

# *Into the Wild*



**Unit written by**  
Jamie Zartler and Mary Rodeback

**Edited by**  
Alex Gordin

## ***Into the Wild: Journeys to Self-Discovery***

### **Introduction to Unit:**

Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild* tells a story that readily engages students. A noble rebel, Chris McCandless is the kind of young adult many teenagers can relate to, and his journey raises questions about identity, knowledge, adventure, and risk-taking that make the narrative more than a little compelling. In this extensive unit, McCandless' story serves as an entry point to a rich range of questions about America, the spirit, nature, and the American literature (particularly the Transcendentalists). We believe that this material is rich enough to serve as the focal point of an entire semester and speculate about pairing this main text with *Huckleberry Finn* or *The Catcher in the Rye*, for example. We are also considering the possibility of using the knowledge gained from this unit to be the prelude to independent student research and writing.

Within this quarter length unit, students read an engaging and scintillating non-fictional text, several short stories, historically significant essays, and a variety of poems. Essential questions that provided the impetus for the curricular unit are as follows:

- What is the relationship between nature and the American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?

Students have multiple opportunities to be poets, critical thinkers, and writers of essays. We use the RAFT model to provide students an opportunity to express their understanding and ideas in a format other than prose (or in prose as the case may be). In addition, Sean Penn's film of this text adds additional appeal to the heroic notions of adventure, simplicity, and survival. The culminating activity, a synthesis essay that uses the unit's essential questions as its basis, allows students to explore their own discoveries about those questions, using evidence from texts we explore together to support their thinking.

The special focus on the literary unit was articulated through the creative lens of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe's, text, Understanding by Design, an innovative set of learning ideas whose main premise, "Backwards Design", is illustrated by the template created at the beginning of this unit. Also, in this set of "deliverables" include a table of contents, lessons of the learning plan labeled with academic priority standards, a pre-assessment, a culminating assessment in

student-friendly language, differentiated possibilities, and a list of literary terms that have been used in the unit. Importantly, the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade *Write Source* and the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Holt Anthology were extensively referenced to assist the teacher and student in the composition of the culminating assessment.

Choosing one direction for this unit was a challenge. To that end, there are several rich texts that we have not yet explored with students. For example, Teddy Roosevelt's comments at the dedication of Yellowstone as the first National Park or a recently published text on Emily Dickinson and her passion for gardening, a civilized control of "the wild."

We present here pdfs of texts we reference in our unit. You will, of course want to obtain enough copies of these texts to use with your class. This curricular unit, *Into the Wild* expands from a singular text into a comprehensive engaging investigation of the American spirit. Eddie Vedder, lead singer of the musical group, Pearl Jam, sums up this energy in the song, "Guaranteed," a song from the sound track that accompanies the film. "Leave it to me as I find a way to be, consider me a satellite for ever orbiting.

I knew all the rules, but the rules did not know me, guaranteed." You are invited on a powerful literary journey into a great American tradition. Enjoy!

## *Into the Wild* Planning Template

### Stage 1: Desired Outcomes

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Priority Standards:</b> (number and description)</p> <p><b>11.01:</b>Analyze and evaluate the merit of an argument by examining evidence.</p> <p><b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.</p> <p><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.</p> <p><b>11.06:</b> Demonstrate familiarity with major American Literary periods including authors and topics.</p> <p><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.</p> <p><b>11.12:</b> Analyze the way in which a work is related to the themes, issues, political movements, and events of its historical period.</p> <p><b>11.13:</b> Provide clear written ideas</p> <p><b>11.14:</b> Demonstrate a competence of conventions.</p> <p><b>11.15:</b> Develop a thesis, cite sources where appropriate .</p> <p><b>11.15.6</b> Draw supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience.</p> |  |
| <p><b>Understandings:</b><br/> <b>Students will understand that...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American literature explores the relationship between nature and identity.</li> <li>• Setting and place shape identity.</li> <li>• Journey is both literal and metaphorical in understanding story.</li> <li>• Students and readers of literature are engaged in their own journey.</li> <li>• Non-fiction limits the borders of truth.</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Essential Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the relationship between nature and American identity?</li> <li>• What does it mean to be a rebel?</li> <li>• What is the relationship between self and society?</li> <li>• What is success?</li> <li>• How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?</li> <li>• To what extent is community essential to happiness?</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Students will know:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How epigrams may relate to and organize text.</li> <li>• Non-fiction represents a point of view.</li> <li>• Character development is an argument in non-fiction.</li> <li>• The relationship between transcendental writers and contemporary notions of rebellion.</li> <li>• Americans have looked historically to the wilderness for solace, spirituality, and enlightenment.</li> <li>• Research Option: The American experience has changed over centuries.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Students will be able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paraphrase text</li> <li>• Embed and analyze quotations.</li> <li>• Synthesize texts around a theme or essential question.</li> <li>• Understand the process of constructing personal identity.</li> <li>• Describe the place between and identity.</li> </ul>  |

### Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Culminating Assessment</b><br/> <i>(learning task)</i></p>  | <p><b>Other Evidence</b></p>  |
| <p>Synthesis Essay that responds to one of the unit’s essential questions and includes references to at least two texts</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Essay</li> <li>• Character Description</li> <li>• Literary Analysis based on epigrams.</li> </ul> |

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
|  | • Compare and contrast response |
|--|---------------------------------|

### Stage 3 -- Learning Plan *Into the Wild*

| Activity Title  | Priority Standards   | Page      |
|---|--|-----------|
| <b>Lesson #1:<br/>Essential Question</b>                      | <p><b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.</p> <p><b>11.13:</b> Provide clear written ideas</p> <p><b>11.16.</b> Volunteer contributions and clarify, illustrate or expand on a response</p>   | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Lesson #2:<br/>Essential Question<br/>Journal</b>          | <p><b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.</p> <p><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.</p> <p><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.</p> <p><b>11.12:</b> Analyze the way in which a work is related to the themes, issues, political movements, and events of its historical period.</p> <p><b>11.15:</b> Develop a thesis, cite sources where appropriate .</p>  | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Lesson #3:<br/>Characteristics of<br/>Resilient People</b> | <p><b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.</p> <p><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.</p> <p><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.</p>   | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Lesson #4:<br/>“To Build a Fire”</b>                       | <p><b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.</p> <p><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.</p> <p><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.</p> <p><b>11.13:</b> Provide clear written ideas</p> <p><b>11.15:</b> Develop a thesis, cite sources where appropriate.</p>   | <b>19</b> |
| <b>Lesson #5:<br/>“Survivor Type”</b>                         | <p><b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.</p> <p><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.</p> <p><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.</p> <p><b>11.12:</b> Analyze the way in which a work is related to the themes, issues, political movements, and events of its historical period.</p> <p><b>11.13:</b> Provide clear written ideas</p> <p><b>11.15:</b> Develop a thesis, cite sources where appropriate.</p> <p><b>11.16.</b> Volunteer contributions and clarify, illustrate or expand on a response</p> | <b>22</b> |

| <b>Activity Title</b>  | <b>Priority Standards</b>   | <b>Page</b> |
|--|---|-------------|
| <b>Lesson #6:</b><br><i>Deep Survival</i>                              | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.<br><b>11.13:</b> Provide clear written ideas<br><b>11.15:</b> Develop a thesis, cite sources where appropriate. | <b>24</b>   |
| <b>Lesson #7</b><br><b>Pre-Assessment</b>                              | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.<br><b>11.13:</b> Provide clear written ideas<br><b>11.15:</b> Develop a thesis, cite sources where appropriate. | <b>27</b>   |
| <b>Lesson #8</b><br><b>Color-Marking Into the Wild “Author’s Note”</b> | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.16.</b> Volunteer contributions and clarify, illustrate or expand on a response   | <b>32</b>   |
| <b>Lesson #9:</b><br><b>Context Clues</b>                              | <b>11.09.</b> Evaluate how literary devices contribute to the unity/effectiveness of a literary work, such as: diction, motif, paradox, apostrophe, antithesis, euphemism.  | <b>34</b>   |
| <b>Lesson #10:</b><br><b>Epigrams</b>                                  | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.   | <b>38</b>   |
| <b>Lesson #11:</b><br><b>Emerson’s “Nature”</b>                        | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.12:</b> Analyze the way in which a work is related to the themes, issues, political movements, and events of its historical period.   | <b>40</b>   |
| <b>Lesson #12:</b><br><b>Emerson’s “Self-Reliance”</b>                 | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.12:</b> Analyze the way in which a work is related to the themes, issues, political movements, and events of its historical period.   | <b>42</b>   |

| Activity Title  | Priority Standards   | Page      |
|---|--|-----------|
| <b>Lesson #13:</b><br><b>Thoreau’s</b><br><b>“Resistance to Civil</b><br><b>Government”</b> | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.12:</b> Analyze the way in which a work is related to the themes, issues, political movements, and events of its historical period.  | <b>43</b> |
| <b>Lesson #14:</b><br><b>Tiered Activity</b>  | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.<br><b>11.15:</b> Develop a thesis, cite sources where appropriate.   | <b>45</b> |
| <b>Lesson #15:</b><br><b>Literary Postcards</b>   | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.<br><b>11.15:</b> Develop a thesis, cite sources where appropriate.  | <b>51</b> |
| <b>Lesson #16:</b><br><b>Epigrams Revisited</b>   | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.  | <b>54</b> |
| <b>Lesson #17:</b><br><b><i>Breaking Trail</i></b>  | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.<br><b>11.12:</b> Analyze the way in which a work is related to the themes, issues, political movements, and events of its historical period. | <b>55</b> |
| <b>Lesson #18:</b><br><b><i>Woman and Nature</i></b>  | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.<br><b>11.13:</b> Provide clear written ideas   | <b>56</b> |
| <b>Lesson #19:</b><br><b><i>From Walden</i></b>   | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs,   | <b>63</b> |

| Activity Title  | Priority Standards  | Page             |
|---|---|------------------|
|   | <p>and perspectives.</p> <p><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.</p> <p><b>11.12:</b> Analyze the way in which a work is related to the themes, issues, political movements, and events of its historical period.</p>  |                  |
| <p><b>Lesson #20:</b><br/><b>“The Spell of the Yukon”</b></p> | <p><b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.</p> <p><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.</p> <p><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.</p> <p><b>11.12:</b> Analyze the way in which a work is related to the themes, issues, political movements, and events of its historical period.</p>   | <p><b>64</b></p> |
| <p><b>Lesson #21:</b><br/><b>Literary Postcards Radix</b></p> | <p><b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.</p> <p><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.</p> <p><b>11.15.6</b> Draw supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience.</p>   | <p><b>67</b></p> |
| <p><b>Lesson #22:</b><br/><b>“Song of Myself”</b></p>         | <p><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.</p> <p><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.</p> <p><b>11.12:</b> Analyze the way in which a work is related to the themes, issues, political movements, and events of its historical period.</p>  | <p><b>72</b></p> |
| <p><b>Lesson #23:</b><br/><b>Summary &amp; Paraphrase</b></p> | <p><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.</p> <p><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.</p> <p><b>11.15.2</b> Cite sources of information as appropriate</p> <p><b>11.15.6</b> Draw supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience.</p>  | <p><b>74</b></p> |
| <p><b>Lesson #24:</b><br/><b>Reading film</b></p>             | <p><b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.</p> <p><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.</p> <p><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.</p> <p><b>11.12:</b> Analyze the way in which a work is related to the themes, issues, political movements, and events of its historical period.</p> <p><b>11.15.6</b> Draw supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience.</p> | <p><b>75</b></p> |

| <b>Activity Title</b>                                  | <b>Priority Standards</b>   | <b>Page</b> |
|--|---|-------------|
| <b>Lesson #25:<br/>Essential Questions<br/>Posters</b> | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S. literature.  | <b>80</b>   |
| <b>Lesson #26:<br/>RAFT</b>                            | <b>11.15.5</b> Draw from both primary sources and secondary sources<br><b>11.15.6</b> Draw supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience.   | <b>84</b>   |
| <b>Culminating<br/>Assessment:<br/>Synthesis Essay</b> | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.<br><b>11.03:</b> Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose, basic beliefs, and perspectives.<br><b>11.07:</b> Use textual to develop and support an interpretation of a work from U.S literature.<br><b>11.12:</b> Analyze the way in which a work is related to the themes, issues, political movements, and events of its historical period.<br><b>11.15.5</b> Draw from both primary sources and secondary sources<br><b>11.15.6</b> Draw supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience. | <b>87</b>   |
| <b>Lesson # 28<br/>Unit Reflection</b>                 | <b>11.02.</b> Analyze an author’s unstated ideas and analyzing evidence that supports those unstated ideas.   | <b>92</b>   |
| <b>Appendix: Chapter<br/>Question</b>                  |   | <b>94</b>   |

## **Academic Vocabulary**

The vocabulary used extensively in this unit:

Fiction

Non-fiction

Protagonist

Epigram

Context clues

Authorial intent

Paraphrase

Figurative language

Textual evidence

Close reading

Analysis

Feminism

Connotation

Embedded quote

Synthesis

Thesis

Foreshadowing

Narrator, unreliable narrator

Vignette

Imagery

Parody

Allusion

Hyperbole

Anaphora

RAFT (Role Audience Format Theme)

## **Lesson #1: Raising the Essential Questions “The Bucket List”**

**Duration:** One class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.13.3, 11.16

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

The lesson introduces the notion of a “bucket list,” a set of goals to complete before one dies, then leads students to consider their own life goals. Students will then read Lisel Mueller’s poem “Curriculum Vitae” and write their own “CV” poem, based on the goals they identify in their own bucket lists.

### **Materials needed:**

- Copies of Mueller’s poem (from the *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* District Curriculum Guide)
- paper and writing utensils

### **Essential vocabulary:**

- “Bucket List”
- “Curriculum Vitae”

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is success?
- How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Students will be engaged by having an opportunity to think through what they hope to achieve in their lives. The initial essential questions raised by this activity centers around “What is success” and “How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?”

### **Steps/Procedures:**

1. Introduce the idea of the “bucket list”; explain that in the 2007 film, *Into the Wild*, the central character was given a limited amount of time to live, and that news propelled him to create a list of things he wanted to experience in the time he had remaining. His list consisted of twenty items—but he had a limited life ahead of him. Yours might consist of twenty items, fifty, one hundred, or more.
2. Give some examples by modeling a brief bucket list on the board—either your own or one from another source. (There are *many* available online.)
3. Ask students to begin brainstorming their own bucket lists. Let them know that they will have an opportunity to share after the brainstorming session.

4. Have students partner-share their lists, then share out with the class. Encourage students to add to their lists as they listen to their classmates—they may hear ideas that they like, or they may think of new ideas as they listen.
5. After students have shared, introduce Mueller’s poem, “Curriculum Vitae.” Explain the concept of the CV.
6. Have a student read the poem aloud. As the student reads, instruct the class to put a star next to lines they like, or lines they have questions about.
7. Begin discussion surrounding the lines students like and some consideration of what makes those lines appealing; follow with questions.
8. Ask another student to read the poem aloud. As the student reads, instruct the class to think about how the concept of a “curriculum vitae” applies to the poem. In what way does the title suit the poem? What story does the poem tell?
9. Following the second reading, have students partner-share their interpretations of the poem; then, share ideas as a class.
10. Explain that Mueller’s poem reflects upon her life from the vantage point of old age. Ask students to use their own bucket lists to begin to craft a “CV” poem of their own, using the structure of Mueller’s poem as a model. Their draft should include at least ten line-items.

**Closure:**

Conclude class session with a read-around of one line from each student’s preliminary drafting session. Ask students to prepare a complete draft for the next class session.

