Masterpieces of World Literature 271
Both a "D" and a "W" Course

Winter 2012 Syllabus

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Required Text: *The Norton Anthology of Western Literature*, Eighth Edition, Volume 1, by Lawall and others (An older edition should work as well.)

Other: Access to the Internet

A Caution concerning World Masterpieces 271

This literature course offers different views on potentially controversial subjects, most particularly religion. The authors we will read held as fervently to their "truths" as we do to ours. If you are devoted to your "truth" in such a way that hearing or reading ideas that seemingly challenge it might offend you or distress you, I suggest you drop this course immediately.

OVERVIEW

Catalog Description: This course explores the fundamental works of Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, and European civilizations from the dawn of literacy to the Renaissance. Representative works include the Bible, Homer, Sophocles, the Koran, Dante, and Shakespeare. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing and/or English 101.

Requirements: When you glance through the text, you will immediately see that the material will require *advanced reading skills and a good amount of time to prepare* for each class. *Please assess your reading level immediately and find an alternative course at once if you feel your reading skills are not advanced enough.* Please remember that all students will be responsible for a close reading of all assignments.

Class time will include both small-group and general discussion. Please remember that this is not a lecture course, and so, to profit, always read assignments in advance and come to class willing to discuss them; please do not attend if your intention is only to have other class members or me tell you what we think the assignments mean. Expect an occasional pop quiz to encourage participation and reward those who complete assignments on time.

The Course website < http://ol.scc.spokane.edu/jroth > is packed with items of interest. These include all course handouts, an updated calendar, links to sites that we visit in class, as well as others that offer additional study/enrichment opportunities. In addition, the website provides a link for you to check your grades in the course. Please visit it often. Your feedback will be welcomed and occasionally rewarded**. I update our course calendar daily and use it to plan and announce assignments and activities. Please check the calendar regularly for changes in due dates, activities, and the next few days' reading assignments.**

EXPERIENCES (EXAMS) (100 points each--three during the term)

There will be three of these, roughly dividing the course into thirds. All questions will be short essay or objective. Each experience is worth up to 100 points and cannot be taken late unless you make arrangements in advance. Because this course provides a "W" credit, your success on these experiences (exams) will depend upon your use of written English as well as upon your mastery of course content.

THE COURSE JOURNAL (please see the attachment to this syllabus)

FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (MLA format) (20 points each--seven to eight during the term.)

Occasionally, prior to a discussion class, I will ask you to write a one to two-page formal reaction to the reading or readings that we will be discussing in class that day. **To be accepted, your paper mush follow MLA format.** Papers that do not follow MLA format will be returned ungraded. In addition, please be sure to put the name of the selection at the top of the page. Be ready to share your reaction and turn it in at the beginning of the class.

These writing assignments are due at the beginning of class and will not be accepted later during the class that day for any reason. This is because they only have value if they are written before the discussion and the writer then participates in the discussion.

The keys to success are the following:

- Read the assignment carefully and answer the specific question the assignment poses.
- Always have your assignment written *before* class. I will be calling on each of you to share your entries throughout the quarter.
- Be honest. Write what you really feel, not what you think you are supposed to say.
- Show respect for the English language—use it correctly. Because this course provides a "W" credit, the points you earn on these assignments will in part be determined by your use of written English.

PORTFOLIO FOLDER

Please keep all returned assignments in your portfolio folder. Being able to produce a returned, graded assignment is the ONLY WAY to verify that you have completed the assignment if my records indicate otherwise.

FIRST THREE DAYS ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

In order to be eligible to receive a course grade of .7 or higher, a student must have attended regularly the first three days of the quarter or have made arrangements with the instructor in advance.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I do not take attendance because I believe that at the college level, attendance is the student's responsibility. Unlike earlier, required school participation, enrolling in college is a choice you freely make; in addition, it is a privilege, not a requirement. Therefore, it is up to you whether you will take advantage of it or not. However, a student who misses too many classes may become ineligible to pass the course because excessive absence brings into question whether the student attempted the course at all.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT and BEHAVIOR

No student has the right to interfere with another student's opportunity to learn. To this end, I expect all of my students to act like responsible, socially-skilled adults or they will be asked to leave the class and/or drop the course. In addition, **please turn off all electronics** including cell phones and I-pods. Since attendance is optional, if you would rather be calling, texting, chatting or listening to music during class time, please do it elsewhere. Please see the S.C.C. Student Code of Conduct for more information.

