

NOT A COMPLETE COURSE PLAN - FOR SAMPLE VIEWING PURPOSES ONLY

◆◆◆ **KON-TIKI** ◆◆◆

| WEEK 1 | |
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| <p>Kon-Tiki, published in 1950, is the non-fiction account of Thor Heyerdahl’s journey across the Pacific Ocean. Heyerdahl set out to sail from Peru to the Polynesian islands, on a raft, to show that the ancient people could have done so, thus populating the islands. He recruits five other men and, in 1947, they head to South America, construct a primitive raft, and set sail for the islands 4300 nautical miles away.</p> | |
| <p>Parent Notes: This novel is more sophisticated story and the reading level may not be appropriate for younger or struggling readers. In order to complete the unit in the 5 weeks outlined below, students will need to read two chapters a week. The reading assignments were not broken day by day since there are only eight chapters in the book. Some students may need additional time to complete the reading.</p> | |
| <p>Characters:</p> <p>Thor Heyerdahl: The author of the book and narrator of the story. Heyerdahl has studied the ancient people of South America and Polynesia and believes that there is a link between the two. When he cannot get his theories to be taken seriously, he proposes to cross the ocean the way he believes the primitive people did.</p> <p>Bengt Danielsson: A vivacious reader, his box aboard the raft contains many books. He is also the steward and the manager of their rations.</p> <p>Erik Hesselberg: The navigator of the journey. He measures and records their progress each day.</p> <p>Herman Watzinger: The first to join Heyerdahl for the trip. He collects and records all sorts of data on the voyage. Much of what he records, such as weather data, is sent back to various people, since this area of the ocean is largely unstudied.</p> <p>Knut Haugland: A radio man Thor met during WWII. He and Torstein work to keep the radio in working order throughout the journey.</p> <p>Torstein Raaby: Another man Thor met during the war. He works with Knut to keep the radio working and to send messages back to their sponsors, friends, and families.</p> | |
| <p>Geographical Locations: A map of the Pacific Ocean and the route <i>Kon-Tiki</i> traveled is included at the front of the book. Encourage students to reference this map as they read to help aid their understanding of the events.</p> | |
| KT | <p>Read Chapter 1 – Chapter 2. Written Assignment: The opening of <i>Kon-Tiki</i> begins: “Once in a while you find yourself in an odd situation. You get into it by degrees and in the most natural way but, when you are right in the midst of it, you are suddenly astonished and ask yourself how in the world it all came about.” How does the author explain that his journey across the Pacific Ocean came about?</p> |
| MON to WED | <p>Read Chapter 1 – Chapter 2.</p> <p>Chapter 1. Thor Heyerdahl is the narrator, and he begins the story on the raft, talking about how he got to be out in middle of the Pacific Ocean. He remembers sitting on a Pacific island with his wife and hearing the story of “Tiki.” Tiki was the chief-god that brought his people to the island. Years later, Thor begins studying the history of the Polynesian islands and how they came to be inhabited.</p> |

