



Lawn Boy
Gary Paulsen
Henry Holt and Company, LLC
2006

Novel Resource

Gary Paulsen's Homepage:

www.garypaulsen.com

<http://www.randomhouse.com/features/garypaulsen/>

www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-paulsen-gary.asp

Publisher's Website:

<http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/about/>



About the Author

Gary Paulsen was not a great student; he was however, a great reader and adventurer. Paulsen ran away from home when he was 14, traveled with a carnival, worked as a farmer, construction, truck driver, sailor, engineer, editor, and competed in the Alaskan Iditarod. His adventures have influenced his writing. He lives in New Mexico, Alaska and a boat off the pacific with his with, Ruth Wright Paulsen, who works as an illustrator.

Paulsen a safe career as an engineer in California and moved to Minnesota where he lived in the woods. His health forced him to slow down and that is when he focused on writing. He states that he is "totally, viciously, obsessively committed to work."

(www.garypaulsen.com) Paulsen has written over 175 books and 200 plus articles and short stories.

Previous books were named Newberry Honor Books: Hatchet, Dogsong, and The Winter Room — were Newbery Honor Books

Annotation

Gary Paulsen's Lawn Boy is about a twelve year old in upper middle class Minnesota who receives a lawn mower from his grandmother as a birthday present. Lawn Boy

starts mowing a neighbor's yard and progresses to a 15 person crew of workers. Through investments he ends the summer with over \$500,000 dollars, a growing stock portfolio, sponsoring a prize fighter and a rival lawn care business threatening bodily harm.

The book provides some light finance lessons: stock, stockbroker, shares, fees, commissions, competition, employees, benefits, and portfolios. It also illustrates lessons about running a business, supply and demand, and investments.

The book is 88 pages and a quick read. The chapters are named after business principles demonstrated in the text, although the content is easy to read and engaging. There really isn't an overt lesson here. Lawn Boy is the narrator and seems to ride the wave of events that flow from his initial investment in the stock market in a manner that seems beyond his control. Everything else is luck and unrealistic. I could give youth the idea that making money is easy and encourage them to fall prey to scams. It's entertaining but farfetched.

Genre

Humorous Fiction

Point of View

First Person narrative

Theme

Rags to riches

The title is the name of the main character. It describes his work and highlights that he is just a kid. Not giving him a name actually draws more attention to him because there is only one Lawn Boy.

Conflict

Lawn Boy is operating a growing business without his parent's knowledge.

Conflict Resolution

Lawn Boy tells his parents about his business, which doesn't solve his problems, but makes the load lighter to bear.

Setting

Lawn Boy is set in an upper middle class neighborhood in Minnesota in the present day. His family is struggling financially. He can't afford an inner tube for his bicycle.

Interest and Reading Level

According to www.permabound.com the reading level is 4.3 and Interest level is 7-12.

Booktalk

Lawn Boy is a typical teenager looking forward to a summer full of... nothing. His big dilemma is he needs an inner tube for his bike and he doesn't have money. Then his often wacky grandmother gives him a lawn mover for his birthday and the laughs begin. Lawn Boy, however, gets more than he bargained for and earns half a million dollars before the summer is over.

If you have ever thought about starting a business this could become your inspiration, if laughing out loud inspires you. If not, just don't mention your negative opinion to Joey Pow, Lawn Boy's prize winning boxer friend. He doesn't hesitate to forget about words and jump to action to defend his sponsor.

Lawn Boy finds that he has a stockbroker, employees, and a rival business and needs a body guard. When will he tell his parents he needs help?

Lawn Boy is a short book, fun to read out loud and just plain groovy.

Characters

Name	Page first appearing	Relationship to main character	Personality and Physical Traits
Lawn Boy	12	Main character	Lawn Boy is a typical 12 year old, hanging around the house over summer break. He doesn't have the money to buy an inner tube for his bike and his parents are too financially strapped to help. He is quiet and easily led by others.
Mom	2	Mother	Teacher in an experimental school
Dad	2	Father	Inventor Projects go awry often Uses family as guinea pigs
Grandma	3		Lawn Boy says "somewhere inside that brain maybe a screw came loose" (page 4) Wise in a round about way purposeful

