



These middle school writers, inspired by both Gary Paulsen's [Hatchet](#) and the [Ultimate Survivor lesson](#) from the WritingFix website, created these original stories about surviving with an unusual object. As they wrote and revised these pieces, they worked especially hard on their organization and word choice skills. Read each story, then discuss with a partner where you see each writer doing something skillful with both **organization** and **word choice** skills. Be prepared to share your ideas with the whole class.

Survival with a Cherry Chap Stick

by Jacob, seventh grade writer

Last week I was at school, thinking about what every kid thinks about--*What will I do tonight or what's for lunch?*--but I should've been wondering about the most efficient ways to survive on the moon with only a Cherry Chap Stick.

Everything started on a Friday afternoon; the hallways were packed with friends like the stadium during the big game and the lunchroom was loaded with food. There was a raffle that day for something so amazing but so wrong in the long run: a trip to the moon! I couldn't wait to deposit my name in that big brown box, but little did I know that would become the worst mistake of my life. That Saturday, a surprising call from School board appeared on my phone. They simply stated in four words, "You won the contest!"

After my training, I set off the next day for a trip to the moon. When my tour guide, Walter, and I landed, everything was incredible and the craters were exactly what I expected. There were so many things I wanted to observe. I left the shuttle and went to take a glimpse at the amazing features the moon had to offer. As I was walking back to my shuttle, I witnessed the worst thing ever; my ride had left me stranded!

The first thing that came to mind was survival. I had to find the best way to adapt in that environment; I needed to find the best place to study my situation. There was a giant crater that was perfect for my new home, but I hoped and hoped that it wouldn't be for long.

The next step was to find some way to get in touch with my shuttle, but as I reached in my spacesuit, all I found was a Cherry Chap Stick. I didn't know how it would help, but there must be something this Cherry Chap Stick could do. I looked for any food, but all I found was an old moon rover with an odd communicator on the left of the door. I thought it would assist me, but the screen explained to me that I needed a number code to reach certain shuttles.

The feeling of never seeing my family again and dying on the cold surface of the moon was frightening. It took till just now for me to realize this was real. I went back to my shelter and saw a smudge in the dust. As I brushed off the surface, I could make out these numbers, 55443. I sprinted to the old rover and typed in the code, but nothing happened. I saw two wires disconnected and lying on the moon's surface. I couldn't connect the wires because they were frail and tangled.

I reached for my Chap Stick and put a glob on each wire to connect them. I put the cap covering the wires so no harm could come to them. I typed in the number code and heard a light whisper. The sound of a human's voice was amazing. I screamed to him that I was stranded on the moon, but static followed and my signal was gone. I was starving and I couldn't take another moment of this. I smelt my Chap Stick, and I knew I would get sick if I ate it, but it smelt so good! Just having to stick my hand in my shirt and slowly raise it up to my face was. I gobbled down the container and then almost threw up in my helmet. The taste of the Chap Stick left was unbearable.

I took a nap and woke up to a loud roaring sound that was very familiar. A rescue shuttle slowly appeared in the distance. This was amazing! Maybe after the longest three days of my life I would finally go home and eat a peanut butter jelly sandwich. On the side of the shuttle, I saw the numbers, 55443. The shuttle I contacted had heard me! A miracle had come to me, and at that very moment I started to cry tears of joy.

The shuttle picked me up and soon things got simple again. I could go back to eating when I wanted to and sleeping knowing that when I woke up I would be in my bed again. When I got home I realized that anything could happen at any time, but if you try hard, the outcome might amaze you.



The High-Heel Shoe

by Dina, seventh grade writer

Being on the Eiffel Tower for two nights and four days with only a high-heel shoe could make you become traumatized. If you are wondering, I was the one who was stuck on the Eiffel Tower with only a high-heel shoe, which was the object that assisted me in surviving.

To begin with, I was hot air ballooning over the beautiful city of Paris when the balloon randomly popped! I brutally fell out of the basket and was surprised to see that I landed on the Eiffel Tower. The first thing I did was panic; then, I came to my senses and realized that what was happening was uncontrollable. As I fell out of my hot air balloon, I did not notice that I was losing one of my high-heel shoes on the way down. My other shoe was snug on my foot, and little did I know it was going to be my survival tool.



