



AMERICAN  
LITERATURE

# Surviving the wild

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for American Literature

Target audience – American literature learners

Time required – 15 minutes

## Activity

Explore Chris McCandless' journey into the wilds of Alaska and the factors that led to his death. Book: *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer.

## English Standards

**CCSS: ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3.** Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.  
**CCSS: ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2.** Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.  
**CCSS: ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1.** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will describe the topography, vegetation, and climate of Central Alaska.
- Students will chart a path out of the Alaskan wilderness using a topographic map.

Map URL: <http://esriurl.com/litGeoInquiry15>

## ? Ask

### What are wild lands?

- Click the URL above to launch the map.
- Read aloud, "McCandless was raised in suburban Virginia."
- ? Click the button, Bookmarks. Select East Coast Population.
- Select the bookmark, Alaska Population.
- ? Looking at both areas, where are the wild lands in the USA? [*Areas that are unpopulated, untamed, forested, and far from people and the built environment.*]
- With the Details button depressed, click the button, Content.
- Click the checkbox to the left of the layer named, World Population Density.
- Turn on the layer, USA Topo Maps.

## ! Acquire

### Where did Chris find his "wild land"?

- Click the button, Bookmarks. Select Stampede Trail
- Turn on the layer, Stampede Trail.
- ? What park surrounds Stampede Trail? [*Denali*]
- To learn more, click the marker, Bus 142.
- Using the Measure tool, measure the distance in miles from the beginning of the Stampede Trail and Highway 1 A3 to Bus 142. [*25 miles*]

## 🔍 Explore

### What is the topography, vegetation, and climate of Central Alaska?

- Turn the USA Topo Maps and Satellite Image of the Stampede Trail layers on and off, one at a time to examine the topography and vegetation along Stampede Trail.
- ? Describe the topography and vegetation? [*Mountainous, braided rivers, scrub trees*]
- Click the sun symbol for temperature and the rain cloud for precipitation.
- Click each climograph for a larger image.
- ? Describe the changes in temperature and precipitation from April to August. [*Warming temperatures and increasing rainfall.*]
- ? When will the water be the highest in area rivers? [*June - August*]

more ►

## Analyze

### How do Alaskan stream flows change through the year?

- Read aloud: "In April, at higher elevations, water is locked in ice so Chris waded across the shallow Teklanika River, with a stream height of only 2 feet. On July 3rd, he cannot cross the raging river."
- Turn on the layer, Steamflow Gaging Stations.
- Pan east and north of Healy.
- Click on the symbol for Marguerite Creek. Scroll down and click on the link, more info.
- Scroll down to the graph, Gage Height, feet.
- ? Could you cross the Marguerite Creek today? *[Answers will vary depending on when the data are viewed.]*

## Act

### What could Chris have done to ensure his survival?

- Click on the cabin and the gaging station symbols on the Teklanika River for more information.
- ? If Chris had a detailed topographic map, would he have known about this cable crossing and the ranger station?
- ? What direction and distance is the gaging station from Stampede Trail? *[North, half a mile]*
- ? Many people have successfully lived in the wild; what could Chris have done to ensure his survival? *[Carried a detailed topographic map and compass, and had knowledge of his surroundings.]*

### USE THE MEASURE TOOL

- Click Measure, select the Distance button, and from the drop-down list, choose a unit of measurement.
- On the map, click once to start the measurement, click again to change direction, and double-click to stop measuring.
- Hint: Position the area of interest on the map so that it is not obscured by the Measure window.

### ADD MAP NOTES

- Click Add and from the drop-down list, choose Add Map Note.
- Type a name, select a template from the drop-down list, and click Create.
- In the Add Features pane, choose a symbol and click in the map to place it.
- In the pop-up window, add your desired information.

## Next Steps

**DID YOU KNOW?** ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to public, private, and home schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at <http://www.esri.com/schools>.

THEN TRY THIS...

- Add a map note, choose Freehand Line, and create a route "out of the wild."
- Follow Chris McCandless' journey across the U.S. to Alaska in this story map: <http://esriurl.com/Geo229>.

## TEXT REFERENCES

This GIS map has been cross-referenced to material in sections of chapters from the following novel.

- *Into the Wild*, Jon Krakauer