

TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LitPlan Teacher Pack

for

INTO THE WILD

based on the book by

Jon Krakauer

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jon Krakauer

Born in 1954, Jon Krakauer grew up in Corvallis, Oregon, where his father introduced him to mountaineering as an eight-year-old. After graduating from Hampshire College in 1976, Krakauer divided his time between Colorado, Alaska, and the Pacific Northwest, supporting himself primarily as a carpenter and commercial salmon fisherman. For the next two decades, however, his life revolved around climbing mountains.

In 1996 Krakauer climbed Mt. Everest, but a storm took the lives of four of the five teammates who reached the summit with him. An analysis of the calamity he wrote for *Outside* magazine received a National Magazine Award. The unsparingly forthright book he subsequently wrote about Everest, *Into Thin Air*, became a #1 New York Times bestseller and was translated into more than twenty-five languages. It was also Time magazine's Book of the Year, and was one of three finalists for the Pulitzer Prize.

In 1998, as a tribute to his companions lost on Everest, Krakauer established the Everest '96 Memorial Fund at the Boulder Community Foundation with earnings from *Into Thin Air*. As of 2012, the fund had donated more than \$1.7 million to such charities as the American Himalayan Foundation, Educate the Children, Veterans Helping Veterans Now, the Access Fund, and the Boulder Valley Women's Health Center.

Krakauer's writing has been published by *Outside*, *GQ*, *National Geographic*, *Rolling Stone*, *Architectural Digest*, *Playboy*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and Byliner.com. An article he wrote for Smithsonian about volcanology received the 1997 Walter Sullivan Award for Excellence in Science Journalism. His 1996 book, *Into the Wild*, remained on the New York Times bestseller list for more than two years.

Major Works

Eiger Dreams: Ventures Among Men and Mountains (1990)

Into the Wild (1996)

Into Thin Air (1997)

Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith (2003)

Where Men Win Glory: The Odyssey of Pat Tillman (2009)

Three Cups of Deceit (2011)

INTRODUCTION *Into the Wild*

This LitPlan has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *Into the Wild*. It includes eighteen lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The first lesson gives students an **introduction to the book** by having them brainstorm a list of things they would need to take with them to survive in the wilderness of Alaska for 100 days, with the constraint that whatever they choose has to fit in a backpack, able to be carried with the traveler.

The **reading assignments** are approximately thirty pages each; some are a little shorter, while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15 minutes of pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for selected vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer and multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice version for occasional quizzes.

The **vocabulary** work is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in students' understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for selected vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text and inviting students to write down what they think the words mean based on the usage in the sentences. Part II offers the definitions of the words in a matching format to help students clarify the word meanings.

After each reading assignment, students will formulate answers for the study questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review of the most important events and ideas** presented in the reading assignments. Teachers choose whether they want to have students formulate answers to the questions prior to the group discussion and choose the methods by which the material will be covered (small groups, whole class, individual work, game scenario, etc.).

After students complete the reading of the book, time is devoted to addressing **critical thinking**, higher-level questions (comparison/contrast, exploring character motivations, etc.), as well as discussing themes and other **elements of fiction**.

There is a **vocabulary review lesson**, which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all the words they have studied. There is also a unit review lesson to bring together all elements of the unit and to help to prepare students for the final evaluation via the unit test.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or having students express personal opinions. In the first writing assignment students write a letter from Gene Rosellini, John Mallon Waterman, Carl McCunn, or Everett Ruess to Jon Krakauer explaining why he attempted to survive alone in the wilderness. In the second writing assignment, students write a persuasive essay in which they defend their position that McCandless either was or was not suicidal. In the third writing assignment, students write a critical review of *Into the*

Wild for a newspaper book review column.

This unit plan includes a nonfiction **reading assignment**. Students must read nonfiction materials to gather information about assigned topics.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given choices of activities or games to use, which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: multiple choice or short answer. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included. There is also an advanced short answer unit test for advanced students.

