

**A FIRST YEAR AND COMMON READING RESOURCE GUIDE
TO KEN ILGUNAS'S**

TRESPASSING ACROSS AMERICA



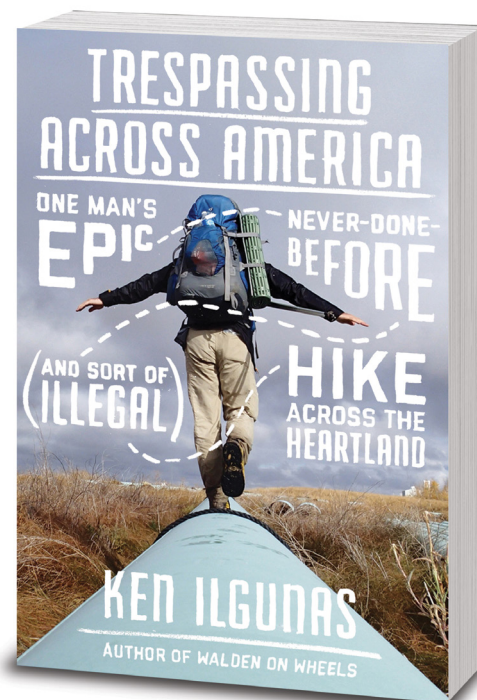
**BY
CHRIS GILBERT**



Penguin
Random House
ACADEMIC MARKETING

I. INTRODUCTION

In *Trespassing Across America*, the reader accompanies Ken Ilgunas as he walks the proposed route of the Keystone XL pipeline. On his journey, Ken encounters wildlife, engages with people both opposed to and supportive of the fossil fuel industry, and develops a deep appreciation for the natural world and a greater understanding of the forces that threaten it. While the environment is expectedly at the center of his narrative, Ken's book is also a meditation on travel, a testament to the importance of following inspiration, and a reflection on the power of kindness in human relationships. For students, Ken's journey invites them to reflect on their own lives and the state of the natural world around them. In a time characterized by increasingly dire warnings about the omnipresent threat of climate change, *Trespassing Across America* is an extremely timely, invaluable text. Through the questions, activities, and resources featured in this guide, students are encouraged to adopt an analytical view of both *Trespassing Across America* and related personal experiences and societal issues. This guide contains five sections: discussion questions, various classroom activities, research opportunities, service learning projects, and other resources for students, teachers, and programs. Each section is applicable to multiple curricular areas, and as such, this document has an interdisciplinary focus. Activities can also be easily modified and scaled, as they were constructed with flexibility in mind. Lastly, students are encouraged throughout to utilize technology and work collaboratively as they complete their First Year Experience (FYE); this guide should provoke meaningful analysis and reflection, and it supports the overall purpose of the FYE: to fuse rigorous classroom study with immersive, communal learning experiences.



II. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions can be posed to an entire class, given to small groups, used to initiate online discussions, etc.

1. "If it's this hard for me—a Caucasian walking through homogenous Caucasian country—what would it be like if I were black, or gay, or Korean, or Muslim, or a woman, or all of the above?" (p. 199). If Ken's identity had differed in the ways mentioned above, do you think his journey across America would have been different? If so, in what ways?
2. If society becomes less reliant on fossil fuels, how will this shift affect the employees and families that are financially dependent on the fossil fuel industry? Is it possible to support alternative energy sources while also providing a financial safety net for those affected by a declining fossil fuel industry? If so, how? If not, why is this impossible?
3. In general, do you believe trespassing laws in the United States are either excessive or too relaxed? Should people be allowed to roam freely?
4. "At worst, the scene was a war zone, the ground zero of some horrific city-destroying bomb. At best, it was a futuristic moon colony where imported laborers operated giant machinery, worked slave hours, and remorselessly plundered a place to which they have no emotional connection" (p. 46). What sort of human relationship with the natural world is depicted in this description of Fort McMurray? In general, what is your reaction to Ken's description of what he observes during his flight?
5. "I thought I had gotten to this place because I'd trusted that initial flash of inspiration I had felt when Liam suggested we hike the path a year before. In time, all such flashes dim. The potentially life-altering sensation that once felt so ground shaking always goes away, and it's easy to come up with reasons not to follow through" (p. 187). Have you ever had such a "flash of inspiration"? If so, did it spur you to act or did you ignore it? Looking back, do you believe you made the right decision? Why? Why not?
6. Are you surprised that Ken declines to help the stranger he meets on the road in Chapter 15? Why? Why not? What does Ken ultimately take away from this experience?
7. "How quickly does the routine—masquerading as life—block from our view the grand vistas of possibility. A periodic hike not only stretches the limbs but also reminds us: Wow, there's a big old world out there" (p. 11). One of Ken's motivations for his journey is to push back against routine and convention. Have you ever felt compelled to defy routine and social expectations, or do you generally find them comforting? Explain.

