

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Freshman Literature teachers	School:	Liberty High School
Book Title:	Into Thin Air	Genre:	Non-Fiction Memoir
Author:	Jon Krakauer	Pages:	333
Publisher:	Anchor Books/Random House	Copyright:	1997

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

When Jon Krakauer reached the summit of Mt. Everest in the early afternoon of May 10, 1996, he hadn't slept in fifty-seven hours and was reeling from the brain-altering effects of oxygen depletion. As he turned to begin his long, dangerous descent from 29,028 feet, twenty other climbers were still pushing doggedly toward the top. No one had noticed that the sky had begun to fill with clouds. Six hours later and 3,000 feet lower, in 70-knot winds and blinding snow, Krakauer collapsed in his tent, freezing, hallucinating from exhaustion and hypoxia, but safe. The following morning, he learned that six of his fellow climbers hadn't made it back to their camp and were desperately struggling for their lives. When the storm finally passed, five of them would be dead, and the sixth so horribly frostbitten that his right hand would have to be amputated.

Into Thin Air is the definitive account of the deadliest season in the history of Everest by the acclaimed journalist and author of the bestseller Into the Wild. On assignment for Outside Magazine to report on the growing commercialization of the mountain, Krakauer, an accomplished climber, went to the Himalayas as a client of Rob Hall, the most respected high-altitude guide in the world. A rangy, thirty-five-year-old New Zealander, Hall had summited Everest four times between 1990 and 1995 and had led thirty-nine climbers to the top. Ascending the mountain in close proximity to Hall's team was a guided expedition led by Scott Fischer, a forty-year-old American with legendary strength and drive who had climbed the peak without supplemental oxygen in 1994. But neither Hall nor Fischer survived the rogue storm that struck in May 1996.

Krakauer examines what it is about Everest that has compelled so many people -- including himself -- to throw caution to the wind, ignore the concerns of loved ones, and willingly subject themselves to such risk, hardship, and expense. Written with emotional clarity and supported by his unimpeachable reporting, Krakauer's eyewitness account of what happened on the roof of the world is a singular achievement (Hardcover, inside flap).

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

From Ninth Grade Curriculum Map:

1. Formulate the meaning of unknown words through context clues and the author's use of comparison, contrast and cause and effect.

2. Integrate new vocabulary into writing and conversation by analyzing literal and figurative meanings of words, including how historical events have impacted the English language.
4. Explain how an author uses rhetorical devices to achieve purpose.
5. Analyze content from different sources on a single topic.
7. Interpret an author's style.
8. Analyze the use of figurative language, sound devices and literary techniques in literary works.
9. Compare and contrast literary elements focusing on plot and conflict, literary styles in diverse literary works.
12. Explain how figurative language expresses tone.

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

On May 19, 1953, Edmund Hillary and Sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay achieved the impossible, becoming the first men to stand on top of Mount Everest. But by May 10, 1996, climbing the 29,000-foot "goddess of the sky" had become almost routine; commercial expeditions now littered Everest's flanks. Accepting an assignment from Outside magazine to investigate whether it was safe for wealthy amateur climbers to tackle the mountain, Krakauer (Into the Wild, LJ 11/15/95) joined an expedition guided by New Zealander Rob Hall. But Krakauer got more than he bargained for when on summit day a blinding snowstorm caught four groups on the mountain's peaks. While Krakauer made it back to camp, eight others died, including Scott Fischer and Hall, two of the world's best mountaineers. Devastated by the disaster, Krakauer has written this compelling and harrowing account (expanded from his Outside article) as a cathartic act, hoping it "might purge Everest from [his] life." But after finishing this raw, emotionally intense book, readers will be haunted, as Krakauer was, by the tragedy. Highly recommended.

(Library Journal)

Review #2

Publishers Weekly

What set out to be a magazine article on top-of-the-line tours that promise safe ascents of Mt. Everest to amateur climbers has become a gripping story of a 1996 expedition gone awry and of the ensuing disaster that killed two top guides, a sherpa and several clients. "Climbing Everest was primarily about enduring pain," writes Krakauer (Into the Wild). "And in subjecting ourselves to week after week of toil, tedium and suffering... most of us were probably seeking, above all else, something like a state of grace." High-altitude climbers are an eccentric breed of Olympian idealists, dreamers, consummate sportsmen, egomaniacs and thrill-seekers. Excerpts from the writings of several of the best-known of them, including Sir Edmund Hillary, kick off Krakauer's intense reports on each leg of the ill-fated expedition. His own descriptions of the splendid landscape are exhilarating. Survival on Mt. Everest in the "Dead Zone" above 25,000 feet demands incredible self-reliance, responsible guides, supplemental oxygen and ideal weather conditions. The margin of error is nil and marketplace priorities can lead to disaster; and so Krakauer criticizes the commercialization of mountaineering. But while his reports of guides' bad judgments are disturbing, they evoke in him and in the reader more compassion than wrath, for, in the Dead Zone, experts lose their wits nearly as easily as novices. The intensity of the tragedy is haunting, and Krakauer's graphic writing drives it home: one survivor's face "was hideously swollen; splotches of deep, ink-

black frostbite covered his nose and cheeks." On the sacred mountain Sagarmatha, the Nepalese name for Everest, the frozen corpses of fallen climbers spot the windswept routes; they will never be buried, but in this superb adventure tale they have found a fitting monument. (Publishers Weekly)

**What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

<u>Title:</u> <b>John Quincy Adams: A Public Life, a Private Life</b>	<u>Author:</u> <b>Paul C. Nagel</b>
<u>Title:</u> <b>The Oddysey</b>	<u>Author:</u> <b>Homer</b>
<u>Title:</u> <b>Great Expectations</b>	<u>Author:</u> <b>Charles Dickens</b>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>

**Document any potentially controversial content:**

Minor swearing; The F-word is used three or four times in life-threatening situations; Passing reference to marijuana use after life threatening situation.

**Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated    Regular    At Risk

**GRADE LEVEL(S):**            6            7            8            9            10            11            12

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):** N/A

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** 9/4/08

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults