

**ENGLISH II HONORS**  
**DR. VAN GUNTEN**  
**Writer's Journal Questions for**  
**Krakauer's *Into the Wild***

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Respond fully and thoughtfully (either typed or neatly handwritten) to the questions and topics below. You will be expected to submit your finished journal responses at the beginning of the school year. Yes, they will be graded.

**Journal Response #1:** Answer this *before* you begin reading the book.

**Author's Note**

A. Shortly after his college graduation, and without telling his family or friends, Chris gives up everything—family, friends, money, college, his given name, his possessions—in search of a transcendent experience. He feels as though something important is missing from his life, some deeper meaning to his existence.

Look up the word *transcendent* in a dictionary. Think about what it means, and then write a paragraph or two to explain why you think people might believe they could have a transcendent experience in a place like the Alaskan wilderness.

**Journal Response #2:** Answer this *after* you have completed Chapter 10.

**Chapter Ten: Fairbanks**

B. Everett Reuss, Chris McCandless, and the Irish monks known as the *papar* all leave behind the civilized world in search of the beauty and isolation found only in the uninhabited, wild places of the world. Everett and Chris, in their journals and letters, express how the beauty and solitude they find in the wild deepens their connection to the world, to their inner lives, and to their individual ideas of the Divine, or God.

Write about your reaction to this idea of escaping civilization to attain a higher degree of spiritual enlightenment. Given the high physical and emotional price paid by Chris, Everett, and the others mentioned in the book, do you think their adventures were worth it? Do you think *they* thought it was worth it as they faced their deaths? Would you like to try a wilderness retreat from civilization similar to what these men did? Respond to these questions in your writing, and add anything else that is on your mind at this point in the story. Be sure to explain why you feel as you do.

**Journal Response #3:** Answer this *after* you have completed the entire book (choose *one*).

C. One of the last notes Chris writes before he dies says:

**"S.O.S. I NEED YOUR HELP. I AM INJURED, NEAR DEATH, AND TOO WEAK TO HIKE OUT OF HERE. I AM ALL ALONE. THIS IS NO JOKE. IN**

*THE NAME OF GOD, PLEASE REMAIN TO SAVE ME. I AM OUT COLLECTING BERRIES CLOSE BY AND SHALL RETURN THIS EVENING. THANK YOU. CHRIS MCCANDLESS. AUGUST?"*

By this note, Chris would seem to be dropping his Alex Supertramp identity and reclaiming his Chris McCandless identity. Write a journal entry as Chris in which you explain why you have decided to drop the name Alex and take back your birth name. Be detailed and specific in describing what this name change signifies. Use events and ideas from the entire book to explain why you want to go back to being Chris.

D. Write a letter to Jon Krakauer expressing your opinion of the book. Explain your reasons for liking or not liking it. State what life lessons you've learned from this book. Explain how the book conveyed those lessons to you. Describe how you feel about Chris McCandless's life choices. Tell whether you would have done anything differently had you been in his shoes. If you have any lingering questions about the story, or about Krakauer's life or motives for writing the book, ask those questions in your letter. Explain why you are curious about these things. Include any other information or thoughts you'd like to express to Krakauer in your letter.