

# CURRICULUM GUIDE

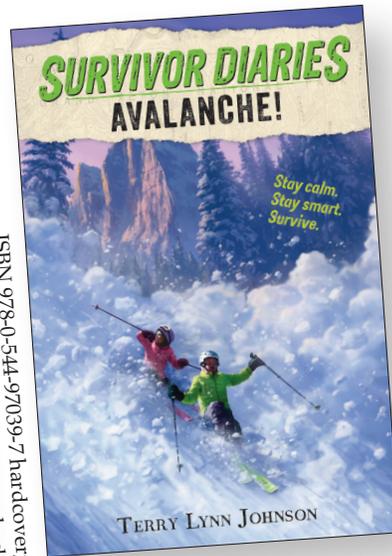
## **SURVIVOR DIARIES**

BY TERRY LYNN JOHNSON

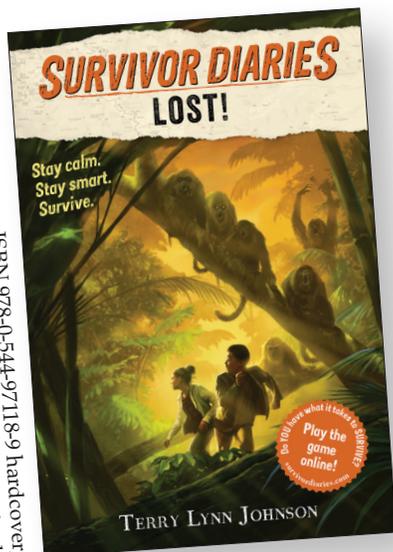
A high-stakes adventure series by the real-life survival expert and author Terry Lynn Johnson!



ISBN 978-0-544-97010-6 hardcover;  
ISBN 978-1-328-51905-4 paperback



ISBN 978-0-544-97039-7 hardcover;  
ISBN 978-1-328-51906-1 paperback



ISBN 978-0-544-97118-9 hardcover;  
ISBN 978-1-328-51907-8 paperback



ISBN 978-0-544-97098-4 hardcover;  
ISBN 978-1-328-52929-9 paperback

**Stay calm.  
Stay smart.  
Survive.**

*Featuring survival tips from official agencies—  
U.S. Coast Guard,  
National Avalanche Center,  
Canadian Red Cross,  
and New Mexico Search  
and Rescue Council!*

**K**IDS ARE TESTED to the extreme in Terry Lynn Johnson's heart-pounding adventure series. It will take all of their grit and knowledge to survive. Packed with real survival expertise and tips, the books in the Survivor Diaries series will make readers better prepared should disaster strike.



Houghton Mifflin Harcourt  
Books for Young Readers

Play the **Will You Survive?** game at [survivordiaries.com](http://survivordiaries.com)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

All discussion questions are aligned with [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1](#) unless otherwise noted.



- ☀ The story begins with Travis being interviewed by a reporter about how Travis survived the capsizing of his whale-watching boat. What do you think would be important survival tips for Travis to share about being thrown overboard?
- ☀ Travis's mom forces him to wear an immersion suit before they set off whale watching. Why is Travis's mom so protective of him?
- ☀ Who is Marina? What does Marina wear that shows she knows about marine safety?
- ☀ Unexpectedly, the whale-watching boat capsizes. What are some of Travis's thoughts as he finds himself in the cold, choppy ocean?
- ☀ What is the first safety lesson Marina teaches Travis after the two find themselves drifting away from the life raft and feeling the effects of the cold water?
- ☀ What does Marina share with Travis about how many minutes people have to react and save themselves in frigid water?
- ☀ How does the piece of wood floating in the ocean help Marina and Travis reach land?
- ☀ What is a selkie? How does a seal provide comfort to Travis as he and Marina battle the waves?
- ☀ Marina suffers an injury to her wrist during the ordeal on the boat. How does Travis provide first aid for Marina and her injured wrist once the two reach the island?
- ☀ Getting and staying warm is important for Marina and Travis to survive. What steps does Travis take to try to start a fire to warm him and Marina?
- ☀ The morning after Marina and Travis camp out on the island, they awake with two new problems: hunger and thirst. How do the two find water and food?
- ☀ Why was the appearance of eagles key to the rescue of Travis and Marina?
- ☀ In this story, not only did Travis have to deal with the dangers of falling overboard, but he also had to face other fears. What events in the story challenged Travis to confront his fears? How did he respond to these challenges?