**Strategies for ELL students:**

- Reading the poem aloud more than once
- Partner-sharing
- Large-group modeling
- Teacher-modeling
- Suggest students to mix home language with English to create voice in the poem

**Strategies for TAG students:**

- Offer Carl Sandburg’s “Chicago,” Allen Ginsberg’s “America,” or Walt Whitman’s “Song of Myself” as additional models
- Encourage students to mimic Mueller’s use of syntax and metaphor as they develop their work

**Modifications for students with special needs:**

- Shorten the length of the poem
- Use concrete prompts instead of open-ended questions
- Partner-sharing

## **Lesson # 2: Essential Questions Journal**

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.07, 11.12, 11.15.6

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

Over the course of the unit, students will keep a journal in which they record passages from our texts. The passages they select will connect to selected essential questions and will function as an ongoing dialogue journal where students will develop a deepening understanding of the essential questions that frame the unit.

### **\*Materials needed:**

- Essential Questions handout
- Journals writing utensil
- “To Build a Fire,” “Survivor Type,” *Deep Survival, Into the Wild*, etc.

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Essential questions, dialogue journal, analysis

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?

### **Steps/Procedures:**

1. Pass out the “Essential Questions Journal” assignment sheet.
2. Read through the assignment sheet, noting how the example uses the quoted passage as a jumping-off point to explore the selected essential question.

### **Closure:**

Students will use the “Essential Questions” journal in the “Essential Questions” poster activity toward the end of the unit, and in constructing their culminating synthesis essay at the close of the unit.

*Into the Wild* Unit  
Essential Questions Journal

Over this unit, we will read a range of texts to build a world around Jon Krakauer’s *Into the Wild*; we will read short stories, poetry, philosophy, journalism, excerpts from works of non-fiction, and more. As we read, you will be expected to keep track of the ways each of these texts relates to the essential questions that guide our thinking. Those questions are:

- How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?
- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?

For each text, you will choose at least two passages (sentences or paragraphs) that you see relating to one of the essential questions. For each passage you choose, you will write out the passage and the page number on which it appears, note the essential question to which it relates, and write a paragraph exploring the ways in which the passage guides your thinking about the essential question. Your journal entries will serve as the basis for a group activity toward the end of the unit and will provide you with evidence to use when you construct your synthesis essay.

An entry for your Essential Question Journal might look like this:

| <u>Title</u>    | <u>Essential Question</u> | <u>Passage</u>   | <u>My Thoughts</u>   |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| “Survivor Type” | What is success?          | “I played football in high school. I was the best damn football player my school ever produced. Quarterback. I made All-City my last two years. I hated football. But if you’re a poor wop from the projects and you want to go to college, sports are your only ticket. So I played, and I got my athletic scholarship” (407-408) | This passage tells me a lot about Richard Pine: he’s determined to reach his goals, and he must be very hard-working to have been so successful on the football field (“I made All-City my last two years” shows his dedication and skill). But he also sounds bitter. When he says, “But if you’re a poor wop from the projects...sports are your only ticket out,” the way he uses an ethnic slur to describe himself makes it sound as though he didn’t like having to succeed on someone else’s terms. |

## **Lesson # 3-7: Opening Texts / Background / Pre-assessment**

**Duration:** 8 55-minute class sessions

**Priority standards:** 11.02; 11.03; 11.07; 11.13.3; 11.15.12; 11.15.5

### **\*Brief overview of lesson:**

In these first lessons, students will use a professional counseling / psychology resource to analyze the traits of characters who face a challenge. They will use the same checklist to assess themselves. A popular psychology text from *Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why* is an optional though fascinating additional professional text.

Texts Addressed: “To Build a Fire” by Jack London; “Survivor Type” by Stephen King; *Into the Wild* by John Krakauer. Excerpts from *Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why* by Laurence Gonzales.

This set of lessons is taught early in the *Into the Wild* unit, and is then revisited near the end when students have enough knowledge of Chris / Alex’s personality traits to analyze him as well.

Some teachers who have taught this lesson have invited counseling staff to integrate lessons on the theme of resiliency in the classroom. Activities such as “challenge” activities that promote group interdependence as well as personal tenaciousness have been used.

The teacher would be well served to have read the excerpts from *Deep Survival* before teaching this lesson. The role of experience and expectations that is an important element in the theory promulgated in *Deep Survival* has some relevancy to the fictional experiences in the two short stories examined in this lesson.

Teachers may wish to tell students that they DO NOT have to fill in the checklist for their own traits, or that they wish to put in marks for what they *wish* to be true as opposed to what is true for themselves.

### **\*Materials needed:**

Work sheet: “Personal Characteristics Resilient People”; “To Build A Fire”; “Survivor Type;” excerpts from *Deep Survival*.

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Resiliency, survival

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?

- Is knowledge dangerous?
- How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?

**\*Steps/Procedures:**

Separate lessons are provided following for texts.

Then students complete a preliminary assessment to aid in differentiation later in the unit.

## **Lesson # 3: Characteristics of Resilient People**

**Duration:** 2 class sessions

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.07

### **\*Brief overview of lesson:**

Students first learn about characteristics of resiliency. They self-assess themselves in order to familiarize with the process. They read Jack London's "To Build A Fire" and apply the trait analysis to the protagonist.

### **\*Materials needed:**

Characteristics of Resilient People Chart

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Resiliency; Personality Traits; Protagonist

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?
- Is knowledge dangerous?
- How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

Personal Characteristics of Resilient People

1. Review the term "character traits."
2. Explain that professionals who work with people in real life consider the traits of their clients.
3. Explain the terms "nurture" and "nature" in the context of human development. We believe that it is important to emphasize that traits at any given time are a tendency and that people may choose various courses of action at any point in their life. We believe that the teacher should emphasize that adolescence is a time to develop desirable traits and to change undesirable personal traits.
4. Review the handout Personal Characteristics of Resilient People
5. Ask students to highlight key words and phrases within each descriptor that help them to identify what that trait "looks like" in a person. As the class works its way through each trait, have the students mark (or not) how they evaluate themselves.

Emphasize that this worksheet will form a key resource for the entire unit.

### **Closure:**

Have students reflect about what they've learned about themselves through this analysis.

**Personal Characteristics of Resilient People**

adapted from Building Resilient Students by Kate Thomsenkj

Key to symbols: + very true    ✓ true  
 – not very true    0 not present    ? not sure

“Nature” based traits

Having an easy temperament or disposition. Some people are just naturally more flexible and easy going than others. Babies show different personalities right away.

Having the ability to elicit positive response from others. These are the people who are likable, friendly, and whom others want to be around. Often, often these are natural leaders. While some people may learn techniques for successful social interaction, this ability is usually an innate characteristic.

“Nurture” based traits

Having empathy and caring about others. Babies are born with empathy. However, it can be quickly forgotten if it is not nurtured in the environment. Luckily, it can be relearned through experiences.

Having excellent communication skills. These skills include the ability to express one’s needs and get them met, the ability to assert without becoming aggressive, the ability to resist pressure to do negative things, and so forth.

Having a sense of humor about one’s self. People who can see the humor or irony in situations that also bring pain are in a better position to recover from that pain. People who do not take themselves or their situations too seriously can see beyond the difficulty they are experiencing to a more hopeful future.

Having a sense of one’s identity. People who understand and take pride in their roots can use that knowledge to overcome adversity.

Having the ability to act independently. People who take initiative and carry on with important tasks without having to rely on others are more resilient.

Having the ability to separate from unhealthy situations or people. Very often, people who perceive themselves as different from those who are having a negative effect on them are able to make plans to do things differently in their own lives. This includes being able to think reflectively about a situation and resolve to do things better.

Having a sense of purpose or future. People who feel that they are necessary to others because they are part of a family or social structure have purpose in life. Believing that you can have a positive future in spite of current circumstances is enough to keep resilient people engaged in working toward that positive future. This may be the most important characteristic of all because people who believe in something bigger than themselves can often overcome great adversity.

| Me | Protagonist<br>“To Build<br>A Fire” | Richard Pine<br>“Survivor<br>Type” | Chris<br>McCandless<br>Alexander /<br>Super Tramp |
|----|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
|    |                                     |                                    |   |
|    |                                     |                                    |   |
|    |                                     |                                    |   |
|    |                                     |                                    |   |
|    |                                     |                                    |   |
|    |                                     |                                    |   |
|    |                                     |                                    |   |
|    |                                     |                                    |   |
|    |                                     |                                    |   |
|    |                                     |                                    |   |
|    |                                     |                                    |   |

## **Lesson # 4: “To Build A Fire” or Die ...**

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.03; 11.10; 11.11; 11.12

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

“To Build a Fire” is classic Jack London: a straight- forward adventure story. The version we read was published in 1908; it is a revision of a version published in 1902 in which the protagonist survives. The story may be regarded as a tale of “Man v. Nature.” The text is fairly dense and difficult, and we suggest reading it aloud in class.

The teacher may introduce the fact the London often wrote about the great North, but in reality only spent a short time there. (This is in contrast to Robert Service who wrote about the same part of northern North America but who spent a long period of time there.)

A key part of this activity is for students to analyze the protagonist (“the man”) according to the traits of resilient people.

Character analysis should focus on the role of the protagonist’s (lack of) experience and his expectations in his demise. Additional literary analysis may focus on foreshadowing.

### **Materials needed:**

Psychological Traits of Resilient People Chart

Text of “To Build A Fire”

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Human v. Nature conflict

Foreshadowing

Expectations v. reality

Contrast of human v. beast e.g. “The Man” v. “The Dog”

Epigram

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- Is knowledge dangerous?
- How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Mention the Gold Rush; explain that Alaska has been drawing adventurous people for years.

## Steps/Procedures:

1. Epigram: point out the epigram; not the nature of the epigram as an admonition

Paragraph 3: Character Traits “He was a newcomer;” “he was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances.”

Paragraph 6: “The animal was depressed by the tremendous cold. It knew that is was no time for traveling. Its instinct told a truer tale than was told to the man by the man’s judgment.... It experienced a vague but menacing apprehension.”

Paragraph 10: “Once in a while the thought reiterated itself that it was very cold and that he had never experienced such cold.”

Paragraph 14: “He was pleased at the speed he had made.” A good example of how one may be lulled into complacency (re: *Deep Survival*).

Paragraph 15: “He was a bit frightened.”

Paragraph 16: “This man did not know cold.”

Paragraph 18: “keenly aware of his danger”

Paragraph 20: “The old timer had been very serious in laying down the law that no man must travel alone in the Klondike after fifty below. Well, here he was; he had had the accident; he was alone; and he had saved himself. Those old-timers were rather womanish, some of them, he thought.” Note that the first instance of “surviving reinforces for the man that he is safe in the journey he is pursuing. Chris McCandless had many adventures before his fatal trip Into the Wild.

Paragraph 21: “It was his own fault or, rather, his mistake. He should not have built the fire under the spruce tree.” Possible discussion: What is the difference between fault and mistake?

Paragraph 26: “Twenty times...” resiliency

Paragraph 28: From the dog’s point of view: “the fire provider had failed” does the man share the same point of view?

Paragraph 31: “He realized that he could not kill the dog.” Emotionally he was prepared, but physically he was unable.

Paragraph 32: “A certain fear of death, dull and oppressive came to him.” Possible discussion: Is fear of death a good thing?

Paragraph 34: “His theory of running until he reached the camp and the boys had one flaw in it: he lacked the endurance.” How does one get an accurate sense of their own capabilities and limitations?

Paragraph 37: “You were right, old hoss; you were right,” the man mumbled to the old-timer of Sulpher Creek.’ McCandless as he is dying in the bus in Denali comes to a final realization as well. From the students’ point of view how often do they test limits or act against the advice of adults?

2. After Reading

As a class review the character traits of resiliency ratings assigned to “the man”

3. Discussion or quick write prompt:

How would you describe “the man” in the story, “To Build A Fire”? Do you feel sorry for him or believe he “got what he deserved?”

**Closure:**

Do you think there was something about “the man” that doomed him? Which of his character traits, if any, would have needed to be different for him to have survived his ordeal?

## **Lesson # 5: “Survivor Type”**

**Duration:** 2 class sessions

**Priority standards:** 11.02; 11.07; 11.11

### **\*Brief overview of lesson:**

We LOVE this story by Stephen King! In the story, “Survivor Type” a heinous man—a life-long survivor, one might say—fights for his life on a desert island. Many elements of his dilemma preview Chris McCandless’ experience, but the protagonist of this story is distinctly less relatable.

### **\*Materials needed:**

Copies of “Survivor Type”; students need to retain their “Characteristics of Resilient People” work sheet.

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Hero, anti-hero, unreliable narrator

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?
- Is knowledge dangerous?
- How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Protagonist: Richard Pine (a common nick name for Richard is “Dick;” in French slang “*Pine*” means penis. To what extent does Richard Pine live up to his name? Look for clues as we read...

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. Explain this to the students that interspersed with reading the story will be quickwrites. Explain to the class that they will have 5-6 minutes to write and that you will ask them to share after each focused writing time.

Pre-Reading Quick Write:

2. What is success? How is it measured? How will you know you are successful? How will others know?

3. On Page 407, have students note the epigram that opens the story. Point out that it is different than the rest of the text and that this is shown through its presentation in italics (the final sentence is in plain text so that *it* may stand in contrast to the rest of the italic passage). Ask students how the question, “How badly does the patient want to survive?” might relate to the story.

4. On page 410 after the paragraph about the \$350,000 of heroin compose a Quick Write: What is value? How do you know something is worth something? How important is money to you? What would you do for money?
5. On page 412 stop at “January 30” have the class brainstorm and compose a writing : Ask the students to describe the protagonist, brainstorm a list of adjectives.
6. On page 415 have a brief Class Discussion:  
“How much shock-trauma can the patient stand? ... How badly does the patient want to survive? Have the class discuss what they think these two questions mean to a surgeon. Prompt them to see how it applies to the protagonist.
7. At Page 418, either at the break here, or after reading the entire piece present students with the text of the Hippocratic Oath. Consider Richard Pine’s activities as he has described them so far and compare them to the oath he presumably took upon becoming a physician.
8. On page 419 Teaching Note:  
It seems to be that the paragraph that begins “Wait. Haven’t I told you” is a hint that he has eaten his foot. We think it best to go a bit further and see if someone in the class has an “ah hah” then to go back and point out where the clues start to come in.

Later you can point out how his use of the heroin began a steady downfall that is perhaps more significant.

9. On page 420 at “February 8<sup>th</sup>” have students compose a Quick Write:  
What do you think will happen to Richard Pine?  
If time permits share, but be sure to ask that no one share who has read ahead.

(Page 422 Teaching note: “drooling” during operation – hungering for his own flesh.)

End of Story Discussion:

10. Obviously there are multiple ways to end the class work on this story; one suggestion is: Briefly discuss initial reactions to the story.  
Then offer questions for a quick write:  
What is failure? How does one know failure? Of their own? Of others?  
Was the protagonist successful? As a Doctor? In getting out of poverty? In surviving for a time?  
Discuss student responses.
11. Analyze Richard Pine according to the chart on “Traits of Resilient People.”  
Or use those same questions in discussion format.

## **Closure:**

To what extent is Richard Pine’s experience an allegory for modern man’s experiences in a capitalist society?

## **Lesson # 6: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why?**

**Duration:** 2 class sessions

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.07

### **\*Brief overview of lesson:**

Students engage a challenging (Adult non-fiction) text that makes an argument about the relationship between human physiology and survival.

### **\*Materials needed:**

Excerpts from from *Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why* by Laurence Gonzales;

Excerpts required for lesson:

- Prologue 13-15
- Chapter 1 Epigram page through 21-43
- Chapter 2 pages 44-49
- Chapter 4 pages 69-82 (separated into 69-75 and 75-82)

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

Is knowledge dangerous?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

The title of the text is telling for the anticipatory set.

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. The teacher will certainly have the best understanding of the material presented if the instructor can read the entire text. However, several key points can be grasped by reading just the presented excerpts.

This material is dense, and is best understood with significant background knowledge and support. We suggest using a text that has already been “marked-up” to facilitate student understanding and to model the task of close reading and analyzing a college level text.

The text does contain some expletives, if the teacher wishes he may block them from the text without diminishing it’s effectiveness; they have been retained as a point of discussion in this plan.

As an entire class read the last section of the prologue. Identify the author’s purpose (to discover and develop for himself the “special ineffable quality” that provided for survival, assumptions in doing his research (“that to survive, you must first be annealed in the fires of peril”), and the most concise statement of his findings, “Corny as it sounds, it’s what’s in your heart.” Students may recognize that this statement is remarkably similar to Richard Pine’s assertion about “shock trauma.”