8. Ken asserts that the fossil fuel industry has a disastrous effect on the environment. In what ways, though, does the industry also negatively affect its employees?
9. Do you feel optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the natural world? Explain.
10. Would you say you are a good steward of the environment? Why? Why not? What else can you do to help lessen our collective reliance on fossil fuels and combat the effects of climate change?
11. What are Ken's thoughts about the act of walking? How do you feel about it? Do you believe walking to be a beneficial, and even meditative, act? Why? Why not?
12. Do you think Ken's journey changes him in significant ways? If so, how does it transform him? Also, how do you think he affects the people he meets on his journey?
13. If you could ask Ken Ilgunas one question related to *Trespassing Across America*, what would you ask and why?

III. VARIOUS CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The following are short activities applicable to a variety of curricular areas.

1. Bridge the Gap

“I was stunned silent by the question. It was now clear that we had such different values, such different ways of thinking. My mind went in a hundred different directions at once, giving me no clear rhetorical path to follow...From the phrasing of this one question, I gathered that any sort of mutual understanding was impossible” (p. 168).

Throughout his journey, Ken encounters people with values and perspectives that differ greatly from his own. Most students have likely had, or will have, similar encounters. Given this likelihood, this activity is designed to help students develop their ability to acknowledge and understand the opposing views of others.

For this activity, each student will be paired with a classmate. In their pairings, students should resist the urge to persuade their partners or argue with them; rather, each participant should seek to gain a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, the views of his or her partner.

- To begin, have students pair up.
- Direct students to their copies of *Trespassing Across America*. They should look back through the text and examine some of the difficult conversations Ken had. What were the points of disagreement in these conversations? How did Ken navigate these differences? Give students time to read and discuss.
- Next, instruct each pair to identify a controversial topic they both feel strongly about but disagree on (if students need help with this step, direct them to <http://www.procon.org> for a list of topics).
- After they select their topic, have students write in response to the following questions:
 - What is your overall stance on this issue?
 - Why does this issue matter to you personally?
 - Where do you think your views on this issue come from?
 - What are your primary reasons for supporting/opposing this issue?

- What is the opposing side of your view? Are there any elements of the opposing side you can identify with?
- After they finish writing, start a timer (give them several minutes) and have one student in each pair share his or her thoughts with their partner. When time expires, restart the clock and have the other partner share.
- To conclude, ask students to debrief in their pairings and discuss these questions: What did you learn about the other side? Have any of your original views changed as a result of this activity? Were you able to locate common ground with your partner?

2. Image Caption Creation

Trespassing Across America features a number of high-quality, color images. While each image is currently accompanied by a short caption, this activity requires students to generate new captions that reflect their unique interpretations of several images.

- To begin, have students (individually or in pairs) select two-three images from the book they find particularly striking.
- Next, direct students to locate several passages from the text that connect explicitly and thematically to their chosen images.
- After they locate their passages, students should create a unique caption for each of their selected images. Each caption should reflect their impression of the image and capture the essence of the related passages.
- Allow students to present their images, passages, captions, and their explanations of them to the class. Take time to discuss students' interpretations.

3. Student Generated Questions (QAR)

When students are able to generate their own questions, they are typically more invested in the analytical process. Allow them to take ownership of inquiry and explore *Trespassing Across America* through this activity. QAR refers to Question-Answer Relationships, and it works well in terms of encouraging both close analysis and personal connections. The types of questions include:

- **Right there questions:** Answers to these questions are found explicitly in the text.
(*Why does Ken embark on his journey?*)
- **Think and search questions:** Answers lie in the text, but may only be found by examining several different sections and piecing them together.
(*What are Ken's various thoughts about private property and trespassing laws?*)
- **Author and you questions:** Answers require personal interpretation based on textual evidence.
(*What is your stance on fossil fuel use? Which related arguments from the text do you most closely identify with?*)
- **On my own questions:** Answers connect personal experience with themes of the text.
(*Have you ever felt invigorated by traveling to a new place? Explain.*)