MAKING UP LATE ASSIGNMENTS

There are no make-ups unless you make arrangements in advance. However, to allow for the unexpected, you may make up one *formal writing assignment* or one web assignment without penalty as long as you make it up within one calendar week of its due date. <u>These make-up guidelines do NOT apply to the three major exams or to the occasional pop quizzes.</u>

☛You must attach your *da Vinci* Late Assignment Submission Form to your late assignment in order for it to be accepted. Please remember that once you have used this one late assignment option, I will <u>accept no more late assignments</u> from you <u>no matter the reason</u> *unless you made <u>earlier, prior arrangements</u> to submit the assignment late.* No excuses and no exceptions, so please don't ask.

CHECKING YOUR GRADES

I keep all of your grades on ANGEL. Please check them regularly and let me know of any discrepancies.

YOUR FINAL GRADE:

S.C.C. uses the decimal grading system. I will first convert your grade to percentage by dividing you total points by the total points possible. I will then convert your percentage grade to a decimal grade using the chart below. The decimal value will appear on your grade sheet and transcript.

Grade Scale—All Classes

% to Decimal	Letter	% to Decimal	Letter	% to Decimal	Letter	% to Decimal	Letter
100--4.0	A	89--3.4	B+	79--2.9	C+	69--1.9	D+
99--4.0	A	88--3.4	B+	78--2.8	C+	68--1.8	D+
98--4.0	A	87--3.3	B+	77--2.7	C	67--1.7	D
97--4.0	A	86--3.3	B	76--2.6	C	66--1.6	D
96--3.9	A	85--3.2	B	75--2.5	C	65--1.5	D
95--3.8	A	84--3.2	B	74--2.4	C	64--1.4	D
94--3.7	A	83--3.1	B	73--2.3	C	63--1.3	D
93--3.7	A-	82--3.1	B	72--2.2	C	62--1.2	D
92--3.6	A-	81--3.0	B-	71--2.1	C-	61--1.1	D-
91--3.6	A-	80--3.0	B-	70--2.0	C-	60--1.0	D-
90--3.5	A-					0.7--less	F

COURSE JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

World Literature 271 is a 'W' course because one of its goals is to help you improve your writing. Regardless of what writing instruction I can give you, the best way to improve your writing is to write and write often. Simply writing lots of words, sentences, and paragraphs can lead to surprising improvement in your writing--the more words, the better. The magic is that the words you write don't have to be read by anyone else to help your writing skills improve.

To understand how this works, compare writing a great number of words to practicing the piano between piano lessons. The piano teacher does not have to listen to each practice session in order for the student to improve; in the same way, someone else (an instructor) does not have to read the words written for the writer to improve. **But in each case the student will improve in proportion to the practice time that he or she invests.**

Therefore, dedicating yourself to this assignment can do more to improve your writing than anything I or any book can do.

THE COURSE JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

The goal of a Course Journal entry is to consider the literary work in question and write as many sentences and paragraphs as possible within the time limit. Your journal response might include your general reaction to the literary work, questions you have about it, your reaction to class discussions, or reflections on your earlier thinking after having the benefit of class discussion and additional time to reflect on the piece of literature.

Writing a journal entry requires a special time set aside to write original sentences and paragraphs about the readings we'll be covering. Plan on about **fifteen to twenty minutes per journal entry**, with about two to three entries per week.

To make a journal entry, first read the selection in question and then write an honest reaction to it. What did or didn't you understand? What did you agree or disagree with? What questions would you ask the author, given the opportunity? What inferences can you draw about the culture in which the selection was written? Did you enjoy the selection? Why or why not? Go deeper than deciding whether a selection appealed to you or not. What's important is WHY you found it appealing or unappealing. Responding to this second-level question can refine your thinking, your knowledge of yourself, and your values.

One key to being successful is to let the words flow quickly. Disregard spelling and punctuation; just be sure you can make out what you have written at a later time because I may ask you to share a general sense of a journal entry or you may want to return to an entry to revise it.

Also please keep in mind that since I will not read in detail any of your entries, you can be absolutely honest with yourself. No one but you will read the content of your journal entries without your permission. It's best to view your journal entries as conversations

with yourself, the author, and the selection.

SPECIFICS

You need not worry about correcting spelling/readability/sentencing errors nor be concerned that someone else will read what you have written. Just be sure you can make out what you've written.

- A minimum of fifteen minutes minimum per journal assignment. (Please see the tentative list of journal assignments below).
- Please be sure to accurately number and date each journal entry.
- Keep all pages together in a notebook or on a USB thumb drive—I will ask you to show me your journal in progress at various times throughout the quarter.
- Please bring journal writing materials with you to each class. Occasionally, we'll write a journal entry together.
- As you write a journal entry, please remember the goal is to produce a large quantity of words within the time limit. Since I will not read the content of your entries, poor spelling and punctuation will not be a factor in your journal grade; only the number of words will.
- At first, expect to sit with pen in hand waiting for the ideas to come. If you are patient, in time your mind will begin to generate content that your pen can record. A fifteen to twenty minute writing session can yield from half a page to several pages of writing depending upon your mood and perseverance.
- **Note:** Your journal must demonstrate that you have read the readings, attended the discussions, and made an honest attempt to meet the requirements of this assignment. Journals that appear "fabricated" at the last minute will not be accepted.
- **No one but you will read the actual sentences you write—only the quantity you write will be checked.**

Literature Journal Entries (Tentative)

- *The Epic of Gilgamesh*—2 journal entries
- The Hebrew Bible—2 journal entries
- *The Iliad*—2 journal entries
- *The Odyssey*—2 journal entries
- Literature of India—1 journal entry
- The Christian Bible—2 journal entries

- Life in the Middle Ages—1 journal entry
- *Beowulf*—1 journal entry
- Dante's the *Inferno*—3 journal entries
- The *Thousand and One Nights*—1 journal entry
- *Don Quixote*—2 journal entries
- *Hamlet*—3 journal entries
- *Paradise Lost*—1 journal entry
- Open Journal entries 2-4
- Total—23 designated ___ open

You can use the following questions as journal prompts:

What was your initial reaction to the selection?
What did or didn't you understand?
What did you agree or disagree with? Why?
What questions would you ask the author, given the opportunity?
What inferences can you draw about the culture in which the selection was written?
Did you enjoy the selection? Why or why not?
Where do you think the story will go next? Where would you take it if you were the author?
What theme does the selection suggest? In other words, what does the selection suggest about the nature of life and experience? Try to state this in a sentence.
Does the selection respond to any of our beginning questions?

How does the world work?
Who or what is in charge of it?
What is the nature of that "Who"?
What is our relationship to that "Who"?
What does that mean for us as humans?

In-depth responses can refine your thinking, your knowledge of yourself, and your values.

Reading Skills Assessment Exercise

Directions: Please read this excerpt from our text and then take the six-question quiz that follows:

The stories told in the Homeric poems are set in the age of the Trojan War, which archaeologists (those, that is, who believe that it happened at all) date to the twelfth century B.C.E. Though the poems do preserve some faded memories of the Mycenaean Age, as we have them they probably are the creation of later centuries, the tenth to the eighth B.C.E.-the so-called Dark Age that succeeded the collapse (or destruction) of Mycenaean civilization. This was the time of the final settlement of the Greek peoples, an age of invasion perhaps and migration certainly, which saw the foundation and growth of many small independent cities. The geography of Greece-a land of mountain barriers and scattered islands-encouraged this fragmentation. The Greek cities never lost sight of their common Hellenic heritage, but it was not enough to unite them except in the face of unmistakable and overwhelming danger, and even then they came together only partially and for a short time. They differed from each other in custom, political constitution, and even dialect: their relations with each other were those of rivals and fierce competitors.