Students may be made aware if they have not already that the core text for the unit is *Into the Wild* and that a key issue in the text is the death of Chris McCandless in the wilderness. The idea is provide a clear linkage and utility to the theories presented here.

As a class continue reading chapter one. Take time to point out the literary / structural differences between the Section Title “HOW ACCIDENTS HAPPEN,” the Aurelius epigram introducing the chapter, and the chapter title “Look Out, Here Comes Ray Charles,” a quote taken from the text of the chapter.

2. As a class read pages 21-43. The first subsection is a hook. Point out as students read through the text the reason for highlighting certain passages: Key Points; important vocabulary; clear statements of thesis or conclusion; provocative statements; etc.

3. There are several excellent places to stop of discussion or to have students engage a particular passage in written reflection (e.g. “Fear is good. Too much fear is not (28),” “Cognition is capable of making fine calculations and abstract distinctions. Emotion is capable of producing powerful physical reactions (33).”

4. After teaching the prologue and chapter one as a whole class activity divide the class into six groups to conduct a modified jigsaw activity for the additional passages. Assign two groups to pages 44-49 and two groups each to pages 69-75 and 75-82. Assign each student individually, and subsequently each group, and pair of groups to identify in each passage the answer to the following and to identify when appropriate (\*) a passage or passages that make this clear. A brief discussion about why it is not necessary to use a cited quote for items 1,2, and 6 will be built on later in the unit during a lesson on summary, paraphrase, and quotation.

- 1) Who died?
- 2) Where there others in a similar situation who survived?
- 3) What was the immediate cause of death?\*
- 4) What was the root cause of death? Or what psychological and emotional factors contributed to their death?\*
- 5) What general lessons about survival can be drawn from the section?\*
- 6) A personal response.

Model determining the answers to these questions are based on chapter one.

- 1) A naval aviator.
- 2) Yes, other Navy pilots who landed safely; the same pilot on other occasions.
- 3) The pilot crashed into the back of an aircraft carrier instead of landing on it.
- 4) “The pilot had developed a powerful secondary emotion, which told him that safety and even ecstasy could be found on the ground (or deck) and that if he could just *get the hell down*, he’d be all right? (37)”
- 5) “It is not a lack of fear that separates elite performers from the rest of us. They’re afraid, too, but they’re not overwhelmed by it. They manage fear. They use it to focus on taking correct action” (41).

**Closure:**

Each pair of groups should be instructed to present their findings, including specific textual references, either orally, with a visual, or in combination.

Students or teacher may wish to compare the aviators on Carl Vinson to the “Resilient People” chart.

## **Lesson # 7: Pre-Assessment**

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02; 11.03; 11.07,, 11.13, 11.15

### **\*Brief overview of lesson:**

Pre-Assessment (some students are apprehensive by the term pre-assessment--you may refer to this activity as a first attempt at showing understanding of the material). There are two differentiated lessons later in the unit during the study of the core text. Performance on this assessment drives the activity that each student pursues in those lessons.

### **\*Materials needed:**

- Personal Characteristics of Resilient People Chart
- “To Build a Fire”
- “Survivor Type”
- *Deep Survival*

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?
- Is knowledge dangerous?
- How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

Use the prompt below (or the handout from the next page) to give students a chance to demonstrate proficiency in using one text to assist in analyzing and explaining their thinking about another text.

Prompt:

Some people are better suited to survive a dangerous situation than others. We have studied two different systems for understanding who is likely to survive: “Personal Characteristics of Resilient People” and the theories presented in the book *Deep Survival*. Using one or more examples from these texts, analyze why “the man” in “To Build a Fire” or Richard Pine in “Survivor Type” might be considered a “survivor.” Try to use at least one passage of text from the resources we have considered to support your ideas. See if you can use evidence from both “Resilient People” and *Deep Survival*. The strongest work will include passages from both short stories and both informational texts.

Key aspects to the pre-assessment:

- Student makes a clear thesis statement for multiple paragraphs.
- Student uses clear topic sentences for paragraphs.
- Student applies understanding of theory to a literary text.

- Student uses a direct quote to support an argument.
- Student properly embeds the quote within her writing.
- Student provides a citation or attribution for the quote or paraphrase.
- Student provides a clear explanation for the application of the evidence to their argument.

## SELF Scoring Guide: Pre-Assessment

| <b>Priority Standard</b>  | <b>6-5 Exceeds</b>   | <b>4-3 Meets</b>   | <b>2-1 Does Not Meet</b>  |
|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Develop a thesis that takes a knowledgeable position<br/>11.15</b> | <b>Develops an exceptionally clear, supportable thesis that synthesizes at least two texts</b>     | <b>Develops a clear, supportable thesis that synthesizes two texts</b>                                 | <b>At this point, the thesis lacks clarity or is not fully supportable; it may be vague or overly general</b> |
| <b>Cite sources of information as appropriate<br/>11.15</b>           | <b>Passages from text and paraphrases include thorough citation</b>                                | <b>Passages from text and paraphrases include citation</b>   | <b>At this point, passages from text and paraphrases lack citation</b>  |
| <b>Draw from both primary sources and secondary sources<br/>11.15</b> | <b>Even in this brief response, there are selections from multiple texts to support the thesis</b> | <b>Selections from at least one primary text and one secondary text are used to support the thesis</b> | <b>The piece lacks support from either a primary or a secondary source</b>                                    |
| <b>Embed quotations properly<br/>11.15</b>                            | <b>Quotations and paraphrases are fluidly and properly integrated into the writer's prose</b>      | <b>Quotations and paraphrases are integrated into the writer's prose</b>                               | <b>Quotations and paraphrase are not integrated into the writer's prose</b>                                   |

**After your pre-assessment has been returned by your teacher:**

1. What do you think you are doing well so far?
2. What are you going to focus on improving?

## TEACHER Scoring Guide: Pre-Assessment

| <b>Priority Standard</b>  | <b>6-5 Exceeds</b>   | <b>4-3 Meets</b>   | <b>2-1 Does Not Meet</b>  |
|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Develop a thesis that takes a knowledgeable position<br/>11.15</b> | <b>Develops an exceptionally clear, supportable thesis that synthesizes at least two texts</b>     | <b>Develops a clear, supportable thesis that synthesizes two texts</b>                                 | <b>At this point, the thesis lacks clarity or is not fully supportable; it may be vague or overly general</b> |
| <b>Cite sources of information as appropriate<br/>11.15</b>           | <b>Passages from text and paraphrases include thorough citation</b>                                | <b>Passages from text and paraphrases include citation</b>   | <b>At this point, passages from text and paraphrases lack citation</b>  |
| <b>Draw from both primary sources and secondary sources<br/>11.15</b> | <b>Even in this brief response, there are selections from multiple texts to support the thesis</b> | <b>Selections from at least one primary text and one secondary text are used to support the thesis</b> | <b>The piece lacks support from either a primary or a secondary source</b>                                    |
| <b>Embed quotations properly<br/>11.15</b>                            | <b>Quotations and paraphrases are fluidly and properly integrated into the writer's prose</b>      | <b>Quotations and paraphrases are integrated into the writer's prose</b>                               | <b>Quotations and paraphrase are not integrated into the writer's prose</b>                                   |

### Comments:

Working well:

Focus on improving:

**Pre-Assessment Prompt:  
Writing About Survival**

*Over the last few days we have read two short stories and a non-fiction text and we have considered personality traits as they relate to survival. Now you get a chance to explain your thinking about people and danger. Read the following prompt and during the rest of the period explaining your thinking in clear writing.*

Some people are better suited to survive a dangerous situation than others. We have studied two different systems for understanding who is likely to survive: “Personal Characteristics of Resilient People” and the theories presented in the book *Deep Survival*. Using one or more examples from these texts, analyze why “the man” in “To Build a Fire” or Richard Pine in “Survivor Type” survived. Try to use at least one passage of text from the resources we have considered to support your ideas. See if you can use evidence from both “Resilient People” and *Deep Survival*. The strongest work will include passages from both short stories and both informational texts.

## **Lesson # 8: Begin reading Krakauer’s *Into the Wild*: “Color-Marking for Comprehension”**

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.16

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

The purpose of this lesson is to reinforce good reading practices at the beginning of a text that employs sophisticated vocabulary and elevated ideas. Krakauer’s text presents challenges for skilled readers, so reminding students of the tools they can use to make the text their own is an important starting point toward securing and maintaining engagement. The lesson models strong active reading strategies.

### **Materials needed:**

- Photocopies of the “Author’s Note” from *Into the Wild*.
- Sets of two different colors of highlighters (each student should have two different colors to work with)

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Part of the lesson entails identifying places where vocabulary poses a barrier to comprehension, and how to overcome that barrier.

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Read the first paragraph of the “Author’s Note” aloud to students twice, and have them write down as many questions as they can think of related to that brief passage. As they write down their questions, pass out the full text of the “Author’s Note” and the highlighters.

### **Steps/Procedures:**

1. Once students have written their questions, have them share as a class, writing their questions on the overhead or board so that they can be viewed as a group. Discuss the questions and any more that emerge through discussion to the list. Point out to students that they should be looking for answers to these questions as we continue reading the text.
2. Explain to students that they will be color-marking the “Author’s Note,” using one color to highlight what they understand, and one color to highlight what they have questions about or are “stuck.” Students should create a “key” at the top of their handout, identifying which color designates “I understand this” and which color designates “I’m

stuck.” “I’m stuck” may be a single vocabulary word, a phrase, a sentence, or a whole paragraph.

3. Read the text aloud and have students highlight as you read. After you have reached the end of the third paragraph, ask students to write a paraphrase of each sentence they understand. For each idea they are stuck on, have students write a question about the concept that is holding them up.
4. Share paraphrases and “sticking points” as a class. For my classes, I’d explain what *Outside* magazine is, what an affluent suburb of Washington, D.C., is like, what Emory University is like, what “the ragged margin of our society” might mean, and what a “raw, transcendent experience” might allude to. Model the kind of questions that good readers raise as they work through text.
5. Have students continue reading a color-marking on their own, paraphrasing what they understand for sure, and raising questions where they’re stuck.
6. When they have finished reading, have students work with a partner, sharing paraphrases, then trying to answer one another’s “I’m stuck” questions.
7. Come together as a class to share conclusions and questions.

### **Closure:**

Revisit the list of questions generated at the beginning of class: have any of those questions been answered? To what extent? What new questions might we add to the list? How does the text relate (so far) to the essential questions we have been considering over the unit?

### **Strategies for ELL students:**

- Color-marking
- Using context clues
- Partner-sharing
- Using questions to guide reading

### **Strategies for TAG students:**

- Have students analyze and evaluate Krakauer’s use of syntax, diction, and word choice to develop voice.

### **Modifications for students with special needs:**

- Enlarge text

## **Lesson # 9: Reading *Into the Wild*: What are Words Worth?**

**Duration:** 1/3 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.09, 11.10

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

This lesson might be paired with the reading of the “Author’s Note” or with Chapter One of *Into the Wild*. Krakauer employs a highly literary, sophisticated vocabulary in this text. To help students negotiate that complex vocabulary, it is useful to remind students about how they can use context clues to get at the meanings of mysterious words. You may choose to have students complete a vocabulary journal as they read the text.

### **\*Materials needed:**

- Vocabulary lists for the book’s chapters (included here)
- Copies of *Into the Wild*

### **Essential vocabulary:**

- Context clues

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs (and word choice)?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Write the following words on the board:

- Congenial
- Escarpments
- Antimony
- Anomaly
- Contumacious

Ask students to copy these words down. Have them circle the words they’ve heard before and underline the ones they don’t think they’ve ever heard or seen. Then, ask them to come up with the best definition they can for each of these words, thinking about all they know about root words, language bases, etc.

Share findings, and then explain that each of these words appears in the first eleven pages of *Into the Wild*.

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. Pass out the vocabulary list for chapters 1-3. Explain that students will be working to identify context clues to get at word meanings.
2. Have students locate each word, copy out the sentence in which it appears, and write an explanation of which context clues help the student define the word in the text.
3. Share definitions and context clues as a class.

**Closure:**

Inevitably, students will ask, “Why didn’t he say ‘rebellious’ instead of ‘contumacious’?”—a question that can seem infuriating, but that at its heart is entirely valid. As a closure to this activity, then, have students spend some time writing about why a writer might choose an elevated vocabulary to tell a particular story. Some questions to consider include, how would the story be different if it were told in different language? In what ways would your relationship to the story change if the language were simpler? What does it tell us about Krakauer’s relationship to the story that he brings out this vocabulary? What does it tell us about Krakauer the writer—in other words, what conclusions can we draw about the kind of voice he is constructing for his narrator?

**Strategies for ELL students:**

- reinforcement for reading skills and the use of context clues
- pair sharing
- large group sharing

**Strategies for TAG students:**

Closing questions, especially with respect to the construction of narrative voice, lend themselves to TAG students.

**Modifications for students with special needs:**

- Word list with sentences pre-printed
- Reduce number of items to complete

## *Into the Wild* Vocabulary Definitions

### Chapters 1-3

**congenial** (5) - friendly

**antimony** (10) - a metallic element

**contumacious** (11) - rebellious

**amiable** (16) - good-natured

**plebeian** (18) - crude, common

**onerous** (22) - troublesome

**escarpments** (10) - a steep slope

**anomaly** (11) - glitch, inconsistency

**visage** (16) - face

**convivial** (18) - sociable

**mien** (18) - appearance

### Chapters 4-5

**egress** (28) - going out

**saline** (32) - salty

**bourgeois** (39) – middle class

**itinerant** (43) - traveling

**fatuous** (44) – satisfied and stupid

**Tolstoy** (29) – Russian author and non-violence, and finding happiness from within.

**indolently** (32) – lazy, inactive

**sere** (32) – withered, dry

**lumpen** (39) – displaced people, misfits of society

**primordial** (44) – primal, basic form of development

**sedentary** (44) – sitting, remaining in one area

**Thoreau** (29) – American writer, poet, and personal freedom.

### Chapters 6-7

**hegira** (48) - flight

**desiccated** (49) – dried

**indigent** (50) – poor

**harangues** (51) – sermon

**endemic** (52) – widespread

**creosote** (48) – an oily liquid

**phantasmal** (49) - ghostly

**destitute** (51) - poor

**fulminate** (52) – verbal attack

**unalloyed** (55) - pure

**arroyo** (49) – gorge

**serape** (51) – poncho

**unbidden** (63) – not asked

### Chapters 10-11

**mercurial** (105) - quick and changeable

**incorrigible** (115) -uncontrollable, incapable of being reformed

**wanderlust** (108) -a strong impulse to travel

## Chapters 12-16

**monomania** (120) - obsessed with one idea  
**cholera** (122) - anger  
**idiosyncratic** (123) - distinctive, individual  
**extemporaneous** (124) - impromptu  
**Rubicon** (163) - point of no return  
**perambulation** (164) - patrol  
**reverie** (164) - dream

**sanctimonious** (122) - self-righteous  
**sullen** (123) - brooding, angry  
**castigated** (123) - punish  
**gloaming** (161) - dusk  
**aesthetic** (163) - appreciates beauty in nature  
**taiga** (164) - subarctic forest  
**obliquely** (123) - indirectly

## Chapter 17

**ford** (174) – a shallow place to cross a river

**miasma** (175) - cloud

**malevolent** (176) – mean

**massif** (176) – connected mountains

**ungulate** (178) – hooved animals

**moldering** (178) – rotting

**scabbard** (178) – cover

**maxillae** (179) – jawbones

**hauteur** (180) – arrogance

**metis** (180) – people of Indian and French-Canadian

**descent sobriquet** (181) – humorous nickname

**ruminations** (183) – reflection

**modicum** (184) – small amount

**feckless** (184) – incompetent

**posited** (184) – put forward as truth

**sojourn** (179) - break

**existential** (184) – creating meaning through experience because life has no inherent meaning; emphasizes personal freedom and responsibility.

