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 **Prestwick House**  
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***Into the Wild***  
BY JON KRAKAUER



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pre-Reading

### Setting

**Objective:** Understanding how setting influences and reflects the characters in a story

#### Activity

*Into the Wild* takes place mainly in Alaska.

Robert Service (1874-1958) was a poet who wrote mainly about Alaska. In one of his poems, "The Spell of the Yukon," he writes the following lines:

There's a land where the mountains are nameless,  
And the rivers all run God knows where;  
There are lives that are erring and aimless,  
And deaths that just hang by a hair;  
There are hardships that nobody reckons;  
There are valleys unpeopled and still;  
There's a land—oh, it beckons and beckons,  
And I want to go back—and I will.

Form groups of three or four people each. Using Service's poem as a source, create a person you think would be attracted to Alaska. List the person's characteristics (for example, profession, age, gender, family background). Then write a brief monologue in which the person tells his or her story about moving to or visiting Alaska and explains the fascination of it. Have one person in your group perform the monologue.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 3

### Point of View

**Objective:** Exploring first-person and third-person narratives and point of view

#### Activity

The point of view of a story is often conveyed through the narrator. In *Into the Wild*, the author uses primarily the third-person point of view: he writes as if he is outside the story and reporting on it as he would see it from afar. In contrast, a first-person narrative is delivered in the voice of the person who is experiencing the story; it uses that person's point of view as the filter for all events and feelings.

This chapter introduces Wayne Westerberg, who owns a grain business in Carthage, South Dakota. The chapter also gives biographical background on Chris McCandless. Rewrite a few paragraphs of this chapter from the point of view of Wayne Westerberg or the point of view of Chris McCandless. Then get into a group with a few other people and share your work.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapters 4 and 5****Jeopardy****Objective:** Exhibiting knowledge of the text**Activity**

Krakauer has included both factual information and assessment of character in these two chapters. Using a format similar to that of the television game show *Jeopardy*, create questions and answers based on information provided in Chapters Four and Five. Create two questions for each category, and write your name next to each question/answer pair. As in the game show, answers must be given in the form of questions. Hand in your questions. Your teacher will then separate the categories and read questions from each. If you know the answer, raise your hand to be called on. You may answer only questions that you did not write.

**A sample question and answer are listed below:****Category: Who?**

1. This person gave Chris a job at his grain silo.

Who is Wayne Westerberg?

2. Q. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Q. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Q. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**Category: What?**

1. Q. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 6****Letter Writing**

**Objectives:** Understanding the perspective of a character  
Expressing emotions in a letter

**Activity**

This chapter tells the story of Ronald A. Franz, an elderly man who befriended Chris McCandless. Franz was particularly attached to the young man he knew as Alex, and he was devastated when he learned that Alex was dead.

From the perspective of Ron Franz, compose a letter to Walt and Billie McCandless explaining your affection for their son and your sense of loss. Your letter should be three paragraphs long: the first should cover how you came to know Alex, the second should give your insights into Alex's character, and the third should tell the McCandlesses how knowing Alex and learning of his death changed you.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 8****Comparison****Objective:** Finding parallels between characters**Activity**

This chapter examines the lives of Gene Rosellini, John Mallon Waterman, and Carl McCunn, three men whose lives parallel McCandless's in many ways. These men, along with McCandless were considered to be eccentrics, hippies, and reckless adventurers who were most likely mentally ill. Their deaths prompted many Alaskans to publicly voice strong, negative opinions of them.

Imagine you are a psychiatrist whose patients include Chris McCandless and the three men described as parallels to him. You meet individually with them right before they make their final journeys. Analyze the men from the notes you've taken and diagnose each one. Your notes should be based on the information provided in the text. Include as many details as you can.

**GENE ROSELLINI:**

Notes

Relationship with parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Upbringing: \_\_\_\_\_

Unusual characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Analysis/Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**JOHN MALLON WATERMAN:**

Notes

Relationship with parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Other factors: \_\_\_\_\_

Unusual characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Analysis/Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 12

### Comprehension

**Objectives:** Writing an essay  
Demonstrating comprehension of character relationships

#### Activity

Write a short essay (250 words or less) about the relationship between Chris McCandless and his parents from high school through his disappearance and his parents' involvement after he left.

Think of the following questions as you write:

- How did the relationship between parents and son seem in public—for example, at McCandless's high school and college graduations?
- How did McCandless's experiences at Emory affect their relationship initially, and how did their relationship change as his Emory experience changed?
- What did McCandless discover when he visited his old home in El Segundo, California?
- How did this discovery change his view of his parents?
- What does Billie McCandless's dream say about her relationship with her son?