These cities, constantly at war in the pursuit of more productive land for growing populations, were dominated from the late eighth century B.C.E. by aristocratic oligarchies, which maintained a stranglehold on the land and the economy of which it was the base. At the same time, cultural horizons were expanding. In the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E. Greeks (perhaps including the landless) founded new cities (always near the sea and generally owing little or no allegiance to the home base) all over the Mediterranean coast . . . . Many of these new outposts of Greek civilization experienced a faster economic and cultural development than the older cities of the mainland (4-5).

Lawall, Sarah, and , ed. The Norton Anthology of Western Literature, Volume 1. 8th ed.

New York: WW. Norton & Company, 2006.

C*omprehension Quiz:* Please circle the best answer in each of the following:

1. According to this article, the Trojan War is believed to have occurred approximately how many years ago?

   A. 1200 years ago

   B. 3300 years ago

   C. 800 years ago

2. According to this article, the poems likely were created

   A. After the Mycenaean Age

   B. Before the Mycenaean Age

   C. During the Mycenaean Age

3. According to this article, which of the following contributed to the breaking apart of a single Greek culture?

   A. years of inclement weather and torrential rains—hence, the Dark Age

   B. Nomadic invaders from western Asia

   C. The geography of the land which they inhabited

4. According to the article, one event likely to unify the otherwise independent Greek cities was

   A. A call from the chief priest to rededicate oneself to the gods.

   B. An unusually high death rate among the infant population.

   C. An easy-to-see and serious threat to their collective welfare.

5. The context in which the phrase *aristocratic oligarchies* occurs in paragraph 2 suggests that *aristocratic oligarchies*

   A. are combinations of various cultures

   B. are brutal and unsuccessful without a religious component

   C. are able to hold control of a people

6. The article suggests that

   A. Life was difficult in the outposts

   B. Outposts held a strong attachment to their counterparts on the mainland

   C. Often the outposts flourished

Ancient World Timeline

Interested? Visit "The Big Eras" from SDSU

Two million BCE to about 13,000 BCE ***Paleolithic*** (Old Stone Age) (From stone tools first used by humanoid creatures to the end of the last Ice Age).

100,000 BCE -- First ritual burying of the dead

30.000 BCE Last of the Neanderthals

25,000 BCE – statue--***Venus of Willendorf*** --worship of female creative power

15,000 to 10,000 BCE Cave art in present-day France--***The Cave of Lascaux*** (hunting predominates) stone weapons

13,000 BCE to 8000 BCE ***Mesolithic*** (Middle Stone Age)

8000 BCE to 3000 BCE ***Neolithic*** (Late Stone Age) ***Dolmen***.

8000 BCE Domestication of animals; villages formed; first wars; bronze tools

3500 BCE – 2350 B.C. ***Sumerian Period***; development of pictographic writing; first ziggurat (temple base)

3000 BCE to 1200 BCE ***Bronze Age*** *(Purchase your sword here)*

2700 BCE Reign of Gilgamesh

2000 BCE earliest version of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

1900 BCE – 1600 B.C. Babylonian Period

1200 BCE ***Iron Age*** begins

The Hebrews (Israelites—Jews)

2350 BCE the Flood

2000 BCE Abraham

1600 BCE Israelite tribes captive in Egypt

1280 BCE Exodus—Moses leads them out of Egypt

1000 BCE -- 961 B.C. Reign of King David

961 BCE -- 922 B.C. Reign of King Solomon

587 BCE Captivity in Babylonia

539 BCE Return to Jerusalem

6 BCE Birth of Jesus

131-134 CE the *diaspora* or "scattering" of the Hebrew people *by* Roman Emperor Hadrian