Lawn mower	2	Gift for 12 th birthday from Grandmother Used to belong to grandfather	Old, small, two feet wide Steel seat, pedals over the motor Looked like a small bull dozer
Arnold	17	Neighbor who trades stock broker services for lawn mowing services	Short, round Bowl type hair cut Clothes vintage 1970 "looked like someone who flunked clown school" (page 17) Says groovy
Pasqual	24	Does trim an other quiet work in the neighborhood Has friends Lawn boy can hire	Red hair Lawn boy has a good feeling about him
Mowing Crew	32	Mow for Lawn Boy	Up to twelve people
Louis	27	Pasqual calls him his cousin	Heads crew for Lawn Boy
Kenny Halverson	24	Neighbor	Believes that if people were supposed to be up at night God would have given them night vision
Joseph Powdermilk. Jr.	53	Boxer Lawn boy sponsors	Also known as the boxer Joey Pow Big as a mountain Fast, light, moves easily Voice sounds like thunder Hand as big as a ham Gentle touch for Lawn Boy
Rock	54	Rival lawn service owner	

Discussion Questions

Chapter	Page	Anticipation	Post Reading
Forward	1	List three adjectives that you think will describe the 12 year old boy, Lawn Boy.	What type of people so you think Lawn Boy's parents are? What do you think they like to do for fun?
1: The Principles of Economic Expansion	3	What was your best/worst birthday gift? Do you think a lawn mower is an appropriate gift for a 12 year old?	What do you think will happen to Lawn Boys business? What does the title of the chapter mean?

2: The Growth of Capitalism	9	How did you spend your summer days? How many hours a week would you like to work?	Lawn Boy stated the first day was his easiest. What could go wrong Have you ever thought about starting a business? What does the title of the chapter mean?
3: The Law of Increasing Product Demand Versus Flat Production Capacity	13	What product is going to be demanded?	What is your reaction to Arnold's offer? Would you agree to the arrangement? What would your parents say about the relationship Lawn Boy is starting with Arnold. What does the title of the chapter mean?
4: Capital Growth Coupled with the Principles of Production Expansion	21	How much money does Lawn Boy have? How much do you think is enough to earn? How many yards can you mow in a summer?	How much money does Lawn boy have? Compare the work that Lawn Boys does. What are the similarities? Differences? What does the title of the chapter mean? What does the company make that Arnold buys stock in?*
5: Labor Acquisition and Its Effect on Capital Growth	26	At what point should Lawn Boy stop accepting new jobs?	Can you think of any businesses that might have started the way Lawn Boy's did? What is your opinion about the business arrangement with Louis? What does the title of the chapter mean?
6: Economic Expansion Combined with Portfolio Diversification	30	How should Lawn Boy tell his parents about his situation?	How much money does Lawn boy have? What does Lawn Boy do to improve his skills? Do you think Lawn Boy likes his job? What does the title of the chapter mean?
7: Overutilization of labor Compounded by Unpredicted	35	Based on the title, do you think Lawn Boy's business is going to pass or fail?	How much money does Lawn Boy have now? What is rich?

Capital Growth			How much is rich? Is rich good? Bad? What does the title of the chapter mean?
8:Dramatic Economic Expansion: Its causes and Effects	42	What problem do Lawn Boy and Arnold have?	How much money does Lawn boy have? Would you trust Arnold to invest your family's money? What does the title of the chapter mean?
9: Conflict Resolution and Its Effects on Economic Policy	48	What were some of the signs Lawn Boy was in shock? Why did Lawn Boy faint?	How much money does Lawn boy have? What type of friend would Joseph Powdermilk be? Has this scheme gone too far? What does the title of the chapter mean?
10:Force of Arms and Its Application to Business	56	What do you think Joseph Powdermilk will do to Rock and his friends?	How much money does Lawn boy have? Is it okay to intimidate people to get your way? What is Joseph's nickname? What does the title of the chapter mean?
11: Business and the Art of Creative Misrepresentation	62	Would you call the police to resolve the problem with Rock? Should Lawn Boy tell his parents about his trouble with Rock? Would adding the police and parents to the problem make it better or worse? Why?	How much money does Lawn boy have? What does the title of the chapter mean?
12: Team Management n Times of Uncertainty	69	Who is a positive influence on Lawn Boy? Negative influence?	How much money does Lawn boy have? Do you think Lawn Boy will follow through and talk to his parents? What will the consequences be if he does? What will the consequences be if he doesn't?
13: Expertise, Its Utilization and	75	How should Lawn Boy tell his parents about his situation?	Did Lawn Boy's parents react the right way?

