

## **My Side of the Mountain**

### **Teacher Key**

#### **Author's Preface**

If you ran away from home, tell what you would pack, where you would go, and how you would survive on your own.

Explain why the author thinks it is better to run away to the woods than the city.

#### **Chapter 1: I Hole Up in a Snowstorm pp. 3-9**

1. Draw the treehouse described on page 3.
2. Why is Sam living in a treehouse in the dead of winter? (ran away from home)
3. Who is The Baron and why is he holed up? (weasel, because of snowstorm)
4. Why was the boy scared that he might never get out of his treehouse? (snowstorm)
5. Who is Frightful and how did the boy train it? (falcon)
6. Why didn't the boy go back to his New York apartment when the snowstorm hit? (hated the apartment with 11 people in it)

#### **Chapter 2: I Get Started on This Adventure pp. 9-20**

1. List the supplies the boy brought with him from New York to the Catskill Mountains.
2. If you were going to run away to the mountains, what would you put in your backpack and why?
3. Why does everyone laugh at the boy when he tells them that he's running away from home? (Because child threatens to run away)
4. How did the boy use the New York Public Library to prepare himself for his trip? (read a survival book)
5. Describe how the boy caught five nice trout. (whittled hook, attached string, and grub bait)
6. Why did the boy crawl into his hemlock tent hungry, cold, and miserable when he just caught five fish? (couldn't start a fire)
7. How did Sam Gribble finally learn how to make a fire? (man in cabin showed him)

#### **Chapter 3: I Find Gribble's Farm pp. 20-24**

1. How does Sam find out about the Gribble farm? (library)
2. Why did Sam's father say he should tell someone at Delhi about the farm?(because Sam's father might want to visit him)
3. Why didn't Sam mail the letter to Bill? (he didn't know Bill's last name)
4. How did Sam feel about cooking catfish and sleeping on his grandfather's land?(independent)

#### **Chapter 4: I Find Many Useful Plants pp. 25-28**

1. Why were so many birds in the trees? (warbler migration)
2. When Sam couldn't catch fish, what did he eat? (fresh-water mussels)
3. Make a map of the Gribble Farm (Locate the trees, foundation of the house, marsh, boulder)

#### **Chapter 5: The Old, Old Tree pp. 28-35**

1. How does Sam plan to use the old, old tree? (home)
2. Why didn't Sam put his clothes in a backpack? (wore them)
3. How did following the crow pay off for Sam? (found its eggs)
4. How did Sam apply his learning about Indians making canoes with fire to help him solve his tree problem? (burnt out the tree)
5. How did his book learning: Hemlocks usually grow around mountain streams and springs help Sam? (found the hemlock's stream)

#### **Chapter 6 I Meet One of My Kind and Have a Terrible Time Getting Away pp. 35-40**

1. Why was Sam chopping an ash tree into 19" lengths? (bed)
2. What got the raccoon all excited? (human)
3. Why did the old lady want Sam's help? (pick strawberries)
4. Why did Sam want the duck hawk (peregrine falcon)? (train it)

#### **Chapter 7 The King's Provider pp. 41-46**

1. How did Miss Turner at the library help Sam? (books and haircut)
2. Why did Sam set up camp near the cliffs? (find falcon's nest)
3. Why did Sam climb the sheer cliff? (get falcon chick)
4. Why was the female falcon attacking Sam? (had her chick)
5. Why did Sam name the falcon chick Frightful? (terrible time getting her)

#### **Chapter 8 What I Did About the First Man Who Was After Me pp. 46-50**

1. What did Sam feed Frightful? (rabbit entrails)
2. Why did Sam think the forester had come to Gribley Farm? (fire prevention)