Additional support materials are included at the end of the unit. The **Unit Resource Materials** section includes a list of related topics for discussion or research, crossword and word search puzzles related to the book, and extra worksheets. There is a list of bulletin board ideas, and there is a list of additional activities the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher may feel is inappropriate for his or her class. The **Vocabulary Resource Materials** section includes similar worksheets and games to reinforce the vocabulary words.

Answer keys are located directly after the reproducible student materials throughout the unit.

The **level** of this unit can be varied depending upon the criteria on which the individual assignments are graded, the teacher's expectations of his/her students in class discussions, and the formats chosen for the study guides, quizzes and test. If teachers have other activities they wish to use, they can usually easily be inserted prior to the review lesson.

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UNIT PLAN ADAPTATIONS

Block Schedule

Depending on the length of your class periods and the frequency with which the class meets, you may wish to choose one of the following options:

- Complete two of the daily lessons in one class period.
- Have students complete all reading and writing activities in class.
- Assign all reading to be completed out of class, and concentrate on the worksheets and discussions in class.
- Use some of the Unit and Vocabulary Resource activities during every class.

Gifted & Talented / Advanced Classes

- Emphasize the projects and the extra discussion questions.
- Have students complete all of the writing activities.
- Assign the reading to be completed out of class and focus on the discussions in class.
- Encourage students to develop their own questions.

ESL / ELD

- Assign a partner to help the student read the text aloud.
- Tape record the text and have the student listen and follow along in the text.
- Give the student the study guide worksheets to use as they read.
- Provide pictures and demonstrations to explain difficult vocabulary words and concepts.
- Create a summary of each chapter that includes the main points in a text that is written at a lower, more accessible reading level.

UNIT OBJECTIVES *Into the Wild*

1. Students will examine the elements of fiction as they apply to *Into the Wild*
2. Students will study the causes and effects of Chris McCandless's actions
3. Students will think critically to determine what items are necessary for survival
4. Students will find, read, and evaluate a nonfiction article about a young person who has attempted something as dangerous (some may say foolish) as Chris McCandless did.
5. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical, and personal.
6. Students will make connections with the material in the text and apply the lessons learned to their lives.
7. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters as they relate to the author's theme development.
8. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the book through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the book.
9. Students will participate in large and small group discussions.
10. The writing assignments in this unit are designed for several purposes:
 - a. to check and increase students' reading comprehension.
 - b. to make students think about the ideas presented by the book.
 - c. to encourage logical thinking.
 - d. to provide an opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language.
 - e. to encourage students' creativity.
 - f. to practice writing to inform, to persuade, and to express personal opinions.

READING ASSIGNMENTS *Into the Wild*

Date Assigned	Assignment	Completion Date
	Part I: Author's Note The Alaska Interior The Stampede Trail	
	Part II: Carthage Detrital Wash Bullhead City Anza-Borrego Carthage	
	Part III: Alaska Davis Gulch Fairbanks	
	Part IV: Chesapeake Beach Annandale Virginia Beach	
	Part V: The Stikine Ice Cap The Stikine Ice Cap	
	Part VI: The Alaska Interior The Stampede Trail The Stampede Trail Epilogue	

UNIT OUTLINE *Into the Wild*

1 Introduction Activity PV for Part I	2 Read Part I	3 Review Part I PVR Part II	4 Review Part II Mapping First Person Encounters PV Part III	5 Writing Assignment #1 Read Part III
6 Quiz Part III Oral Presentations Nonfiction Research PV IV	7 Nonfiction Research	8 Review Part IV Research Presentations	9 PVR Part V Oral Reading Eval	10 Review Part V Writing #2 PV Part VI
11 Route Mapping Read VI Finish Oral Reading Eval	12 Review VI Role-Playing	13 Role-Playing Extra Discussion ?s	14 Extra Discussion ?s Writing #3	15 Vocabulary Review
16 Theme Review Quote Worksheet	17 Unit Review	18 Unit Test		

Key: P = Preview Study Questions V = Vocabulary Work R = Read