her,

“See, he got his treats. No tricks.” Then something occurred to me. I reached inside the door and pulled out my calendar stick. I counted 28, 29, 30, 31.

“Frightful, that old weasel knows. It is Halloween. Let’s have a Halloween party.”

Swiftly I made piles of cracked nuts, smoked rabbit, and crayfish. I even added two of my apples. This food was an invitation to the squirrels, foxes, raccoons, opossums, even the birds that lived around me to come have a party.

When Frightful is tethered to her stump, some of the animals and birds will only come close enough to scream at her. So bird and I went inside the tree, propped open the flap, and waited.

Not much happened that night. I learned that it takes a little time for the woodland messages to get around. But they do. Before the party I had been very careful about leaving food out because I needed every mouthful. I took the precaution of rolling a stone in front of my store tree. The harvest moon rose. Frightful and I went to sleep.

At dawn, we abandoned the party. I left the treats out, however. Since it was a snappy gold-colored day, we went off to get some more rabbit skins to finish my winter underwear.



We had lunch along the creek — stewed mussels and wild potatoes. We didn't get back until dusk because I discovered some wild rice in an ox bow of the stream. There was no more than a handful.

Home that night, everything seemed peaceful enough. A few nuts were gone, to the squirrels, I thought. I baked a fish in leaves, and ate a small, precious amount of wild rice. It was marvelous! As I settled down to scrape the rabbit skins of the day, my neighbor the skunk marched right into the campground and set to work on the smoked rabbit. I made some Halloween notes:

“The moon is coming up behind the aspens. It is as big as a pumpkin and as orange. The winds are cool, the stars are like electric light bulbs. I am just inside the doorway, with my turtle-shell lamp burning so that I can see to write this.

“Something is moving beyond the second hemlock. Frightful is very alert, as if there are things all around us. Halloween was over at midnight last night, but for us it is just beginning. That's how I feel, anyhow, but it just may be my imagination.

“I wish Frightful would stop pulling her feathers in and drawing herself up like a spring. I keep thinking that she feels things.



“Here comes Jessie C. James. He will want the venison.

“He didn’t get the venison. There was a snarl, and a big raccoon I’ve never seen walked past him, growling and looking ferocious. Jessie C. stood motionless — I might say, scared stiff. He held his head at an angle and let the big fellow eat. If Jessie so much as rolled his eyes that old coon would sputter at him.”

It grew dark, and I couldn’t see much. An eerie yelp behind the boulder announced that the red fox of the meadow was nearing. He gave me goose bumps. He stayed just beyond my store tree, weaving back and forth on silent feet. Every now and then he would cry — a wavery owl-like cry. I wrote some more.

“The light from my turtle lamp casts leaping shadows. To the beechnuts has come a small gray animal. I can’t make out what — now, I see it. It’s a flying squirrel. That surprises me, I’ve never seen a flying squirrel around here, but of course I haven’t been up much after sunset.”

When it grew too dark to see, I lit a fire, hoping it would not end the party. It did not, and the more I watched, the more I realized that all these animals were familiar with my camp. A white-footed mouse walked over my woodpile as if it were his.

I put out my candle and fell asleep when the fire turned to coals. Much later I was awakened by screaming. I lifted my head and looked into the moonlit forest. A few guests, still lingering at the party, saw me move, and dashed bashfully into the ground cover. One was big and slender. I thought perhaps a mink. As I slowly came awake, I realized that screaming was coming from behind me. Something was in my house. I jumped up and shouted, and two raccoons skittered under my feet. I reached for my candle, slipped on hundreds of nuts, and fell. When I finally got a light and looked about me, I was dismayed to see what a mess my guests had made of my tree house. They had found the cache of acorns and beechnuts and had tossed them all over my bed and floor. The party was getting rough.



I chased the raccoons into the night and stumbled over a third animal and was struck by a wet stinging spray. It was skunk! I was drenched. As I got used to the indignity and the smell, I saw the raccoons cavort around my fireplace and dodge past me. They were back in my tree before I could stop them.

A bat winged in from the darkness and circled the tallow candle. It was Halloween and the goblins were at work.