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| | <p>For him, all the signs pointed towards the story of Tiki. There were similar stories all over the islands of Tiki having been driven out of a land in the east (South America) and sailing over to the islands. Then, his investigation into the theory is interrupted by WWII. Chapter 2. After the war, Thor goes to New York and submits his manuscript, and explains his theory to a number of scientists. He is soon frustrated by the lack of response. Thor decides the only way to get people to pay attention to his theories is to actually attempt to sail from Peru to the Polynesian islands on a raft. He talks to a number of people, consulting charts and maps. Most agree that the currents and winds would be favorable but that he would be crazy to try it. He decides to do it and begins recruiting men to go along with him. He quickly has five of the six men and begins working on funding and supplies. By the end of the chapter, they are on an airplane on their way to South America.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Chapter 1: isolated, Polynesian, civilizations, descended Chapter 2: manuscript, keel, bulwarks, expedition</p> <p>Study Questions for Chapter 1:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who is the narrator of <i>Kon-Tiki</i>? 2. Where are the men when the book begins? 3. What are the names of the six men on the raft? 4. Who was "Tiki"? How does Thor first learn about him? 5. How does Thor think people came to the Polynesian Islands so long ago? <p>Study Questions for Chapter 2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why does Thor have a hard time getting people to read about or believe his theories? 2. What does his friend Wilhelm tell Thor to try to talk him out of going? 3. Who is the first man to want to go with Thor? 4. Why are Knut and Torstein asked to join them on the voyage? 5. Where are Herman and Thor headed at the end of the chapter? |
| THUR | Complete the written assignment (see above) in a minimum of 1 paragraph, due Monday. |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">Notes</div> | |
| WEEK 5 | |
| KT | Written assignment: Congratulations! You have finished reading <i>Kon-Tiki</i> . Now you need to write a nice book report on the story. |
| MON to WED | Written Assignment. Work on your book report. Review your paper to make sure everything you have written supports your thesis statement, and the entire paper has a gentle flow from one supported idea to the next. Check for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. Rewrite the paper neatly if you are writing it in long hand. |
| THUR | Study for the Final Exam. Review all your Study Questions, the starred vocabulary, the written assignments, and the characters. |
| FRI | Final Exam. |

NOT A COMPLETE ANSWER KEY - FOR SAMPLE VIEWING PURPOSES ONLY**WEEK 1:****Study Question Answers for Chapter 1:**

1. Who is the narrator of *Kon-Tiki*? *The author, Thor Heyerdahl.*
2. Where are the men when the book begins? *On a raft in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.*
3. What are the names of the six men on the raft? *Thor, Herman, Bengt, Knut, Erik, and Torstein.*
4. Who was "Tiki"? *According to legend, he was both chief and god from a land far in the east. How does Thor first learn about him? From a story an old man tells him when Thor is on one of the Polynesian islands.*
5. How does Thor think people came to the Polynesian Islands so long ago? *That they sailed across the ocean on rafts carried on the currents.*

Study Question Answers for Chapter 2:

1. Why does Thor have a hard time getting people to read about or believe his theories? *Because people do not think anyone could have made it across the Pacific on a raft.*
2. What does his friend Wilhelm tell Thor to try to talk him out of going? *That even though the currents and winds are favorable, it is not probable that they would actually make it across the ocean. There would be too many dangers.*
3. Who is the first man to want to go with Thor? *Herman Watzinger.*
4. Why are Knut and Torstein asked to join them on the voyage? *For their skills with radio communication.*
5. Where are Herman and Thor headed at the end of the chapter? *To South America.*

Written Assignment:

The opening of *Kon-Tiki* begins: "Once in a while you find yourself in an odd situation. You get into it by degrees and in the most natural way but, when you are right in the midst of it, you are suddenly astonished and ask yourself how in the world it all came about." How does the author explain that his journey across the Pacific Ocean came about? *It began years ago when he and his wife were on an island and heard the story of Tiki. He began to think about the things that were similar between areas of South America and the Polynesian Islands. Later, he began to study the people of these areas more. He writes a manuscript about his theories but, when no one takes it seriously, he decides to replicate the journey he believes the ancient people traveled.*

NOT A COMPLETE EXAM- FOR SAMPLE VIEWING PURPOSES ONLY

Grade ____/100

Part I. Plot Elements. Number the plot events from *Kon-Tiki* in the order in which they happened. (2 points each)

- _____ 1. Herman falls overboard and Knut dives in to help rescue him.
- _____ 2. Thor first hears the story of Tiki and how he came to the Polynesian Islands.
- _____ 3. The men float past Puka Puka and are unable to land because of the currents.
- _____ 4. Thor decides that the only way to get people to believe his theory is to construct a raft and sail across the Pacific.