#### **Chapter 9 I Learn to Season My Food pp. 50-58**

1. Design a model of a box trap using simple materials (shoebox, string, stick, clay) for the trap, hinge, bait.
2. Why was the weasel furious at Sam? (Sam caught it in his trap)
3. Who is the author describing when she says, Down he climbed, as stately as royalty...He sank beneath the leaves like a fish beneath water? (weasel)
4. Use the words like and as to tell about an animal you know.
5. Why does Sam want a deer? (door)
6. Design a model of Sam's bed from page 54 using toothpicks and string.
7. Why do you think the forester left the Gribley Farm? (found no one)

#### **Chapter 10 How a Door Came to Me pp. 54-58**

1. What is the best way to preserve food? (smoke it)
2. Why did the man come into the forest with a gun? (pouch deer)
3. What was the prize Sam got from the man? (deer)
4. Who was making the pip, pop, pop, noises? (earthworms)

#### **Chapter 11 Frightful Learns Her ABC's pp. 58-68**

1. How did Sam solve the problem of tanning the deer hide? (soaked it in tree stump)
2. Draw a picture of what Sam did with the deer hide once it was tanned. (door)
3. How did Sam use the deer bones to catch frogs? (made spears out of them)
4. How did Sam plan to replace his worn out pants and sweater? (deer skin pants)
5. Why did the Baron like Sam even though he wouldn't eat Sam's food? (lonely)
6. Divide a sheet of paper into four sections. Then draw and write how Sam trained Frightful.
7. How did Sam avoid the threat of people in summer? (hide in tree house)
8. Why did Harold and Grace run out of the woods? (Baron)
9. Make a rack for smoking fish and meat shown on p. 65 (toothpicks and string).
10. Design a pants pattern for yourself the same way that Sam made his pants.
11. How did Sam know that Frightful was finally trained? (caught sparrow)

#### **Chapter 12 I Find a Real Live Man pp. 68-85**

1. How did Sam start his summer days? (swimming)
2. How was Jessie the raccoon useful to Sam? (dug mussels)
3. What beverages did Sam make to drink during the summer? (teas)
4. What alarmed Frightful so that she dug into Sam's shoulder? (siren)
5. When Sam put two and two together what did he decide about the man? (criminal)

6. Why did the stranger say that he must be dreaming? (because Sam was living like 18th century man)
7. Look up Thoreau in an encyclopedia. Then explain why the man wanted to call Sam Thoreau.
8. Why do you think Sam called the man Bando? (short for bandit)
9. Who does Bando say he really is and what does he really do? (English teacher)
10. What did Bando want to do with the 10 pounds of sugar? (make jam)
11. Use clay to shape jars that could hold Brando and Sam's jam.
12. How did Bando and Sam make slide willow whistles.
13. What does Sam mean when he says, I had the feeling we were all back together again? (his animal friends hid for 10 days while Brando stayed with Sam)

### **Chapter 13 The Autumn Provides Food and Loneliness pp. 85-93**

1. What does the author mean when she writes, September blazed a trail into the mountains? (burns grasses, sent squirrels and chipmunks harvesting, frosted aspen leaves, flocked birds, and crooped crickets)
2. How did Sam know it was time to make clothes for winter? (weasel's coat)
3. Make a clay model of how Sam solved his problem of heating his tree house during the winter.
4. Why do scarecrows and Halloween make Sam feel terribly lonely? (missed N.Y)
5. What made Frightful sick in the tree house? (no ventilation, no oxygen)

### **Chapter 14 We All Learn About Halloween pp. 93-101**

1. Why must Sam harvest the walnuts and hickory nuts whether they were ripe or not? (because the squirrels would get them)
2. Who else entered the race to gather apples? (squirrels, raccoon, skunk)
3. Why does Sam say that Baron knows it is Halloween? (eating his treats, turtle soup)
4. Who came to Sam's Halloween party? (squirrels, raccoon, bats, mouse, fox)
5. Who or what is Sam describing in his notes on pages 97 to 100?

