

Into the Wild

Chapters 11–15

by Jon Krakauer

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: bereavement, clemency, extricated, gregarious, recalcitrant, receptacles, sanctimonious, supplanted, veneer, volition

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

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.



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. Months of **bereavement** left her quiet and withdrawn.

- A. worry and stress
- B. deep grief and mourning
- C. illness and fatigue

2. The judge showed **clemency** and reduced the sentence.

- A. caution and restraint
- B. fairness and impartiality
- C. mercy and leniency

3. Rescuers **extricated** the hiker from the narrow cave.

- A. freed from entanglement
- B. guided to safety
- C. lifted and carried out

4. Naturally **gregarious**, she joined every club on campus.

- A. sociable and outgoing
- B. ambitious and competitive
- C. generous and giving

5. The **recalcitrant** toddler refused his coat, his shoes, and his breakfast.

- A. tired and cranky
- B. stubbornly uncooperative
- C. playfully mischievous

6. The recycling center has separate **receptacles** for glass, paper, and plastic.

- A. machines that crush items
- B. containers that hold items
- C. labels for sorting items

7. His **sanctimonious** lecture about honesty annoyed everyone at the table.

- A. harsh and angry
- B. long and rambling
- C. self-righteous and preachy

8. Streaming services have **supplanted** the old video rental stores.

- A. competed against
- B. learned from
- C. took the place of

9. A glossy **veneer** covered the worn wood of the old desk.

- A. a thin surface layer
- B. a thick protective padding
- C. a bright painted design

10. She finished the grueling race through sheer **volition**.

- A. force of will
- B. stubborn pride
- C. physical strength

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

thrummed — vibrated or pulsed with a steady, resonant energy

ANSWER KEY

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

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

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

1 “He was intensely private but could be convivial and gregarious in the extreme.”

As it is used in the passage, the word “gregarious” most nearly suggests that Chris could be

- A. skilled at flattering people
- B. fond of others’ company
- C. eager to lead others

2 “Children can be harsh judges when it comes to their parents, disinclined to grant clemency, and this was especially true in Chris’s case.”

The passage most strongly suggests that, more than most children, Chris

- A. judged strangers most harshly
- B. rarely granted his parents mercy
- C. forgave his parents in time

3 “... Chris would fixate on his father’s own less than sterling behavior many years earlier and silently denounce him as a sanctimonious hypocrite.”

The author most likely has Chris label his father a “sanctimonious hypocrite” in order to show that

- A. Walt held real moral authority
- B. Walt openly admitted his failings
- C. Chris sees him as a false moralist

4 “... In both photos Chris stares at the lens with the same pensive, recalcitrant squint, as if he’d been interrupted in the middle of an important thought and was annoyed to be wasting his time in front of the camera.”

In the passage, the “recalcitrant squint” characterizes Chris as

- A. stubbornly resistant to control
- B. shy and easily embarrassed
- C. playful and eager to perform

5 “Such bereavement, witnessed at close range, makes even the most eloquent apology for high-risk activities ring fatuous and hollow.”

In the excerpt, the image of Billie’s bereavement primarily functions to

- A. explain why Chris loved danger
- B. celebrate the courage of risk-takers
- C. expose the hollowness of defending risk

6 “Were I to break through the veneer of snow over a hidden crevasse, though, the curtain rods would, I hoped mightily, span the slot and keep me from dropping into the frozen depths of the Baird.”

It can reasonably be inferred that the “veneer of snow” was dangerous because it

- A. thinly hid a deep crevasse below
- B. froze the climber’s gear solid
- C. was too heavy for the rods

7 “A little later I broke through another bridge to my waist; the poles kept me out of the hundred-foot crevasse, but after I extricated myself, I bent double with dry heaves ...”

Which statement about the crevasse fall is best supported by the passage?

- A. The poles alone pulled him to safety
- B. He freed himself, then retched in fear
- C. He fell to the bottom of the crevasse

8 “It had been supplanted by a rueful sympathy and something not unlike affection.”

Which choice best describes the narrator’s attitude toward his father in the excerpt?

- A. former rage has yielded to sympathy
- B. cold indifference to the man
- C. bitterness he still cannot release

9 “I was forced to acknowledge that volition alone, however powerful, was not going to get me up the north wall.”

It can reasonably be inferred that, on the north wall, the narrator learned that

- A. sheer will cannot guarantee success
- B. better gear would have sufficed
- C. his will had never been strong

10 “But I came to appreciate that mountains make poor receptacles for dreams.”

As it is used in the passage, “poor receptacles for dreams” most nearly means that mountains

- A. are too dangerous to climb safely
- B. are best admired from a distance
- C. cannot hold or fulfill one’s hopes

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	
2	B	Character comprehension.
3	C	Event comprehension. The charge rests on Chris's discovery of his father's concealed earlier double life.
4	A	
5	C	Event comprehension.
6	A	Here 'veneer' is literal – the thin crust of snow over a crevasse – not its more common figurative sense.
7	B	The curtain rods only kept him from dropping in; 'extricated' means he then worked himself free by his own effort.
8	A	Character comprehension. 'It' refers to the narrator's earlier rage toward his father, now replaced.
9	A	
10	C	Theme comprehension. The phrase is figurative – mountains imagined as vessels meant to hold one's dreams.

Teacher Context: Chapters 11–15

The focus turns to Chris's upbringing and family: his childhood, his relationship with his parents, and his sister Carine's perspective. Krakauer then inserts his own youth and a solo climb of the Devils Thumb, drawing a parallel between his younger self and McCandless. The break falls before Chapter 16, where the narrative returns to McCandless's final journey.