As I began an attempt to climb down the Eiffel Tower, the fact of me being scared of heights was an enormous hindrance. You might be asking the obvious question “Why I was wearing high-heel shoes while hot air ballooning?” Simply put, because my friend Carley bet me \$100 to wear them throughout my journey of Paris. I figured this would be easy as pie, but I guess I was wrong. Wearing *one* high-heel shoe and walking on a skinny pipe is an extremely difficult task, especially when one is terrified of heights. Don’t jump to conclusions; I am not one to always be scared; I mean, I did ride a hot air balloon with high heels on, but you don’t understand the my phobia.

When I finally grasped the enormity of the situation of escaping from the Eiffel Tower, I began making a plan on how I could return back to the safe ground. I ended up spending a night up there, in an elevator which was unable to work.

In the morning, as soon as I woke up, my stomach was growling like a bear. I had never been so hungry in my entire life; it felt as if I hadn’t eaten for a week’s time. On top of the Eiffel Tower, food was not exceedingly plentiful, and I was beginning to get nervous. I saw a few birds flying around, but thought nothing of them until I remembered back at home my grandfather shot birds and ate them all the time. Although he cooked them, I was sure I could eat a bird some kind of way. On the cross pipe in front of me, there was a normal-sized bird. I had to think of a way to kill this creature, to it and eat this for food.

All of a sudden, my ankle rolled because of the pointy heel on my shoe. I quickly took my one shoe off and snuck up on the bird, which had its head down and was nibbling on some type of food. He continued to not see me, so I kept sneaking, which was easier than I thought. When I was close enough, I stabbed the bird with my heel, and he died instantly. I did not enjoy doing this at all because I love animals, but I was starving, and this action was extremely necessary. Now that I had the bird, I was baffled to how I could actually eat this. With no fire, cooking a bird was practically impossible; but then, I found my hot air balloon engine hanging on by a thread to one of the pipes on the Eiffel Tower. I climbed to the area where the engine was, and I grabbed the engine, bringing it back to the elevator, which I now called my camp. I pulled the crank, and fire immediately shot out. I was practically hysterical because I was just so thankful that the engine still worked. I took off my top shirt to ignite a fire, and this worked! I took hold of the bird and placed him above the fire. Once I thought the bird was cooked, I tried this divine specimen, which after my first bite, I devoured.

Nearly five minutes after I turned my engine off and settled in with my fire still alive, rain began to fall onto the Earth. Thankfully, I was in the elevator, so the rain was unable to wet me. A thirst came over me, which was a terrible thirst, and I saw my shoe just sitting there on the floor of the elevator. I rapidly gripped the shoe and ran out onto the pipes of the Eiffel Tower. Being scared of heights, I could not really stand straight with the wind blowing, but I finally accumulated enough balance to fill the shoe with water, and climbed back into the elevator. I drank the water immediately and went out for more, which was even more difficult than the first time. After catching the water and drinking again, I settled in the elevator until the rain stopped.

Two hours passed before the rain completely came to a halt, which thrilled me. My fire was of no use to me anymore because the flames were gone, and at the exact moment, I heard a helicopter near the tower. I sprinted onto the pipes once again, waving my arms fanatically to receive the driver’s attention. Unfortunately, my plan did not help out in this situation, and I became depressed because of this.

Another night was spent in the elevator, and I was beginning to contemplate if anyone was going to rescue me. When I woke up the next morning, my eye caught sight of a human being connected to numerous ropes. I assumed what I was seeing was a mirage, but gratefully, my so-called mirage was real! I yelled at the man, saying, “Hey! I need help!”

He turned his head and looked at me, and my looks showed him what I had been through for the past few days. He said, “I’m coming, I’m coming.”