big as a pumpkin and as orange( moon)\_\_\_\_\_

like electric light bulbs (stars)\_\_\_\_\_

drawing herself up like a spring (Frightful)\_\_\_\_\_

weaving back and forth on silent feet (red fox)\_\_\_\_\_

walked over my woodpile as if it were his (white-footed mouse) \_\_\_\_\_

vanished like a magician's handkerchief (red fox)\_\_\_\_\_

6. How did Sam get rid of his guests? (yelled and chased them)

### **Chapter 15 I Find Out What to Do with Hunters pp. 101-107**

1. What was the moral to the Halloween party? (don't invite animals)
2. How did Sam plan to hide from deer hunters? (hole up)
3. Why didn't Sam make it to the library?(deer hunter treed him)
4. Why did Sam wait until after dark to get the deer and his jacket? (safer)
5. Why didn't Sam smoke the venison? (venison froze)
6. What does Sam mean when he says, Hunters are excellent friends when used correctly? (stold three deer from them)
7. Draw the design of Sam's jacket and pants on graph paper.

### **Chapter 16 Trouble Begins pp. 107-112**

1. How did Sam get a haircut? (penknife)
2. Why did the young man say, Well, if it isn't Daniel Boone! when he saw Sam? (Sam looked like a mountain man)
3. Why did Sam say he wore leather-skinned clothes? (He'd rip city clothes in a week)

4. Why did the young man guess Sam was from New York? (his accent)
5. What did Sam say he was doing on the Gribbley Farm? (research)
6. Why do you think Sam went to town on Sunday when the library was closed? (meet a friend).
7. How does Sam know that it is winter? (animals gone)
8. What has Sam forgotten to do to prepare for winter? (firewood)

**Chapter 17 I Pile Up Wood and Go on with Winter pp. 112-115**

1. Why didn't Sam become lonely during the long winter? (too exciting)
2. How did Sam compare the people of Third Avenue to chickadees? (chattered, and shopped like each other)

Compare the teachers at CES to animals on a farm.

3. How does Sam plan to celebrate Christmas? (with Bando)
4. How did Sam act when he saw Bando? (hugged him)
5. What did Bando have to show Sam? (newspaper articles)
6. How are the newspaper stories about Sam exaggerated? (wild, crazy boy)
7. How did Sam know Bando liked his present? (wore it)
8. How did Sam react to the voice that shouted, I know you are there'? (Dad)
9. Why wasn't Sam's father upset with him? (proud of him)
10. Why was Sam's mother worried about him? (his diet)
11. How was it a glorious feast? (venison feast with all the trimmings)
12. What does Sam's dad mean when he says, I toil from sunup to sundown, and never have I lived so well? (Sam's doing fine on his own)
13. How did Bando say that he would help keep people away from Sam? (write false newspaper report)
14. Write how you would feel if you weren't going to see your mother or father for a long time.

**Chapter 18 I Have a Good Look at Winter and Find Spring in the Snow pp. 131-148**

1. Tell how winter became serious for Sam in the Catskills.
2. Use tagboard strips to design snowshoes for yourself, just as Sam did on p. 132.
3. How did Sam know that a blizzard was coming? (watched wind and smelled air)
4. Why did Sam consider the nuthatch a good barometer? (indicator of night time) Look up barometer in a dictionary and compare the nuthatch to it.
5. Why does Sam say, there is no such thing as a still winter night? (animals active)
6. Why don't birds' feet freeze in winter? (shift from one foot to the other)
7. Why was it special to Sam to have a Great Horned Owl at the Gribbley Farm? (owls need a lot of wilderness space)
8. Why couldn't the mouse get into Sam's house or Sam get out of his house? (ice storms)
9. Why did Sam laugh at Frightful when she left the tree house? (slipped on trees)
10. What was the explosions Sam heard in the woods during the icestorm? (tree snapping)
11. Why didn't Sam need to worry about the Baron during the icestorm? (ate dead)
12. Why did Sam suspect he was feeling tired and got a nose bleed? (vitamins)
13. When did his tiredness go away? (vitamin C from the rabbit liver)
14. How did Sam help the deer survive the winter? (cut limbs from trees)
15. How did Sam know that spring was coming? (grasses and owl eggs)