Have students work independently or in pairs to generate several questions per category for a specific section of the book. After these questions are generated, instructors have several options:

- Have students trade and answer each other's questions in writing.
- Have students submit questions on notecards, and randomly select several for formative assessments.
- Have students select one question to expand upon in an extended written response or brief presentation ("Right there" questions do not work well for this).
- Have students answer each other's questions via collaborative documents on Google Docs (<http://docs.google.com>).*

For more information on this strategy, consult this resource: <http://www.readingquest.org/strat/qar.html>

*All Google resources mentioned in this guide are accessible with a free Google account.

4. Nature Blog

"And sometimes I'd be overcome with this joy, this love, this ecstasy. Whatever it was, it would linger, and sometimes I'd carry it with me for hours. I'd be overcome with a strange love for this rock, this blade of grass, that white cloud tearing into pieces, this body, this life. I wanted to fall to the ground and hug it. I wanted to suck all the air from the sky and eat all the dirt and consume everything so it and I were finally one" (p. 140).

Use this activity to help students remind themselves and the larger community about our connection to the natural world. Encourage students to locate three–four local, natural settings that are relatively unscathed by human activity (do emphasize that students should consider their own personal safety and comfort when doing so). Instruct students to spend some time in each location and to answer the following questions in a journal writing while they are in each setting:

- Where are you?
- What do you notice about your surroundings? Pay attention to what each of your senses reveals.
- What animals do you notice?
- How do you feel in this setting?
- Compare/contrast this location with your daily surroundings.

Also, tell students to take several pictures and/or video of each natural setting.

Next, have each student create a blog through the use of a free resource such as <http://www.blogger.com> or <http://www.wordpress.com>. On the blog, students should create an individual entry for each location they visited. Then, have them import their journal writing and related media. After their blogs are completed, have students share their blog addresses with their classmates and encourage them to comment on each other's work. Also, promote their material to the larger community by posting links to their blogs on your school's website.

5. Catalog and Confront Fears

"For this first leg of my trip, I felt as if there were something constantly glaring down at me, making me uneasy and edgy. The eye, I realized, was fear. Fear of getting caught. Fear of getting shot. Fear of getting trampled. Fear of not finishing. Fear of everything. It wasn't something that felt as if it came from inside me; rather, it came from someplace else, like an evil spirit, a dream-invading succubus, a ghost that won't leave the attic" (p. 103).

While Ken finds his trip to be both enlightening and invigorating, it also provokes a number of fears that he is forced to confront. Use this activity to invite students to examine Ken's fears and their own. The overall goal of this activity is to help students see themselves as people capable of overcoming challenging circumstances.

- To begin, have students (working individually or in pairs) construct a T-chart. An example of one is located here: <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/T-Chart.pdf>
- One side of the chart should be labeled "Ken's Fears" and the other side should be labeled "My Fears."
- Instruct students to look back through *Trespassing Across America* and identify fears that Ken explicitly references and those that are implied by his speech and actions. Students should list these on the corresponding side of the T-chart.
- Next, tell students to imagine that they, instead of Ken, are hiking across America. What would their concerns be? How would their age, gender, ethnicity, etc. contribute to their specific concerns? They should record this information on the corresponding side of the T-chart.

- Finally, ask students to refer to their charts and answer the following questions in writing: What were Ken's central concerns? What are yours? How are your fears similar to/different from his? How did Ken manage his fears? How would you manage yours?
- After students finish writing, transition to a whole-class discussion and allow them to share their thoughts. During the discussion, push students to consider the various ways they could persevere and summon physical and emotional strength during such a challenging journey.

IV. RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

The following topics are designed to provide students with opportunities for extended inquiry and analysis. In response to these topics, students could:

