**Incoming 10th grade students** will be reading *Into Thin Air*, by Jon Krakauer. This book is Krakauer’s account of the tragic events of the May 1996 expedition to the summit of Mount Everest.

Here is a synopsis of the book from Barnes and Noble:

*Into Thin Air* is the definitive, personal account of the deadliest season in the history of Mount Everest -- told by acclaimed journalist, and bestselling author of *Into the Wild*, Jon Krakauer. On assignment for *Outside* magazine, Krakauer, an accomplished climber, went to the Himalayas to report on the growing commercialization of the planet's highest mountain. When he reached the summit in the early afternoon of May 10, 1996, he hadn't slept in over 57 hours and was reeling from oxygen depletion. Twenty other climbers were pushing for the summit, and no one had noticed the clouds filling the sky. Six hours later, and 3,000 feet lower, Krakauer collapsed in his tent. The next morning he learned that six of the climbers hadn't made it back. In his account, Krakauer examines what it is about Everest that has compelled so many people -- including himself -- to throw caution to the wind and willingly subject themselves to so much danger, hardship, and expense.

This book is the basis for the recent movie, *Everest*. The book is available on audio through Audible and at bookstores.

The **written assignment for this book includes 3 parts.**

1. **Character Summary chart-Attachment 1.** Students will complete this chart as they read the story. (Use the list of the members of the expeditions in the front of the book and add to these notes as you read.) This chart is attached.

2. **Events Contributing to the Tragedy chart—Attachment 2.** Students will complete as they read the story. (Directions are on the attached chart.)

3. **Five-paragraph essay—Attachment 3.** Students will discuss 3 of the events that contributed to the tragedies. (The essay outline is attached.)
These 3 documents must be turned in the first day of school in August 22.

**SUGGESTIONS** for reading this book and completing the written assignments:

**Preview before reading**
- **Review the map** at the front of the book. Note the locations and path from Base Camp to Camp Four and up the Southeast Ridge to the Summit.
- **Read through the list of expedition members** at the front of the book for:
  1. Adventure Consultants of New Zealand—led by Rob Hall
  2. Mountain Madness of the U. S.—led by Scott Fischer
  3. IMAX team—led by David Breashears
- **Read the Introduction** at the beginning of the book.
- **Refer to the Glossary** of terms, Attachment 4.

**As you read**
- **Pay attention to the descriptions of physical and psychological effects of low oxygen (from the high altitudes) on the human body.**
- **Highlight the mistakes, lapses in judgment, and natural occurrences (beyond the control of the climbers) that contributed to the tragedy on Everest.** You will need this information to complete the Events Contributing to the Tragedy chart, Attachment 3.
- **Make notes in the margins throughout the book to identify key events as the expeditions climb from Base Camp to Camp Four and from there to the summit.**

**Important Note:** Students are not required to read the short introductions to each chapter. They are not required to read the following passages in the book:
- Pages 15-26
- Top of page 69-top of page 72
- Pages 91- top of 104 (Chapter 7)
- Pages 142- middle of 143
- Pages 158-middle of 160
- Author’s Notes (end of book)
### Into Thin Air

**Character Chart**

Identify each member of these 3 expeditions. You may use the list of members in the front of the book to fill in the Description column. As you read about each member, add more detail to the Additional Notes column.

#### Adventure Consultants Expedition—New Zealand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expedition Member</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Additional Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rob Hall</td>
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<td>Ang Dorje Sherpa</td>
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<td>Doug Hansen</td>
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<td>Beck Weathers</td>
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<td>Yasuko Namba</td>
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#### Mountain Madness Expedition—USA

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<tr>
<td>Scott Fischer</td>
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<td>Lopsang Jangbu Sherpa</td>
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#### MacGillivray Freeman IMAX Expedition—USA

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<tr>
<td>David Breashears</td>
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Attachment 2

Events Contributing to the Tragedy

Throughout the book, Krakauer discusses how many different situations, some deliberate and some accidental, contributed to the tragedy and loss of life during the May 1996 ascent of Everest.