## Chapter 18 – Epilogue

**munificence** (188) - bounty

**eloquence** (189) - expressive speech

**precipitous** (190) - abrupt

**decumbent** (192) - growing along the ground

**emetic** (192) - causes vomiting

**insidiously** (194) - causing harm in a sneaky way

**moniker** (198) - name

**conflagration** (198) - fire

**beatific** (199) - saintly

**Lesson # 10:** Epigrams: Chap 1, 2, 3

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02; 11.03; 11.07; 11.10

**Brief overview of lesson:**

Many of the texts in this unit contain epigrams. The intent of this lesson is to help students understand how an epigram (or vignette) may help to focus the reader on the author's intent or purpose for a passage.

Texts in the unit which contain epigrams are: "To Build A Fire;" "Survivor Type;" *Deep Survival*; *Into The Wild*; the excerpt from *Breaking Trail* by Arlene Blum (vignette); and the excerpt from Susan Griffin's *The Roaring Inside Her*.

**Materials needed:**

*Into the Wild* (book), white board/ chalkboard or posters of the epigrams from chapters 1,2, and 3, or document camera preferably displaying on a surface that can be written on. An image of the Sphinx is provided in the image bank for this lesson.

**Essential vocabulary:**

Epigram; Vignette; authorial intent

**Addressing Essential Question(s):**

What is the relationship between nature and American identity?

What is the relationship between self and society?

What is success?

To what extent is community essential to happiness?

Is knowledge dangerous?

**Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

In the first epigram Chris / Alex acknowledges the extreme danger of his undertaking, and references the Yukon, the setting for "To Build a Fire."

**\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. If possible present the text of the epigram opening Chapter One in large print (a document camera on a white board would be ideal):
  - Point out to students that every chapter in *Into The Wild* begins with an epigram; ensure that students recognize that the epigram is a device to focus the reader on a concept or concepts explored in a section of literature.
  - Have the epigram read aloud.
  - Ask students to identify what seems to be the MOST key words, phrases, or concepts.
  - Highlight or mark those key passages.
  - Be sure that "fatal" and "into the wild" are identified.
2. Ask students to suggest what these key phrases suggest about the content of the paragraph.

Background knowledge:

April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1992: This time is early spring in central Alaska. “Break Up” or the loss of the ice coverage on the rivers has already happened, but the most significant period of run-off from the snowpack has not yet affected the rivers.

Point out to students the area of the Yukon and remind them of the story “To Build A Fire.”

3. Ask students to write one or more questions in their notes / journal that are prompted by the epigram.

Read the remainder of Chapter One aloud.

We expect to assign Chapter Two and Chapter Three as independent reading. However analyzing the epigrams prior to students reading the rest of the text is important scaffolding.

#### Winnowing and Exploding

4. The strategy employed periodically in this unit to help understand the function of the epigrams is to have students first winnow the passage down to likely key words, phrases, and passages. Second, students identify any missing knowledge such as essential vocabulary or background knowledge. Next, students explode key words or phrases by making associations (as one would do when exploring connotations). Finally students pose questions concerning the content of the rest of the chapter.

5. Begin with the text of the *White Fang* epigram at the beginning of Chapter Two. Ask students to identify words or phrases that seem significant. Pose the questions, “Are there any ideas that seem to be repeated? Are there any words or phrases that seem to be emphasized by the way they are phrased or how they are presented in the epigram?” As a class, or individually mark these words and passages.

6. For Chapter Two students may identify an ominous theme from words such as: ominous; desolation; lifeless; lone and cold; a laughter more terrible than any sadness; the Wild, the savage, frozen-hearted Northland Wild.

7. Ask students to identify difficult vocabulary; assist them with comprehension including as appropriate modeling the use of the dictionary. Add any words or ideas that are now understood to those marked significant earlier.

8. Ask students to quickly brainstorm words and ideas that they think of when they look (primarily) at the words and passages that have been marked as significant.

9. Finally, ask students to share questions that the significant words or their brainstorming brings up about the possible content of the chapter. Have each student record at least two questions for themselves. Remind students to refresh these questions in their minds just before they read Chapter Two on their own.

For Chapter Three follow the same Winnowing and Exploding model as above.

#### **Closure:**

Tell students that you will ask them to share their questions and the answers they found to their questions at the start of the next class.

## **Lesson # 11: Emerson’s “Nature” McCandless’ Transcendental Journey**

**Duration:** One class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.12

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

This lesson fits most naturally either immediately before or immediately after students read Chapter 4, “Detrital Wash,” as it engages many of the same attitudes toward nature that Emerson expresses in this excerpt. Students will read and consider the ideas of one of McCandless’ philosophical forefathers, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and in the process discuss the role of nature in identity and specifically “American Identity.” Because Emerson’s prose style is notoriously dense, the text provides an excellent opportunity to practice paraphrasing skills, which will ultimately be employed in the culminating project.

One option to teaching this Emerson piece on its own would be to jigsaw reading with Lesson #12 (Emerson’s “Self-Reliance”) and Lesson #13 (Thoreau’s “Resistance to Civil Governance”)

### **\*Materials needed:**

- *Holt Elements of Literature Fifth Course (203-207)*
- *The Holt Reader (optional)*
- *The Holt Adapted Reader (optional)*

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Imagery, paraphrase

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Have students free write in response to the following prompt:

“To what extent is nature ‘good’? To what extent is mankind ‘good’? On what experiences or observations do you base your positions? Use examples to support your thinking.”

Follow with discussion of students’ views. Explain that the relationship between nature and identity in America has a unique history, in part pioneered by the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

### **Steps/Procedures:**

1. Explain Emerson's background to students. It may be helpful to focus them on the essential questions, then have them read the biographical selection on Emerson on pages 203-204 of the *Holt*.
2. Review the definition of *imagery* with students, and ask students to look for uses of imagery as we read the excerpt from "Nature."
3. Review what it means to *paraphrase* with students; let them know that they will be asked to paraphrase key passages from the excerpt during the class session.
4. Read the text aloud with the class, using the direct teaching guidelines in the *Holt* to help students navigate Emerson's text.

**Closure:**

- Have students make connections between Emerson and McCandless: in what ways do they seem to share similar perspectives about society? About the role of nature in life?

**Strategies for ELL students:**

- Guided paraphrasing
- Paired work with a peer

**Strategies for TAG students:**

- Assign "The American Scholar"; ask students to consider how the ideas in that essay overlap with those found in "Nature" and in *Into the Wild*.
- Assign "Thanatopsis" by William Cullen Bryant (*Holt* 191); ask students to consider the ways the poem uses imagery and conveys attitudes toward nature that are similar to or different from Emerson's ideas.

**Modifications for students with special needs:**

- Have students make outlines of key ideas for difficult paragraphs (with a partner)

## **Lesson # 12: *Into the Wild* and “Self-Reliance”:** Self-Reliance

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.12

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

Students will read an excerpt from Emerson’s essay “Self-Reliance,” making connections between the ideas he develops there about the individual and society and McCandless’ views on the same subject.

### **Materials needed:**

- *Holt Elements of Literature, Fifth Course* (208-212)
- *The Holt Reader* (optional)
- *The Holt Adapted Reader* (optional)

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Figurative language

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Have students freewrite in response to the following prompt:

“As citizens of a bold, young nation, Americans have always taken tremendous pride in their personal liberty. Emerson nourished this individualistic creed with his essay “Self-Reliance.” What associations do you make with the word ‘self-reliance’? How does ‘self-reliance’ differ from ‘selfishness’ and ‘self-centeredness’?” (*Holt* 208) Use examples to show what you mean.

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. Remind students that Emerson saw himself as a poet, not an essayist. In this piece, he uses rich figurative language to develop his ideas about self-reliance. Ask students to look for examples of that figurative language as we read.
2. Read the selection aloud with students, using the “Direct Teaching” guidelines in *Holt* to reinforce comprehension. Have students respond to the boxed questions throughout the reading.

As an alternative:

3. Use *The Holt Reader* for a more interactive reading experience, or use *The Holt Adapted Reader* to introduce students to Emerson’s ideas.

### **Closure:**

At this point in *Into the Wild*, is Chris McCandless “self-reliant” or “selfish”? How? Use examples from the text and from Emerson’s work to support your point of view.

### **Lesson # 13: Rebellion: “Resistance to Civil Government” & *Into the Wild***

**Duration:** 55 minutes

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.07, 11.12

#### **Brief overview of lesson:**

Students will read an excerpt from Thoreau’s “Resistance to Civil Government” to begin to understand the history behind McCandless’ personal philosophy with respect to government structures and independence. This lesson provides a historical context for McCandless’ specific acts of rebellion.

#### **\*Materials needed:**

- *Holt Elements of Literature, Fifth Course*
- *The Holt Reader* (optional)
- *The Holt Adapted Reader* (optional)

#### **Essential vocabulary:**

Paradox, logical appeals, ethical appeals, emotional appeals

#### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?

#### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Have students make a list of school rules they encounter on a daily basis (no hats, no electronic devices, dress code, district transfer policy, PPS high school redesign). Have each student choose one or two of those rules and brainstorm the strongest arguments for AND against those rules. Pair-share, then move into large group discussion.

#### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. Tell the encapsulated story of Thoreau and his experiment at Walden, limiting his background as a rebel.
2. Begin reading “Resistance” (*Holt* 236). As the class reads, have students keep track of Thoreau’s use of paradoxes and his use of persuasive techniques.

**Closure:**

- To what extent is Thoreau's perspective toward government similar to Chris McCandless'? Ask students to identify three specific stories from McCandless' experiences that overlap with or extend Thoreau's ideas.
- To what extent do students agree with Thoreau's ideas? Why? Use examples from your own life to support your points.

**Strategies for ELL students:**

- Have students work in pairs to identify Thoreau's persuasive strategies
- Have students work in pairs to paraphrase Thoreau's key points
- *The Holt Reader* provides interactive questions and guidelines for reading to assist students

**Strategies for TAG students:**

Provide TAG students with Emerson and Hawthorne's assessments of Thoreau as a writer and a man. Ask students to evaluate the views of Thoreau's contemporaries and the extent to which students agree with their points.

**Modifications for students with special needs:**

*The Holt Adapted Reader* provides a graphic organizer and a usefully redacted version of the text for students with special needs.

## **Lesson # 14: Differentiated Activity**

**Duration:** 2 class sessions

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.07, 11.15.6

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

Midway through the unit (following Chapter 7), after students have spent some time exploring the text and practicing some use of textual evidence to support positions, form three groups based on pre-assessment data:

- Group 1: Students who already met or exceeded all four standards
- Group 2: Students who met some or nearly met all four standards
- Group 3: Students who did not meet any standards or are significantly below two or more standards

### **\*Materials needed:**

- Copies of *Into the Wild*
- Copies of excerpts from Thoreau's *Walden* (*Holt Elements of Literature*)
- Copies of "Survivor Type"
- Differentiated writing prompts
- Poster paper
- Markers

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Close reading, textual evidence, analysis

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between self and society?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

#### **1. Group 1: Connecting "Nature" to *Into the Wild***

- Free write about the relationship between adventure and comfort: To what extent is being comfortable and happy a deterrent to risk-taking? Use examples to support your points.
- Read the excerpted passage from Thoreau's *Walden* ("Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," "Solitude," and "Conclusion" can be found in the *Holt Elements of Literature* (220-227))
- Read the following passage:  
"So many people live within unhappy circumstances and yet will not take the initiative to change their situation because they are conditioned to a life of security, conformity, and conservatism, all of which may appear to give one peace of mind, but in reality nothing is more damaging to the adventurous spirit within a

man than a secure future. The very basic core of a man's living spirit is his passion for adventure" (57)

- Discuss the similarities and differences between the texts.
- On poster paper, write a thesis statement and a supporting paragraph that synthesizes the two texts, drawing connections between Krakauer's statement and Thoreau's perspective. Use textual evidence from each text and analyze that evidence to support your ideas. Be prepared to share your thinking with the class.

## 2. Groups 2: Words to live by

- Free write about ideals and our ability to live up to them: What is the purpose of ideals in terms of how we live our lives? Are we truly hypocrites when we fall short of our ideals? Why or why not?
- Re-read the excerpt from Emerson's "Self-Reliance."
- Read and consider the following:

Before McCandless leaves for Alaska, Wayne Westerberg offers to buy him a plane ticket. McCandless refuses, however, claiming, "flying would be cheating. It would wreck the whole trip" (67). Find and explain two quotes from this chapter that demonstrates whether or not McCandless actually lives by his words.
- Discuss the similarities and differences between Emerson's perspective and that of McCandless
- On poster paper, write a thesis statement and a supporting paragraph that synthesizes the two texts, drawing connections between Emerson's ideal and McCandless' real, lived experience. Use textual evidence from each text and analyze that evidence to support your ideas. Be prepared to share your thinking with the class.

## 3. Group 3: Fathers and Sons

- Free write about the ideal relationship between fathers and sons: What ideals do fathers represent in American culture? To what extent are those ideals realistic?
- Review "Survivor Type," noting the relationship between Richard Pine and his father
- Read and consider the following:

Ronald Franz and McCandless establish a father-son type of relationship. Identify one benefit or drawback (using a quote) that each gets out of the relationship.
- Discuss the similarities and differences between Richard Pine and Chris McCandless in terms of their respective relationships with their fathers, and with regard to McCandless' relationship to Ronald Franz.
- On poster paper, write a thesis statement and a supporting paragraph that synthesizes the two texts, drawing connections between Pine and McCandless' experiences surrounding the idea of father-son relationships. Use textual evidence from each text and analyze that evidence to support your ideas. Be prepared to share your thinking with the class.

## Closure:

Each group teaches the class about the thinking they did together. Posters could be displayed in the classroom to reinforce learning.

## Connecting *Walden* to *Into the Wild*

Free write about the relationship between adventure and comfort: To what extent is being comfortable and happy a deterrent to risk-taking? Use examples to support your points.

Reading the excerpted passages from Thoreau's *Walden* ("Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," "Solitude," and "Conclusion" can be found in the *Holt Elements of Literature* pp. 220-227): As you read the assigned selections from *Walden*, write down any passages (including page numbers) that seem to connect with McCandless' philosophy about society, nature, and life.

Group Discussion: Read the following passage:

"So many people live within unhappy circumstances and yet will not take the initiative to change their situation because they are conditioned to a life of security, conformity, and conservatism, all of which may appear to give one peace of mind, but in reality nothing is more damaging to the adventurous spirit within a man than a secure future. The very basic core of a man's living spirit is his passion for adventure" (57)

Discuss the significance of this passage, especially in relation to the reading you just completed from *Walden*. What similarities and differences do you see between the texts? Take notes from the discussion in the space below.

After discussion, as a group: write a thesis statement and a supporting paragraph that synthesizes the two texts, drawing connections between Krakauer's statement and Thoreau's perspective. Use textual evidence from each text and analyze that evidence to support your ideas. Once you have finished your paragraph, transfer it to poster paper, and be prepared to share your thinking with the class.

### **“Words to live by”**

Free write about ideals and our ability to live up to them: What is the purpose of ideals in terms of how we live our lives? Are we truly hypocrites when we fall short of our ideals? Why or why not?

Re-read the excerpt from Emerson's "Self-Reliance," highlighting any sentences that connect with McCandless' way of thinking about independence. Then, read and consider the following:

Before McCandless leaves for Alaska, Wayne Westerberg offers to buy him a plane ticket. McCandless refuses, however, claiming, "flying would be cheating. It would wreck the whole trip" (67).

Find and explain two quotes (including page numbers) from this chapter that demonstrates whether or not McCandless actually lives by his words. Write the quotes and explanations below:

After you have finished writing, with your group members, discuss the similarities and differences between Emerson's perspective and that of McCandless. Take notes on your discussion below:

After discussion, with your group, write a thesis statement and a supporting paragraph that synthesizes the two texts, drawing connections between Emerson's ideal and McCandless' real, lived experience. Use textual evidence from each text and analyze that evidence to support your ideas. When your paragraph is complete, transfer it to poster paper, and be prepared to share your thinking with the class.

