



ENG 302: Advanced Placement English Language & Composition 2022 Summer Reading

AP Language & Composition engages students in becoming skilled readers of any genre from a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts and in becoming skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes. This course will focus on the study of American literature where students will not only become aware of the great, controversial, and beautiful ideas contained in America's literary history, but also examine the interaction between the writer's purpose, subjects, and audience expectations. This summer you will begin this wonderful adventure by reading across genres, across time periods, and across themes. Feel free to email me, should you have any questions (pharris-marcus@vdoh.org).

Read (required):

- o *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer: a reading guide accompanies this text. As you read, take notes on post-its or in your book and be prepared to discuss the first week of class. Make sure to have a physical copy of the text; there will be a writing assignment that requires textual evidence. Use the reading guide to help navigate the text, as it is not written in a linear fashion.

Individual Choice Text: Select at least TWO to read

The list below contains a variety of subjects and genres that in some way relate to America; the goal is to engage students by providing a wide range of texts to choose from, while also representing a variety of perspectives and voices. Hopefully, you will find at least one text that piques your interest!

Parents and students are encouraged to research individual choice texts, as the content varies. Common Sense Media (www.common sense media.com), Goodreads (www.goodreads.com), and Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.com) are excellent resources to consult and will help in determining if the content of a text aligns with your family's individual media guidelines. If you are unsure of what book you may enjoy, ask a member of the English Department—we love talking about books, and can recommend a text from this list based on your interests! Parents are encouraged to read the texts in tandem with their child, as this creates the opportunity for dialogue about what they are reading and how they are responding to the texts.

Select ONE book from this column	Select ONE book from this column
<p>Fiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>A Woman is No Man</i> by Etaf Rum (**references to death by suicide, depictions of domestic violence) -<i>The Heart is a Lonely Hunter</i> by Carson McCullers (**depiction of death by suicide) -<i>Fahrenheit 451</i> by Ray Bradbury -<i>The Namesake</i> by Jhumpa Lahiri -<i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i> by Ken Kesey -<i>Americanah</i> by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie -<i>On the Road</i> by Jack Kerouac -<i>There There</i> by Tommy Orange (**depictions of gun violence) -<i>All the Pretty Horses</i> by Cormac McCarthy -<i>The Round House</i> by Louise Erdrich (**references to sexual assault, depictions of violence) -<i>Little Fires Everywhere</i> by Celeste Ng -<i>Life of Pi</i> by Yann Martel -<i>American Street</i> by Ibo Zobi -<i>The Midnight Library</i> by Matt Haig -<i>The Parable of the Sower</i> by Octavia Butler (**depictions of violence, some graphic; references to sexual assault) -<i>The Haunting of Hill House</i> by Shirley Jackson -<i>We Have Always Lived in the Castle</i> by Shirley Jackson -<i>Lincoln in the Bardo</i> by George Saunders -<i>My Antonia</i> by Willa Cather <p>Autobiography / Memoir</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Hollywood Park</i> by Mikel Jollett -<i>Naked</i> by David Sedaris -<i>Me Talk Pretty One Day</i> by David Sedaris -<i>When Breath Becomes Air</i> by Paul Kalinithi -<i>Beautiful Boy: Father's Journey through His Son's Addiction</i> by David Sheff -<i>127 Hours: Between a Rock and a Hard Place</i> by Aaron Ralston -<i>Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust</i> by Immaculée Ilibagiza -<i>Greenlights</i> by Matthew McConahey -<i>Bossypants</i> by Tina Fey 	<p>True Crime (**content warning: all of the texts below include references to real-life crime, as well as descriptions of crime scenes and the crime themselves)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>The Devil in the White City</i> by Erik Larson -<i>In Cold Blood</i> by Truman Capote -<i>American Sherlock: Murder, Forensics, and the Birth of American CSI</i> by Kate Winkler Dawson -<i>Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil</i> by John Berendt <p>Nonfiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i> by Rebecca Skolt -<i>Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II</i> by Liza Mundy -<i>Hidden Figures</i> by Margot Lee Shetterly <p>Autobiography / Memoir</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Angela's Ashes</i> by Frank McCourt -<i>Educated</i> by Tara Westover -<i>Between the World and Me</i> by Ta-Nehisi Coates -<i>The Woman Warrior</i> by Maxine Hong Kingston -<i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> by Maya Angelou (**depiction of sexual assault) <p>Fiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> by John Steinbeck -<i>Passing</i> by Nella Larson -<i>The Underground Railroad</i> by Colson Whitehead -<i>The Things They Carried</i> by Tim O'Brien (**depictions of graphic violence during war) -<i>The Sun Also Rises</i> by Ernest Hemingway -<i>The Joy Luck Club</i> by Amy Tan