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3](#)

## ACTIVITIES

- ☀ Create a map of the island where Marina and Travis are stranded after their ordeal at sea. Reread the description of what the children found on the island and draw these as part of your map. Include a key that describes what each feature on your map represents.  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.7](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.7](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.7](#)
- ☀ Travis is delighted to find a wide variety of sea life on his whale-watching trip, including dolphins, orcas, and humpback whales. Later, he and Marina encounter a harbor seal. Select one of the animals Travis spotted on his trip and research your chosen animal to discover what the animal looks like, what it eats, how it is adapted to living in the sea, and how it takes care of its young. Write a paragraph presenting all of the facts about your animal.  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2](#)
- ☀ Pretend that you are a newspaper reporter covering the story about two children swept overboard during a whale-watching trip. Write a factual article that describes what happened to Travis and Marina, what they went through, and how they survived. Remember to include a headline for your article. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2](#)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# COLD-WATER SURVIVAL QUIZ

Travis and Marina must navigate the freezing ocean water and survive alone in the wilderness on a tiny island until help arrives.

Do *you* have what it takes to survive? Take the quiz and find out!



## WHICH SEVEN OF THE FOLLOWING ARE U.S. COAST GUARD-APPROVED COLD-WATER SURVIVAL TIPS?

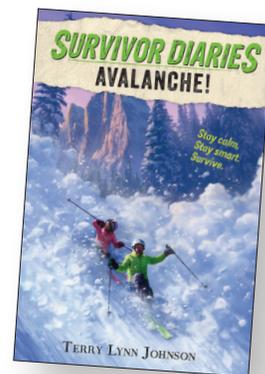
1. Raise your arms out of the water and wave them around.
2. Get to a survival craft—a boat, a raft, or anything floating.
3. Swim as fast as you can to stay warm.
4. Stay calm and hold your knees to your chest and clasp your arms around your calves to preserve body heat.
5. Minimize your time in the water.
6. Strip off your clothes so they don't weigh you down in the water.
7. If you're in a group, separate so there's a greater chance you'll be spotted.
8. Stay in one place. Don't try to swim.
9. Huddle with others to preserve body heat.
10. Float on your back so you can scan the sky for rescue planes or helicopters.
11. Keep your clothes on.
12. Save your energy.



Answers: 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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- \* Chapter 2 starts two months earlier than the events in chapter 1. What is the setting of chapter 2? [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.7](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.7](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.7](#)
- \* The twins explore more of the mountain before meeting their parents. What inspires them to deviate from the plan? What does it mean to “skin up” the face to the untouched snow?
- \* Ashley hears an “ominous sound” as she goes across the open area between trees. What does the sound mean for the two young skiers?
- \* Ryan and Ashley had safety training from their ski club at home. When the avalanche happens, how does Ash use what she learned to survive the disaster when it first occurs?
- \* What tool does Ash use to save Ryan? Why does she have to work so quickly?
- \* After rescuing Ryan, Ash discovers that her brother has at least one major injury. What happened to Ryan during the disaster and how do Ryan’s injuries make the twins’ survival efforts even harder?
- \* Wintertime in the mountains can be dangerously cold. How does Ash try to provide warmth for herself and her brother?
- \* Ashley and Ryan make good use of things found in nature in order to survive. How do they use branches and snow to stay alive on the mountain?
- \* The twins have to deal with the snow, the cold, and their injuries. On top of those challenges, they also face wild animals. What do the twins do when their paths cross with a wolverine and a bear?
- \* An avalanche is powerful enough to carry away everything in its path. How do Ashley and Ryan make use of the broken avalanche warning sign?
- \* The reporter who interviews Ash is impressed with how she and her brother survived the avalanche. What is the message in this tale of survival?  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2](#)
- \* Throughout the story, Ash remarks about how she feels less than her twin brother and about how she wants to make her dad proud. How do you think the twins’ dad’s feelings about his children changed over the course of the story?  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3](#)

## ACTIVITIES

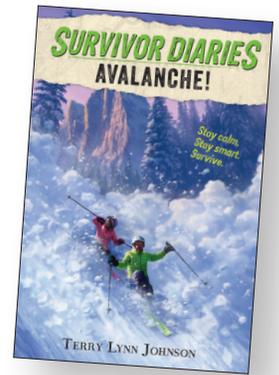
- \* The twins struggle to survive in the snow and brutal cold on the mountain. Humans are not naturally adapted to life in very cold temperatures. In comparison, wolverines are ideally suited to mountain life and are fierce and fearless. Look for information in the story about wolverines and their special adaptations for living in the cold and snow of the mountains. Write an informative essay about wolverines. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2](#)
- \* The contents of the twins’ backpacks were essential to their survival. Read the appendix to the story and think about story events related to what a prepared skier would need to stay safe. Make a list of the key items to pack and write a reason why each item would be important to include. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1](#)
- \* Work with a partner to come up with a good title for each of the twelve chapters in *Avalanche!* Remember, a title should make the reader want to read more, and also hint to story events in the chapter. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1](#)



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# ARE YOU AVY SAVVY?

