

# AP Language and Composition: Randleman High School

## Reading requirement for summer of 2017:

- *Into the Wild*, by Jon Krakauer
- (alternative) *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

To understand Chris McCandless of Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild* is to understand his journey, both literally and idealistically. By examining his choices, along with the rewards and consequences those choices produced, perhaps this can serve as an impetus for you to closely examine the choices that lie ahead of you and the possible outcomes of those decisions, not only for you but for your loved ones as well. When McCandless ditches his car and gives away his trust fund, he steps off the road into the Alaskan wilderness carrying only what will fit into his backpack. In doing so, he joins a small but highly committed group of individuals who in some manner reject the lifestyles, norms, and even ideals of much of modern America and its culture. Hopefully, by taking this journey with McCandless, you'll also be given an opportunity to examine your own path, and the ideals that pave it.

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Besides being used as the source for the summer project, *Into the Wild* will be the centerpiece for a Socratic Seminar, an argumentative essay, and journal presentations to the class upon the immediate return to school for AP Language and Composition. Therefore, not reading it, relying on Spark Notes or a similar internet source, or merely watching the movie version would be a very bad choice. The summer project—consisting of a journal created from natural materials and four specific entries designed and written for that journal—is due Monday, Aug. 28, the first day of the 2017-18 school year. Without exception, there will be no late work accepted. The summer project, along with the argumentative essay that will be written in class and your journal presentations which will commence once school begins, will account for 10 percent of your first quarter grade.

## Summer Assignments:

**A “Natural” Journal:** As much as possible, you are to create a journal for all your writing assignments for this summer from natural materials collected from “the wild.” You may buy products such as leather strings, rope, paper, etc., which have roots in nature, but challenge yourself to make this product as “natural” as possible. If you have a vacation to the beach, mountains, etc., planned for this summer, it would be an excellent opportunity to schedule one of your journaling sessions there and collect materials from that unique habitat. Your journal should be a minimum of 10x14 inches, and it should be constructed well enough to securely hold your writing entries.

**“Selfie” Artwork:** To illustrate your journal, please take “selfie/nature” photos during each of your assigned four writing sessions to commemorate that moment, with you and your setting in the photograph. Use the photos in any creative way that you please—on the front, back, or inside your journal.

**Journaling Assignment Settings:** The chief requirement for your journaling sessions is that they be done in isolation—a place with as much peace and quiet as possible so that you may reflect and contemplate without interruption. A site within nature would be most ideal—in the woods behind your house, in a park, on a beach, in a mountain field—but a rocking chair on the front porch, or even on your bed with a flashlight could be equally effective. The key goal here is that you get some “alone” time, particularly time in nature if you can do so safely and with the proper permission.

*(Note to administrators: The following journaling assignments will not be included among the paperwork given to AP students prior to the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year. Instead, each student will be given envelopes that will be marked Assignment #1, Assignment #2, etc. Rather than reading the text with these assignments at the forefront of their thoughts, I would rather their writing be more spontaneous upon opening the envelopes at the chosen journaling sites.)*

**Journaling Assignment #1:** We begin this assignment with imagery: with your eyes closed, what do you hear? What do you smell? Touch something nearby. How does it feel? Open your eyes. What do you see? Be as specific as possible, using strong imagery descriptions. Conclude this assignment by asking yourself: How do I feel being alone? Peaceful? Comfortable? Unsafe? Anxious? What thoughts enter your mind? Is it possible to shut out distractions? Could this “alone time” serve a purpose in your normal routine? **<Minimum length of journal entry: 1 page (notebook size)>**

**Journaling Assignment #2:** *Option A*—Writing as Chris McCandless on the night before deciding to leave The Magic Bus while wrapped up warmly in the sleeping bag sewn by his mother, compose a letter to Chris’s mom that reflects on his adventures and what he has learned about life. *Option B*—Writing again as McCandless, just days before “your” death, compose a letter to your father on how you feel about your relationship with him, past and present. **<Minimum length of journal entry: 1 page (notebook size)>**

**Journaling Assignment #3:** The following passages are all quotes found highlighted in McCandless’s journal and amongst his other belongings. Analyzing what you have learned about McCandless, write a half page on what you infer one of these passages might have meant to him. Be sure to indicate which passage you are addressing. On the other half of your page, pick a passage—the same, or a different one—that has meaning for your life and write what it means to you. Again, be certain to clearly indicate which passage you are addressing. **<Minimum length of journal entry: 1 page (notebook size)>**

**Journaling Assignment #4:** Enclosed within this last envelope you will find the last picture, or selfie, taken by McCandless shortly before his death. The words accompanying this photo were: “I have had a happy life and thank the Lord. Goodbye and may God bless all.” Reflect on McCandless’s frame of mind in this moment by writing a one-page first-person narrative based on his last sentiments and selfie photo. To conclude your journal, on a separate sheet of paper, summarize McCandless’s final message to the world by creating an original hashtag in his name. You can display this as a piece of art or a drawing, and underneath the hashtag please explain its meaning. <**Minimum length of journal entry: 1 page of analysis and another page featuring hashtag and meaning**>

**Journal Presentation and Musical Accompaniment:** Students will be required to present their journals and at least one of their writing entries to the class upon their return to school. To accompany your presentation, please select a song that reflects the tone/themes of your project that can be played to provide the appropriate ambiance for your message.

**In Conclusion:** If it’s possible with a “summer” assignment, have fun with this project. If you’re fortunate, you’ll not only learn something about the Chris McCandlesses of the world, but you’ll also learn something about yourself. If there are any questions at all about the assignment, you can email me at [mrouth@randolph.k12.nc.us](mailto:mrouth@randolph.k12.nc.us). Get off to a great start in AP Language and Composition by making sure you turn in a college-worthy product!

**Grading Rubrics:** Included