

Dear Future ATOMS Students,

Congratulations! Your hard work has paid off and you have been accepted into Wilby High School's ATOMS Program. I look forward to working with you all in the next school year. To begin our learning experience, you will have to complete some readings and assignments this summer. The two books you will be *required* to read this summer are:

- Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte
- Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer

You must purchase these novels yourself or check them out at the library. Barnes and Nobles has these novels in stock. It is your responsibility to make sure you obtain the novels and complete all subsequent assignments. For each novel you will be required to complete corresponding assignments. The assignments for each are delineated below.

For Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte, you are required to answer 4 CAPT (Connecticut Academic Performance Test) questions. You must type out each response to the question in 12 Font, Times New Roman, one-inch margins, double spaced. Each response *must* be one page long, a page for each question. Please answer the question thoughtfully and completely and provide textual evidence (support) to back up your thoughts.

1. What are your thoughts and questions about the story? You might reflect upon the characters, their problems, the title, or other ideas about the story.
2. How does the main character change from the beginning of the story to the end? What do you think causes this change?
3. What does this story say about people in general? In what ways does it remind you of people you have known or experience you have had? You may also write about stories or books you have read, movies, works of art, or television programs you have seen. Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.
4. How successful was the author in creating a good piece of literature? Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

For Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer, you will be required to complete the assignments on the following page. Please complete ALL assignments, as I will be looking at and grading them when you return. Be prepared to discuss the novels at length in the beginning of the year. If you have any questions- please contact me. I check my email daily and that is the best way to get in touch with me. My email is slabonte@waterbury.k12.ct.us. Good Luck and see you in the fall!

Sincerely,

Mrs. LaBonte

English Teacher

Introducing Key Concepts

Directions: We know about characters from their actions, their thoughts, what they say, their appearance, and what others say about them. This book explores a character, Chris McCandless, and the actions he takes. Before reading about him, complete this prereading activity. Read the scenarios below and use specific words to describe the character in the scenario. In groups compare your lists, and turn in your finalized list of descriptive words to the teacher.

Mary was from the Valley. She used the word “like” in front of most of her adjectives when she spoke and talked quite a bit. On her 16th birthday she expected to get a car. It was a given. Her friends thought she would get a pink Mazzarati, but she was sure her parents would buy her the candy-apple red Alpha Romeo. The day of her birthday came and as she peered out her bedroom window, she noticed a new car in the driveway, but it was yellow—surely not hers. She thought it may have been the new cleaning woman’s. She did not see any other car in the long driveway. She ran down to get a closer look. It was a new canary-colored convertible Volkswagon bug. On the front driver’s side seat was a birthday note to her. She burst into tears and ran into the house.

Words to describe **Mary**: _____

Vandana had a comfortable life. Not unlike her friends, Vandana had gone to school and done well and soon was to attend the university. She had received several scholarships and her parents had planned to pay the rest for her education. Vandana hoped to help people in her future career, but hadn’t quite decided in which field she wanted to do this. She decided to take a year off before attending college. Her parents refused her this. She worked hard the summer before she was to go to college, and made enough money for a one way ticket to India. She had been interested in the life of Buddha and wanted to learn more about him. Leaving a note for her parents, she headed off to India, in hopes of discovering a spiritual and centered path for herself.

Words to describe **Vandana**: _____

Fred did not understand why he had trouble finding a job after college. He knew he was brighter than his fellow graduates and certainly more popular. When he heard about a counselor position at a camp for delinquent teens, he applied, and was not surprised he got the job. He moved to the woods to live on site. He was trained and became counselor to 10 boys. Fred was interested in taking them out on the river in canoes. Without lessons in canoe safety, they got into boats. Two boys paddled quickly and within an hour were out of sight. One canoe capsized, and the boys swam to shore, in another boat, one boy, terrified of the water, screamed and cried. Confused and dazed, Fred paddled away to find the missing boys, leaving the rest of the group where they were.

Word to describe **Fred**: _____

Saul managed the Seven Eleven near his house. Even though he had graduated from high school several years earlier, his parents allowed him to live at home with them. He paid his parents \$100.00 monthly to help contribute the house. Other than his parents and the small kitty that made his home behind the store and who got milk and food from Saul each morning, Saul did not spend much time with others. He preferred to read and listen to music in his room or at a park.