Into the Wild Reading Guide

Into the Wild Character Chart: This chart will help you keep track of all the different people in this book. Consider including page numbers as well as notes for future reference.

Person / Character	Description
Chris McCandless (Alex Supertramp)* *consider the significance of McCandless' pseudonym or nom de plume	
Jim Gallien	
Jan Burres	
Wayne Westerberg	
Ronald Franz	

Gene Rosellini	
John Waterman	
Carl McCunn	
Everett Reuss	
Carine McCandless	
Samuel Walter McCandless	
Wilhelmina "Billie" McCandless	
Jon Krauker (the author)	

Introduction: *Into the Wild* is a nonfiction story about a young man, Christopher McCandless, who left everything behind to walk “alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley . . . four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter” (description from the book jacket). Jon Krauker, a journalist fascinated by McCandless’ *odyssey*, “reassembles the disquieting facts of Chris McCandless’ short life—and searche[s] for clues to the mystery of his untimely death” (description from the book jacket). This story explores many themes including the pull of the American wilderness, the restlessness of Americans, and father-son relationships.

A note on the organization of this text: Krauker, the author, weaves together his research about McCandless’s life with history, descriptions or natural landscapes, and stories about other pioneers who have ventured to go “into the wild.” Moreover, the details of McCandless’ life are not arranged in a chronological fashion; thus, this book may be challenging to follow. Pay attention to the maps and epigraphs located at the beginning of each chapter: they will serve as guideposts on your journey.

How to use this reading guide: While you do not need to write answers to or even answer every question, they will help you check for understanding and prepare you for our first assessments in the fall.

Read the Author’s Note at the beginning of the text.

Pre-reading Question: What are the benefits and disadvantages of revealing McCandless’ death on the cover of the book and in the opening chapters?

Chapter 1: “The Alaska Interior”: Before saying goodbye to Jim Galian, Alex gives him his watch saying, “I don’t want to know what time it is. I do not want to know the day it is or where I am. None of that matters.” (7) Why do you think Alex wanted to be unaware of these things?

Chapter 2: “The Stampede Trail”: Given that McCandless had no ID and wanted to be so disconnected from society, why do you think he wrote the 113 journal entries mentioned on pg. 13? What do you think keeping a record meant to McCandless?

Chapter 3: “Carthage”: When describing McCandless’ work habits Wayne Westerberg concludes that, “He was what you’d call extremely ethical.” Define *ethical* in your own terms. Do you see McCandless as an ethical person? Why do you think McCandless declined membership into Phi Beta Kappa? What do you think of his choice?

Chapter 4: “Detrital Wash”: Consider the final sentences of the opening quotation by Paul Shepard: “To the desert go prophets and hermits; through the deserts go pilgrims and exiles. Here the leaders of the great religions have sought the therapeutic and spiritual values of retreat, not to escape but to find reality.” Do you think of Alex as a pilgrim searching to get more fully in touch with reality or as an escapist running from the modern world? Explain.

Chapter 6: “Anza-Borrego”: Consider the opening quotation from Thoreau. What “intangible” goods did McCandless accumulate during his odyssey? McCandless asserts that, “nothing is more damaging to the adventuresome spirit within a man than a secure future” (57). What do you think he means by this statement? Can you relate to it? If so, how?