Effects on Economy		If you were his parents, how would you react?	Would you have reacted differently? What does the title of the chapter mean?
14: Resource Utilization: Its Causes and Effects	79	List three adjectives that describe each person's reaction to the situation: Mom, Dad, Grandma, Lawn Boy Why do you think Lawn Boy worries so much about telling his parents how much money he is making?*	What parts of the story are believable? When does the story become fantasy? How would it have been different if Lawn Boy's investments were lost? What does the title of the chapter mean?
15: Serendipitous Activity and Its Effects on Capital Quantity	84	How will this story end? State a positive ending. Negative. Is Lawn boy sad he worked the entire summer?*	How much money does Lawn boy have? How did the lawn mover take care of Lawn Boy? What does the title of the chapter mean? Could this really happen? When did the story become a fantasy?

* Suggested questions from <http://www.goodreads.com/user/show/1944371-spanish-springs-library-book-buddies>

Vocabulary

Word	Page	Definition
Experimental	1	Type of school that uses unconventional methods
Economic	3	Related to money
Expansion	3	Growth
Upper Middle Class	4	Description of family income More than average
Oriented	6	Familiar with
Defy	6	against
Tinker	7	Fiddle with, mess around, likes to figure things out
Capitalism	9	Having choices in business
Capacity	13	Amount something can hold, take
Cash Flow	17	Amount of money you have to spend
Stock	19	Shares in a company, if you own stock you own part of the company
Production	19	Making or creating
Supply and Demand	23	If you have more equipment you can do more work
Acquisition	26	Getting something
Portfolio	30	Collection
Diversification	30	Different, varied, assorted
Relative	40	Related, compared
Overutilization	35	Using too much
Compounded	35	Mix, multiply
Commission	45	Payment, fee, cost or expense
Investment	45	Deal, venture, savings
Policy	45	Rule, strategy
Conflict	45	Disagreement, difference
Resolution	45	Solve
Shock	48	Stun, amaze, surprise
Misrepresentation	63	Not telling quite the full truth
Serendipitous	84	Surprise, unexpected
Quantity	84	Amount

Indiana Academic Standards

Lawn Boy does not appear on the DOE Indiana Reading List, although the list is not all inclusive.

Art, and Music standards are not directly related to this novel. Below are standards that could be addressed by Lawn Boy.

Grade Level	Language Arts	Math	Science	Social Studies	Guidance 6-8 th grade
6	1.4 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5 3.6 3.8 3.9		3.11 3.12 3.13	6.20 6.21 6.22 6.23 6.24	2.2 2.7 3.7 3.8 3.15
7	1.3 2.4 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5		1.3	1.21 1.24	
8	1.3 2.7 2.6 2.9 3.2 3.4 3.9 3.7	2.4			

Anticipation Guide

Respond to the following questions before you read the book. After, respond to the questions again.

YES!	NO!	<i>Lawn Boy</i> Gary Paulsen	YES!	NO!
		1. It is good to get presents.		
		2. Kids should confide in their parents.		
		3. All work and no play makes for a dull summer.		
		4. Teenagers can manage money well.		
		5. Teenagers can understand the stock market.		
		6. Boxers have no heart.		

Read Aloud

Selection 1

Chapter 1, Pages 3-4, “My grandmother is the kind of person who always thinks that no matter how bad thing might seem, everything will always come out all right...”

This describes Grandmother’s eccentric behavior and illustrates that she makes sense and good points in the end, however round about the process is.

Selection 2

Chapter 9, Pages 48-49, “When I came to, there was a damp paper towel over my face...” Arnold told Seth how much money he had made and Seth’s reaction is hilarious. Students will laugh and be entertained by the short sentences traded between Arnold and Lawn Boy.

If you like Lawn Boy, you’ll love:

Hatchet, Dogsong, and The Winter Room all by Gary Paulson

The Call of the Wild by Jack London

Sweet Farts by Raymond Bean is funny and the topic will lure many kids in. It is about making the world a better place.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid, any of the series by Jeff Kinney

The Homework Machine by Dan Gutman is an over the top tale about a machine designed to complete homework that gets out of control and takes on a life of its own wrecking the days of it four misfit creators.

How to steal a dog by Barbara O’Conner

Georgina and her family are homeless. Georgina devises a plan to steal a wealthy woman's dog and return it for a reward.