## **“Fathers and Sons”**

Free write about the ideal relationship between fathers and sons: What ideals do fathers represent in American culture? To what extent are those ideals realistic?

Review “Survivor Type,” highlighting any details about the relationship between Richard Pine and his father. Write passages about his father, with page numbers, in the space below.

Read and consider the following:

Ronald Franz and McCandless establish a father-son type of relationship. Identify one benefit or drawback (using a quote for each, and including the page numbers) and explain how each quote shows what each character gets out of the relationship.

Write the quotes and explanations in the space below:

With your group members, discuss the similarities and differences between Richard Pine and Chris McCandless in terms of their respective relationships with their fathers, and with regard to McCandless’ relationship to Ronald Franz. Take notes on your discussion below:

After discussion, with your group, write a thesis statement and a supporting paragraph that synthesizes the two texts, drawing connections between Pine and McCandless’ experiences surrounding the idea of father-son relationships. Use textual evidence from each text and analyze that evidence to support your ideas. When your paragraph is complete, transfer it to poster paper, and be prepared to share your thinking with the class.

## **Lesson # 15: Literary Postcards -- On the Road**

**Duration:** 2 class sessions

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.07, 11.15.6

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

This lesson fits well after students have read through the end of Chapter Five (“Bullhead City”) in *Into the Wild*. Students will select key scenes from the reading so far, then illustrate those scenes to reinforce their visual understanding of the text, creating postcards that tie to and reflect upon key moments in the narrative.

### **Materials needed:**

- 4x6 notecards, lined on one side (one for each student)
- Colored pencils, pens, markers, etc, for drawing
- Copies of *Into the Wild*

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Legend

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between self and society?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Bring in a set of postcards for students to examine. What kinds of information are included on a postcard? What kinds of images are captured? What does the legend tell us?

### **Steps/Procedures:**

1. Ask students to make a list of five images or scenes that stand out to them from the text so far; ask students to record a brief description of the scene and the page upon which it appears on their list. Remind them that the scenes might come from anyplace in their reading.
2. Have students pair-share, then share as a larger class, the scenes that stand out. Encourage students to add to their lists as they hear about scenes from classmates.
3. Pass out the “Literary Postcard” assignment sheet, and explain that students will be crafting postcards that reflect the journey recorded in *Into the Wild* so far. Ask students to choose ONE scene from the list they have generated, then turn to the passage in the text and begin to record all of the imagery that pertains to the scene.
4. After they have compiled ideas about imagery, they should select one passage from the text that might serve as a descriptive “legend” for the postcard.
5. Instruct students to begin a rough draft of the postcard, laying out the imagery and text to suit the scene they’ve selected. When students have completed drafts, pass out 4x6 notecards on which students will put together finished postcards.

**Closure:**

- Have students present postcards, identifying the scene they've selected and reading the messages they've written, then explaining what about that scene was important to them.

**Strategies for ELL students:**

- Visualization
- Pair-sharing, large group sharing

**Strategies for TAG students:**

- Have students find a passage from one of the ancillary texts ("Survivor Type," "Deep Survival," "To Build a Fire," "On Civil Disobedience," or "Nature") to develop an epigram for their postcard, or to use as a legend.

**Modifications for students with special needs:**

- Have students use images from magazines, or computer-generated images to create the postcard

## *Into the Wild* Literary Postcards

*One of the most important parts of reading is visualization. Making pictures in your mind is the key to both reading comprehension and enjoyment. In *Into the Wild*, Krakauer crafts many rich visual descriptions of the landscapes and environs to bring Chris McCandless' story to life. Today we are going to explore and develop those elements of the book.*

**This assignment is about visualization, not about artistic talent.**

1. Pick ONE scene from the book. Make a list of all the sensory details present in the scene. List in your journal the details that are in print and those that are in your mind as you read.
2. Use a passage from the text as a “legend” for your postcard. You may place the legend on the top or bottom of one side of your card. Include the page number from the book in parentheses.
3. On one side of your card, write a postcard from one character in the scene to another, one character to you, *or* from yourself to a character. The writing should cover the back of the card. It should be “in character”—in other words, try to use the voice and personality of the character when you write.
4. On the blank side of your card, draw and color the scene you selected. Review your list of sensory details before you begin to draw. Be sure to fill the whole space. You don't have to make the picture realistic, like a photo; rather, make sure you communicate the feeling of the scene.

A strong postcard will include:

- A passage from the text, along with page number in parentheses
- Art that conveys the feeling of the scene through the use of line, color, and arrangement of images
- A note from the character or yourself that gives background information about the scene or explains how the scene feels to a character or to you, filling the back of the card

**Lesson # 16:** Epigrams: Chap 6

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02; 11.03; 11.07; 11.10

**Brief overview of lesson:**

Many of the texts in this unit contain epigrams. The Arlene Blum excerpt begins with a vignette. The intent of this lesson is to help students understand how an epigram (or vignette) may help to focus the reader on the author's intent or purpose for a passage.

Texts in the unit which contain epigrams are: "To Build A Fire;" "Survivor Type;" *Deep Survival*; *Into The Wild*; the excerpt from *Breaking Trail* by Arlene Blum (vignette); and the excerpt from Susan Griffin's *The Roaring Inside Her*.

**Materials needed:**

*Into the Wild* (book), white board/ chalkboard or posters of the epigram from chapters 6, or document camera preferably displaying on a surface that can be written on. An image of the Sphinx is provided in the image bank for this lesson.

**Essential vocabulary:**

Epigram

**Addressing Essential Question(s):**

What is the relationship between nature and American identity?

What is the relationship between self and society?

What is success?

To what extent is community essential to happiness?

Is knowledge dangerous?

**Steps/Procedures:**

Use the strategy of "Winnowing and Exploding" (see detailed notes in Lesson 10 as needed)

Winnowing and Exploding

The strategy employed periodically in this unit to help understand the function of the epigrams is to have students first winnow the passage down to likely key words, phrases, and passages. Secondly, students identify any missing knowledge such as essential vocabulary or background knowledge. Next, students explode key words or phrases by making associations (as one would do when exploring connotations). Finally, students pose questions concerning the content of the rest of the chapter.

## **Lesson # 17: Breaking Trail: One Woman's Struggle to Experience the Wild**

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11:02; 11.03; 11.07; 11.11; 11.12

### **\*Brief overview of lesson:**

Students will read a selection describing a pioneering female mountaineer's early experiences in the wild. They will focus on the question, "In what ways does Arlene's experience of the wilderness differ from the experiences of her male companions?"

### **Materials needed:**

Excerpt from *Breaking Trail: A Climbing Life* by Arlene Blum

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?
- Is knowledge dangerous?
- How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

So far in this unit we have read stories featuring the experiences of men in the wilderness. Do women experience the natural world differently today? Do you think that the way men and women experienced the wilderness was different forty-five years ago than it is today? How? Why?

### **Steps/Procedures:**

To be determined and coordinated as a reading sample.

## **Lesson # 18: Woman And Nature a Feminist Perspective**

**Duration:** 3 class sessions

**Priority standards:** 11.02; 11.03; 11.07; 11.10; 11.11; 11.12

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

A second female voice is brought into the examination of wilderness. In 1978, Susan Griffin wrote the text *Woman and Nature*. The text is very much concerned with issues of voice (and silence) and the dominance of a (Griffin argues) specifically male perspective on the nature of wilderness.

The prefaces present Griffin's ideas clearly and directly in straightforward prose.

In the main body of the work, students must engage text that is difficult because its use of language is highly stylized and unfamiliar. The feminist lens is very evident, and may challenge student assumptions.

There are wonderful challenges for high performing students to create a pastiche based on Griffin's use of the objective third person voice to represent the dominant (and oppressive) paradigm exist.

**NOTA BENE:** The text makes several vivid references to genitalia; it is recommended that students be forewarned and offered a redacted version (Sir Walter Raleigh and Henry Miller epigrams).

The text bank includes additional excerpts (pages 6-19) so that the teacher may have a broader experience of the text.

### **Materials needed:**

Excerpt from *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Insider Her* by Susan Griffin 1978.

Essential excerpts are ix-xv, page 6 (Prologue) and 49-51. 51-52 is highly recommended the section has a natural break on page 55. Pages 6-19 are provided as well for teachers interested in pursuing a in depth study of voice and parody (as well as arguments about power and patriarchy).

Part 4 and 5: A data camera is an excellent tool to model "marking up" the text.

Part 6: For examination of the Prologue: one large sheet of chart paper per group; one (single sided copy) of the large print version of the prologue per group (make extras just in case). Several large markers per group. A glue stick per group. Group size of 3-5 is recommended.

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Feminism; Voice; Dominant Paradigm, Objective Third Person Point of View; Taxonomy; Patriarchy; Parody; Paternal

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

What is the relationship between nature and American identity? What does it mean to be a rebel? What is the relationship between self and society? (How does gender influence one's role in society or perceptions of the society or the role of the self?) Is knowledge dangerous?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Project the image of Henry VIII hunting with (or for?) Anne Boleyn, and ask students to tell the story of what they see happening in the image. What is happening, and how can they tell? Ask them to support their "version" of the story by referring to specific elements of the image.

So far in this unit we have read stories featuring the experiences of men in the wilderness. Do women experience the natural world differently today? Do you think the way men and women experienced the wilderness was different forty-five years ago?

Are there any connections between environmentalism (being 'green') and feminism?

What pronoun would you use to describe the wilderness: he, she, it?

Who does most of the cleaning and tidying up in your home? Who is most responsible for 'cleaning up' the planet?

### **Steps/Procedures:**

- 1) Forewarn students about language / content in the piece.
- 2) Provide essential vocabulary definitions to students (discuss as appropriate).
- 3) Provide students with personal copies of the text and model "marking up" the text.
- 4) Help students put the text into temporal context.

Arlene Bloom's story (1955 porch vignette and 1964 first climb of Mt. Adams).  
1972

Alaskan Statehood 1959

Title IX 1972

*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

*Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a [United States](#) law enacted on June 23, 1972. It was renamed in 2002 as the [Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act](#), in honor of its principal author [Congresswoman Mink](#), but is most*

*commonly known simply as Title IX. The law states that No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance... Although Title IX is best known for its impact on high school and *collegiate athletics*, the original statute made no explicit mention of sports.*

The **Endangered Species Act of 1973** (7 U.S.C. § 136, 16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq. , **ESA**) is one of the dozens of **United States environmental laws** passed in the 1970s. As stated in section 2 of the act, it was designed to protect critically **imperiled species** from **extinction** as a "consequence of economic growth and development untempered by adequate concern and **conservation**."

Susan Griffin text 1977 and 1998

Students should be able to note a significant difference in tone between the two prefaces (written 21 years apart).

(As an extension the class may examine the timeline on pages 17-19 and compare them.)

5) Examination of the text prefaces to *Woman and Nature*:

The two prefaces reveal several interesting arguments about the relationship  
Key points from the 1998 preface include:

- A) Thinking about the state of the world as an avenue to personal growth and change
- B) Reflection as a route to change (Rebellion)
- C) Traditional Western assumption that women are closer to nature; this closeness is a weakness
- D) Feminism has resulted in many women abandoning “traditional roles” and thus becoming unfamiliar with natural process (as men are)
- E) We are “perilously close to making the earth [a place] that not only limits but even erases nature” (X).
- F) “The simple truth that human existence is immersed in nature, dependent on nature, inseparable from it.”
- G) “a vision of freedom from an imprisoning state of mind”

Key points from the 1977 preface include:

- A) women are always being asked to “clean up”
- B) “man does not consider himself a part of nature”
- C) “man considers himself superior to matter”

- D) “man’s attitude that woman is both inferior to him closer to nature”
- E) patriarchal though does, however, represent itself as emotionless (objective, detached and bodiless)
- F) Paternal voice as “recognized opinion”

6) Examination of the Prologue (page 6)

Show the students the prologue as it is presented in the book.

Have students read through the text of the prologue on their own. Ask them to think attend to the voice(s) of the speaker.

“He says” and “We are” may be very clear voices to the students. “It is so” may or may not be clear (and may or may not be different than “he says”).

5. Direct students to cut the sentences apart in their groups. Ask the students to then sort the individual sentences (and fragments). Ask them to first sort them first based on voice; then based on subject matter. (Alternatively have different groups assigned to different sorting options; more advanced readers may work on grouping by subject / content while less advanced readers may be assigned voice.)

6. Once students grouped their lines ask them to create a chart that divides the lines into categories (e.g., male voice lines / female voice lines / lines that don’t differentiate; lines about speaking / lines about listening). Students should then glue the lines onto their chart, and provide written annotations to explain their taxonomy, and their interpretations.

7. Examination of Woman and Nature 49-54

Consider before beginning this section how you wish to deal with the sexual language in the epigrams (e.g., Sims, Raleigh, and Miller). Consider discussing the role of appropriation and parody.

Prompt students to “Winnow and Explode” the epigrams at the start of the section (49)

Read the first sub-section aloud.

8. Discuss voice and stated and implied meaning and argument.

9. Read all of the epigrams in the section (skipping the intervening texts). Ask students to identify common themes and to raise questions about the text.)

10. Have students obtain two different colored highlighters or pens. Individually or as a class read through the text and mark passages that echo themes from the epigrams in one color and mark those that seem to refute themes from the epigrams in the second color.

11. Discuss the role of voice and point of view. Discuss the arguments Griffin is making through her construction of the text.

**Closure:**

Ask students to reflect in a journal and free write on which of the voices that they have been reading most closely resembles their own experience? Which voice most closely resembles the voice that most closely resembles the experiences they *WISH* they had?

Part 6 “Examination of the Prologue” provides an opportunity to differentiate

**Strategies for ELL students:**

Students with limited English proficiency or challenges with reading comprehension may be focused on the prefaces and the first three epigrams from the section “Land.” Heterogeneous grouping for the Prologue activity will help them.

**Strategies for TAG students:**

Students with accelerated reading skills may be challenged with additional parts of this text. They can be offered a chance to use an extreme form of a voice as Griffin did to make a point (see pages 6-19).

**Modifications for students with special needs:**

Students with limited English proficiency or challenges with reading comprehension may be focused on the prefaces and the first three epigrams from the section “Land.” Heterogeneous grouping for the Prologue activity will help them.

Prologue to *Woman and Nature: The roaring Inside Her*  
by Susan Griffin

He says that woman speaks with nature.

That she hears voices from under the earth.

That wind blows in her ears and trees whisper to her.

That the dead sing through her mouth and the cries of infants are clear to her.

But for him this dialogue is over.

He says he is not part of the world, that he was set on this world as a stranger.

He sets himself apart from woman and nature.

And so it is Goldilocks who goes to the home of the three bears, Little Red Riding Hood who converses with the wolf, Dorothy who befriend a lion, Snow White who talks to the birds, Cinderella with mice as her allies, the Mermaid who is half fish, Thumbelina courted by a mole.

(And when we hear in the Navaho chant of the mountain that grown man sits and smokes with bears, and follows directions give to him by squirrels, we are surprised. We had thought only little girls spoke with animals.)

We are the bird's eggs.

Bird's eggs, flowers, butterflies, rabbits, cows, sheep; we are caterpillars; we are leaves of ivy and sprigs of wallflower.

We are women.

We rise from the wave.

We are gazelle and doe, elephant and whale, lilies and roses and peach, we are air, we are flame, we are oyster and pearl, we are girls.

We are woman and nature.

And he says he cannot hear us speak.

But we hear.

## **Lesson # 19: From *Walden***

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.07, 11.12

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

Students will read selections from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, making connections between Thoreau's stationary quest and McCandless' active journey and considering the extent to which their goals were similar.

### **\*Materials needed:**

- *Holt Elements of Literature Fifth Course* (213-228)
- *Into the Wild*

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Metaphor, allusion, connotation, paraphrase

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?
- How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Free write: Imagine your parents take your family on vacation for two weeks. You are dropped off at a cabin in the remote wilderness. There is no cell phone reception, no wireless connection, no internet, no mail delivery, no newspaper delivery. Your relatives will be coming back to pick you up at the end of your two week stay. By the end of the third day, you have read the two books you brought along, and you are completely without ways to entertain yourself. What do you imagine you will do during the next week and four days? How will you keep yourself occupied? What aspects of your stay will be difficult?

