***Into the Wild* Essay Prompts**

**Prompt Choice 1:**

Krakauer says in the “Author’s Note” that there were many differing opinions about Chris, and that his own “convictions should be apparent soon enough.” But that he will “leave it to the reader to form his or her own opinion of Chris McCandless.” Indeed in chapter 8, in defense of McCandless, Krakauer states,

“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.”

Is Krakauer’s view impartial enough to allow readers to form their own opinions about Chris McCandless? How does his writing style and structure of the text either allow or disallow his readers to “form his or her own opinion”?

**Prompt Choice 2:**

You will not answer all of the questions listed below, but rather focus your argumentative essay on one to three that will allow you to formulate a working thesis:

Is Chris a hero? A dreamer? A nut? What are your reactions to Chris and others like him who are “kind of different”? What drives them? How do they navigate the world? What is the impact of their actions on themselves and others?

* Consider such ELEMENTS of his character (and others) as: his beliefs; his actions; his choices; his relationships
* Your sources might be: his letters to family and friends; his journal entries; Krakauer’s analysis of Chris; testimony of family; McCandless’s similarities to other non-conformists
* Incorporate at least one other person from the narrative who was also an outcast or non-conformist or who also attempted to separate from society for personal beliefs

**Prompt Choice 3:**

Compare Krakauer’s book to the film directed by Sean Penn, starring Emile Hirsch. Does the film paint a very different picture from that portrayed in the book? Do you feel that the film does Chris McCandless justice? Explain what you see to be key differences between the text and the film in terms of character (Chris’s traits, motivations, conflicts), message, style, etc. Suggestion: Organize by idea rather than by book vs. film

**Prompt Choice 4:**

The word “hubris” is Greek for excessive pride. Speaking about his own forays into nature, Krakauer says, “The fact that I survived my Alaska adventure and McCandless did not survive his was largely a matter of chance; ( . . . ) Eighteen years after the event I now recognize that I suffered from hubris, perhaps, and an appalling innocence, certainly; but I wasn’t suicidal.” Compare this idea to your understanding of McCandless. Do you think it is an accurate way to see McCandless?

**Prompt Choice 5:**

A central question in this narrative is whether Chris McCandless’s choices were hubristic and selfish or ambitious and admirable. You need to decide what YOU think about Chris’s decisions and actions, but you also need to inform your ideas with evidence from the text. Write your essay by answering this prompt:

**What kind of person is Chris, what is the author’s attitude toward Chris’s choices, and what is your opinion about Chris’s choices?**

For a smoother essay, organize your paragraphs to answer the three parts of the prompt: Body paragraph one should analyze Chris’ personality traits and goals. Body paragraph two should analyze Krakauer’s attitude toward Chris. Body paragraph three should state your opinion of Chris. **DO NOT** answer paragraph THREE in FIRST PERSON!!!!

**Prompt Choice 6:**

Explain McCandless’s attitude regarding civilization versus nature. Also discuss his feelings about the government and law, family, friends, and society. Explain McCandless’s worldview and how it connects to/mirrors the philosophies of Romanticism and Transcendentalism.

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**Prompt Choice 7:**

Developing a theme: Explain how Krakauer develops a theme through telling of McCandless’s story. Choose one of the following topics and explain how Krakauer develops this idea into a theme and for what purpose: the American Wilderness, arrogance/innocence/ignorance, isolation versus intimacy, freedom of solitude, luck/chance/circumstance, materialism versus idealism, risk and self-reinvention. Your thesis should address and explain the theme, how it is developed, what purpose it fulfills. The essay should be richly supported with references to the text, and should consider the implications of the theme developed in the essay.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL ESSAYS:**

DUE: 11:59 PM ON TURNITIN.COM WEDNESDAY 12/19

MLA FORMATTING, MULTI-PARAGRAPH, FULL INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION

THESIS STATEMENT AT END OF THE INTRO. PARAGRAPH

AT LEAST TWO MAIN IDEAS WITH TWO QUOTES AS EVIDENCE WITH ANALYSIS IN EACH BODY PARAGRAPH, THREE IS IDEAL.

FOLLOW THE OUTLINE FORMAT PROVIDED FOR YOUR CRUCIBLE ESSAY.

GOAL: IMPROVEMENT FROM YOUR LAST ESSAY!

THESIS STATEMENT CHECK: 12/13

ROUGH OUTLINE CHECK: 12/14

ROUGH DRAFT CHECK: 12/17