600 CE the Birth of Mohammed

The Greeks

1400 BCE – 1200 BCE ***Mycenaean Empire*** (Proto-Greece)

1250 BCE Mycenaean war against Troy

900 BCE – 700 BCE Homeric epics *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*

776 BCE First Olympic games

450 BCE – 323 BCE--Golden Age of Greece—Classical Period

429 BCE Sophocles—*Oedipus Rex*

400 BCE – 330 BCE Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle

336 BCE – 323 BCE Alexander the Great

The Romans

753 BCE Founding of Rome

146 BCE Africa and Greece become Roman Provinces

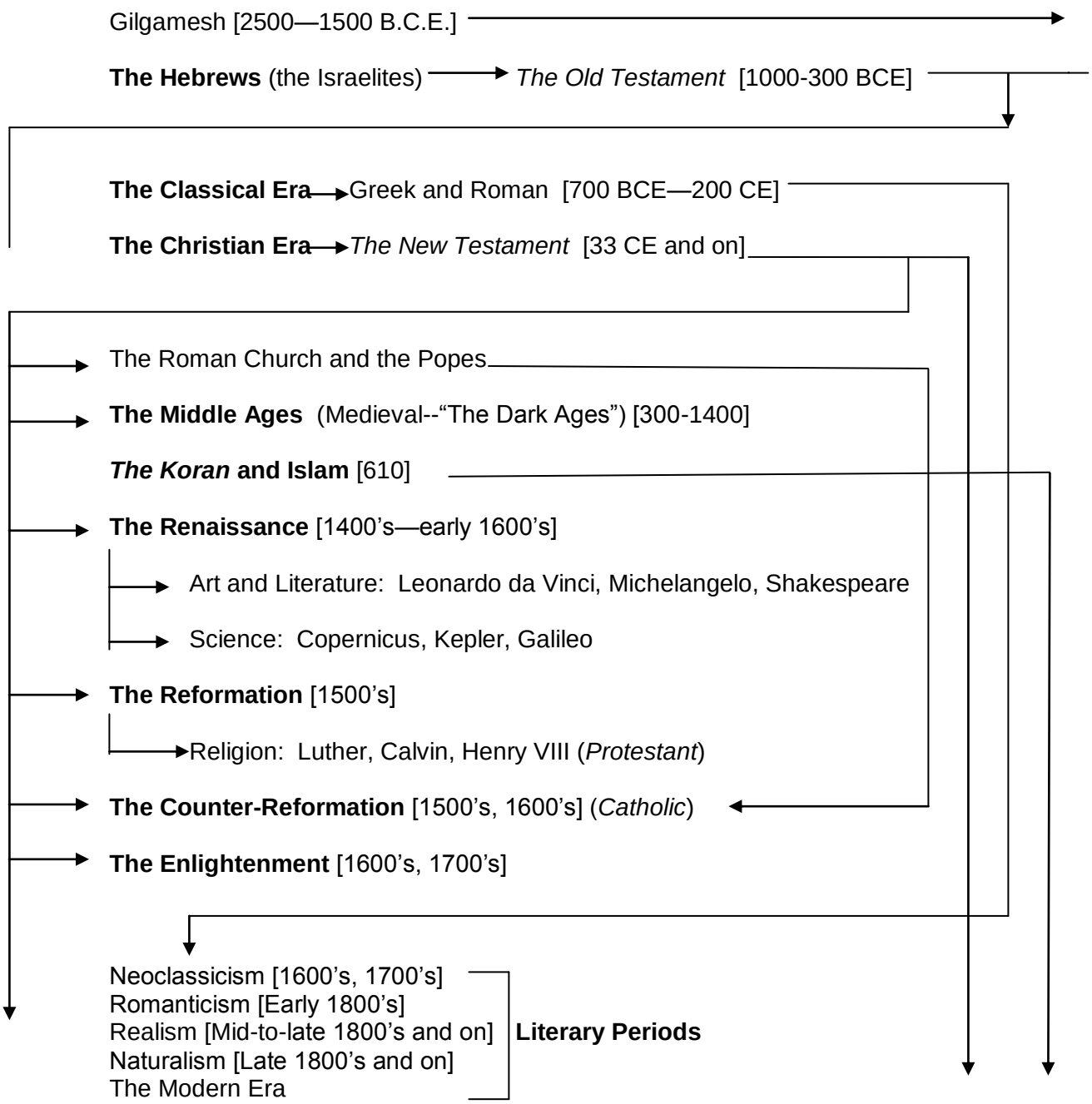
63 BCE Conquest of Jerusalem by the Romans