Words to describe **Saul**: _____

Emory was very popular and made friends easily. People were drawn to his honest nature and his free spirit. It was odd when two of his classmates saw drawings he had made to build bombs in his math notebook. It was even odder when he took off one day without a word to his teachers or friends. His parents notified the police. When they did a search of his room, they found two small guns and threatening notes he had written to a former girlfriend a year earlier.

Words to describe **Emory**: _____

Getting Ready to Read

Into the Wild is a non-fiction, full-length text, by Jon Krakauer (published in 1996). It was based on an article he wrote in *Outside Magazine* about Christopher McCandless, a young college graduate who went off to Alaska and died in the woods. Krakauer's article resulted in a huge amount of mail to the magazine, and so he decided to write a book about this interesting character. He's a young, idealistic guy who forms a life philosophy based on his experience and his reading in college. His idealism, ironically, led to his death by starvation. He makes choices that seem foolish as we look at them now--something we all do. But McCandless genuinely loved the outdoors and wanted to live in the world without all of the trappings of money and his middle-class upbringing. *Into the Wild* is in a way a mystery story. We're unsure as to why he rejects his family, why he's so angry with them, and why he chooses to head for Alaska.

Quickwrite

Choose one of the following topics and write a short response:

- Think about your experience hiking, backpacking, and/or existing in the wild. What are the benefits of any one of these activities?
- Think about some alternative plans you might have to beginning college immediately after high school. What might you do? Why would you do it, and how long do you see yourself in this activity?
- Think about an experience you have had when you were alone and made some misjudgments that could have led to disaster but didn't (it doesn't have to be in the outdoors). What miscalculations did you make and how did you avert disaster?

Surveying the Text

Take a look at the number of chapters in the text.

- Read a few chapter titles.
- Read a few of the short epigraphs that come before a chapter begins (an epigraph is a relevant quotation at the beginning of a book or a chapter, etc.).
- Look at the length of the book.
- Look at any maps and photographs.
- Identify the author and publication date.
- What other works has Krakauer written? Do you know of them? Read them?

Author's Note:

Most skip these few pages that begin a book, but this note by Krakauer is particularly interesting and will guide your reading of his book.

- Read the three-page "Author's Note."
- What might have McCandless's motives have been for his behavior (para. 3)?
- How difficult would it be to invent a new life?
- In paragraph 4, Krakauer introduces the themes of the book. Discuss these.
- In paragraph 5, Krakauer warns us that he will not be an impartial biographer. What does this mean? Are all biographers impartial? What might we then expect from him?
- In the last paragraph, Krakauer introduces the complexity of Chris McCandless. Note the four questions that you should keep in mind as you read the text:
 1. Should we admire McCandless for his courage and noble ideas?
 2. Was he a reckless idiot?
 3. Was he crazy?
 4. Was he an arrogant and stupid narcissist?
 5. Idealistic, impetuous?

Making Predictions and Asking Questions

Find an issue of *Outside Magazine* (google) and write a one-page report describing it, its audience, what sorts of articles it publishes, etc.

- Why do you think that Krakauer wrote this particular book?
- Who do you think is the intended audience for this book?

Introducing Key Vocabulary

You will keep a concept dictionary as you read *Into the Wild*. Each page in the dictionary you keep will focus on one concept. You will gather words from the readings that seem to fit under the concept. For example, you will have one page for raw weather conditions. Words that would appear on that page would be *harsh, raw, grim, austere, stringent, and severe*. You will also want to include antonyms such as *sonorous*.

A page in the dictionary might contain the following items under the key concept heading:

- Synonyms (page numbers cited)
- Antonyms (page numbers cited)
- Meanings of the words in students' own words
- Drawings of the word written
- Plus or minus marks (positive or negative), depending upon the word's connotation
- Other words sharing the same root or derivation if the meaning is related.

The following vocabulary is contained in the "author's note." Where would they go in your concept dictionaries?

- Where is Emory University? What kind of a university is it?

