

Into the Wild

Chapters 16–18 and Epilogue

by Jon Krakauer

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: ambivalent, castigated, cross the Rubicon, emaciated, grandiose, insidious, precarious, precipitous, requisite, reverie

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

Into the Wild

Chapters 16–18 and Epilogue

by Jon Krakauer

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

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

1. She felt **ambivalent** about moving to a new city.
 - A. having mixed feelings
 - B. feeling secretly hopeful
 - C. feeling vaguely anxious
2. The coach **castigated** the team for their careless mistakes.
 - A. calmly corrected
 - B. criticized harshly
 - C. openly challenged
3. Once the rebels declared independence, they had **crossed the Rubicon**.
 - A. reached a lasting agreement
 - B. passed a point of no return
 - C. entered dangerous territory
4. The **emaciated** stray could barely stand.
 - A. extremely thin and wasted
 - B. weak from a recent injury
 - C. frightened and trembling
5. The mayor announced **grandiose** plans for a new stadium.
 - A. exaggeratedly grand
 - B. highly detailed
 - C. long overdue
6. The disease is especially **insidious** in its early stages.
 - A. highly contagious
 - B. subtly harmful
 - C. difficult to treat
7. The hikers crossed on a **precarious** footbridge over the gorge.
 - A. newly constructed
 - B. unusually narrow
 - C. dangerously unstable
8. After the scandal, the company saw a **precipitous** drop in sales.
 - A. sudden and steep
 - B. long expected
 - C. carefully managed
9. Applicants must have the **requisite** training before starting the job.
 - A. strongly recommended
 - B. highly specialized
 - C. necessary or required
10. The long train ride left her drifting into **reverie**.
 - A. a deep sleep
 - B. a dark mood
 - C. a daydream

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

serene — calm, peaceful, and untroubled; here, 'serene as a monk gone to God'
stunted — prevented from growing or developing fully; here, dwarfed trees

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

Into the Wild

Chapters 16–18 and Epilogue

by Jon Krakauer

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

Vocabulary in Context

Into the Wild

Chapters 16–18 and Epilogue

by Jon Krakauer

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

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

1 “He never suspected that in so doing, he was crossing his Rubicon.”

As it is used in the passage, the phrase “crossing his Rubicon” most nearly suggests that McCandless...

- A. had reached his journey’s end
- B. had passed a point of no return
- C. had entered truly remote land

2 “Reality, however, was quick to intrude on McCandless’s reverie.”

The author most likely includes the word “reverie” in order to...

- A. contrast his fantasy with reality
- B. emphasize his physical exhaustion
- C. stress how carefully he had planned

3 “... he had always been ambivalent about killing animals. That ambivalence turned to remorse soon after he shot the moose.”

It can reasonably be inferred that, before he shot the moose, McCandless’s feelings about hunting were...

- A. growing more eager
- B. deeply conflicted
- C. largely indifferent

4 “Although he castigated himself severely for this waste of a life he’d taken, a day later McCandless appeared to regain some perspective ...”

According to the passage, McCandless’s first response to wasting the moose meat was to...

- A. rebuke himself harshly
- B. blame his faulty smoker
- C. quietly accept the loss

5 “... both were perceived to have lacked a requisite humility; both were thought to have possessed insufficient respect for the land.”

In context, the word “requisite” emphasizes that the humility both men lacked was...

- A. essential, not optional
- B. admired by their peers
- C. unusual among explorers

6 “He possessed grand, some would say grandiose, spiritual ambitions.”

Which choice best describes Krakauer’s attitude toward McCandless’s ambitions, signaled by “some would say grandiose”?

- A. openly mocking and dismissive
- B. qualified — they may be excessive
- C. purely admiring and uncritical

7 “He was balanced on a precarious edge.”

In context, the image of being “balanced on a precarious edge” primarily functions to...

- A. praise his physical sense of balance
- B. describe the steep riverbank terrain
- C. stress how close he was to disaster

8 “There has been a great deal of conjecture about what caused such a precipitous decline.”

The passage most strongly suggests that McCandless’s physical decline was...

- A. mild and reversible
- B. quiet and unnoticed
- C. swift and steep

9 “The toxin does the deed insidiously, indirectly, by inhibiting an enzyme essential to glycoprotein metabolism.”

Which statement about how the toxin acted is best supported by the passage?

- A. It harmed him only when well fed
- B. It struck suddenly and visibly
- C. It worked gradually and unnoticed

10 “His face is horribly emaciated, almost skeletal.”

The passage most strongly suggests that, by the time of this self-portrait, McCandless...

- A. had grown extremely thin and wasted
- B. had begun to regain weight
- C. had injured his face in a fall

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

Into the Wild

Chapters 16–18 and Epilogue

by Jon Krakauer

#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	The idiom alludes to Caesar's irreversible crossing of the Rubicon River; here the river is literal too.
2	A	
3	B	'Indifferent' is the common misreading: ambivalent means holding both feelings at once, not lacking feeling.
4	A	
5	A	
6	B	The teaching point is grandiose vs. merely grand: Krakauer's hedge concedes the ambitions may be inflated without fully endorsing the charge.
7	C	
8	C	Here 'precipitous' is figurative — a sudden, steep drop in health, not a physical cliff.
9	C	Event comprehension. The toxin blocks the body from using food, so harm built up unnoticed even as he kept eating.
10	A	

Teacher Context: Chapters 16–18 and Epilogue

The narrative returns to McCandless's last journey into the Alaska interior, his months living at the bus, and a close reconstruction of his final weeks. The Epilogue follows Krakauer with Walt and Billie McCandless as they visit the bus. Section runs to the end of the book.