- Compose a research paper
 - Deliver a presentation
 - Design a lesson plan and teach a class
 - Create a website (<http://www.wix.com>, <http://www.weebly.com>, and <https://sites.google.com> are excellent free resources for this)
1. "The Heartland now beats with a dull thump. Take a drive through the plains and you'll see ghost towns, barns rotting, barbed wire rusting on old wooden posts. I never saw children, and the women of child-bearing age seem to have vanished from the face of the prairie as dramatically as the buffalo" (p.169). Perform research and examine the social, political, and economic factors responsible for the decline of this region. Why does the Heartland now beat with a "dull thump"? How has the region changed over time? Did the fossil fuel industry contribute to the Heartland's decline? How can the region be revitalized? Make specific recommendations informed by research.
 2. Select a portion of the Keystone XL pipeline's route. Next, take a close look at your section and investigate the habitats and species that would be affected by the pipeline's construction. If constructed, would the pipeline harm endangered species? Would the pipeline contribute to the extinction of specific animals? Or, would the pipeline's effect on wildlife likely be minimal? Make sure your conclusions are backed by research.
 3. What exactly is climate change? How is it caused by human activity? How can it be combatted? Despite nearly world-wide consensus from the scientific community regarding its existence, why do some citizens and politicians deny the reality of climate change and/or its connection to human behavior? Do you believe that governments around the world are doing enough to address climate change? Why? Why not? Perform research to answer these questions.
 4. Scrutinize the voting records and campaign contributions of your local and state legislators. Do your findings show these individuals to be supportive of the environment? Which candidates, if any, receive financial support from the fossil fuel industry? Which environmental policies are endorsed/rejected by these candidates? Does there appear to be a correlation between campaign contributions and policy decisions? Extend your analysis to politicians at the national level and share your findings. To facilitate your research, visit <http://www.opensecrets.org>.
 5. "The Keystone XL, though not yet built nor even approved, had become, I thought, the perfect symbol of the twenty-first century. It was a warzone where environmentalists were pitted against industry. It was where hopes for our future clashed with habits of our past" (p. 15). Why is the Keystone XL pipeline particularly controversial? How is tar sands oil different from crude oil? What is bitumen, and how does its extraction affect the environment? As you perform research, you should also predict the pipeline's fate. Despite President Obama's rejection of the Keystone XL pipeline, does evidence suggest that its construction will eventually resume? Explain your reasoning.
 6. The fight over the Dakota Access pipeline received national attention. Perform research and locate arguments both for and against the pipeline's construction. How did the Native American population react to the proposed pipeline? Why? What are the positions of the oil companies supporting its construction? What is your position in this contentious debate? Be sure to discuss how your research informs your stance.
 7. How can the United States become a nation powered by renewable energy sources instead of fossil fuels? Are there other countries that have made substantial moves in this direction? What can our country learn from them? What sort of social, economic, and political changes are necessary to create such a paradigm shift? Perform research and generate a plan that details how the United States can move in a more sustainable direction.

V. SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

These projects are designed to connect students' learning experiences with the larger community.

1. Participate in National Take a Hike Day

"What would I do to have the life of the hiker?! It was more than just a form of escape. On a hike, the days pass with the wind, the sun, the stars; movement is powered by a belly of food and water, not a noxious tank of fossil fuels...A periodic hike not only stretches the limbs but also reminds us: Wow, there's a big old world out there" (p. 11).

Ken finds the act of hiking to be invigorating and enlightening. Invite students to initiate their own illuminating hiking adventures by encouraging them to participate in National Take a Hike Day. Sponsored by the American Hiking Society, National Take a Hike Day occurs annually on November 17th.

- To begin, ask students to plan their hike. Students should initiate their hiking trip in a safe environment that brings them into close contact with the natural world. If students can highlight an environmental issue during their hike, all the better.
- Ask students to bring their smartphones so they can "vlog" about their hike. Vlogging is similar to blogging, except students use video instead of text to communicate their thoughts and feelings. Students should record their most striking sights, sounds, and their related takeaways. If they are highlighting a specific environmental issue, this should be the focus of their vlog. Students should be able to edit their vlog footage using standard apps on their smart devices (iMovie works great for this, for example), and they can upload and share their videos via YouTube, Facebook, or other online resources. Have them present their hiking vlogs to the class, and encourage them to share their videos with other outlets, especially if they focused on a specific environmental area/issue.
- Students can also share their experiences with the American Hiking Society here: <https://americanhiking.org/national-take-hike-day>. Lastly, note that the American Hiking Society also sponsors National Trails Day, which students could also participate in and vlog about. More information about this event is located at <https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/>.