55 BCE -- 44 B.C. Julius Caesar

27 BCE – 14 B.C. Augustus Caesar

J. Roth

Rough Timeline of Periods and Events

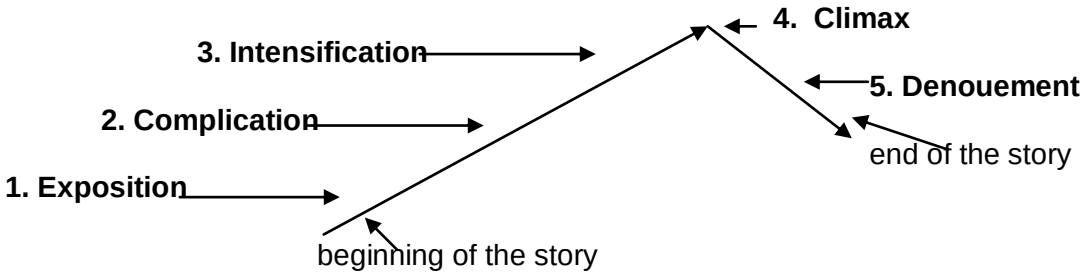


Link to Map of Ancient World

FICTION TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

PLOT

The Classical Plot Line



1. **Exposition:** In general, the setting is established and certain characters are introduced.
2. **Complication:** A problem in introduced that creates conflict.
3. **Intensification:** The problem and the conflict get worse.
4. **Climax:** The most exciting part of the plot.
5. **Denouement:** The resolution—a look at the characters and situation after the climax.

PLOT--continued

- **Protagonist**—the central character
- **Antagonists**—characters, forces, etc., that oppose the protagonist
- **Conflict**—where opposing forces meet—a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills.
- **Suspense**—the quality in a story that makes us want to read on.
- **Mystery**—an unusual set of circumstances for which readers crave an explanation.
- **Dilemma**—two choices—neither favorable.
- **Plot Manipulation** (deus ex machina)—a plot turn unjustified by the situation or characters.

CHARACTER

- **Direct Presentation**—we are told straight out what the characters are like.
- **Indirect Presentation**—we are shown what the characters are like by watching them in action and then making inferences.

- **Flat Character**—a character about which we know little—one-dimensional.
- **Round Character**—a character about which we know a great deal—multi-faceted, more fully developed.

- **Stock Character**—a character who is of a recognizable type and whose actions are predicable.

- **Static Character**—a character that does not change significantly through the action of the story.
- **Developing (Dynamic) Character**—a character that changes significantly through the action of the story.

THEME

- **Theme**—the central insight or unifying generalization about life presented in a story. Not all stories have themes. In addition, a theme is stated as a generalization about experience rather than specific to the story in which it is found.

NARRATIVE POINT OF VIEW

- **First Person Narration**—a character is the narrator.
- **Limited Omniscient Narration**—the narrator is outside of the story—**one** character's thoughts are revealed.
- **Omniscient Narration**—the narrator is outside of the story—**at least two** characters' thoughts are revealed.
- **Objective Narration**—the narrator is outside of the story—no character's thoughts are revealed. Often called "camera eye" or "fly-on-the-wall."

SYMBOL

- **A symbol**—something that means more than what it is. It is something that represents itself plus something of a different kind. It is an object, a person, a situation, an action, or some other item that has a literal meaning in the story but suggests or represents other meanings as well.

IRONY

- **Verbal Irony**—when the opposite of what is said is meant. (Not to be confused with satire).
- **Dramatic Irony**—a contrast between what the character says and what the reader knows to be true.
- **Situational Irony**—when the opposite of what is expected to happen happens.

EASY STEPS TO READING AND UNDERSTANDING A POEM

Reading, understanding, and enjoying poetry is possible for all of us. It only requires that we follow a process. Follow these steps for each poem you study.

FIRST: **SCAN** the poem for difficult words and look these up in a dictionary. Remember, every word in a poem is significant.

SECOND: **READ** the poem two or three times **ALOUD**.