Having invited all these neighbors, I was now faced with the problem of getting rid of them. The raccoons were feeling so much at home that they snatched up beechnuts, bits of dried fish and venison and tossed them playfully into the air. They were too full to eat any more, but were having a marvelous time making toys out of my hard-won winter food supply.

I herded the raccoons out of the tree and laced the door. I was breathing "relief" when I turned my head to the left, for I sensed someone watching me. There in the moonlight, his big ears erect on his head, sat the red fox. He was smiling — I know he was. I shouted, "Stop laughing!" and he vanished like a magician's handkerchief.

All this had awakened Frightful, who was flopping in the dark in the tree. I reached in around the deer flap to stroke her back to calmness. She grabbed me so hard I yelled — and the visitors moved to the edge of my camp at my cry.

Smelling to the sky, bleeding in the hand, and robbed of part of my hard-won food, I threw wood on the fire and sent an enormous shaft of light into the night. Then I shouted. The skunk moved farther away. The raccoons galloped off a few feet and galloped back. I snarled at them. They went to the edge of the darkness and stared at me. I had learned something that night from that very raccoon bossing Jessie C. James — to animals, might is right. I was biggest and I was oldest, and I was going to tell them so. I growled and snarled and hissed and snorted. It worked. They understood and moved away. Some looked back and their eyes glowed. The red eyes chilled me. Never had there been a more real Halloween night. The last bat of the season darted in the moonlight. I dove on my bed, and tied the door. There are no more notes about Halloween.

Think About the Selection



1. What does Sam's solution for staying warm through the winter tell you about him?
2. Think about Sam's loneliness on page 655. What are some ways a time of year can affect a person's feelings?
3. On page 665, Sam says that he has never experienced a "more real" Halloween night. What do you think he means?
4. How do you think Sam feels about the wild woodland creatures that live around him? Use details from the story to support your answer.
5. If it were up to you, would you have tried to persuade Sam to leave the wilderness? Why or why not?
6. Do you think you would enjoy a wilderness experience similar to Sam's? Why or why not?
7. **Connecting/Comparing** Compare Sam's fictional woodland adventure with the real-life wilderness experiences of Michio Hoshino and Andreia Martins in this theme. How are they different? How are they alike?



Explaining

Write Directions

A person who relies on food from the forest would need to know what food to eat and how to prepare it. Use information in the selection to write directions for making a wilderness meal. Include choices for a main course, side dish, and dessert.

Tips

- List the ingredients needed for each course of the meal.
- Use a sequence of steps to explain how to gather and prepare the food.



Social Studies

Make a Picture Map

With a partner, take notes about Sam's camp and the trees, animals, and land he describes. Then make a picture map, using small pictures to show the camp and its surroundings. Include a key that explains the pictures you have used.

Bonus Give a presentation in which you compare a picture map to another kind of map, such as a road map or a contour map. Tell in what situation each map would be useful.

Viewing

Update an Illustration

Choose an illustration from the selection. Study it carefully. Then show in a drawing or describe in a paragraph how the scene in that illustration might look hours later, one month later, or one year later.

Tips

- Ask yourself how the illustration would look in a different season.
- If the illustration shows the day, consider how it might look at night — or vice versa.

Internet

Complete a Web Word Find

You've learned a lot of vocabulary words related to Sam's experience living on the land. Try finding those words in a puzzle that can be printed from Education Place. www.eduplace.com/kids

Career Link

Skill: How to Categorize Information

Categorizing organizes ideas by **classifying** items that have something in common.

As you read . . .

- If you come to a group of items or ideas, identify a **category** they have in common. Use **headings** for each category, such as Animal Injuries, or Medical Instruments.
- Divide a broad category into **narrower categories**. For example, the category Animals can be divided into Wild Animals and Pets.

California
Standards

Standards to
Achieve

Reading

- **Understand text features (R2.1)**



Robin Hughes: Wildlife Doctor

Dr. Robin Hughes could give Sam Gribble advice. She formerly worked as wildlife veterinarian at the Virginia Living Museum in Newport News, Virginia.



by Susan Yoder
Ackerman

As I walked into her office, Robin was on the phone. "Yes," she was saying, "hummingbirds need more than sugar water. They need protein. Fruit flies are perfect for them!"

