

# Into the Wild

## Author's Note and Chapters 1–5

by Jon Krakauer

### Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

**Practice words:** asceticism, bourgeois, derelict, emancipated, espoused, estranged, flout, foolhardy, oblique, primordial

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#### PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview ..... 2

Answer Key — Preview ..... 3

**Caution:** share only if self-checking

#### OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context ..... 4

Answer Key — In Context ..... 5

**Caution:** do not share with students

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#### About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

#### About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz (use after reading, or skip):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.

#### Vocabulary Sections for this Book:

**Section 1 · Author's Note and Chapters 1–5 · A hitchhiker bound for Alaska**

Section 2 · Chapters 6–10 · McCandless's travels across the West

Section 3 · Chapters 11–15 · McCandless's family and childhood

Section 4 · Chapters 16–18 and Epilogue · The final journey into Alaska

**Bold = this section.** Other sections are available at [verbalworkout.com](http://verbalworkout.com).



[verbalworkout.com](http://verbalworkout.com)

(all resources free)

# Vocabulary Preview

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

*Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.*

1. Friends were surprised by the **asceticism** of his daily life.

- A. strict self-denial
- B. constant cheerfulness
- C. careful organization

6. The two brothers had been **estranged** for nearly a decade.

- A. separated by long distance
- B. rival business partners
- C. no longer on good terms

2. The artist mocked the **bourgeois** tastes of his wealthy neighbors.

- A. refined and aristocratic
- B. conventional and middle-class
- C. rebellious and artistic

7. He liked to **flout** the dress code by wearing sandals to work.

- A. openly defy or ignore
- B. deliberately misread
- C. loudly complain about

3. A **derelict** warehouse stood at the edge of the old harbor.

- A. abandoned and decaying
- B. dark and windowless
- C. enormous and sprawling

8. Diving into the rocky surf after dark was a **foolhardy** thing to do.

- A. recklessly daring
- B. genuinely courageous
- C. completely pointless

4. After years of strict rules, the young man finally felt **emancipated**.

- A. filled with new energy
- B. left without support
- C. set free from control

9. The senator gave an **oblique** response to the reporter's pointed question.

- A. openly hostile
- B. indirect and evasive
- C. carefully rehearsed

5. Throughout her career she **espoused** the cause of public libraries.

- A. carefully studied
- B. adopted and supported
- C. generously funded

10. Deep in the canyon, a **primordial** silence pressed in on the hikers.

- A. sudden and uneasy
- B. deep and respectful
- C. ancient and primeval

# ANSWER KEY

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| #  | KEY |
|----|-----|
| 1  | A   |
| 2  | B   |
| 3  | A   |
| 4  | C   |
| 5  | B   |
| 6  | C   |
| 7  | A   |
| 8  | A   |
| 9  | B   |
| 10 | C   |

# Vocabulary in Context

## Into the Wild

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

**1** “I do so in the hope that my experiences will throw some oblique light on the enigma of Chris McCandless.”

As it is used in the passage, the word “oblique” most nearly means that the light shed will be

- A. harsh
- B. indirect
- C. faint

**2** “In college McCandless began emulating Tolstoy’s asceticism and moral rigor to a degree that first astonished, and then alarmed, those who were close to him.”

It can reasonably be inferred that McCandless admired Tolstoy chiefly for his

- A. pursuit of literary fame
- B. taste for refined comforts
- C. embrace of self-denial

**3** “Gallien thought the hitchhiker’s scheme was foolhardy and tried repeatedly to dissuade him ...”

Which detail best supports the idea that Alex’s scheme was foolhardy?

- A. his only food was a bag of rice
- B. he came from South Dakota
- C. he gave his watch away

**4** “A vintage International Harvester from the 1940s, the derelict vehicle is located twenty-five miles west of Healy as the raven flies, rusting incongruously in the fireweed beside the Stampede Trail, just beyond the boundary of Denali National Park.”

The author most likely calls the bus “derelict” in order to

- A. imply it is still drivable
- B. stress its abandonment and decay
- C. note its great age alone

**5** “If McCandless felt estranged from his parents and siblings, he found a surrogate family in Westerberg and his employees, most of whom lived in Westerberg’s Carthage home.”

The passage most strongly suggests that, in Westerberg’s circle, McCandless found

- A. coworkers he secretly resented
- B. closeness he lacked with his family
- C. the first family he had ever had

**6** “At long last he was unencumbered, emancipated from the stifling world of his parents and peers, a world of abstraction and security and material excess, a world in which he felt grievously cut off from the raw throb of existence.”

The word “emancipated” in the excerpt primarily functions to convey McCandless’s

- A. sense of release from his old life
- B. fear of the unknown ahead
- C. anger at his parents’ careers

**7** “... he took as gospel the essay ‘On the Duty of Civil Disobedience’ and thus considered it his moral responsibility to flout the laws of the state.”

It can reasonably be inferred that McCandless believed he was justified in choosing to

- A. quietly obey every statute
- B. avoid all public attention
- C. openly defy unjust laws

**8** “On the face of it, Bullhead City doesn’t seem like the kind of place that would appeal to an adherent of Thoreau and Tolstoy, an ideologue who expressed nothing but contempt for the bourgeois trappings of mainstream America.”

As it is used in the passage, the word “bourgeois” most nearly refers to

- A. strict religious traditions
- B. corrupt government officials
- C. conventional middle-class values

**9** “London’s fervent condemnation of capitalist society, his glorification of the primordial world, his championing of the great unwashed, all of it mirrored McCandless’s passions.”

Which statement about Jack London is best supported by the passage?

- A. He idealized a wild, primitive world
- B. He avoided all politics
- C. He celebrated modern industry

**10** “... maintaining a sedentary existence that bore scant resemblance to the ideals he espoused in print.”

Which choice best describes the author’s attitude toward Jack London in the excerpt?

- A. skeptical of his consistency
- B. indifferent to his fame
- C. awed by his self-discipline

**ANSWER KEY**  
**Vocabulary in Context**  
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| #  | KEY | NOTE                                                                                                                 |
|----|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | B   |                                                                                                                      |
| 2  | C   |                                                                                                                      |
| 3  | A   | Event comprehension.                                                                                                 |
| 4  | B   |                                                                                                                      |
| 5  | B   | Character comprehension.                                                                                             |
| 6  | A   |                                                                                                                      |
| 7  | C   | Students often confuse 'flout' (to openly defy) with 'flaunt' (to show off); the answer turns on the defiance sense. |
| 8  | C   |                                                                                                                      |
| 9  | A   |                                                                                                                      |
| 10 | A   | The answer turns on the gap between the ideals London 'espoused' in print and the sedentary life he actually led.    |

**Teacher Context: Author's Note and Chapters 1–5**

An Author's Note frames how Krakauer came to the story, then the book opens with Jim Gallien dropping a young hitchhiker at the Stampede Trail and hunters later finding his body in an abandoned bus. The narrative doubles back to begin tracing Chris McCandless's two-year wandering after college: Carthage and Wayne Westerberg, the abandoned car and the desert Southwest, and Bullhead City. Chapters are grouped to balance section length; the break falls before Chapter 6.