**Chapter 19 The Spring in the Winter and the Beginning of My Story's End pp. 148-160**

1. What happened after the author said, the owl broken the spell of winter? (signs of spring appeared)
2. Why had Matt Spell come to the Catskills? (find the Wild Boy)

3. Why did Matt say to Sam, My whole circulatory system thanks you?? (Sam fed him a rabbit Frightful caught)
4. What story did Sam tell Matt about the Wild Boy? (a made up story about a cave boy)
5. Why did Sam beg Matt with the words, No, Matt, no? (Matt wrote Sam was the Wild Boy)
6. What is the deal that Matt made with Sam? (if Matt spends spring vacation, April 12, with Sam he won't tell)
7. Why was the raccoon waiting for him at his tree house? (invaded the tree house)
8. Explain the forum in Matt's head that discussed what to do about Matt Spell.  
Tell me about a private conversation you have with yourself.
9. Why did Matt say that he liked Frightful better when she didn't talk in his head? (Frightful said that Matt wanted to be caught)

### **Chapter 20 I Cooperate with the Ending pp. 161-172**

1. Why was Aaron sitting on the edge of a cliff? (humming, wandered off from Passover)
2. Why did Sam sing for Aaron?(Aaron was a song writer; Sam sang the animals' songs)
3. How did Sam know that Matt must be coming soon? (because Aaron told him it was Passover, close to Easter or April 14)
4. How does Matt react to Sam's life in the tree house? (joyful)
5. What does Matt tell Sam about the outside world? (troubles, murders, sports news)
6. How did Sam and Matt spend the week together? (hunting and gathering)
  7. What did making a guest house mean? (Sam was building a city in the woods)
8. Why would photographers be coming to the Catskills? (Matt told them about Sam)
9. Who was Mr. Jacket and how did they become friends? (Tom Sidler played with Sam)
10. Why does Sam want Bando to bring him a shirt and blue jeans on his next visit? (Sam will go back to the city)

### **Chapter 21 The City Comes to Me pp. 172-177**

1. How does the author describe June? (bursting out all over)
2. Why does Sam run to the voice who says, I know you are there?(father)
3. Who else came Dad to the Gribley Farm? (Sam's family)
4. Why is Sam's whole family at the Gribley Farm? (moved to the farm)
5. How did Sam's argument with his father end? (Father will build a proper house)

After reading:

1. Tell why you think a story like this could or could not happen?
2. Compare My Side of the Mountain to another survival story such as Island of the Blue Dolphins or Hatchet .

## **My Side of the Mountain**

### **Student Guide**

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Explain why the author thinks it is better to run away to the woods than the city.

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2. Why is this boy living in a treehouse in the dead of winter?
3. Who is The Baron and why is he holed up?
4. Why was the boy scared that he might never get out of his treehouse?

5. Who is Frightful and how did the boy train it?
6. Why didn't the boy go back to his New York apartment when the snowstorm hit?

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1. List the supplies the boy brought with him from New York to the Catskill Mountains.
2. If you were going to run away to the mountains, what would you put in your backpack and why?
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2. What got the raccoon all excited?
3. Why did the old lady want Sam's help? (Make the lady a basket out of clay.)
4. Why did Sam want the duck hawk (peregrine falcon)?

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1. How did Miss Turner at the library help Sam?
2. Why did Sam set up camp near the cliffs?
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5. Why did Sam name the falcon chick Frightful?

### **Chapter 8 What I Did About the First Man Who Was After Me pp. 46-50**

1. What did Sam feed Frightful?
2. Design a model of a rabbit snare using inexpensive materials (e.g., string, clay).
3. Why did Sam think the forester had come to Gribble Farm?

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6. How did Sam get rid of his guests?

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