Ashley and Ryan were able to survive an avalanche because they were prepared for the unexpected. Test your knowledge about avalanche conditions and preparation by taking this quiz.



## WHICH ANSWER BEST COMPLETES EACH SENTENCE?

1. Avalanches generally occur on slopes steeper than \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. 25° B. 35° C. 45°
2. One sign of unstable snow is \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. shooting cracks B. animal tracks C. snow drifts
3. One common avalanche trigger is \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. burrowing animals B. airplanes flying overhead C. people
4. Avalanche probes—long, collapsible poles—are most useful for \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. searching for someone buried in snow  
B. measuring snow depth  
C. fighting off bears
5. One of the most essential tools for backcountry skiers to carry with them is \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. a pair of snowshoes B. a shovel C. a charged cell phone
6. When venturing into the backcountry, it's most important to \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. bring a buddy  
B. wear sunscreen  
C. eat breakfast before you go

Answers: 1. b; 2. A; 3. C; 4. A; 5. B; 6. A

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

All discussion questions are aligned with [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1](#)



- ▶ The reporter interviewing Carter about his time lost in the Costa Rican rainforest wants to know what drew Carter and Anna into the jungle. What does Carter cite as the reason he and Anna ventured down the trail? What is the legend surrounding what the two kids were looking to find?
- ▶ Why have Carter and his family come to Costa Rica? What is the family most hoping to see while they are in the rainforest?
- ▶ Anna discovers a tool early in their hike to the waterfall. What does she find? How does this tool help the kids survive in the rainforest?
- ▶ What caused Anna and Carter to panic, leave the trail to the waterfall, and head into the jungle? Why does Carter tell Anna, “Never run in the jungle!”?
- ▶ As the kids realize that they are lost, Carter remembers the concept of S.T.O.P. What does S.T.O.P. stand for?
- ▶ Through Carter’s ordeal with an injury, swarms of mosquitoes, and pouring rain, he reveals a truth about himself to Anna. What is the history of Carter’s personal struggle? How does he deal with it?
- ▶ Though they are surrounded by water on the land and from the sky, both kids are suffering from dehydration. What are some of the steps Carter and Anna take to secure water for themselves while they are lost in the jungle?
- ▶ How does Carter plan on using one of the lenses from his binoculars?
- ▶ Why is the discovery of the bamboo plant a stroke of good luck for Anna and Carter? How does the bamboo help the kids escape the jungle?
- ▶ Anna shares her father’s advice with Carter: “Everything you’ve ever wanted is on the other side of fear.” How does this message speak to Carter’s experience while lost in the jungle?
- ▶ How did following the stream, even with its treacherous rapids, help Anna and Carter discover a way home?
- ▶ Carter managed to salvage one thing from his emergency kit: a garbage bag. How did the garbage bag come in handy as Anna and Carter tried to find their way out of the rainforest?
- ▶ Why do you think that Carter no longer had panic attacks after his ordeal in the rainforest? What specific events while he was lost in the jungle might have helped Carter overcome his anxiety?

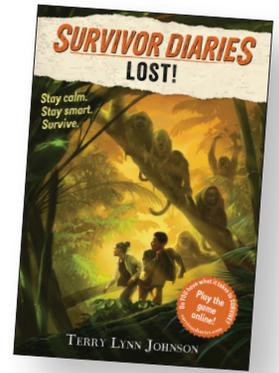
## ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Carter and his parents are avid birdwatchers and are excited to see the resplendent quetzal in Costa Rica. Research this beautiful tropical bird and the legends that surround it, and write a short report on the quetzal.  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2](#)
- ▶ Carter’s emergency kit is stolen by a monkey before he and Anna can make use of it. Reread the contents of Carter’s kit on pages 22–23. Make a list of the items and note how each could have been used by Anna and Carter in the jungle.  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1](#)
- ▶ Use a Venn diagram to compare Anna and Carter. What makes them different from one another? What traits do they share?  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3](#); [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3](#)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# SURVIVAL KIT ESSENTIALS

Carter carried a survival kit with him into the rainforest, but a monkey snatched it! Do you know what components are essential in a wilderness survival kit? Take the quiz and find out!