Robin's understanding of small wild birds is no wonder, growing up as she did with the name Robin. While her friends were selling Kool-Aid on hot days, little Robin set up a veterinary stand. She stocked it with her stethoscope, long sticks for splints, and lots of gauze. The neighborhood pets showed up with their sore paws and torn ears.



Sometimes Dr. Hughes's work takes her out of the office and into the woods. After tranquilizing this deer to work on its overgrown hoof, Dr. Hughes (center) administers medicine to wake him up.

As she got older, Robin decided to go to veterinary school to learn all she could about dogs and cats and horses. But she didn't stop there. Pursuing her interest in wild animals, she cared for gazelles at the Kansas City Zoo. She learned to know the white ibises who feed on fiddler crabs on Pumpkin Seed Island in South Carolina. She worried over the growth on a Gila monster's tongue in California's Living Desert.

So, when Robin finally became Dr. Robin Hughes, she wasn't content in private practice treating mostly cats and dogs. She came to the Virginia Living Museum, where she has the care of live-animal exhibits that reflect Virginia's wildlife in its native habitat. And though she uses all the training she's had, sometimes she feels as if she's writing her own medical book. How do you

medicate a sick beaver? Just figure out the dosage for a very large guinea pig! What about an otter? Try what's good for ferrets. A skunk with heart disease? Perhaps the treatment for a small dog would be most appropriate. Robin studies diet, behavior, tooth structure, and anatomy to figure out the best way to treat her patients. Has she ever treated a wild animal she couldn't match to a domestic one?

"A possum!" she said with a laugh. "Possums are clearly in a class of their own! *The Care and Treatment of Possums* is a book nobody has written yet."



Besides nursing raccoons and giving advice on the diet of hummingbirds, what does Robin do in the course of a day? Happily for her, every day is different. As curator of animals and a veterinarian, she may find herself out on a trawler in the York River, using a seine net to find new fish for the aquarium display. She might be rescuing injured waterfowl to bring to the outdoor wetlands aviary. She might travel to a distant wooded lake and release half-grown beavers into the wild. Other days she adjusts the diets for all the animals on the museum grounds.

And then there are the days when Robin really shows her stuff. Such as the day she needed to operate on an eastern diamondback rattlesnake to remove a mass growing under its eye. A fungal infection was causing inflammatory tissue to form into a granuloma. Robin said that snakes in the wild often get abscesses and tumors, but she didn't want any snake under her care to crawl off into a corner to die. So she scrubbed up and got started.

Robin vented anesthetic gas through a small hose in the lid of a sealed aquarium until the snake was asleep. (Since a

sleeping snake doesn't look a whole lot different from a snake that's awake, this was the tricky part.) Then, taking the snake out of the aquarium, she put a tube down its windpipe to control the amount of anesthesia until the procedure was over.

Cutting into the skin so near the venomous fangs was also risky. Just to be safe, Robin placed corks over the fangs during surgery. And, to save herself a lot of trouble, she closed the incision with sutures that would dissolve all by themselves. A rattlesnake might not want to hold still to get its stitches taken out.

Sometimes Robin finds herself running a maternity ward. A couple of newborn baby otters stole the show at the museum for months, and black-crowned night herons hatched their young in the outdoor aviary. One year Robin and everyone else tiptoed around the bald eagle enclosure for thirty-eight days, hoping that the eggs the pair was guarding would hatch. They never did, but Robin hopes that the adult birds, injured by hunters in the wild, will someday produce perfect little bald eagles that can fly wherever they wish.



Then there are the exciting outdoor dramas that take place when the larger animals get vaccinated. The deer, foxes, and otter don't like injections any more than people do, so Robin has to come prepared. Sometimes she uses a dart gun to carry the vaccine; sometimes she'll throw a net around the animal to hold it still. Even so, there can be surprises, such as the time the thirty-pound bobcat leaped onto Robin's back when she turned to get the vaccine ready! She wasn't injured, but the incident made her aware that he was still a wild animal, even though he'd been hand-raised as an orphan. She never turns her back to him now if she has to enter his enclosure.



