

12 General English

Summer Reading Choices

Choose One

Into the Wild by John Krakauer

In April 1992 a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. His name was Christopher Johnson McCandless. He had given \$25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Four months later, a party of moose hunters found his decomposed body. How McCandless came to die is the unforgettable story of *Into the Wild*.

Immediately after graduating from college in 1991, McCandless had roamed through the West and Southwest on a vision quest like those made by his heroes Jack London and John Muir. In the Mojave Desert he abandoned his car, stripped it of its license plates, and burned all of his cash. He would give himself a new name, Alexander Supertramp, and, unencumbered by money and belongings, he would be free to wallow in the raw, unfiltered experiences that nature presented. Craving a blank spot on the map, McCandless simply threw away the maps. Leaving behind his desperate parents and sister, he vanished into the wild.

The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon by David Grann

A grand mystery reaching back centuries. A sensational disappearance that made headlines around the world. A quest for truth that leads to death, madness or disappearance for those who seek to solve it. *The Lost City of Z* is a blockbuster adventure narrative about what lies beneath the impenetrable jungle canopy of the Amazon.

After stumbling upon a hidden trove of diaries, New Yorker writer David Grann set out to solve "the greatest exploration mystery of the 20th century": What happened to the British explorer Percy Fawcett & his quest for the Lost City of Z?

In 1925, Fawcett ventured into the Amazon to find an ancient civilization, hoping to make one of the most important discoveries in history. For centuries Europeans believed the world's largest jungle concealed the glittering kingdom of El Dorado. Thousands had died looking for it, leaving many scientists convinced that the Amazon was truly inimical to humans. But Fawcett, whose daring expeditions inspired Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*, had spent years building his scientific case. Captivating the imagination of millions round the globe, Fawcett embarked with

his 21-year-old son, determined to prove that this ancient civilization--which he dubbed Z--existed. Then his expedition vanished. Fawcett's fate, & the tantalizing clues he left behind about Z, became an obsession for hundreds who followed him into the uncharted wilderness.

For decades scientists & adventurers have searched for evidence of Fawcett's party & the lost City of Z. Countless have perished, been captured by tribes or gone mad. As Grann delved ever deeper into the mystery surrounding Fawcett's quest, & the greater mystery of what lies within the Amazon, he found himself, like the generations who preceded him, being irresistibly drawn into the jungle's green hell. His quest for the truth & discoveries about Fawcett's fate & Z form the heart of this complexly enthralling narrative.

Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers by Mary Roach

Stiff is an oddly compelling, often hilarious exploration of the strange lives of our bodies postmortem. For two thousand years, cadavers—some willingly, some unwittingly—have been involved in science's boldest strides and weirdest undertakings. In this fascinating account, Mary Roach visits the good deeds of cadavers over the centuries and tells the engrossing story of our bodies when we are no longer with them.

The Road by Cormac McCarthy

A father and his son walk alone through burned America. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. It is cold enough to crack stones, and when the snow falls it is gray. The sky is dark. Their destination is the coast, although they don't know what, if anything, awaits them there. They have nothing; just a pistol to defend themselves against the lawless bands that stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food—and each other.

The Blind Side: The Evolution of the Game by Michael Lewis

When we first meet Michael Oher, he is one of thirteen children by a mother addicted to crack; he does not know his real name, his father, his birthday, or how to read or write. He takes up football and school after a rich, white, Evangelical family plucks him from the streets. Then two great forces alter Oher: the family's love and the evolution of professional football itself into a game in which the quarterback must be protected at any cost. Our protagonist becomes the priceless package of size, speed, and agility necessary to guard the quarterback's greatest vulnerability: his blind side.