Other books about kids and money as recommended by Common Sense Book Review:

The Shoeshine Girl by Clyde Robert Bulla

The Great Brain by John D. Fitzgerald

Make Four Million Dollars by Next Thursday by Stephen Manes

Fat Fanny, Beanpole Bertha, and the Boys by Barbara Ann Porte

The Toothpaste Millionaire by Jean Merrill

Double Fudge by Judy Blume

Millions by Frank Cottrell Boyce

Lunch Money by Andrew Clements

Framed by Frank Cottrell Boyce

Across the Curriculum Connections

Activity #1 (adapted from <http://www.jniteenstockmarketgame.org>)

Social Studies

6.2.1 Identify the structural features of popular media (newspapers, magazines, online information) and use the features to obtain information.

6.4.10 Stocks and investments

This is an individual research project that would follow up on a previous discussion about basic stock market information.

Assignment: Identify three stocks that interest you. Write a minimum one page summary describing the stocks you choose. Include information about the company, current exchange rates, which market you found it on, why you like it.

Suggested resources:

- Parents
- Friends
- Internet (MSN.com*; CNBC.com; Stockcharts.com)
- Newspapers (Wall Street Journal; Local Newspaper's Business Section)
- Magazines (Business Week)
- Television (Mad Money - CNBC; Bloomberg Television; The Lou Dobbs Report)
- Books
- Build your first stock portfolio and Investing 101

<http://articles.moneycentral.msn.com/Investing/StartInvesting/StartInvesting.asp>

X

- Welcome to Stock Research

<http://moneycentral.msn.com/investor/research/welcome.asp>

- Guided Research' "Research Wizard"

<http://moneycentral.msn.com/investor/research/wizards/SRW.asp>

- "Find Stocks" allows Teens to select from MSN's lists of top rated stocks

<http://moneycentral.msn.com/investor/StockRating/srstopstocksresults.aspx?sc>

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Activity #2

6.4.10 Social Studies

Stocks and investments

6-8.3.6 Guidance

Describe the adolescent need for peer acceptance and how it may affect some students' ability to show kindness and respect for others.

6-8.3.7 Guidance

Describe typical adolescent challenges and successful methods for addressing them.

This is a group activity to practice consensus skills that can be used to accept peers and promote kindness and respect.

The class will follow three stocks for a semester. We must achieve group consensus to choose the stocks. We will practice achieving consensus. This is adapted from Tom Jackson's book, *Activities that Teach*, Publisher's Press, 1993, the activity is M&M Madness.

Teacher fills a jar of M&Ms and counts the number of candies in the jar.

Round 1: Students are asked to individually guess how many M&Ms are in the jar. The teacher responds by saying yes or no. At the end of each round the teacher can give upper and lower limits on the amount.

Round 2: Students should pair up and agree upon a guess. All pairs report their guess. Same teacher response.

Round 3: Students go through the same process in groups of four. At this time and all guesses following the teacher should ask different students in the group to report the group's guess. At this time define consensus and state that if true consensus is achieved everyone will know the guess. Help students problem solve by asking how they can work together. Ask for suggestions to reach an agreement. Let the students choose their methodology.

Round 4: Divide the class in half. Ask both halves to reach consensus.

Round 5: The entire class must reach consensus.

Reveal the number of M&Ms and eat while processing the activity. Suggested questions:

How close were your guesses to the actual amount?

How did you choose subsequent numbers?

Is it more difficult to achieve consensus in a small group? Large group?

What strategies worked? Didn't work?

What was the mood in the groups? Did it change?

How can you relate this activity to showing kindness and respect to others?

Using these skills, the class will reach consensus on three stocks to monitor during the until

Book Activities

Activity 1

Language Arts

6.1.4 Understand unknown words in informational texts by using word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine meaning. (Core Standard)

This is an individual activity that can be adapted to pairs or small groups. If completed in groups the students would benefit from reporting orally to the class.

If reports are given orally the activity also meets Language Arts standard 6.7.6: Support opinions with researched, documented evidence and with visual or media displays that use appropriate technology.

Explain what context is: Surrounding information that allows the reader to figure out the meaning of the text.

Assignment: List each chapter title and define it from the context of the book.

