

Into the Wild: Critical Analysis Response

CP English 11

Directions: After reading the selection, please **respond fully** to the following prompts. Be sure that your responses are clearly labeled (*Into the Wild* with chapter numbers), and have your name on them. Your responses are expected to be in written paragraph form and may be collected and graded at any time.

Each day we will review homework responses during discussion of the novel. Participation in class discussion is expected and it will be a portion of your grade for this unit. At the end of each discussion, **you** should note at the top of your homework **how many times you participated and indicate the type of participation**, such as: asked a question, commented on the character, answered a homework question, or challenged another student's comment. Keeping track of your own participation will help you be sure you are on track to receive a good grade on the participation portion of this book.

Chapters 1-3; pages 3-23

Participation: _____ Type: _____

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?

Additional Discussion Topic: McCandless' family relationships and upbringing

Vocabulary Definitions

congenial (5) - friendly

antimony (10) - a metallic element

rebellious **visage** (16) - face

amiable (16) - good-natured

plebeian (18) - crude, common

onerous (22) - troublesome

escarpments (10) - a steep slope

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

convivial (18) - sociable

mien (18) - appearance

Chapters 4 and 5; pages 25-46

Participation: _____ Type: _____

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.

Vocabulary Definitions

egress (28) - going out
saline (32) - salty
bourgeois (39) – middle class
itinerant (43) - traveling
fatuous (44) – satisfied and stupid
Tolstoy (29) – Russian author and philosopher believed in self-sacrifice, 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 philosopher who believed in simple living and personal freedom.

Chapters 6 and 7; pages 47-69

Participation: _____ **Type:** _____

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: Do you agree with this statement: “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).

Vocabulary Definitions

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 and 11; pages 98-116

Participation: _____ **Type:** _____

1. Identify two qualities that Walt McCandless and his son have in common. Support **each** quality with a **quote** from the text.
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).

Vocabulary Definitions

mercurial (105) - quick and changeable
incorrigible (115) -uncontrollable, incapable of being reformed
wanderlust (108) -a strong impulse to travel

Chapter 12, pages 117-126; Chapter 16, pages 157 – 171 Participation: _____ Type: _____

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?

Vocabulary Definitions

| | |
|--|---|
| monomania (120) - obsessed with one idea | sanctimonious (122) - self-righteous |
| cholera (122) - anger | sullen (123) - brooding, angry |
| idiosyncratic (123) - distinctive, individual | castigated (123) - punish |
| extemporaneous (124) - impromptu | gloaming (161) - dusk |
| Rubicon (163) - point of no return | aesthetic (163) - appreciates beauty in nature |
| perambulation (164) - patrol | taiga (164) - subarctic forest |
| reverie (164) - dream | obliquely (123) - indirectly |

Chapter 17; pages 172 - 186 Participation: _____ Type: _____

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

Vocabulary Definitions

| | |
|--|---|
| ford (174) – a shallow place to cross a river | miasma (175) - cloud |
| malevolent (176) – mean | massif (176) – connected mountains |
| ungulate (178) – hoofed animals | moldering (178) – rotting |
| scabbard (178) – cover | maxillae (179) – jawbones |
| hauteur (180) – arrogance | metis (180) – people of Indian and French-Canadian descent |
| humorous nickname | sobriquet (181) |
| 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. | |

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 Epilogue

Vocabulary Definitions

munificence (188) - bounty

precipitous (190) - abrupt

emetic (192) - causes vomiting

moniker (198) - name

beatific (199) - saintly

eloquence (189) - expressive speech

decumbent (192) - growing along the ground

insidiously (194) - casing harm in a sneaky way

conflagration (198) - fire

Into the Wild Reading Schedule:

The chapters below are the reading homework for the night indicated. Example: if you are a student in my B day class, on Nov. 11th you need to read chapters 1 -3 and have that reading completed by Nov. 13th. You should complete the response assignments nightly so that you are prepared daily for discussion. They may be collected and graded at ANY time. If you don't have it with you it will be LATE!

(B Day/A Day)

Nov. 11/12—Chapter 1-3 (23)

Nov. 13/14—Chapter 4-5 (33)

Nov. 15/18—Chapter 6-7 (22)

Nov. 19/20—Chapter 8-11 (29)

Nov. 21/Dec. 1—Chapters 12-14 (27)

Dec. 3/4 -Chapters 15-16 (25)

Dec. 5/6—Chapter 17 (14)

Dec. 9/10—Chapter 18-epilogue (18)