### **Steps/Procedures:**

1. Use the Direct Teaching guidelines for a shared reading of Thoreau's work, developing a series of paraphrases that detail Thoreau's argument. Have students try to determine the kinds of appeals that Thoreau uses to develop his ideas. The double-entry journal strategy discussed on page 215, is a useful way to help students engage with Thoreau's difficult language.
2. The "Thinking Critically" questions on page 230 helps students hold and deepen their thinking about the selection.

### **Closure:**

Have students compare Thoreau's cabin and McCandless' bus: in what ways were they similar? In what ways were they different?

Have students illustrate one of Thoreau's metaphors (or one of Emerson's aphorisms, for that matter).

## **Lesson # 20: Robert Service’s “The Spell of the Yukon” Going for Gold: Narratives of the North**

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.07, 11.12

### **\*Brief overview of lesson:**

This lesson fits well with the ideas in Chapter 8 (“Alaska”). Students will read Robert Service’s narrative poem “The Spell of the Yukon,” building their literary analysis skills through a consideration of Service’s use of narrative elements in his work.

### **\*Materials needed:**

Copies of Robert Service’s “The Spell of the Yukon”

Highlighters

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Narrative poem, lyric, speaker, motivation, imagery, metaphor, diction, syntax, hyperbole, anaphora

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- How do we construct identity through our actions, interests, values and beliefs?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Project an image of a Yukon landscape in winter. Have students describe the landscape in detail. What aspects of the landscape are inviting? What effect does the landscape have on you as a viewer?

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. Explain Service’s background and relationship to the North to the class. Contrast Service’s status as the “Bard of the Yukon” to London’s reputation and experience in the North.
2. Explain the concepts of narrative poetry and the lyric form.
3. Ask students to highlight words, phrases, or lines that convey the following:
  - How does Service use literary devices (diction, syntax, anaphora, etc.) to create a sense of the speaker as a character?
  - What motivates the speaker? Do his motivations change over the course of the poem? How can you tell?
  - What is the speaker’s relationship to the land/natural world? How can you tell?
  - What is the speaker’s relationship to society? How can you tell?
  - What does “gold” represent in the poem?

**Closure:**

What attitudes or beliefs does the speaker in this poem share with the other writers we have encountered in this unit—Emerson, Thoreau, Krakauer, Griffin, Blum? To what extent are his views similar to theirs?

Alternative: Have students write a narrative poem from the perspective of one of the characters we have encountered and in a specific location (Ron from Chris' campsite at the hot springs; Chris on finding the bus; Thoreau in jail) over the unit to date.

**Strategies for ELL students:**

- images projected to support ideas in the poem
- read the poem aloud
- use highlighters to pull out key details

**Strategies for TAG students:**

Have students read Whitman's "A Sight in Camp at Daybreak Gray and Dim" (*Holt* 376); examine Whitman's use of symbol in the poem, and incorporate a similar use of symbol in their own narrative poem written from the perspective of a character we have encountered, in a specific location (see "Closure" above).

**Modifications for students with special needs:**

Have student create a found poem from one of the texts we have used in the unit, focusing on character description, character motivations, and landscape.

## The Spell of the Yukon

by [Robert W. Service](#)

I wanted the gold, and I sought it;  
I scrabbled and mucked like a slave.  
Was it famine or scurvy-I fought it;  
I hurled my youth into a grave.  
I wanted the gold, and I got it-  
Came out with a fortune last fall-  
Yet somehow life's not what I thought it,  
And somehow the gold isn't all.

No! There's the land. (Have you seen it?)  
It's the cussedest land that I know,  
From the big, dizzy mountains that screen it  
To the deep, deathlike valleys below.  
Some say God was tired when He made it,  
Some say it's a fine land to shun;  
Maybe; but there's some as would trade it  
For no land on earth-and I'm one.

You come to get rich (damned good reason);  
You feel like an exile at first;  
You hate it like hell for a season,  
And then you are worse than the worst.  
It grips you like some kinds of sinning,  
It twists you from foe to a friend;  
It seems it's been since the beginning,  
It seems it will be to the end.

I've stood in some mighty-mouthed hollow  
That's plumb-full of hush to the brim;  
I've watched the big, husky sun wallow  
In crimson and gold, and grow dim,  
Till the moon set the pearly peaks gleaming,  
And the stars tumbled out, neck and crop,  
And I've thought that I surely was dreaming,  
With the peace o' the world piled on top.

The summer-no sweeter was ever;  
The shiny woods all a-thrill;  
The grayling aleap in the river,  
The bighorn asleep on the hill.

The strong life that never knows harness;  
The wilds where the caribou call;  
The freshness, the freedom, the faress  
O God! how I'm stuck on it all.

The winter! the brightness that blinds you,  
The white land locked tight as a drum,  
The cold fear that follows and finds you,  
The silence that bludgeons you dumb.  
The snows that are older than history,  
The woods where the weird shadows slant;  
The stillness, the moonlight, the mystery,  
I've bade 'em good-bye-but I can't.

There's a land where the mountains are  
nameless,  
And the rivers all run God knows where;  
There are lives that are erring and aimless,  
And deaths that just hang by a hair;  
There are hardships that nobody reckons;  
There are valleys unpeopled and still,  
There's a land-oh, it beckons and beckons,  
And I want to go back-and I will.

They're making my money diminish;  
I'm sick of the taste of champagne.  
Thank God! When I'm skinned to a finish  
I'll pike to the Yukon again.  
I'll fight-and you bet it's no sham-fight;  
It's hell!-but I've been there before;  
And it's better than this by a damsite-  
So me for the Yukon once more.

There's gold, and it's haunting and haunting;  
It's luring me on as of old;  
Yet it isn't the gold that I'm wanting  
So much as just finding the gold.  
It's the great, big, broad land 'way up yonder,  
It's the forests where silence has lease;  
It's the beauty that thrills me with wonder,  
It's the stillness that fills me with peace.

## **Lesson # 21: Literary Postcards Redux: On the Road Again**

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.07, 11.15.6

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

This lesson fits well at the end of Chapter 18 (“The Stampede Trail”). Once again, students select key scenes from the reading so far, then illustrate those scenes to reinforce their visual understanding of the text, creating postcards that tie to and reflect upon key moments in the narrative. In this extension of the first activity, students practice embedding a passage of text in the narrative postcard they write.

### **\*Materials needed:**

- “Embedding Quotes” handout (PPS)
- 4x6 notecards, lined on one side (one for each student)
- Colored pencils, pens, markers, etc, for drawing
- Copies of *Into the Wild*

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Legend, embedded quote

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between self and society?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Show students the Everett Ruess’ slideshow (see Appendix), providing imagery of Davis Gulch, the various wanderers described in chapters 8-9, and Denali.

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. Ask students to make a list of five images or scenes that stand out to them from the text so far; ask students to record a brief description of the scene and the page upon which it appears on their list. Remind them that the scenes might come from anyplace in their reading.
2. Have students pair-share, then share as a larger class, the scenes that stand out. Encourage students to add to their lists as they hear about scenes from classmates.
3. Pass out the “Literary Postcard” assignment sheet, and explain that students will be crafting postcards that reflect the journey recorded in *Into the Wild* so far. Ask students to choose ONE scene from the list they have generated, then turn to the passage in the text and begin to record all of the imagery that pertains to the scene.
4. After they have compiled ideas about imagery, they should select one passage from the text that might serve as a descriptive “legend” for the postcard and one passage they will *embed* into the text of their postcard. Explain to students that for this postcard, they will practice *embedding quotations*.
5. Pass out the “Embedding Quotations” handout and review strategies for embedded quotes.
6. Instruct students to begin a rough draft of the postcard, laying out the imagery and text to suit the scene they’ve selected. When students have completed drafts, pass out 4x6 notecards on which students will put together finished postcards.

**Closure:**

- Have students present postcards, identifying the scene they've selected and reading the messages they've written, then explaining what about that scene was important to them.
- Have students make connections between the postcards they've crafted and the essential questions for the unit. Which essential question is most addressed by the ideas in your postcard? How?

**Strategies for ELL students:**

- Visualization
- Pair-sharing, large group sharing

**Strategies for TAG students:**

- Have students find a passage from one of the ancillary texts (“Survivor Type,” *Deep Survival*, “To Build a Fire,” “On Civil Disobedience,” “Nature,” *Women & Nature, Breaking Trail, Walden*, “The Spell of the Yukon”) to develop an epigram for their postcard, or to use as a legend—or to embed in the text of their postcard.

**Modifications for students with special needs:**

- Have students use images from magazines, or computer-generated images to create the postcard

## Quoting Textual Passages in a Literary Essay

*Directions: For each example paragraph, analyze each quote and then write a concluding sentence.*

1. **EMBEDDED QUOTES:** Introduce the passage with a sentence or a phrase and blend it into your own writing so that it flows smoothly together and makes sense.

The mercy killing of Candy's dog serves to isolate Candy even further. After allowing Carlson to take the dog outside to kill it, Candy refuses to join in the card game with the other men. He then physically distances himself from the others by lying down on his bunk. After they hear Carlson shoot the dog, Candy retreats even more when "he rolled slowly over and faced the wall and lay silent" (49).

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

Note: The quoted material is integrated into the sentence. The citation (page number) comes after the quoted material but immediately BEFORE the period.

2. **BLOCK QUOTES:** For long passages (more than 4 typed lines), special rules apply. Introduce the quote with a sentence and use a colon as your mark of punctuation before the passage. Indent about ten spaces (TAB twice) and write the passage out to the right margin. The citation (page number) goes AFTER the final punctuation.

The mercy killing of Candy's dog also serves to isolate Candy from the other men. After allowing Carlson to take the dog outside to kill it, Candy refuses to join in the card game with the other men. He then physically distances himself from the others by lying down on his bunk. After they hear Carlson shoot the dog, Candy retreats even further:

The silence was in the room again.

A shot sounded in the distance. The men looked quickly at the old man. Every head turned toward him.

For a moment he continued to stare at the ceiling. Then he rolled slowly over and faced the wall and lay silent. (49)

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |

**3. PARAPHRASED CITATIONS:** This type of citation is used if you just tell what the writer said in your own words.

The mercy killing of Candy's dog also serves to isolate Candy from the other men. After allowing Carlson to take the dog outside to kill it, Candy refuses to join in the card game with the other men. He then physically distances himself from the others by lying down on his bunk. After they hear Carlson shoot the dog, Candy retreats even further by saying nothing. Instead he rolls over on his bed facing away from the other ranch workers (49). Candy's reaction to the loss of his only friend is silent and detached. His physical reaction, turning away from the other men in the bunkhouse, further emphasizes his loneliness. It is even greater now that his dog is gone. Without his dog, Candy is alone on the ranch and in the world.

#### 4. QUOTING PASSAGES IN A PLAY (DRAMA)

- When quoting dialogue between two characters in a play:
- Indent the beginning of the quotation 10 spaces (or indent 2 times)
- Begin each part of the dialogue with the character's name followed by a period. Indent all following lines in that character's speech an additional quarter of an inch (or 3 spaces)
- When the dialogue switches to a new character, repeat the pattern as listed earlier.

Throughout the play *Fences*, Troy and Cory fail to understand one another. Each character refuses to see the other's point of view, especially in regards to Cory's dreams of playing football in college. When Cory puts a part-time job at Mr. Stawicki's store on hold in order to focus on football, Troy intervenes, telling Cory's coach that he will no longer be playing:

Cory. Why you wanna do that to me? That was the one chance I had.

Rose. Ain't nothing wrong with Cory playing football, Troy.

Troy. The boy lied to me. I told the nigger if he wanna play football... to keep up his chores and hold down that job at the A&P. That was the conditions. Stopped down there to see Mr. Stawicki ...

Cory. I can't work after school during the football season, Pop! I tried to tell you that Mr. Stawicki's holding my job for me. You don't never want to listen to nobody. And then you wanna go and do this to me!

Troy. I ain't done nothing to you. You done it to yourself.

Cory. Just cause you didn't have a chance! You just scared I'm gonna be better than you, that's all! (57-58; Act One)

In this conversation, neither Troy nor Cory attempt to understand each other's actions. Cory only sees his father as being bitter and afraid of what Cory may be able to accomplish. He doesn't consider that his father might be sparing him from the same disappointment Troy experienced during his baseball career.

From *Nervous Conditions* curriculum by Amy Ambrosio, Carol Dennis, Kelly Gomes, Henise Telles-Ferreira

## *Into the Wild*

### Literary Postcards, Round Two

*One of the most important parts of reading is visualization. Making pictures in your mind is the key to both reading comprehension and enjoyment. In Into the Wild, Krakauer crafts many rich visual descriptions of the landscapes and environs to bring Chris McCandless' story to life. Today we are going to explore and develop those elements of the book, focusing on scenes from Chapters 6-18.*

**This assignment is about visualization, not about artistic talent.**

1. Pick ONE scene from the book. Make a list of all the sensory details present in the scene. List in your journal the details that are in print and those that are in your mind as you read.
2. Use a passage from the text as a “legend” for your postcard. You may place the legend on the top or bottom of one side of your card. Include the page number from the book in parentheses.
3. On one side of your card, write a postcard from one character in the scene to another, one character to you, *or* from yourself to a character. The writing should cover the back of the card. It should be “in character”—in other words, try to use the voice and personality of the character when you write. Make sure to embed one passage from the text into the postcard.
4. On the blank side of your card, draw and color the scene you selected. Review your list of sensory details before you begin to draw. Be sure to fill the whole space. You don't have to make the picture realistic, like a photo; rather, make sure you communicate the feeling of the scene.

A strong postcard will include:

- A legend made up of a passage from the text, along with page number in parentheses
- Art that conveys the feeling of the scene through the use of line, color, and arrangement of images
- A note from the character or yourself that gives background information about the scene or explains how the scene feels to a character or to you, filling the back of the card, and that includes one embedded quote from the text

## **Lesson # 22: Whitman, excerpts from “Song of Myself”: Connecting Whitman to McCandless**

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.12

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

Students will read excerpts from Walt Whitman’s, “Song of Myself,” focusing on anecdotes that the poet uses in the piece. Review *Into the Wild* and have students create three anecdotes to a character from the story in the style of Walt Whitman.

### **\*Materials needed:**

- *Holt Elements of Literature, Fifth Course*
- *The Holt Reader*

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Free verse, repetition, alliteration, consonance, assonance, onomatopoeia, imagery, personification, simile, metaphor, parallel structure

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is success?
- What is the relationship between the self and society?
- How do individuals construct identity?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Use the “skills starter” activity (*Holt Fifth Course Teacher’s Edition*, 367) to introduce students to the concept of sound structures that underlie Whitman’s work.

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. Have students read the biographical sketch on Whitman, noting the literary figures they are already familiar with as they read. In what ways is Whitman a rebel?
2. Have students read the excerpt from *Song of Myself* in *The Holt Reader* (131-138), putting emphasis on the paraphrasing activity tied to “Number 33”.
3. Ask students to go back through the poem to identify the anecdotes Whitman uses to construct the piece. What values are implicit in each anecdote?

**Closure:**

Choose a character from *Into the Wild*, and find three anecdotes related to that character. Then, write a free verse poem relating those three anecdotes and imitating Whitman's use of alliteration, consonance, assonance, onomatopoeia, and imagery.

**Strategies for ELL students:**

- Have students work with a partner to paraphrase segments of the poem
- Have students work with a partner to identify anecdotes
- Have students work with a partner to define unfamiliar words

**Strategies for TAG students:**

Have students examine Whitman's use of grammar and syntax, focusing on anaphora and asyndeton, to explore the impact of his use of these devices on the reader.

**Modifications for students with special needs:**

- Have students work with a partner to paraphrase segments of the poem
- Have students work with a partner to identify anecdotes
- Have students work with a partner to define unfamiliar words

## **Lesson # 23: Summary and Paraphrase**

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Priority standards:** 11.03, 11.07, 11.15.2, 11.15.6

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

Throughout this unit students are prompted to and taught close-reading strategies. We believe that many students have difficulty utilizing generalized information and facts not conveyed through a directly quoted passage (e.g. Chris traveled extensively through North America; Chris died alone in a remote campsite in Alaska) as evidence in essays.