The author describes the mistakes, bad decisions, and natural occurrences (events that were out of the control of the climbers, like the health problems at the high altitude) that impacted in the tragic outcome of the expedition.

As you read this story, use this chart to document 5 of these mistakes, bad decisions, or nature occurrences that caused or complicated the tragic outcome.

You will use these notes to develop your essay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Problems resulting</th>
<th>People involved</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
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Into Thin Air
Essay Instructions

The 3rd part of your summer assignment is writing a 5-paragraph essay.

In your essay, you will thoroughly explain 3 of the mistakes, bad decisions, or natural occurrences (that were out of the control of the climbers) that contributed to the tragic events of the May 1996 Mount Everest expeditions. Use your Attachment 3 chart, Events Contributing to the Tragedy, that you completed while reading this book.

Follow the essay structure below.

Paragraph 1: Introductory Paragraph

- Include the book title, author, and brief statement explaining the subject of the book. Don’t forget to italicize the book title.
- Your thesis statement should include information about the Mount Everest expeditions of 1996 resulting in the tragic deaths and multiple serious injuries of a record number of climbers. There were a number of mistakes, bad decisions, or natural occurrences that contributed to the tragedy. Three of these events impacting the tragedy were...
- All your writing should be in your own words, unless you include a quote. If you include a quote, use the proper MLA citation.
- Example of citation for a quote: “Because Boukreev wasn’t breathing supplemental oxygen, he had apparently decided to strip his load down to the bare minimum to gain every possible advantage in the appallingly thin air” (187). The page number of the quote is in ( ) followed by a period.

Paragraph 2: Explain the first event in detail, including what happened, who was involved, and the impact this event had on the outcome of the expeditions. Include any other important details.
**Paragraph 3:** Explain the second event in detail, including what happened, who was involved, and the impact this event had on the outcome of the expeditions. Include any other important details.

**Paragraph 4:** Explain the third event in detail, including what happened, who was involved, and the impact this event had on the outcome of the expeditions. Include any other important details.

**Paragraph 5: Conclusion**

Some possible ideas for your concluding paragraph:

- Restate the thesis.
- Summarize important points made in the essay
- Give your essay a sense of completion.
- Leave an interesting final impression on the reader.

Your 5-paragraph essay should be typed and proofed carefully. Follow the guidelines you have learned in your English class for sentence structure and grammar.

Nepal—Country in Southeast Asia between Tibet, a region of China, and India. Mount Everest, part of the Himalayan mountain range, is bordered by Nepal and Tibet.

Tibet—Located on the northern side of the Himalayas, Tibet is in an autonomous region of China. Mount Everest is bordered by Tibet and Nepal.

Himalayas—a mountain range in Asia separating the plains of the Indian subcontinent (Nepal) from the Tibetan Plateau. The Himalayas are made up of some of the world’s highest peaks, including Mount Everest.

Chortens—a religious monument (Buddhist). There were a number of chortens on the mountain.

Sherpas—mountain people from the Himalayan region of Nepal; they serve as guides to the expeditions and carry heavy loads of equipment up the mountain for the expeditions. Sherpas are devoted Buddhists. Their name for Everest is Sagarmatha.

K2—second highest peak in the world. Everest is the highest. K2 is located on the China-Pakistan border.

Khumbu Icefall—part of the Khumbu Glacier on Everest. It is considered the most treacherous portion of the climb. The icefall is constantly shifting, so crevasses appear and open and close as often as daily. Large ice towers, called Seracs, cover the icefall. Because of the shifting on the icefall, the seracs can move or even fall down the icefall. Some of these seracs are as large as towers.
Crampons—a metal plate with spikes fixed to a boot for walking on ice or rock climbing.

Sirdar—the head Sherpa. Each expedition had a sirdar at the Base Camp and a sirdar that climbed to the summit with the expedition.

HAPE—High Altitude Pulmonary Edema
HACE—High Altitude Cerebral Edema

Puja—religious ceremony held on the mountain for the climbers. Sherpas lead the ceremony and pray for safety on the climb.