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English 112B

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The Call of Adventure

The ability to go where ever you wanted, to face down dangerous challenges, and to live the life of an explorer, that is what adventure books are all about. The appeal of breaking away from the dullness of everyday life for just a few moments is irresistible. For many, it is extremely unlikely that we would be able to do many of the things found in these kinds of books. For one, our sense of caution and instinct for safety would prohibit us from going out and doing many of the reckless things, like being chased down by something in the woods.

Besides providing entertainment, these kinds of stories allow readers to experience what life would be like in different settings and situations. They allow us to live in foreign lands, and see life through a different pair of eyes. They take us out of the known and into the unknown. They show us challenges and characters struggling to overcome them. They force characters outside of their comfort zones and away from safety. Adventure stories show this to us without the actual and very real danger that happens in a book.

This genre often overlaps other genres such as, survival, fantasy, science fiction, and so forth. Adventure books take some parts of those other genres to help with the world building. These kinds of books seem to go well with almost any other genre out there. There is really no standalone adventure book. But the fast-paced plot, thrill, and constant danger help make it its own category.

Great adventure stories display many of the Exeter qualities found in Young Adult novels. Often, these books have complex chacracters, interesting plots, deep themes, etc. In addition to helping readers develop their literature skills, this genre does the basic job of keeping readers entertained.

Annotated Bibliography

Coelho, Paulo. *The Alchemist*. Trans. Alan Clarke. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993. Print.

“Paulo Coelho's masterpiece tells the magical story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy who yearns to travel in search of a worldly treasure as extravagant as any ever found. The story of the treasures Santiago finds along the way teaches us, as only a few stories can, about the essential wisdom of listening to our hearts, learning to read the omens strewn along life's path, and, above all, following our dreams.” (https://www.amazon.com/Alchemist-Paulo-Coelho/dp/0061122416)

A story featuring the travels of Santiago on his way to look for treasure after having what he believes to be a prophetical dream. Along with being a tale about adventure, it also seems to serves well to be a story of self-discovery.

 Crichton, Michael. *Jurassic Park: A Novel*. New York: Knopf, 1990. Print.

“An astonishing technique for recovering and cloning dinosaur DNA has been discovered. Now humankind’s most thrilling fantasies have come true. Creatures extinct for eons roam Jurassic Park with their awesome presence and profound mystery, and all the world can visit them—for a price. Until something goes wrong. . . .” (https://www.amazon.com/Jurassic-Park-Novel-Michael-Crichton/dp/0345538986)

This story details the experience of a group of people stuck on an island with dinosaurs out to get them. Despite its gruesome approach, I think it does well in featuring a thrilling experience that will show readers what it’s like being hunted down by something created by man. It also serves as a cautionary tale against the dangers and misuse of science.

 Krakauer, Jon. *Into the Wild*. Thorndike, Me.: G.K. Hall, 1997. Print.

“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, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter.  How McCandless came to die is the unforgettable story of *Into the Wild*.” (https://www.amazon.com/Into-Wild-Jon-Krakauer/dp/0385486804)

This is a retelling of the story of McCandless after he decided to travel and live the raw experience of being in nature. Into the Wild is part story and part speculation as the author, Jon Krakauer, tries to piece together McCandless’s journey. It is a nonfiction work that only exists because McCandless was inspired to go on his own adventure.

Lewis, C. S., and Pauline Baynes. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. New York: HarperCollins, 1994. Print.

After they were evacuated from London during the war, four kids are transported to the land of Narnia after entering through their wardrobe. There they learn of their destiny through the king of Narnia, Aslan.

A captivating story of fate and heroism, this story is great for a wide range of ages. Though it is aimed particularly at children, older readers might be able to enjoy the story for its complex characters, themes and plot. Despite the whole good and evil approach on morality, this book shows that even then it is not so simple.

London, Jack. *The Call of the Wild*. New York: Dover, 1990. Print.

After Buck is stolen from his home and sold off to become a sled dog in Alaska, he must now learn how to survive in this new, harsh environment.

This fits the adventure genre perfectly through the eyes of a dog. It takes readers onto the setting of Alaska and shows them the wild where law and civility is practically nonexistent. This book shows the savageness that takes a hold of both human and animal in a setting where only the strong survive.

Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi: A Novel*. New York: Harcourt, 2001. Print.

“Life of Pi is a fantasy adventure novel by Yann Martel published in 2001. The protagonist, Piscine Molitor "Pi" Patel, a Tamil boy from Pondicherry, explores issues of spirituality and practicality from an early age. He survives 227 days after a shipwreck while stranded on a boat in the Pacific Ocean with a Bengal tiger named Richard Parker.” (Goodreads.com)

An atypical experience of being stuck on a boat together with a hungry tiger, this book questions what is considered a good story, a believable one or one that runs a lot through the suspension of disbelief.

Oppel, Kenneth. *Airborn*. Toronto: HarperCollins, 2004. Print.

“Matt Cruse is a cabin boy on the Aurora, a huge airship that sails hundreds of feet above the ocean, ferrying wealthy passengers from city to city. It is the life Matt's always wanted; convinced he's lighter than air, he imagines himself as buoyant as the hydrium gas that powers his ship. One night he meets a dying balloonist who speaks of beautiful creatures drifting through the skies. It is only after Matt meets the balloonist's granddaughter that he realizes that the man's ravings may, in fact, have been true, and that the creatures are completely real and utterly mysterious.” (Goodreads.com)

Pirates are popular, and this is like a seafaring adventure, except this takes place in the sky. The characters in this story are out to find the beasts that live their entire lives out in the air, hoping to discover that they really exist. This is the first of the books in the series.

Paulsen, Gary. *Hatchet*. New York: Bradbury, 1987. Print.

On his way to visit his father, Brian finds himself stranded in the Canadian wilderness after his pilot has a heart attack and Brian is forced to crash the plane onto a lake. With nothing but the clothes on his back and a hatchet his mother had given to him before, Brian must now find a way to survive.

Beloved by many readers, this survival adventure story has created a number of other stories by Gary Paulsen. Even if it is not getting stranded in the middle of the wilderness, reading about the struggles and hardships concerning survival might inspire others to face their own challenges.

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter*. London: Bloomsbury, 2007. Print.

The stories of harry Potter and his friends from their time at the wizarding school of Hogwarts. The series feature all seven books set throughout their years at the school of magic.

This is a set of the books by J. K. Rowling. This can count as part of the adventure genre, because they are taken out of the known world and into the wizarding world. The characters go through many challenges and danger and learn how to overcome them. They go through many experiences that young readers may go through such as dealing with an abusive teacher, adults dismissing what children are saying, and dealing with fear.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit, Or, There and Back Again*. Boston: Mariner, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. Print.

“Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who enjoys a comfortable, unambitious life, rarely traveling any farther than his pantry or cellar. But his contentment is disturbed when the wizard Gandalf and a company of dwarves arrive on his doorstep one day to whisk him away on an adventure. They have launched a plot to raid the treasure hoard guarded by Smaug the Magnificent, a large and very dangerous dragon. Bilbo reluctantly joins their quest, unaware that on his journey to the Lonely Mountain he will encounter both a magic ring and a frightening creature known as Gollum.” (https://www.amazon.com/Hobbit-J-R-Tolkien/dp/054792822X)

A reclusive hobbit reluctantly goes on a quest with a wizard and a company of dwarves. It is an epic tale of heroism, greed, danger, and much more. Bilbo goes through so much and comes out in the end a whole new hobbit. A great example of an adventure story.