

Writing Situation/Prompt: Chris McCandless is a complex character whose motives are difficult to explain. One thing for certain that we learn from McCandless' journal entries, books he read, and ideas he shared with others is that he was greatly influenced by Thoreau's writings.

In a well-written, logically structured essay, use both "Civil Disobedience," "Life Without Principle," and "Walking" to interpret and explain how/why McCandless lived the last several adult years of his life by showing the many *ideological or philosophical influences* Thoreau had on McCandless. To structure your essay, organize your paragraphs around key ideas that Thoreau advocates. These will be your generalizations out of which you build paragraphs with supporting evidence from *Into the Wild*.

Overall, your essay must show the multiple ways (*no fewer than 4*) that Thoreau (via his three essays) influenced McCandless' life.

Evaluation Criteria: You'll be evaluated on the quality/precision of your thesis statement, your originality of influences you see, your paragraph development and organization principle, audience awareness, thoroughness, and accurate use of sources, p-notes, and a Works Cited page.

Purpose/Objective:

The essay aims to sharpen your skills of exposition, analysis, interpretation, and synthesizing multiple texts.

Requirements:

- **Page length:** *4-6 typed, double-spaced pages* (min. 4 fully-typed pages). This is equivalent to 1300-2000 words.
- **Manuscript Conventions:** Use the required MLA essay template located on the course website.
- **Audience:** You are writing to peers, college-educated folks. Assume your audience is familiar with the texts you are using.
- **SAWE:** Your paper must follow the basic conventions of standard American written English (correct mechanics, usage, grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and so forth).
- **Sources:** H.D. Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience," "Life Without Principle," "Walking," and Krakauer's *Into the Wild*.
- **MLA:** Because this paper requires that you cite from two essays and a book, you must use the MLA in-text parenthetical citation method and include a Works Cited page at the end of your essay.

Due Dates: Rough Draft _____ Final: _____

Budget 8-10 hours for the drafting/writing of this assignment.

Preparing the Essay:

- Note the major ideas and themes in Thoreau's two essays, "Civil Disobedience," "Life Without Principle," and "Walking."
- As you read *Into the Wild*, be aware of Krakauer's direct references to Thoreau in general; mark your text when you note behavior in McCandless that fits Thoreau's philosophies about how to conduct one's life.
- Locate a good number of quotations from both of Thoreau's essays to use that show his influence on McCandless and write a paraphrase for each of these quotations.
- Employ an organization strategy for paragraphs. You might use emphatic order, chronological order, or any other **organizing principle** that is logical.
- Write an **informal general outline**.
- Next, make a **micro outline**. At this level, connect the specific examples from *Into the Wild* that illustrate Thoreau's influences on McCandless. *One or two examples will be insufficient to convince your audience that Thoreau indeed had a tremendous influence on McCandless.*
- Start **drafting** your main body section of the essay. Visit the Writing Center.

Writing the Introduction:

Be sure that you introduce all authors, all texts, and briefly summarize each. Clearly establish the essay's subject matter. Assert a strong thesis at the end of your introductory paragraph. (See the sample introductory paragraph online.)

Writing the Main Body Paragraphs:

Refer to your micro outline. Start each main body paragraph with a **paraphrase** of a **direct quotation** from Thoreau's essays that you plan to use to illustrate an **influence**. Each **paraphrase** will be your **topic sentence** for each new paragraph that shows an additional influence Thoreau has on McCandless. Lead into the direct quotation and be sure to follow it with the correct parenthetical note format. Build the rest of your main body paragraph with specific examples from *Into the Wild* and be sure to incorporate p-notes as appropriate. Illustrate the influence with a sufficient number of examples to convince your audience that Thoreau really has had an influence on McCandless. (See the sample main body paragraph online.)

Writing the Conclusion:

You might make some observations about the power of Thoreau's ideas that are over 150 years old; you might make some subjective observations about McCandless and the life he chose to live. But most of all, avoid summarizing your essay.