- Transcendent
- Alaska taiga
- Peregrinations
- Impartial biographer
- Dispassionate
- Authorial presence
- Oblique light
- Enigma
- Emulating
- Moral rigor
- Shards Fulminated
- Narcissist

Reading

- Looking Closely at Language
- Rereading the Text
- Analyzing Stylistic Choices
- Considering the Structure of the Text

First Reading

Because you will be given directed tasks as you read through *Into the Wild*, you may be required to flip back and forth through this guide. For example, you might read Chapters 1-2, practice some reading strategy, skip to the section on vocabulary for those chapters, skip on to the section that gives you strategies for rereading, etc.

Quick Writes (5 minutes):

After you finish a chapter, jot down what you think the chapter's main focus was and also what the author was trying to accomplish in that chapter.

Other questions:

- What are the issues the author is discussing?
- What does the author want us to believe?

Reading chapters 1-2: The Beginning and the End

Note the epigraphs that begin each of these chapters. One is by a friend of Chris McCandless and the other is by both McCandless and then a quotation by Jack London from *White Fang*. In a notebook, keep track of the literary quotations that Krakauer uses in his epigraphs.

Note all of the maps that begin the text.

What is your assessment of Chris McCandless so far? Keep notes as you read, ask questions of the text, and write down your reactions.

Reading chapter 3: Home

Jot down your thoughts on the following questions:

- What was Westerberg like? What sort of character did he have?
- What was McCandless like? What kind of character did he have? Would you have liked to know him?

Reading chapter 4-7: The Journey

Study the map that begins Chapter 4 and refer to it as you follow McCandless's journey.

Jot down answers to the following as you read these chapters:

- In your notebook, list the people that McCandless meets along the way.
- What was it about McCandless's personality that made an impression on people?
- Note Alex's journal. Why do you think he avoids the first person when he talks about himself (he doesn't use "I")?
- What's the purpose of Chapter 4?
- Characterize Ronald Franz. What kind of a human being was he? Did he have your sympathy? Why? Why not?
- What more did you learn about Alex's relationship with his father? Do you think his anger was justified? Why? Why not?

Reading chapters 8-10: The Outcasts

- What is the function of these chapters? What is their relationship to the rest of the text?
- Why did Krakauer interrupt the McCandless story with chapters 8 and 9?
- Were you surprised that McCandless left trails so that the authorities could find out who he was?
- What's in a name? Does it matter that we have the name we were given by our parents? How do names matter? Does your name fit you? If not, what name would you choose and why?

Reading Chapters 11-13: Family History

These three key chapters give background information that will help you piece together the mystery of McCandless. Chapter 11 fills in his personal past; chapter 12 fills in his family past; chapter 13 chronicles Chris's family's grief.

Jot down the surprises (if any) that you encountered as you read?

- What was Chris like as a child, a teen, an adult? Were there indications as to what he would become?
- Do you think you are essentially the same person you were as a child? How have you changed?

Reading Chapters 14-15: Krakauer Interjects

- Why does Krakauer talk about himself in these two chapters?
- Do you like his interjections?
- What is your reaction to his description of his own climbing experience?
- How is Krakauer's life related to McCandless?
- John Menlove Edwards said that climbing was a "psycho-neurotic tendency." Do you think that is so? Always?
- Do you think that Edwards defines McCandless? How is he psycho-neurotic?

Reading Chapters 16-18: Into the Alaskan Wild

Go back to the “author’s notes,” and jot down your thoughts on the questions that Krakauer asks at that point:

- Was McCandless crazy?
- Was he just ignorant?
- Did he have a death wish?
- Investigate further the plants that Chris ate (wild sweet peas and wild potatoes). Were they toxic?

Reading the Epilogue: Grief

- What was your initial sense of McCandless’s mental condition compared to what you think now? Have you changed your mind?
- What was your reaction to the parents as they visited the bus?

Introducing Key Vocabulary

Since the book is full length there are many new words to learn. You learn most of the words you know from hearing them or reading them. Here are some clues to help you learn new words as you are reading:

1. Notice what comes before and after the word for clues, as well as the parts of the word itself you may already know.
2. Link your prior knowledge with what you are reading—make connections to the word or subject.
3. Make predictions about the word’s meaning.
4. Use references to find more about the word.
5. Make connections to a key concept and if relevant, place the new word and its meaning in the concept dictionary.