Guide:

Chapter	
Chapter Title	Context
1: The Principles of Economic Expansion	Lawn Boy is going to earn money cutting grass. His neighbor has asked him to mow.
2: The Growth of Capitalism	Capitalism is earning money. Neighbors are approaching Lawn Boy to employ him. He has six more lawns to mow after his first day on the job.
3: The Law of Increasing Product Demand Versus Flat Production Capacity	Lawn boy is at capacity for mowing; he can't accept anymore jobs. He has more requests and the opportunity to make almost \$700 a week. He needs to expand by hiring more people, or he needs to turn

	down job requests.
4: Capital Growth Coupled with the Principles of Production Expansion	Lawn Boy makes more money when he hires Pasqual.
5: Labor Acquisition and Its Effect on Capital Growth	New expenses come with the expanding business. Lawn Boy has to pay Pasqual his share. He also pays Arnold a commission.
6: Economic Expansion Combined with Portfolio Diversification	Lawn Boy needs to hire more people to meet need. His working season is short and he needs to work all he can while he is out of school. As he does more work and earns more money Arnold invests capital in a variety of stocks and other opportunities.
7: Overutilization of labor Compounded by Unpredicted Capital Growth	Lawn Boy needs to consider benefits for his employees to be a conscientious employer. Lawn Boy needs to choose investments that will earn him money and use that money to take care of his employees.
8: Dramatic Economic Expansion: Its causes and Effects	The investments earn a high return. Arnold forgets to sell some stock and it splits and earns even more. It is a happy accident, and a rich one.
9: Conflict Resolution and Its Effects on Economic Policy	Lawn Boy understands what has happened to earn so much money, and he is over the shock. He needs to talk to his parents so the investments can be made in the family name and they can guide him, in addition to Arnold.
10: Force of Arms and Its Application to Business	Lawn Boy is physically threatened by Rock and his investment in Joey pays off. Joey uses his size and strength to intimidate and run Rock and his friends away before they hurt the boss, Lawn Boy.
11: Business and the Art of Creative Misrepresentation	Lawn Boy learns that his ventures in business, although legal, may cause trouble with the police because his parents don't know about it. He cannot get the law's help to ward off Rock.
12: Team Management n Times of Uncertainty	Lawn Boy has a team helping him make decisions and he feels more secure about his position. His parents are sympathetic and willing to help. Rock is still trying to hurt Lawn Boy and his team. Arnold calls Lawn Boy and tells him to go home right away. He knows this means trouble.
13: Expertise, Its Utilization and Effects on Economy	Grandma and parents help Lawn Boy contact Joey to get his help with Rock, who is holding Arnold hostage. Because Lawn Boy is sponsoring Joey, Joey jumps to help him.
14: Resource Utilization: Its Causes and Effects	Lawn Boy uses Joey's strength to physically get rid of Rock and his gang.
15: Serendipitous Activity and Its	Joey wins his fight in seconds; it is a surprise. Again a

Effects on Capital Quantity	stock didn't sell and Lawn Boy gains more money through the glitch.
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Activity #2

6.6.4

Capitalization:

Use correct capitalization.

Underline the words that need to be capitalized in the following selection from Lawn Boy. Number and explain the grammar rule that applies.

it (1) was still raining softly that afternoon as i peddled home from arnold's(2), but the sun was coming out and i(3) _knew we'd be able to work the next day.

i'd (4) told arnold (5) what happened with rock (6). he (7) nodded. "as (8) you become more successful you'll attract more attention. good(9) _ and bad. it's(10) _ a fact of business. it (11) was good that mr. (12) powdermilk (13) showed up. with (14) our unique situation, it might be difficult to call the authorities.

1. Beginning of sentence
2. Proper name
3. Capitalize the pronoun I
4. Capitalize the pronoun I
5. Proper name
6. Proper name
7. Beginning of sentence
8. Capitalize the first word of a quoted sentence.
9. Beginning of sentence
10. Beginning of sentence
11. Proper name
12. Capitalize a person's title when it precedes the name.
13. Capitalize the pronoun I
14. Beginning of sentence

Resources used to prepare this Novel Resource

<http://www.bookfinder.com/author/gary-paulsen/>
<http://search.barnesandnoble.com>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flowchart>
http://www.ehow.com/about_5081911_symbols-used-flowchart.html
www.permabound.com
www.garypaulsen.com
<http://www.randomhouse.com/features/garypaulsen/>
www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-paulsen-gary.asp
<http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/about/>
<http://dc.doe.in.gov/Standards/AcademicStandards>
Activities that Teach, Tom Jackson's Publisher's Press, 1993.
<http://www.injteenstockmarketgame.org>
http://hubpages.com/hub/Grammar_Mishaps__Capitalization_Rules
<http://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/capital.asp>
<http://dc.doe.in.gov/Standards/AcademicStandards/StandardSearch.aspx>
<http://suzyred.com/2008lawn.html>
<http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/professional-development/childlit/paulsen.html>
<http://www.goodreads.com/user/show/1944371-spanish-springs-library-book-buddies>
<http://www.timeforkids.com>