Bobcat, rattlesnake, hummingbird, raccoon — Dr. Robin is there for them. She also cares about the half million people who visit the Virginia Living Museum each year. Robin wants visitors to walk away with a greater appreciation and concern for Virginia's wildlife.



Career File

Veterinarian

Do you like taking care of animals? If so, consider becoming a veterinarian. As a vet, you'll have a chance to help house pets, wild animals, farm or zoo animals by . . .

- caring for them when they're sick or injured
- making sure they eat healthy diets
- giving them the medicine or vitamins they need
- studying diseases that could affect them

After college, you'll need a degree from a four-year veterinary school. You'll also need to pass a state exam in the state where you want to work. In the meantime, you can learn more about what a veterinarian does by volunteering at a local animal hospital, humane society, zoo, or farm.

✔ Writing an Opinion Essay

You may take a test that asks you to write an essay stating your opinion about a *prompt*, or a particular topic. Read this sample test prompt. Then use the tips when you write an opinion essay.

Write an essay that gives your opinion about why people should or should not keep wild animals as pets.

Tips

- Read the test carefully. Look for key words that tell you what to write about. In this prompt, some key words are **opinion** and **wild animals**.
- Make a chart to help you plan your writing.
- After you finish writing, proof-read your essay.

Here is the planning chart one student made.

Wild animals should not be pets.

Supporting Reasons

- 1. They can be dangerous.*
- 2. happier in their natural habitats*
- 3. not treated properly*

Details

- 1. rabies, other harmful diseases*
- 2. may get angry and attack as pets*
- 3. fed human food, won't know how to get food, may starve*

Read the opinion essay that the same student wrote and the features that make it a good essay.

Wild Animals As Pets

I do not think wild animals should be kept as pets. I think wild animals should be wild. There are many reasons why I think this.

First of all, wild animals can be dangerous. For example, many wild animals have rabies and other diseases. You could get the diseases if you kept the animal as a pet.

Also, wild animals are happier in their habitats. If kept as pets, they could become angry and attack you.

Lastly, most people don't know how to treat wild animals, and they spoil them. Therefore, if the animal goes back into the wild it will have forgotten skills it was born with, like finding or hunting food.

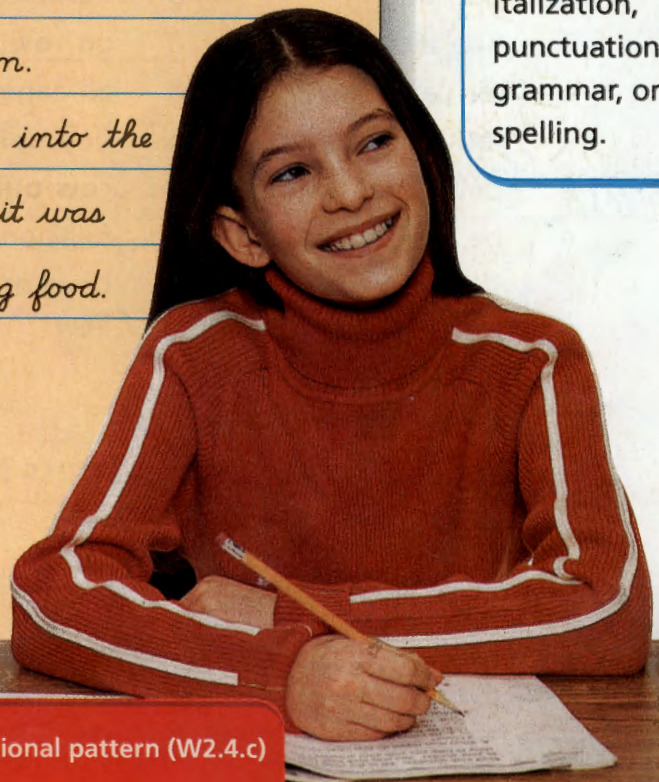
The ending of the essay should sum up the important points.

Each paragraph has a topic sentence that tells the main idea.

The reasons are strong and are supported with details.

The writing sounds like the writer.

There are few mistakes in capitalization, punctuation, grammar, or spelling.



Use organizational pattern (W2.4.c)