I was gratified to know he would help me, and he was only about five feet away from me, so I leaped into his arms, which broke the ropes of the contraption he was on. We plunged toward the ground when our ropes caught a hook on the Eiffel Tower. We then swung into an open area, which was only about ten feet from the ground, and I was still terrified. The first thought that came to my mind was to jump, so this was exactly what I did, and this worked! I was on the safe ground again, away from all the conflicts I had faced during my adventure on the Eiffel Tower with only one high-heel shoe.

The Henry Marsh Collection

by Steven, seventh grade writer

He felt blood but he was not bleeding; he was hungry but yet he has food; he feels pain but all his wounds are healed. Now he, Henry Marsh, is within the arctic, scared, lost, and alone. How will he survive?

In the beginning, Henry was visiting his uncle who studies wildlife activity in their natural habitats. Henry was interested by this, so he packed his bags and was on his way by dog sled until he saw that baby seal that was hurt. Whatever the animal was had left bite marks.

Henry jumped off to help, not knowing that his ride was leaving. After realizing this, he started walking. Halfway to the tent, Henry heard something. Something large and was close. Before knowing what the animal was, a moose trampled him from behind. The moose was relentless; the beating didn’t stop until Henry started to play dead. He felt cuts and broken bones; the pain was unbearable. The moose left, but not without making his point heard.



The pain was coursing through Henry's body until he felt something in his pocket. His favorite mirror was destroyed, but this gave him an idea for both protection and starting a fire. This broken mirror was his only tool, and the only way to survive in the arctic was with this tool. Henry couldn't move from all the pain. His body felt like he was being stabbed by nails everywhere. He was cold, scared, and vulnerable to any predators if they decided to attack. Henry began to cry. He was just falling apart in his mind, but he knew crying wouldn't help him. He was going on. Henry could stand, but not walk. He remembered a survival show where someone had made arrows out of ice. Henry thought if they could do this with ice, then he could make arrows from pieces of mirror.

Out of nowhere Henry heard something. He was scared the sound was another moose. He looked, but at night everything was hard to see anything. The sound had been his stomach, so his fear stopped. He slowly fell asleep.

Henry could now crawl, so he needed to look for a shelter or a place to make a fire. Suddenly, he saw a small patch of dry grass. Henry had an idea. He angled the sun's reflection onto the mirror to make fire. Time went by, and two hours later, his fire began. The fire was small but warm, so warm. He was still hungry, and he found a berry bush near the fire. He couldn't believe the luck he was getting; he didn't know this, but his luck was about to change in the worst of ways. When he ran up to the berry bush, the killer of the arctic stood on two feet and began roaring to the top of her lungs.

The *roar* had come from an enormous grizzly bear that stood as tall as the roof of his school back home, and this bear was about to attack. Henry had hardly survived a moose attack. How was he going to survive this? Henry couldn't run or hide. He would have no choice but to fight. He took out his crude mirror "knife" and was ready. The first attack came, and the war started. Cutting and biting, gnawing and stabbing, the war became gruesome and only one would be left standing. From the early afternoon to about four in the morning, the battle went on until the bear had fallen. Henry had cuts and bite marks all over his body, but he was victorious. The battle was hard fought, and he now had food other than berries.

A week passed, and Henry had bear meat, shelter, and a fire. He was almost in the lap of luxury, but the weather was getting colder than usual. Winter was coming, and he would not survive with such a small fire. Henry would have to find civilization soon, or he would die. Henry took out his knife and stared at himself for a few minutes. You would think he was being silent, but Henry was speaking a silent oath to himself that if he would not reach society by tomorrow night, would slit his wrist to stop his loneliness and suffering.

He walked for hours on the first day, but nothing came to his rescue until the second night had almost come. The time to find safety was now or never. Henry took out the crude knife and was about to cut himself when he heard something. Not a moose, or a bear, but what could the sound be? Maybe the sound was in his mind. The sound of, of, of... THE DOGS! The sled that left him returned with his uncle driving. Excitement spread across his face when he saw the lead dog, Bolto. Henry sprinted forward to see if this was true. His uncle stopped the dog team and hugged Henry for what felt like hours. He had survived in one of the harshest elements known to man.

Henry was finally going home!

What survival story are you inspired to write? What object will help you survive? How will you ensure your story is organized and uses strong word choice?