

English 4 Honors

Summer Reading Questions: *Beowulf*, *Dracula*, *Into the Wild*

The following contains questions to help you in your understanding of your summer reading. During the course of the 2009-2010 year, we will study each of these: *Beowulf*, *Dracula*, and *Into the Wild*, so the summer reading activity is not a “meaningless activity”—you will be responsible for having completed these activities; these questions are a foundation upon which we will build.

Please read the introductions before each reading assignment; they explain how to approach the reading assignments. A quick overview is as follows:

Beowulf—Questions for Guided Reading and Annotation of the Text

Dracula—Study Guide Questions (Short Answers)

Into the Wild—Ten Short Essay Questions

Warning: Do not ignore nor wait until the last minute to do this work. Most English 4 Honors students who seek to find a fast route through this material or think that watching a movie is the same as reading the text tend to do poorly in the course. Those who read the actual texts and respond to the questions, reflecting on the answers, tend to do very well. As an honors class, it has been designed for students who enjoy reading and writing.

Unlike other texts assigned during the year, you will have read *Beowulf*, *Dracula*, and *Into the Wild* by the start of the fall semester; therefore, you will only have a few days to review these texts prior to our studying them in class. Please keep all questions and your responses so that you may refer to them when that time comes.

Into the Wild

After reading *Into the Wild*, type up responses to the following prompts. (Each should be a fully developed, solid paragraph. Spend time with your answer—word choices, specific, clear language, good sentence fluency in addition to making certain your mechanics, [grammar, punctuation, usage] are sound.)

Please note that we will be studying *Into the Wild* later in the year. I will assume, however, that at the start of the fall semester, you have read *Into the Wild* and that you have answered these questions. Please keep your responses. You will be required to bring these questions and responses during the summer reading exams / activities check.

1. Since we “know” the end of the story of Chris McCandless—he dies by starvation, alone in the Alaskan bush after trekking into the wild to live off the land—why bother reading this?
2. How does the novel examine the following: 1) “the grip wilderness has on the American imagination”; 2) “the allure high-risk activities hold for young men of a certain mind”; and 3) the complicated highly charged bond that exists between fathers and sons?

3. *Into the Wild* can be called a “travel narrative”—what is a “travel narrative”? Besides McCandless, who is the other major traveler who shares his travel narrative?
4. Look up the term “New New Journalism.” How is Krakauer’s style one of a new, new journalist? (Use *Into the Wild* to help you; also research Krakauer’s other books and articles.)
5. Krakauer admits he is not an “unbiased” narrator / journalist—he is presenting an argument regarding McCandless. What is that argument and do you agree with it? Why or why not?
6. What did you learn about yourself after reading this book? Compare yourself with McCandless’ ideals and goals. Do you think you might gain something if you had a worldview similar to his? Explain.
7. Read the quotes at the start of each chapter. Find several that have a similar theme—copy them and discuss how they reflect an important theme within the story.
8. Have you ever wanted to wander into the wild and live off the land? Or do you share an intoxicating relationship with nature? In answering this, please explain why / why not and what this says about you as a person.
9. After reading this book what surprises you the most? Be specific and explain why.
10. Watch the movie—what does it lack? What does the novel give you that the movie does not and cannot?