## WHICH TEN OF THE FOLLOWING ARE CANADIAN RED CROSS-APPROVED COMPONENTS OF A WILDERNESS SURVIVAL KIT?

1. Knife

9. Small hammer

2. Radio

10. Cell phone

3. First-aid kit

11. Whistle

4. Dry socks and a wool beanie

12. Shelter-making material

5. Sun protection

13. Compass and map

6. Rain jacket

14. Bug repellent

7. Fire-making supplies

15. Flashlight

8. Food and water



Answers: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

All discussion questions are aligned with **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1**; **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1**; **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1**; **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1**



- ☀ The story begins with a reporter interviewing Jen about her time in the Chihuahuan Desert. What information is revealed about Jen’s character during the beginning of her interview with the reporter?
- ☀ Why are Jen and her fellow sixth-grade classmates headed in a van to the desert? Who does Jen miss having on the trip? Why is Jen unhappy that Martin is on the trip with her?
- ☀ Soon after riding their bikes into the desert, Jen sees a wall of dirt rising high in the air. What is Jen witnessing and how does it affect her and Martin?
- ☀ One of the first issues that Jen and Martin have to contend with is their lack of water. Jen spots a windmill in the distance. What happens once they are able to reach it?
- ☀ The kids make two discoveries near the windmill: a cholla cactus and a Clovis point. How does each discovery affect Jen and Martin?
- ☀ As night descends, the desert comes alive with all sorts of creatures—some friendly and some not. What animals are the kids most concerned about as they try to light a fire?
- ☀ Jen and Martin become quite resourceful as they find ways to use what little the desert has to offer them. What does Jen create from a wood stalk and the Clovis point? How does her creation help her survive in the desert?
- ☀ In the van, Martin had been intensely focused on a book about deserts in New Mexico. Jen had been reading the book over his shoulder and picked up some important desert survival tips. What does Jen discover about Martin and his book? How does her discovery about Martin change their friendship?
- ☀ Jen’s earbuds and a staple from the geocache paper provide important supplies. How does Martin use them to help the kids locate where they are?
- ☀ What positive and negative things happened to Jen and Martin as a result of getting lost and then rescued in the Chihuahuan Desert?

## ACTIVITIES

- ☀ The Chihuahuan Desert is home to 130 different kinds of mammals, 500 types of bird species, and 110 kinds of freshwater fish. Choose an animal that lives in this desert and research it. Look for facts about adaptations that help it survive in this environment. Write an informative report about an animal that calls the Chihuahuan Desert home.  
**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2**; **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2**; **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2**; **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2**
- ☀ Jen and Martin are geocachers. They use a GPS or coordinates to find spots in nature where treasures are hidden. As a class, design a geocaching adventure for another class at school. Select several spots on campus where “treasures” can be hidden. Create a map with coordinates that students will have to read in order to locate the treasure. Each spot on the adventure should have the coordinates for the next mystery location. Place trinkets at each location and watch as another class solves the coordinates to find the hidden treasures. **CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.5.G.A.1**; **CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.5.G.A.2**
- ☀ Martin turns a staple and a magnet from an earbud into a compass when he and Jen are lost in the desert. Gather a sewing needle, a magnet, a bowl of water, and a cork to make your own compass. Rub the needle in one direction across the magnet 30–40 times to magnetize it. Insert the magnetized needle horizontally into the cork. Place the cork near the center of the bowl of water. Watch as the compass spins and finally settles to point north. **Next Generation Science Standard 3-PS2-3**



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# WILDERNESS TRAVEL PLAN



Prior to any adventure in the wilderness, take the time to write down a comprehensive plan and leave it with a reliable person who can notify the state police or other authority in the event of a suspected emergency.

## MY TRAVEL PLAN

Destination: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure time and date: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected return time and date: \_\_\_\_\_

Types of activities planned: \_\_\_\_\_

Supplies brought: \_\_\_\_\_

Clothing and footwear brought: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and descriptions of everyone in our party: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle description, including license plate number: \_\_\_\_\_

Planned parking location: \_\_\_\_\_

Any medical or physical issues and medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone numbers for everyone in our party: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