We suggest using the showing of the Sean Penn film *Into the Wild* as an opportunity to review the value of Summary and Paraphrase as a skill. The Write Source (Orange) has a lesson for teaching this skill on page 422.

### **Materials needed:**

Write Source (Orange) page 422

Film: *Into The Wild* Directed by Sean Penn

**Steps/Procedures:** See Write Source page 422

## **Lesson # 24: Reading the film -- Sean Penn's *Into the Wild***

**Duration:** 4 class sessions

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.07, 11.12, 11.15.6

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

Students view Sean Penn's film *Into the Wild*, drawing comparisons between Penn's telling of the McCandless story as it relates to and often contrasts with Krakauer's version. Discussion questions ask students to probe the nature of authorship, authority, and truth in non-fiction.

### **\*Materials needed:**

- Copy of the Penn film
- Copies of film questions
- Copies of A. O. Scott's 2007 review of the film (optional)

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Authorship, authority, non-fiction

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- How do individuals construct identity?
- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. Explain to students that the next several class sessions will be devoted to reading the text of Sean Penn's film version of the McCandless story, and that despite the fact that Krakauer and Penn's texts share the same title, the two tell very different stories. Both claim to be works of non-fiction, but the films take very different stands on Chris McCandless as a character. Explain that they will be looking for the many ways in which Penn's story differs from Krakauer's as they view and interpret the film.
2. Pass out film questions and review questions with students. Point out that they will need to take notes, paraphrasing specific scenes and events in the film to respond to the questions.
3. Show film. It is recommended to stop the film at the end of each titled section ("Childhood," "Adolescence," etc.) to help students make sense of how the "chapter titles" organize McCandless' experience, and what each title suggests about the "story" told in each segment. These chapter breaks provide an opportunity for students to work on paraphrasing skills; paraphrases they write might play a role in the culminating synthesis essay.

4. Use the film questions as a basis for class discussion following the film. Questions might be used in a Socratic Seminar, for small group discussion, or in conjunction with the essential questions for a carousel-style silent discussion on posters.

**Closure:**

- Which version of the McCandless story feels most “true” to students? Why?
- Have students write their own reviews of Penn’s film, using A. O. Scott’s review as a model for elements to consider.

## ***Into the Wild* Wrap-Up**

Now that we have read Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild* and watched Sean Penn's film that interprets the same story, consider the following questions in detail, using specific examples from the book and the film to support your ideas. Responses to each question should be constructed in strong paragraphs that provide a clear topic sentence, a refinement of that topic, evidence (in the form of a quote from the book or a detailed description of a scene from the film), an explanation of how the evidence proves your point, and a clear conclusion.

1. Krakauer's version of the Chris McCandless story unfolds in chapters and follows a sequence of events that is not linear and that incorporates stories of similar adventurers to make achieve particular narrative purpose. Penn's version of the McCandless story unfolds in visual "chapters" titled "Childhood," "Adolescence," "Adulthood," and "Wisdom." How do the different structures of these versions of the McCandless story impact the narrative? In other words, in what ways does the organization of each story impact the meaning of the story?
2. A. O. Scott's review of Penn's version of *Into the Wild* argued that Penn created a kind of "saint" out of McCandless. In what parts of Penn's film do you see Penn creating a saint out of McCandless? To what extent do you think Penn's version of Chris McCandless is more "saintly" than Krakauer's? Why do you feel that way?
3. Penn's version of the McCandless story incorporates material from copious interviews with the McCandless family, and reveals significant information about McCandless family dynamic when Chris was a child. In what ways does that information contribute to your understanding of Chris' decision to isolate himself from his family? Does it make you feel as though his attitude toward his parents is more or less justified? Why?
4. Krakauer relates to his audience that many readers of his early work on the McCandless story objected to the general public fascination with McCandless, dismissing him as a dreamer or an idiot who is not worth much consideration. Penn's adaptation of the McCandless story makes no reference to that dismissive point of view, providing a mainly positive perspective on McCandless and his life's journey. Which version of the story feels more "fair" or "accurate" or "truthful" to you? Why?
5. Both Krakauer and Penn add things to the McCandless story to provide context for the narratives they create. Krakauer focuses on the extended tradition of going out into nature in American history; Penn expands McCandless' personal relationships to provide background for the story. Identify three specific things that each storyteller adds to the story, and comment on how those additions impact the meaning of the story. To what extent do those additions enhance the story? To what extent do they distract from the story? Why?

## Following His Trail to Danger and Joy

September 21, 2007

By A. O. SCOTT: *New York Times*

There is plenty of sorrow to be found in [“Into the Wild,” Sean Penn](#)’s adaptation of the nonfiction bestseller by Jon Krakauer. The story begins with an unhappy family, proceeds through a series of encounters with the lonely and the lost, and ends in a senseless, premature death. But though the film’s structure may be tragic, its spirit is anything but. It is infused with an expansive, almost giddy sense of possibility, and it communicates a pure, unaffected delight in open spaces, fresh air and bright sunshine.

Some of this exuberance comes from Christopher Johnson McCandless, the young adventurer whose footloose life and gruesome fate were the subject of Mr. Krakauer’s book. As Mr. Penn understands him (and as he is portrayed, with unforced charm and brisk intelligence, by Emile Hirsch), Chris is at once a troubled, impulsive boy and a brave and dedicated spiritual pilgrim. He does not court danger but rather stumbles across it — thrillingly and then fatally — on the road to joy.

In letters to his friends, parts of which are scrawled across the screen in bright yellow capital letters, he revels in the simple beauty of the natural world. Adopting the pseudonym Alexander Supertramp, rejecting material possessions and human attachments, he proclaims himself an “aesthetic voyager.”

Mr. Penn serves as both his biographer and his traveling companion. After graduating from [Emory University](#) in 1990, Mr. McCandless set off on a zigzagging two-year journey that took him from South Dakota to Southern California, from the Sea of Cortez to the Alaskan wilderness, where he perished, apparently from starvation, in August 1992. “Into the Wild,” which Mr. Penn wrote and directed, follows faithfully in his footsteps, and it illuminates the young man’s personality by showing us the world as he saw it.

What he mostly saw was the glory of the North American landscape west of the Mississippi: the ancient woodlands of the Pacific Northwest, the canyons and deserts farther south, the wheat fields of the northern prairie and Alaska, a place that Mr. McCandless seemed to regard with almost mystical reverence. Mr. Penn, who did some of the camera work, was aided by the director of photography, Eric Gautier, who previously turned his careful, voracious eye on the wilds of South America in Walter Salles’s “Motorcycle Diaries.” That movie, like “Into the Wild,” finds epic resonance in a tale of youthful wandering and proposes that a trek through mountains, rivers and forests can also be a voyage of self-discovery.

Mr. Salles’s film, in which [Gael García Bernal](#) played Che Guevara, found a political dimension in its hero’s journey. And while Chris’s fierce rejection of his parents’ middle-class, suburban life contains elements of ideological critique, Mr. Penn and Mr. Krakauer persuasively place him in a largely apolitical, homegrown tradition of radical, romantic individualism.

An enthusiastic reader (with a special affinity for Tolstoy and Jack London), Chris is in many ways the intellectual heir of 19th-century writer-naturalists like John Muir and especially Henry David Thoreau, whose uncompromising idealism — “rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth” — he takes as a watchword. (Had he survived, Mr. McCandless might well have joined the ranks of latter-day nature writers like Edward Abbey and Bill McKibben.) His credo is perhaps most succinctly stated by Thoreau’s mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson, who advised that “the ancient precept, ‘Know thyself,’ and the modern precept, ‘Study Nature,’ become at last one maxim.”

One problem with this strain of American thought is that it sometimes finds expression in self-help nostrums and greeting-card sentiments. “If you want something in life, reach out and grab it,” Chris says

to Tracy ([Kristen Stewart](#)), a teenage girl who develops a crush on him, collapsing Self-Reliance into something like an advertising slogan. But the movie's theme, thankfully, is not so simple or so easily summed up in words.

Mr. Penn, even more than Mr. Krakauer, takes the Emersonian dimension of Chris McCandless's project seriously, even as he understands the peril implicit in too close an identification with nature. The book took pains to defend its young protagonist against the suspicion that he was suicidal, unbalanced or an incompetent outdoorsman, gathering testimony from friends he had made in his last years as evidence of his kindness, his care and his integrity. The film, at some risk of sentimentalizing its hero, goes further, pushing him to the very brink of sainthood. After Chris offers wise, sympathetic counsel to Rainey (Brian Dierker), a middle-aged hippie he has befriended on the road, the older man looks at him with quiet amazement. "You're not Jesus, are you?" he asks.

Well no, but it's a comparison that Mr. Penn does not entirely discourage. (Note the final, man of sorrows image of Mr. Hirsch's face and also an earlier shot of him floating naked in a stream, his arms extended in a familiar cruciform shape.) At the same time, though, "Into the Wild" resists the impulse to interpret Chris's death as a kind of martyrdom or as the inevitable, logical terminus of his passionate desire for communion with nature.

Instead, with disarming sincerity, it emphasizes his capacity for love, the gift for fellowship that, somewhat paradoxically, accompanied his fierce need for solitude. Though he warns one of his friends against seeking happiness in human relationships — and also rails incoherently against the evils of "society" — Chris is a naturally sociable creature. And "Into the Wild" is populated with marvelous actors — including Mr. Dierker, a river guide and ski-shop owner making his first appearance in a film — who make its human landscape as fascinating and various as its topography.

The source of Chris's wanderlust, and of the melancholy that tugs at the film's happy-go-lucky spirit, is traced to his parents ([William Hurt](#) and [Marcia Gay Harden](#)), whose volatile marriage and regard for appearances begin to seem contemptible to their son. (His feelings for them are explained in voice-over by his younger sister, Carine, who is played by [Jena Malone](#).)

Fleeing from his mother and father, Chris finds himself drawn, almost unwittingly, to parental surrogates: a rowdy grain dealer in South Dakota ([Vince Vaughn](#)), a retired military man in the California desert ([Hal Holbrook](#)) and Rainey's companion, Jan ([Catherine Keener](#)), who seems both carefree and careworn. Chris reminds some of these people of their own lost children, but all of them respond to something about him: an open, guileless quality, at once earnest and playful, that Mr. Hirsch conveys with intuitive grace. "You look like a loved kid," Jan says, and "Into the Wild" bears that out in nearly every scene.

He is loved, not least, by Mr. Penn, who has shown himself, in three previous films ("[The Indian Runner](#)," "[The Crossing Guard](#)" and "[The Pledge](#)") to be a thoughtful and skilled director. He still is, but this story seems to have liberated him from the somber seriousness that has been his hallmark as a filmmaker until now. "Into the Wild" is a movie about the desire for freedom that feels, in itself, like the fulfillment of that desire.

Which is not to say that there is anything easy or naïve in what Mr. Penn has done. "Into the Wild" is, on the contrary, alive to the mysteries and difficulties of experience in a way that very few recent American movies have been. There are some awkward moments and infelicitous touches — a few too many Eddie Vedder songs on the soundtrack, for example, when [Woody Guthrie](#), [Aaron Copland](#) or dead silence might have been more welcome — but the film's imperfection, like its grandeur, arises from a passionate, generous impulse that is as hard to resist as the call of the open road.

## **Lesson # 25: Essential Questions Posters: Summing it up**

**Duration:** 2 class sessions

**Priority standards:** 11.02. 11.03, 11.07

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

Students will create posters that reflect each of the major texts they have encountered in this unit, providing examples of how each text engages the essential questions that have shaped our thinking. Posters will serve as a place where classes compile their thinking about the works we have read and prepare them to write the synthesis essay.

### **\*Materials needed:**

- Poster paper
- Markers
- Copies of the major texts used in the unit
- Essential Question Journals

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Essential questions

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- How do individuals construct identity?
- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. Let students know that they'll be working in groups of 3-5 students to complete posters that show how the text they're assigned to cover explores some of the essential questions we've worked with over the unit. They'll be creating posters to use to teach the class about the two or three essential questions best addressed by the text they're working with.
2. Assign students to texts or work groups. (Obviously, this can be done a number of ways—students may self-select on a sign-up sheet, may be assigned a text at random, or may be assigned to a group, at the educator's discretion.)
3. Groups should begin by choosing roles: Group Leader/Speaker, Text Monitor, Question Monitor, and Task Master (at least). If you have more than four students per group, they may want to designate a presentation planner as well.
4. Once groups are formed, they should begin by sharing the ideas they compiled in their Essential Questions Journals. They'll need to decide which two or three essential questions are most fully addressed by the text that they're working with, then select three or four passages that show the kinds of ideas raised by the text.

5. Students make posters.
6. Students present posters to the class. During presentations, classmates should add to their own Essential Questions journals.

**Closure:**

With which text do you most align yourself? Which essential questions interest you most and why? Which texts seem most connected to your thinking about that question?

## Essential Questions Poster Assignment

### *Into the Wild*

Over the course of this unit, we have considered the following texts:

- “To Build a Fire,” Jack London
- “Survivor Type,” Stephen King
- *Deep Survival*, Laurence Gonzales
- *Into the Wild*, Jon Krakauer
- “Nature,” Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “Self-Reliance,” Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “Resistance to Civil Government,” Henry David Thoreau
- *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau
- *Breaking Trail*, Arlene Blum
- *Women and Nature*, Susan Griffin
- “The Spell of the Yukon,” Robert Service
- *Song of Myself*, Walt Whitman
- *Into the Wild*, Sean Penn

We have used these essential questions to guide our thinking:

- How do individuals construct identity through their actions, values and beliefs?
- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?
- Is knowledge dangerous?

With your group, you will create a poster to teach the class about the text you have been assigned and the two or three key essential questions your text addresses. On your poster, you will include the following:

- Title and author of the work
- Two to three essential questions related to the work
- Three to four passages from the work that connect to each essential question
- Explanations of how each passage connects to or extends the essential question it is tied to
- A visual image that connects to the text and the essential questions related to it

Use your Essential Questions Journals to begin to focus on essential questions and gather passages for your poster. Your poster will serve as the basis for a presentation to the class. The purpose of your presentation is to teach the class about how your text engages the essential questions you have chosen to work with.

Essential Question Poster Planning Sheet

Group Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Text Monitor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Question Monitor: \_\_\_\_\_ Task Master: \_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_

Text: \_\_\_\_\_  
Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Essential Question #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Passage #1:

Analysis:

Passage #2:

Analysis:

Passage #3:

Analysis:

Passage #4:

Analysis:

Essential Question #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Passage #1:

Analysis:

Passage #2:

Analysis:

Passage #3:

Analysis:

Passage #4:

Analysis:

## **Lesson # 26: *Into the Wild* RAFT**

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Priority standards:** 11.15.5, 11.15.6

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

This differentiated assessment strategy allows students to engage with the unit's content and concepts in a mode of their choosing.

### **\*Materials needed:**

- Copies of *Into the Wild*
- Copies of ancillary texts

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Role, audience, format, theme

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- How do individuals construct identity through their actions, values and beliefs?
- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?
- Is knowledge dangerous?

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. Explain to students the concept of the RAFT, reviewing key terms (role, audience, format, theme), talking them through the student handout.
2. Encourage students to add to each column on the RAFT handout.
3. Share possible additions to each category with the class.
4. Have students choose two or three different possibilities they are interested in completing and begin brainstorming ways they could complete those projects.
5. Have students share their plans for their projects with a partner, then with the class as a whole. Have students offer one another feedback on their intended projects.

### **Closure:**

Have students present the projects they create, explaining how their piece connects with one or more of the unit's essential questions.