2. Become an Expert and Educator

Have students select a topic related to *Trespassing Across America* to research in small groups. Some suggested topics include:

- The fight against the Keystone XL pipeline, the Dakota Access pipeline, and other pipeline projects
- The status of the Ogallala Aquifer
- The intersections of overpopulation, consumption, and greenhouse gas production

- The phenomenon of peak oil
- The concept of "freedom/right to roam"
- The fight over Canadian tar sands oil

The purpose of this activity is for students to become experts on their topic so that they may effectively educate other members of the campus community. Student groups should read and analyze the applicable sections of *Trespassing Across America* while performing secondary research as well. After students have sufficiently researched their topic, have them answer the following two questions:

1. What is the essential information that others must know about my group's topic?
2. What are controversial elements of my topic?

Finally, have students present their research to the campus community in such a way that it both informs and invites them to debate the issue. Groups could:

- Staff an information booth (be sure to obtain permission first) in a visible area and distribute brochures, fliers, or other documents. Free web resources such as <https://www.canva.com/> will work for this, or students could use programs such as Microsoft Publisher to create documents.
- Launch an online informational campaign through social media or a designed website. Encourage students to create captivating presentations through Prezi (<http://www.prezi.com>), Google Slides (<http://www.google.com/slides/about/>), or Microsoft Sway (<https://sway.com>).
- Design and publish infographics. An infographic is a visual representation of information that features short sections of text and multiple charts, graphs, and other visuals. The digital medium offers students a unique way to package and convey knowledge while sharpening their digital literacy skills. Free resources for this include <http://piktochart.com> and <http://easel.ly>.

Regardless of the format students select, their presentations should invite their audience to ask questions and engage in dialogue.

3. Volunteer with an Environmental Organization

"Almost as depressing as an inevitable collapse is how powerless I feel as an individual...But change is only possible if it's a collective 'we' rather than a lonely 'I.' So where does that leave those individuals who care deeply about the planet but are no more than a scattered minority?" (p. 220).

This activity invites students to become part of the "collective we" that Ken refers to. Encourage students to connect with other environmentally-minded individuals by asking them to volunteer with an organization dedicated to environmental causes. The following resources can be used to locate such an organization:

- <https://www.volunteermatch.org/>
- <http://www.nature.org/about-us/volunteer/search-volunteer-opportunities/index.htm>
- <http://winterwildlands.org/take-action/volunteer/>
- <https://www.gooverseas.com/volunteer-abroad/environmental-conservation>
- <https://greenwire.greenpeace.org/usa/en>
- <http://www.americansagainstfracking.org/about-the-coalition/members/>

Ask students to maintain a journal during their time volunteering so that they can share their experiences with classmates and the local community when they return.

4. Become a RAKtivist

“On this trip, the locals had every reason to keep their distance and be suspicious, and even treat me with a sort of guarded contempt. Yet they had shown me nothing but compassion and generosity, opening their hearts and doors to this dusty, bearded, limping backpacker who could conceivably be a criminal” (p. 111).

Ken experiences numerous acts of kindness during his trip, as many of the people he encounters offer him words of support, companionship, food, shelter, and more. While *Trespassing Across America* certainly situates the reader’s focus on the natural world, the book also highlights the importance of compassionate human interaction. Encourage your students to initiate acts of generosity and kindness through their work as “RAKtivists.”

- A “RAKtivist,” as defined by the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, is a “Random Acts of Kindness activist.” Invite your students to become RAKtivists by directing them to <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/become-a-raktivist>.
- Once there, they can sign up and join an online community of thousands of other people who have joined the kindness movement.
- After they sign up, direct students to <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-ideas>. Here, they can browse an extensive list of kindness ideas. Have students, either individually or in groups, select several ideas from the list that they are willing to implement. Give them time to plan, and instruct them to carry out their plans in the community. Encourage students to capture images and video of their kindness efforts.
- After all students implement their plans, come together as a class and debrief. Have students discuss the particular acts of kindness they performed, and have them consider the effects of their compassionate actions on both themselves and others. If they have images and videos, ask students to share these with classmates.
- Make sure students are aware that they can participate in National Random Acts of Kindness Week in February. Direct Students to <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/rakweekpartners> for more information.

5. Become an Environmental Activist

“A pipeline is built to send a resource from a place that has a lot of it to a place that doesn’t. But civilization won’t collapse without new oil pipelines; it’ll collapse without clean water, healthy soil, and a stable climate. What we ultimately need, it seems, cannot be delivered by a pipe” (p. 264).

