***Into the Wild* Essay Topics**

1. **Argumentative:**

Literary critic Leslie Fiedler suggests that the central theme of all U.S. literature is the escape of American men and boys from civilization into the wild. *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau, *Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, "Big Two-Hearted River" by Ernest Hemingway, and many more represent this theme. Make the argument that *Into the Wild’s* central theme is “the escape of American men and boys from civilization into the wild”. Must provide:

* Two reasons for your claim
* Compare *Into the Wild* with another work of U.S. literature with the same theme (how are they similar in themes?)
* At least 3 citations
* Cite your sources in MLA format
* At least 5 paragraphs

1. **Comparative:**

Chapter 9 of Into the Wild begins explaining the saga of Everett Ruess, a young man who similarly chose to escape society and live off the land during the 1930s. Unlike McCandless, however, Ruess’s remains were never found.

Compare and contrast Chris McCandless’s life with that of Everett Ruess. Must provide:

* How are they similar?
* How do they differ?
* What was each’s reason for doing what he did?
* At least 3 citations
* Cite your sources in MLA format
* At least 5 paragraphs

1. **Argumentative:**

Krakauer’s *Outside* article claimed that Chris “lacked the requisite humility” to go into the wild and that he “commits big-time hubris” (72).

Make the argument agreeing/disagreeing with this claim. Must provide:

* How did Chris commit “big-time hubris”? (or, how did he not?)
* How did Chris lack “the requisite humility”? (or, how did he have “the requisite humility”?)
* What actions did he do that proof your argument for each claim?
* At least 3 citations
* Cite your sources in MLA format
* At least 5 paragraphs

1. **Comparative:**

Chapter 5 of *Into the Wild* mentions Chris’s admiration for the author Jack London. Krakauer acknowledges that Chris “conveniently overlooked the fact that London…” did not live the life he wrote about and suffered a rather miserable life with “scant resemblance to the ideals he espoused in print” (44). Compare the lives of Chris McCandless and Jack London. Must provide:

* How are the two similar/different?
* Who was more authentic in reality to their ideals?
* Were either men successful in their pursuits?
* At least 3 citations
* Cite your sources in MLA format
* At least 5 paragraphs

1. **Argumentative:**

Chris marked the following passage in Tolstoy’s *Family Happiness*, “He was right in saying that the only certain happiness in life is to live for others” (169) and then wrote, “Happiness only real when shared” (189). Make the argument that Chris’s life exemplified this quote or did not exemplify this quote. Must provide:

* Your explanation for what the quote means
* 2 reasons why (or why not) Chris’s life exemplified this quote
* At least 3 citations
* Cite your sources in MLA format
* At least 5 paragraphs

1. **Argumentative:**

“The Four I’s” of Romanticism are Individualism, Intuition, Inspired by Nature, and Innocence of Youth. Write an argumentative essay as to how Chris McCandless exemplified each of “The Four I’s” of Romanticism. Must provide:

* a paragraph for each “I” of Romanticism with explanation of how Chris exemplified each
* At least 3 citations
* At least 5 paragraphs
* Cite your sources in MLA format