SIGN OF THE BEAVER

Synopsis

When Matt is left alone in the Maine wilderness, while his father returns to get the rest of his family, anything can happen and sometimes does. First, an unfriendly hunter comes and then takes away his only gun, leaving him with no way to kill his food. Next, a wild animal comes and ruins most of the food he had stored away. His last disaster almost causes his death but instead brings him the friendship of the Indians who have been watching him. They make a deal to help each other, and so the Indian boy named Attean teaches Matt how to survive, while Matt teaches Attean, the Indian boy, how to read. As the Indians get ready to move on, they invite Matt to come with them so he won’t have to be alone. His parents are a long time overdue, and it is a hard decision. He must choose whether to stay and wait for his parents, knowing they might never come, or go with the Indians, never to see his parents again. Matt stays and wins the respect of the Indians, and shortly thereafter his parents do arrive.
SIGN OF THE BEAVER
LESSON 1
Chapters 1 - 5

1. Where is Matt’s cabin?

2. How long will Matt be living in the family cabin alone while his father is gone?

3. What scared Matt the most about the stranger taking his only gun?
   A. His father’s anger at it being gone
   B. Fear of what the stranger might have done to him
   C. Not being able to kill how own food

4. Describe Matt’s first visitor.

5. Explain how you would feel if you were left alone in the wilderness for six weeks.

6. The second visitor to the cabin scattered and wasted most of Matt’s food. If you could only have two foods to live on for a day which two foods would you pick? Why would choose them?
1. What treaty does Saknis make with Matt?

2. Why does Saknis believe it is important for his grandson to learn to read?

3. What does "contempt" mean?

4. Attean takes Matt fishing. Put the rest of the events in the correct order.
   _____ Matt foolishly tries to catch a fish with a sharp stick.
   _____ The two boys cook their fish over the fires.
   _____ Matt starts using his fishing pole but the line breaks.
   _____ Attean caught a fish by stabbing it with a sharp stick.
   _____ Attean carves a new fishhook.

5. Matt begins to have more respect for Attean. Tell one example from the story that shows this.

6. Describe someone you admire and what it is that you admire about them.
1. What is the loud noise Matt mistakes for a gun going off?

2. Matt wishes he could win something from Attean what is it?

3. When the bear was dead, what did Attean talk to the bear about?

4. How does Attean and his tribe feel about the killing of animals?

5. Why is Matt feeling proud of himself as he and Attean part after the killing of the bear.

6. Describe something you do that makes you feel proud of yourself?
1. What activity does Attean invite Matt to?

2. What is troubling Matt when he looks at his notched sticks?
   A. He is running out of firewood.
   B. He doesn’t know how to whittle very well.
   C. His parents are along time over due.

3. Matt sees Attean’s dog in a trap but he realizes that the dog won’t let him help. What does Matt do?

4. Why doesn’t it bother Matt when the Indians at the gathering are laughing about his part in the bear story?

5. Matt had thought the Indians were a dull lot. List two things that happened at the celebration that changed his mind.

6. Why does Matt feel that he is no longer alone?
1. What is the last gift that Attean brings from his grandfather to give to Matt?

2. When Matt’s father and family finally arrive, what do they give as the reason for being so late?

3. As they discussed the ownership of the land, Matt had a suspicion that Attean might be making more sense then he. What did Attean say about the ownership of the land?

4. The Indian tribe is getting ready to go on a great hunt. Why do they invite Matt?

5. Attean has great respect for Matt at the end of the story. What did Matt do to earn the respect?

6. Describe two ways that Matt has changed from the beginning of the story to the time his parents returned.
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ANSWER KEY

LESSON 1
1. Matt’s cabin is in the wilderness of Main. (Maine was still part of the Massachusetts Colony at the time of the story.)
2. Matt will be alone at the cabin for six to seven weeks while his father returns for the rest of the family.
3. C
4. Matt’s first visitor is a man who lives in the wilderness. He is big and has a beard.
5. Answers will vary.
6. Answers will vary.

LESSON 2
1. Saknis and Matt made a treaty that Matt would teach his grandson to read and his grandson would bring food to Matt.
2. Saknis says it is important for his grandson to learn to read so the white man’s treaties will not trick the Indians.
3. To have contempt for someone means to have a feeling of disrespect or to be scornful.
4. The correct order is 2, 5, 3, 1, and 4.
5. Answers will vary.
6. Answers will vary.

LESSON 3
1. A beaver hitting the water with his tail makes such a loud noise that Matt mistakes it for a gun going off.
2. Matt wants to win Atteans’ respect.
3. Attean talked to the dead bear to apologize for killing it.
4. The Indian tribe respects the animals and they only kill when there is a need.
5. Matt feels proud to know that is throwing the rabbit helped save their lives.
6. Answers will vary.
LESSON 4
1. Attean gives Matt an invitation to come to the Indian village for the feast of the killing of the bear.
2. C
3. Matt sees Attean’s dog in the trap and realizes the dog won’t let him help; he goes to the Indian village to get help even though it is far away.
4. Matt doesn’t mind the Indians laughing at his part in the bear story because they are friendly and he feels they are laughing with him.
5. Matt thought the Indians were a dull lot but several things changed his mind at the celebration.
   A) They were laughing at him,
   B) They told jokes,
   C) They were dancing,
   D) They were shouting and having a good time.
6. Answers may vary. Matt no longer feels alone as he has made Indian friends.

LESSON 5
1. The last gift The Saknis gave Matt was a pair of snowshoes.
2. Matt’s family finally arrived and explained they were late because they had been sick with typhus fever and couldn’t travel.
3. Attean is discussing the land which and says it belongs to no one. He wonders how a person can own it.
4. The Indians are going on a great hunt and will not return. They ask Matt to go because there is a chance that his parents had an accident and would not be returning. His parents were already very late.
5. Matt wins Attean’s respect by being willing to stay alone and wait for his parents.
6. Answers will vary.