Provide students with the opportunity to become activists and join the fight for clean air, healthy soil, and a stable climate. Assemble students in small groups and instruct them to select a local environmental issue that would benefit from their group’s activist efforts. First, have them research the issue to determine the history of the problem, its main contributors, and other important items of information. Next, tell students to take action. Some suggested forms of activism include:

- Use a website such as <http://www.change.org> to start an online petition.
- Write op-ed articles and send letters to the editors of local newspapers.
- Staff an information booth on campus to inform the academic community about the issue.
- Use resources such as <http://www.wix.com>, <http://www.weebly.com>, or <http://sites.google.com> to design a website related to the issue. Promote the website through social media to publicize the issue and connect with other activists.
- Use resources such as <http://www.canva.com> or <http://docs.google.com> to create fliers and brochures to be distributed to the public.
- Contact local legislators about the issue and related laws and policies.
- Screen related films to the community.
- Create and distribute zines (self-published magazines). Students can design them by hand (see <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Zine> for more information) or they can create them via free online resources such as <http://zinepal.com>.

6. Join the Fossil Fuel Divestment Movement

“It seemed pipelines were destined to the outmoded fate of horsedrawn wood wagons and whaling ships sooner than imagined. The coal, gas, and oil industries were under siege like never before. Perhaps it’s just a mirage on the horizon, but it appears we are moving—albeit at a steady crawl—toward a future with far fewer fossil fuels” (p. 263).

This activity invites students to participate in the larger movement to force institutions to divest from fossil fuels. Typically, divestment efforts target local governments, colleges, religious organizations, and other institutions. Students could certainly center their divestment campaign on their university, or they could select another institution of interest.

Invite students to access and utilize the resources below to help them design their own fossil fuel divestment campaigns and to connect them with several larger national movements.

- <https://campaigns.gofossilfree.org>
Fossil Free is a project of 350.org and a network of campaigns and campaigners who work to free communities from fossil fuels. Their website offers students an interactive map where they can initiate and display their own campaign and/or locate other fossil fuel divestment campaigns nearby.
- <http://www.studentsdivest.org>
The Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network works to mentor, train, and organize students in order to support fossil fuel divestment and community reinvestment. Among other useful items, their website features a downloadable toolkit for reinvestment campaigns.
- <http://powershift.org/campaigns/divest>
The Power Shift Network is a grassroots hub for young climate activists. Their website allows users to access fossil fuel divestment resources, attend pipeline resistance community digital town halls, connect with other climate activists around the country, and much more.

VI. OTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND PROGRAMS

The following are resources useful for extending a study of *Trespassing Across America* and its many related subjects:

Online resources

- <https://www.nrdc.org/>
Official website of the Natural Resources Defense Council, an organization working to safeguard the earth.
- <https://insideclimatenews.org/>
Official website of InsideClimate News, a Pulitzer Prize-winning news organization covering climate change, energy, and the environment.
- <https://350.org/>
Official website of 350.org, a planet-wide grassroots climate change movement.
- <http://americawalks.org/>
Official website of America Walks, an organization working to make America a great place to walk.
- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jun/23/a-beginners-guide-to-fossil-fuel-divestment>
An informative guide to the basics of fossil fuel divestment.
- <http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/energy/great-energy-challenge/keystone-xl-pipeline-route-map/>
An interactive map of the Keystone XL's route.

- http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/24/opinion/sunday/this-is-our-country-lets-walk-it.html?_r=0
In this *New York Times* opinion piece, Ken Ilgunas discusses trespassing, right to roam, and the freedom to walk.
- <http://www.kenilgunas.com/p/media-speaking.html>
This resource features several links to interviews with Ken Ilgunas and media related to *Trespassing Across America*.

Books

- *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*
By Naomi Klein
- *Oil and Honey: The Education of an Unlikely Activist*
By Bill McKibben
- *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*
By Bill McKibben
- *The Energy of Slaves: Oil and the New Servitude*
By Andrew Nikiforuk
- *Patagonia's Tools for Grassroots Activists: Best Practices for Success in the Environmental Movement*
Edited by Nora Gallagher and Lisa Myers
- *Goodlands: A Meditation and History on the Great Plains*
By Frances W. Kaye

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

CHRIS GILBERT is a former high school English teacher and current doctoral student who lives in the mountains of North Carolina. He is also an avid writer. His work has appeared in The Washington Post's education blog, "The Answer Sheet," NCTE's (National Council of Teachers of English) English Journal, and he has also written a number of educational guides for Penguin Random House and Patagonia. He is a 2013 and 2015 recipient of NCTE's Paul and Kate Farmer Writing Award.



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