

## LITERARY ANALYSIS: SETTING IN NONFICTION

Like all authors of **memoirs**, Gary Paulsen writes about real events of his life. Since these events actually happened to him, Paulsen is able to give specific details about the **setting**. He includes descriptions of

- the location and changing seasons
- his surroundings in the remote wilderness of Minnesota

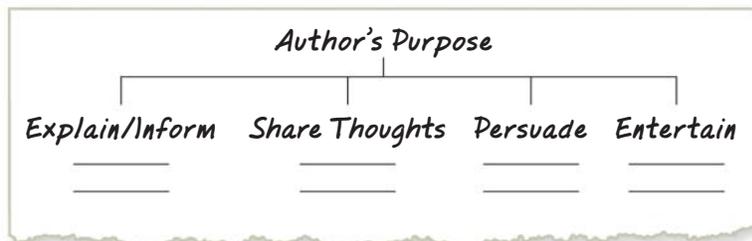
As you read, look for details that show you what it's like to live in the wilderness. Then think about how the setting affects Paulsen's daily life.

## READING SKILL: IDENTIFY AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

A person can have many reasons for writing. For example, a writer might aim to

- explain or provide information about a topic or event
- share thoughts or feelings about an issue or event
- persuade people to think or act in a certain way
- entertain the reader with a moving story

Even when writers have several goals, they often have one main reason for writing. This is called the **author's purpose**. As you read, use a chart to record clues about Paulsen's main purpose for writing his memoir.



## VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Gary Paulsen uses these words to help relate an event that taught him a lesson. For each numbered word or phrase, choose the word from the list that is closest in meaning.

|             |          |             |          |
|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| <b>WORD</b> | coherent | hibernation | scavenge |
| <b>LIST</b> | eject    | novelty     | truce    |

- |              |                   |             |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. throw out | 3. find leftovers | 5. sensible |
| 2. agreement | 4. new thing      | 6. sleep    |

### Into the Woods

For Gary Paulsen, the woods were often an escape from an unhappy home in a small Minnesota town. According to Paulsen, "all the hassles of life were very quickly forgotten" in the woods. His wilderness adventures and love of nature appear in much of his work.



Gary Paulsen  
born 1939

**Another Escape** Paulsen discovered the joy of reading during his teenage years. One very cold night, he ducked into a public library to warm up. The librarian offered him a library card and recommended a book. Paulsen discovered that books, like the woods, provided a way for him to get away from it all, explore new worlds, and learn about himself.

**Back to Nature** In his book *Woodson*, Paulsen describes his life in the woods of northern Minnesota. In this region, people are scarce, but wild animals are plentiful. It is home to timber wolves, white-tailed deer, beavers, and black bears. Paulsen lived there with his wife and son in a cabin with no plumbing or electricity. During this time, Paulsen raised dogs and trained for the Iditarod, the famous trans-Alaska dogsled race.



### MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For more on Gary Paulsen, visit the Literature Center at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).