Chapter 7: “Carthage”: Wayne says, “Unlike most of us, [McCandless] was the sort of person who insisted on living out his beliefs.” Do you agree with Wayne? If so, can you list five or more of McCandless’ beliefs? When

Alex cries, Borah, Wayne's girlfriend, has an intuition that McCandless' trip might result in his death. Do you think, despite Krakauer's obvious bias against this opinion, that there was an element of suicidal intent in McCandless' final journey? Use specific facts from Krakauer's account to support your position.

Chapter 8: "Alaska": This chapter introduces three eccentric Alaskan characters: Gene Rosellini, John Waterman, and Carl McCunn. Why does Krakauer infuse their life stories into his study of McCandless? Krakauer writes, "Although he was rash, untutored in the ways of the backcountry, and incautious to the point of foolhardiness, he wasn't incompetent – he wouldn't have lasted 113 days if he were. And he wasn't a nutcase, he wasn't a sociopath, he wasn't an outcast. McCandless was something else – although precisely what is hard to say? A pilgrim, perhaps." What is McCandless to you?

Chapter 9: "David Gulch": What parallels can you draw between McCandless' personality and Reuss's? What differences?

Chapters 10, 11, 12 and 13 all explore how the people who knew McCandless processed the finality of his death. Appropriately, the epigraph for Chapter 10 is the 1992 New York Times article detailing the discovery of an unidentified young man's body in the bus.

Questions for chapters 10-13: How do the stories about McCandless' childhood help you better understand his behavior in adulthood? Be specific. Krakauer explores McCandless' idealism, particularly his desire to help the hungry and the homeless. What do you think motivated McCandless to help the less fortunate? What did McCandless discover about his father during his trip to El Segundo, CA two summers earlier? How does McCandless' handling of this family secret resemble Walt's way of dealing with his two marriages?

Chapters 14 & 15: "The Stikine Ice Cap": List six reasons Krakauer gives that explain why he included these autobiographical chapters. Do you think these autobiographical chapters enhance the book? If so, how?

Chapter 16: "The Alaska Interior": Gaylord Stuckey was struck by McCandless' independence and concludes, "He wanted to prove to himself that he could make it on his own, without anybody else's help." Why do you think self-reliance was so vital to McCandless?

Chapter 17 & 18: "The Stampede Trail": Krakauer wonders why people "seem to despise [McCandless] so intensely for having died here." What do you think underlies many people's scorn for McCandless' desire to live, even at the risk of death, in the wild?

Epilogue: Our culture tends to view death as an end that defines or even invalidates the life that preceded it. Consider how different characters view McCandless' death. Does how they view the way he died make them judge his life in a particular way? Explain using one or two characters as specific examples.

Journal Prompts: You are not required to answer these questions; however, we will be exploring these individually and discussing our responses with the class in August. They are included here as *food for thought*.

- Chris McCandless was born and raised in an economically-stable home. He received a college education, owned a car, and had money. What were his motives for running away from home, as directly stated and/or inferred in the text? What did McCandless expect to find or experience?
- Throughout his journey, McCandless meets many people who offer him help. Which person that he meets do you think impacted him the most? Why do you think this?

- “Dozens of marginal characters have marched off into the Alaska wilds over the years, never to reappear. A few lodged firmly in the state’s collective memory” (Krakauer 72). Why do you think that Chris McCandless’ story is significant? What universal themes are present in this story?
- “Chris just didn’t like being told what to do” (Krakauer 115). During high school, McCandless told his parents that he didn’t want to go to college. Why do you think he listened to his parents’ advice and went anyway? Do you think this was a good decision for him?
- “Happiness only real when shared.” Respond to this quote. Consider McCandless’ journey, as well as your own experiences.
- Prepare three open-ended questions to pose during class seminar. Write your own response to one of these three questions.

