

***Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer (Published by Anchor Books)**

Approved for use in Communication Arts II and Honors Communication Arts II

Summary

Into the Wild is a true story about the life of Chris McCandless, an adventurer who, in his early twenties, gives up his former life to travel and work with a new identity. He donates most of his belongings and cash in order to engage in his new lifestyle. His final destination is an abandoned city bus in which he makes his home in the wilds of Alaska. He attempts to live off the land until he eventually dies of a combination of starvation and possible ingestion of poisonous seeds.

Connection to the Curriculum

Into the Wild is a nonfiction selection for the sophomore level. The language and vocabulary is at a higher level and will challenge readers to apply specific reading (vocabulary) skills. As a nonfiction “coming of age” story where a young man attempts to find his true self, readers could compare this piece to other “coming of age” works. The text opens the door to another range of authors for readers as it quotes Jack London, Leo Tolstoy, and Henry David Thoreau (McCandless was fond of classic works). Students at the sophomore level research and write an oral history paper. This nonfiction piece provides a professional example of telling the story of another person while including narration and dialogue as part of the text. In addition, the author weaves McCandless’ own thoughts from his personal diary. Students can examine McCandless’ decisions and how they affected his final outcome as they examine cause and effect.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students read fluently. 1.3- The students expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text.

Research: 4.1- The students use effective research practices.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators):

Reading:

1.2.1- The student adjusts reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.3.2- The student engages in connotative vocabulary practice.

1.3.5- The student identifies, interprets, and analyzes the use of figurative language including similes, metaphors, analogies, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, personification, idioms, imagery, and symbolism.

1.4.7- The student identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.10- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.

1.4.9- The student uses prior knowledge, content, and text type features to make, revise, and confirm predictions.

1.4.12- The student analyzes and evaluates how authors use text structures to help achieve their purposes.

1.4.14- The student explains and analyzes cause-effect relationships in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.17- The student analyzes and evaluates how an author’s style and use of literary devices works together to achieve his or her purpose for writing text.

Literature:

2.1.2- The student analyzes the historical, social, and cultural contextual aspects of the setting and its influence on characters and events in the story.

2.1.5- The student identifies, analyzes, and evaluates the use of literary devices in a text.

Research:

4.1.2- The student locates appropriate print and non-print information using texts and technical resources, periodicals and book indices, including databases and Internet.

A Note on the Text

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The dialogue between Chris and others includes a few instances of profanity. Chris’s struggle, fight for survival and ultimate death, along with the repercussions for his loved ones, are discussed openly and honestly.

AP Connections

With its advanced vocabulary and allusion/reference to classic authors and works, this text provides a quality extended nonfiction text for students to examine. Nonfiction excerpts are common on the Advanced Placement Language exam.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities