

Into Thin Air

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **1 marking period**
Length: **Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

This unit entails a guided reading and discussion of Jon Krakauer's account of the infamous 1996 disaster on Mount Everest, *Into Thin Air*. Students will participate in discussion and writing activities that discuss the style of Krakauer's reporting as well as the psychology, science, and competitive nature of adventure sports. The culmination of the unit will be a research and presentation project that considers how we define what qualifies as a sport.

Transfer

Students will be able to independently use their learning to...

- read and understand the biases of a first hand journalistic account.
- assess the risk and reward of challenging physical feats.
- articulate their opinions and insights on controversial issues.
- research a topic for greater knowledge and understanding.

For more information, read the following article by Grant Wiggins.

http://www.authenticeducation.org/ae_bigideas/article.lasso?artid=60

Meaning

Understandings

Students will understand that...

- a first person account of an event has inherent bias.
- definitions of what defines a sport are not fixed and are debatable.
- different types of people and cultures are drawn to different sports and physical challenges.
- a wide variety of researchable sports exist across the world.

Essential Questions

Students will keep considering...

- Is mountain climbing a sport, and what defines a sport?
- Why are some people drawn to extreme physical challenges?
- What factors can affect bias and critical decision making in a crisis?
- How do life and death situations affect human ethics and choices?

Application of Knowledge and Skill

Students will know...

Students will know about the history of Everest expeditions, the basics of mountaineering, the factors that led to the 1996 Everest disaster, why Krakauer's account is not the only version of events, the history, culture, and rules of whichever sport they choose to research.

Students will be skilled at...

Students will be skilled at...

- independent reading and comprehension.
- collaborating on interpretation and analysis activities.
- verbal and written articulation of their own opinions.
- researching and presenting on a well selected topic.

Academic Vocabulary

First-person Journalism

Bias

catharsis

in media res

point of view

setting

adaptation

Mount Everest

Himalayas

Nepal

Tibet

Mountaineering

Altitude

Altitude sicknesses

Target 2

SWBAT read a narrative non-fiction text for comprehension and analytical response. Share responses verbally and in writing.

LA.RI.11-12	Reading Informational Text
LA.W.11-12.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes. Comprehension and Collaboration

Target 1

SWBAT to respond to open ended questions on assigned readings in a brief paragraph that shows comprehension of the text and the ability to form their own ideas.

LA.W.11-12.1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
LA.W.11-12.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
LA.W.11-12.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes.

Learning Goal 3

Students will engage in a research project in which they investigate the history and practice of a "fringe" sport and present their findings as well as an argument about its activity as a "true sport."

Target 1

SWBAT to select an appropriate topic, gather research, and use it to develop an effective presentation.

LA.W.11-12.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
LA.W.11-12.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. (MLA or APA Style Manuals).

LA.W.11-12.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Target 2

SWBAT to use their own research and presentation slides to deliver an effective informative speech.

LA.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, qualitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

LA.SL.11-12.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

LA.SL.11-12.4

Present information, findings and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

LA.SL.11-12.5

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

LA.SL.11-12.6

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

LA.L.11-12.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

LA.11-12.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Summative Assessment

The unit summative assessment will be a research and presentation project where students will research, create, and deliver a presentation on the background, history, culture, rules of a non-traditional or obscure sport.

Formative Assessment and Performance Opportunities

Formative assessments will include brief written reactions to readings, message board responses, organized group discussion activities, and individual study question responses.

Accommodations/Modifications

- Offer struggling readers an audiobook option and / or Into Thin Air Litcharts for comprehension help.
- Supply students with guided reading questions for each chapters to engage them and give them purpose.
- Provide one on one assistance and additional time on the research project for students may need either.

Unit Resources

- Everest (film, 2015)
- Google Classroom / Slides
- Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer

21st Century Life and Careers

CAEP.9.2.12.C.1	Review career goals and determine steps necessary for attainment.
CAEP.9.2.12.C.7	Examine the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities for both employers and employees in the global workplace.

Interdisciplinary Connections

SCI.HS	Weather and Climate
SOC.9-12.1.1.1	Compare present and past events to evaluate the consequences of past decisions and to apply lessons learned.
SOC.9-12.1.1.2	Analyze how change occurs through time due to shifting values and beliefs as well as technological advancements and changes in the political and economic landscape.
SOC.9-12.1.2.2	Relate current events to the physical and human characteristics of places and regions.
SOC.9-12.1.4.2	Demonstrate effective presentation skills by presenting information in a clear, concise, and well-organized manner taking into consider appropriate use of language for task and audience.
9-12.HS-LS2-2.LS2.C	Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning, and Resilience