Part II. Study Questions. Answer in complete sentences, giving as much detail as possible. (3 points each)

1. Why are Thor and Herman told it will be impossible to get the balsa wood they need for the raft?
2. Give a brief description of the completed raft.
3. Why is it important that the raft stays in the Humboldt Current?
4. Describe some of the activities the men typically do during a day at sea.
5. How do the men prepare for the shipwreck?

Part III. Vocabulary. Use each word in a sentence. (2 points each) For extra credit, make the sentence similar to the one in which the word appears in the book.

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| 1. ambush | 4. isolated |
| 2. balsa | 5. porous |
| 3. devoured | 6. provisions |

Part IV. Essay. The essay should be at least one full paragraph with plenty of examples from the story. (30 points)

The *Kon-Tiki* expedition begins because Thor wants to be able to prove that the native people of South American could have traveled to the Polynesian Islands. Did his journey help to show this? What other support does he give in the novel? In your essay, discuss the clues Thor had collected that supported his theory and how his voyage contributed to his ideas. Include your opinion as to whether or not the theory could be true.

NOT A COMPLETE EXAM ANSWER KEY- FOR SAMPLE VIEWING PURPOSES ONLY**Part I. Plot Elements.**

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| 6 | 1. Herman falls overboard and Knut dives in to help rescue him. |
| 1 | 2. Thor first hears the story of Tiki and how he came the Polynesian Islands. |
| 7 | 3. The men float past Puka Puka and are unable to land because of the currents. |
| 2 | 4. Thor decides that the only way to get people to believe his theory is to construct a raft and sail across the Pacific. |

Part II. Study Questions

- Why are Thor and Herman told it will be impossible to get the balsa wood they need for the raft? *Because it is the rainy season and they will not be able to go into the jungle because the roads are too muddy.*
- Give a brief description of the completed raft. *The raft is made from 9 balsa logs and is about 45 feet long at the longest point. There is a small cabin in the middle. There are oars for setting at the stem. Bamboo is laid as the flooring in some areas and there are two masts.*
- Why is it important that the raft stays in the Humboldt Current? *Because it will take them to the Polynesian Islands. Otherwise, they could be lost at sea if they caught by a different current.*
- Describe some of the activities the men typically do during a day at sea. *Thor maintains the logbook. Knut and Torstein keep the radio working. Herman takes measurements and makes scientific observations. Erik maintains the sails, draws, and carves. Bengt reads.*
- How do the men prepare for the shipwreck? *They seal important items in waterproof bags. They secure the boxes tightly to the raft and put important items in the dinghy. They put on their shoes.*

Part III. Vocabulary. Answer will vary; the following are sample sentences.

- ambush – *The shark circled around the raft, ready to ambush the unsuspected fish.*
- balsa – *The balsa wood was light enough to float across the ocean.*
- devoured – *Hungry for fresh fruit, the men devoured the pineapple.*
- isolated – *Out in the middle of the ocean, we were isolated from any other people.*
- porous – *The porous wood was absorbing the water and was wet inside.*

Part IV. Essay

The *Kon-Tiki* expedition begins because Thor wants to be able to prove that the native people of South America could have traveled to the Polynesian Islands. Did his journey help to show this? What other support does he give in the novel? In your essay, discuss the clues Thor had collected that supported his theory and how his voyage contributed to his ideas. Include your opinion as to whether or not the theory could be true. *Answers should include examples from the book that show that the Polynesian people could have come from South America. This may include the similarities in language, the various plants that are in both places, the many versions of the story of Tiki, the stone sculptors, etc. Students should state whether or not they think the theory is true and why they believe that.*

NOT A COMPLETE GLOSSARY- FOR SAMPLE VIEWING PURPOSES ONLY

All Definitions for the Vocabulary lists have come from Merriam Webster's Dictionary at www.m-w.com

A

***ambush**: waiting to attack by surprise

B

bulwarks: sides of ship that rise above the upper deck

C

coral: the hard deposits, usually red in color, left by certain small sea animals

D

***dinghy**: a rubber life raft

E

***expedition**: a journey taken for a specific purpose