## *Into the Wild* RAFT

A RAFT is a culminating activity that allows you to choose how to show your learning. For this project, you will choose a role (a character or entity you will “be”), an intended audience (the person or group your piece will address or “talk to”), a format, and a theme or topic. You may add to any of the columns as you begin to plan your piece.

| <b>Role</b>  | <b>Audience</b>  | <b>Format</b>  | <b>Theme</b>   |
|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chris McCandless</li> <li>• Ron Franz</li> <li>• Walt McCandless</li> <li>• Billie McCandless</li> <li>• Carine McCandless</li> <li>• Sam McCandless</li> <li>• Wayne Westerberg</li> <li>• Jan Burres</li> <li>• Tracy</li> <li>• A resident at the Slabs</li> <li>• A camper from Oh-My-God Hot Springs</li> <li>• Jim Gallien</li> <li>• The hunters who found McCandless</li> <li>• A grief counselor</li> <li>• Bud Walsh</li> <li>• Lori Zarza</li> <li>• Jon Krakauer</li> <li>• Sean Penn</li> <li>• The Bus</li> <li>• An editor at <i>Outside Magazine</i></li> <li>• Gene Rosellini</li> <li>• John Waterman</li> <li>• Carl McCunn</li> <li>• Everett Ruess</li> <li>• <i>New York Times</i> reporter</li> <li>• <i>Fairbanks News-Miner</i> reporter</li> <li>• Roger Ellis</li> <li>• Border agent at the Mexican-</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walt McCandless</li> <li>• Billie McCandless</li> <li>• Students in a wilderness survival program</li> <li>• Parent of a runaway</li> <li>• A runaway</li> <li>• Outdoor enthusiasts</li> <li>• Tourists</li> <li>• “Tramps”</li> <li>• Border guards</li> <li>• Hunters</li> <li>• National Park Rangers</li> <li>• College students</li> <li>• Philosophy students</li> <li>• Oxfam administrators</li> <li>• Magazine editors</li> <li>• Film studio executives</li> <li>• TV executives</li> <li>• Travel agents</li> <li>• Family counselors</li> <li>• Psychiatrist</li> <li>• Psychologist</li> <li>• Teacher</li> <li>• Professor</li> <li>• College students</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Speech</li> <li>• Radio program (similar to “This American Life”)</li> <li>• Painting</li> <li>• A series of related songs</li> <li>• Survival Guide</li> <li>• Manifesto</li> <li>• Magazine article</li> <li>• Newspaper feature</li> <li>• Monologue</li> <li>• Drama</li> <li>• Ad campaign</li> <li>• Pamphlet</li> <li>• Map</li> <li>• Career Counselor</li> <li>• Parenting handbook</li> <li>• Cartoon/Graphic Novel panels</li> <li>• Series of related poems</li> <li>• Epic poem</li> <li>• Storyboard</li> <li>• Employee handbook</li> <li>• Job performance evaluation</li> <li>• Psychological evaluation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to resolve family conflicts</li> <li>• How to establish healthy relationships</li> <li>• How to plan for a wilderness adventure</li> <li>• A personal philosophy</li> <li>• How it feels to be at odds with your family</li> <li>• The dangers of conformity</li> <li>• The effects of consumer society on individuality</li> <li>• What it means to live an ethical life</li> <li>• How to reconnect with your rebellious teenager</li> <li>• How to reconnect with a family you have abandoned or run away from</li> <li>• How to hitchhike safely across the Americas</li> </ul> |

| Role  | Audience | Format | Theme |
|---|----------|--------|-------|
| <p>American crossing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Gianini guitar</li> <li>• An alum of Emory University from Chris' class</li> <li>• Buckley the dog</li> <li>• One of McCandless' high school friends</li> <li>• A travel agent</li> <li>• A tour guide at Denali Park</li> <li>• A resident of Healy, Alaska</li> <li>• The yellow Datsun</li> <li>• Quinn McCandless</li> <li>• Outward Bound Counselor</li> <li>• Parent of a runaway</li> <li>• A runaway</li> <li>• Adventure Travel guide</li> </ul> |          |        |       |

## **Culminating Assessment: Synthesis Essay**

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.07, 11.12, 11.15.5, 11.15.6

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

Students will write a synthesis essay in response to one of the prompts tied to the unit's essential questions. Essays will employ evidence from multiple sources to respond to the selected prompt.

### **\*Materials needed:**

- Essential Questions Journal
- *Into the Wild*
- “Survivor Type”
- “To Build a Fire”
- *Deep Survival*
- “Self-Reliance”
- “Nature”
- “Resistance to Civil Government”
- *Walden*
- “The Spell of the Yukon”
- *Breaking Trail*
- *Women and Nature*
- “Song of Myself”

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Synthesis essay

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- How do individuals construct identity through their actions, values and beliefs?
- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?
- Is knowledge dangerous?

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. Distribute writing prompts
2. Go through the writing prompts with students, helping them identify key terms in each prompt.
3. Ask students to choose two prompts they may want to write about, then have them begin to identify three or four of the texts from the unit they may use to support their response.

4. Have students choose one prompt to work with, and gather the pieces of textual evidence they will use on the Graphic Organizer.
5. Have students pair-share the ideas they have for their essays, talking through how each piece of evidence contributes to a response to the chosen prompt.
6. Brainstorm thesis statements for the essays with students.
7. Pair-share thesis statements.
8. Begin writing the culminating assessment.

**Closure:**

Have students share the body paragraph that they feel is the strongest in their piece.

## ***Into the Wild* Synthesis Essay**

As we reach the end of this unit, you will have a chance to synthesize your thinking about the essential questions we have explored, using several texts together to respond to the prompt that you are most interested in. The questions we have explored are:

- How do individuals construct identity through their actions, values and beliefs?
- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?
- Is knowledge dangerous?

The texts we have considered include:

- *Into the Wild*, Jon Krakauer
- “Survivor Type,” Stephen King
- “To Build a Fire,” Jack London
- *Deep Survival*, Laurence Gonzales
- “Self-Reliance,” Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “Nature,” Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “Resistance to Civil Government,” Henry David Thoreau
- *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau
- “The Spell of the Yukon,” Robert Service
- *Breaking Trail*, Arlene Blum
- *Women and Nature*, Susan Griffin
- “Song of Myself,” Walt Whitman

Your synthesis essay will respond to ONE of the essential questions. The strongest essays will employ textual evidence from FIVE of the texts we have considered and will demonstrate strong command of the skills we have focused on in this unit: employing and analyzing textual evidence, paraphrasing, embedding quotes, and making connections between literary texts from diverse historical periods.

## SELF Scoring Guide: Synthesis Essay

| <b>Priority Standard</b>  | <b>6-5 Exceeds</b>   | <b>4-3 Meets</b>  | <b>2-1 Does Not Meet</b>  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Develop a thesis that takes a knowledgeable position<br/>11.15</b>                           | <b>Develops an exceptionally clear, supportable thesis that synthesizes at least four texts</b>                | <b>Develops a clear, supportable thesis that synthesizes three texts</b>                                | <b>At this point, the thesis lacks clarity or is not fully supportable; it may be vague or overly general, or it may address fewer than three texts</b> |
| <b>Cite sources of information as appropriate<br/>11.15</b>                                     | <b>Passages from text and paraphrases include thorough citation</b>  | <b>Passages from text and paraphrases include citation</b>  | <b>At this point, passages from text and paraphrases lack citation</b>  |
| <b>Draw from both primary sources and secondary sources<br/>11.15</b>                           | <b>The essay employs evidence from multiple texts to support the thesis</b>                                    | <b>Selections from the primary text and at least two secondary texts are used to support the thesis</b> | <b>The piece lacks support from either a primary or a secondary source</b>  |
| <b>Draw supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience<br/>11.15</b> | <b>Evidence is analyzed thoroughly and cogently, establishing clear persuasive points throughout the essay</b> | <b>Evidence is analyzed, establishing persuasive points in the essay</b>                                | <b>Evidence is not analyzed, or the analysis is not persuasive</b>  |
| <b>Embed quotations properly<br/>11.15</b>  | <b>Quotations and paraphrases are fluidly and properly integrated into the writer's prose</b>                  | <b>Quotations and paraphrases are integrated into the writer's prose</b>                                | <b>Quotations and paraphrase are not integrated into the writer's prose</b>   |

**After your synthesis essay has been returned by your teacher:**

1. What do you think you are doing well so far?
2. What are you going to focus on improving?

## TEACHER Scoring Guide: Synthesis Essay

| <b>Priority Standard</b>  | <b>6-5 Exceeds</b>   | <b>4-3 Meets</b>  | <b>2-1 Does Not Meet</b>  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Develop a thesis that takes a knowledgeable position<br/>11.15</b>                           | <b>Develops an exceptionally clear, supportable thesis that synthesizes at least four texts</b>                | <b>Develops a clear, supportable thesis that synthesizes three texts</b>                                | <b>At this point, the thesis lacks clarity or is not fully supportable; it may be vague or overly general, or it may address fewer than three texts</b> |
| <b>Cite sources of information as appropriate<br/>11.15</b>                                     | <b>Passages from text and paraphrases include thorough citation</b>  | <b>Passages from text and paraphrases include citation</b>  | <b>At this point, passages from text and paraphrases lack citation</b>  |
| <b>Draw from both primary sources and secondary sources<br/>11.15</b>                           | <b>The essay employs evidence from multiple texts to support the thesis</b>                                    | <b>Selections from the primary text and at least two secondary texts are used to support the thesis</b> | <b>The piece lacks support from either a primary or a secondary source</b>  |
| <b>Draw supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience<br/>11.15</b> | <b>Evidence is analyzed thoroughly and cogently, establishing clear persuasive points throughout the essay</b> | <b>Evidence is analyzed, establishing persuasive points in the essay</b>                                | <b>Evidence is not analyzed, or the analysis is not persuasive</b>  |
| <b>Embed quotations properly<br/>11.15</b>  | <b>Quotations and paraphrases are fluidly and properly integrated into the writer's prose</b>                  | <b>Quotations and paraphrases are integrated into the writer's prose</b>                                | <b>Quotations and paraphrase are not integrated into the writer's prose</b>   |

### Comments:

Working well:

Focus on improving:

## **Lesson # 28: End-of-Unit Reflection**

**Duration:** 1 class session

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

Students will engage in reflection about the learning they have experienced over the course of the unit.

### **Materials needed:**

A list of activities and readings completed during the unit.

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Reflection

### **Addressing Essential Question(s):**

- How do individuals construct identity through their actions, values and beliefs?
- What is the relationship between nature and American identity?
- What does it mean to be a rebel?
- What is the relationship between self and society?
- What is success?
- To what extent is community essential to happiness?
- Is knowledge dangerous?

### **Hook/Anticipatory Set:**

Have students make a list of the activities they liked best during the unit (or activities that are memorable)

### **\*Steps/Procedures:**

1. Share recollections about unit activities, and make a list on the overhead or the board so that all students have a mnemonic in place for major activities and texts
2. Explain the goal of reflection, and pass out the “End-of-Unit” Reflection Prompt
3. Review assignment guidelines, and have students begin to write

### **Closure:**

Have students share one paragraph from their reflections

## ***Into the Wild* End-of-Unit Reflection:**

Re-read pages 70 – 72 of *Into the Wild*, and think about the following questions:

Do you feel, as one letter writer did, that there is “nothing positive at all about Chris McCandless’ lifestyle or wilderness doctrine ... surviving a near death experience does not make you a better human it makes you damn lucky” (116); or do you see something admirable or noble in his struggles and adventures? Was he justified in the pain he brought to family and friends in choosing his own solitary course in life?

After pondering the questions, **write a letter** to Jon Krakauer that responds to these questions and addresses what value you thought this book and our exploration through the unit had for you. What can be learned from McCandless’ story?

## **Appendix: Chapter Questions**

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Priority standards:** 11.02, 11.03, 11.07, 11.15.6

### **Brief overview of lesson:**

Chapter questions and discussion questions may be used throughout the unit to help students develop skill in the effective use of textual evidence to support key points.

### **\*Materials needed:**

- Copies of *Into the Wild*
- Copies of the Chapter Questions

### **Steps/Procedures:**

Chapter questions may be projected on a screen or photocopied. Students might work on responses to the questions individually, with a partner, in small groups.

## ***Into the Wild Writing Prompts***

These prompts might be used as openers, as the basis for small-group activities, or as discussion starters. The questions reinforce the unit goal of helping students use textual evidence and analysis to support their points.

### Chapters 1-3; pages 3-23

1. After reading chapter 1, use two adjectives to describe your impressions of Chris McCandless (Alex). **Explain and support each adjective with a specific quote from the chapter.**
2. After graduating college, McCandless begins, “an epic journey that would change everything” (22). He saw his time in college as “an absurd and onerous duty” (22). In heading west he felt freed “from the stifling world of his parents and peers, a world of abstraction and security and material excess” (22). **Using examples from the reading** explain what he meant by this. Do you agree with his motivation for leaving?

### Chapters 4 and 5; pages 25-46

1. Chapter 4 ends with the following quote from McCandless’ journal: “It is the experiences, the memories, the great triumphant joy of living to the fullest extent in which real meaning is found” (37). Identify an experience from this chapter and explain what “meaning” you think Alex has found. **Use a quote to support your explanation.**
2. What does “Plastic People” in chapter five mean? What are two things McCandless considered plastic? Do you agree with his assessment? **Support your answer with a quote.**

**Additional Discussion Topic:** McCandless’ definition of living life to its fullest.

### Chapters 6 and 7; pages 47-69

1. Ronald Franz and McCandless establish a father-son type of relationship. Identify one benefit or drawback (using a quote) that **each** gets out of the relationship.
2. Before McCandless leaves for Alaska, Wayne Westerberg offers to buy him a plane ticket. McCandless refuses, however, claiming, “flying would be cheating. It would wreck the whole trip” (67). **Find and explain two quotes from this chapter that demonstrate whether or not McCandless actually lives by his own words.**

**Additional Discussion Topic:** “So many people live within unhappy circumstances and yet will not take the initiative to change their situation because they are conditioned to a life of security, conformity, and conservatism, all of which may appear to give one peace of mind, but in reality nothing is more damaging to the adventurous spirit within a man than a secure future. The very basic core of a man’s living spirit is his passion for adventure” (57).

Chapters 10 and 11; pages 98-116

1. Identify two qualities that Walt McCandless and his son have in common.
2. Identify two specific details or examples (using quotes) from Chris McCandless'

childhood/high school years that seem to predict his later behavior. What is it about these events that help to explain his actions as an adult?

**Additional Discussion Topic:** "How is it that a kid with so much compassion could cause his parents so much pain?" (104).

Chapter 12, pages 117-126; Chapter 16, pages 157 – 171

1. Contrast McCandless' feelings about his family with his family's feelings about him. How does the Thoreau quote that opens the chapter match Chris' feelings about his family?  
**Support your points with two quotes from the reading.**
2. Read the italicized passage on page 168 that McCandless wrote and the italicized passage he highlighted from Tolstoy on page 169. Based on these writings and events in this chapter, what convinced McCandless that it was time to return to civilization? What did he learn from his time "in the wild"? **Support your answer with specific details.**

**Additional Discussion Topic:** What did McCandless expect this "greatest adventure" to accomplish?

Chapter 17; pages 172 - 186

1. Krakauer observes that it is not "unusual for a young man to be drawn to a pursuit considered reckless by his elders." **Identify two details** from this chapter where McCandless exemplifies this observation. Explain whether or not McCandless would agree with Krakauer. Finally compare McCandless' view with that of **one of the following men** mentioned in this chapter: Andy Horowitz, Gordon Samel, Roman Dial, Sir John Franklin.
2. Krakauer goes on to claim that McCandless' "life hummed with meaning and purpose. But the meaning he wrested from existence lay beyond the comfortable path." Do you agree with Krakauer? **Support your response with two specific quotes from this chapter.**

**Additional Discussion Topic:** Adventure and freedom versus safety

Chapters 18 and Epilogue; pages 185-203

1. How does the Doctor Zhivago quote that opens the chapter foreshadow McCandless' actions and writings later in the chapter? Cite **two specific examples using quotations from the text.**
2. Do you believe McCandless is to blame for his own death? Explain your answer using **two specific details** from the chapter. **Use quotations to support your response.**

**Additional Discussion Topic:** The poem "Wise Men in Their Bad Hours" and the Epilogue