THIRD: **ASK** yourself who is the speaker and what is the occasion. Do not assume the speaker of the poem is the poet. Often this is not the case.

FOURTH: **PARAPHRASE** the poem line-by-line or stanza-by-stanza until you get a meaning that makes sense. Remember, a paraphrase is a translation into common language.

FIFTH: **READ** the poem **ALOUD** a time or two more for new understanding and enjoyment.

A Primer on Poetic Feet

All poems have structure, which can be divided roughly into **rhythm** and **rhyme**.

Just as the music we listen to has rhythm or beat, so, too, does language and, therefore, poetry. The terminology we use to identify certain rhythm patterns is a bit strange but not difficult to understand.

We first start with what is called a "**poetic foot**," which is usually made of two or three syllables.

Here are the two-syllable feet:

The ***iamb*** has this beat: ∪ . This means that the second syllable is accented or stressed, but the first syllable is not. The word "today" is iambic because we stress the "DAY" syllable, but not the "to" syllable.

Here's a whole line of iambs (Stress syllables written in capital letters):

i WANT to RUN and JUMP and SING/ i WILL not REST for AN-y-THING.

A ***trochee*** is the opposite of the iamb. It has this rhythm pattern: ∪ . Notice that the first syllable is accented or stressed, but the second syllable is not. A good trochaic word is "daily" because the "day" gets the stress, but the "ly" does not.

How's this for a line of trochees:

TELL me NOT in MOURN-ful NUM-bers

or, to quote Shakespeare . . .

DOU-ble, DOU-ble TOIL and TROU-ble

Now on to the three-syllable poetic feet.

First is the ***anapest*** with this rhythm pattern: ∪ ∪ —.

An example is the word *intervene.* Say it aloud and you'll hear stress on the last syllable but not the first two *(in-ter-VENE).*

An anapestic line?

i am MAS-ter of ALL i pos-SESS

A bit of irony? The word "anapest" is an example of a dactyl. Go figure.

The opposite of the anapest is the ***dactyl***. Far from dinosaur ancestry, this poetic foot has this rhythm pattern: — ∪ ∪.

A good example of a dactyl is *yesterday* because the accent is on the first syllable only (*YES-ter-day*).

A whole line of dactyls is difficult to write, but here's a start:

TEN-der-ly, TEN-der-ly SPOKE the crazed SHOE salesman

Now on to measuring poetic feet. A long time ago, the word *meter* meant "measure of."
Penta is Greek for "five." If we add "meter" to the end of penta, we get "pentameter" which means "measure of five." If we have five iambs in a row, we have "iambic pentameter."

Back to Shakespeare:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? (depends on the weather!)

Say the line aloud and try to exaggerate the accents. This is the rhythm pattern you can uncover:

shall I com-PARE thee TO a SUM-mer's DAY?

Five iambs, right? Thus, hence, ergo *Iambic pentameter.*

Here are other measure words:

dimeter (two feet), trimeter (3), tetrameter (4), pentameter (5), hexameter (6), heptameter (7), octameter (8)

Let's talk about **rhyme** and **rhyme scheme** for a bit.

Most poems have rhyme. Usually rhyme occurs when poetic lines end with similar sounds, a quality somehow pleasing to our ear. Music and song employ rhyme most of the time. Take, for example, these lines from a Johnny Rivers song:

People say I'm the life of the party
Because I tell a joke or two.
Although I may be laughin' loud and hardy,
Deep inside I'm blue.

Check out the end rhyme. We have *party* rhyming with *hardy* as well as *two* rhyming with *blue*.

We mark the rhyme scheme of a poem by using the alphabet. The first line's ending sound is given the letter "A." Any similar ending sounds in that poem also are given the letter "A." The next new end-of-the-line sound is given the letter "B," the next "C," and so on.

Johnny Rivers' lines would have the **rhyme scheme** of ***A,B,A,B***. See?

Try to determine the rhyme scheme of the following:

In literature class we toss and turn
To understand the great unknown
Throughout the class, some seeds are sown
That grow to plants that we can learn.

Quizzes come and quizzes go
But the lectures just go on and on
We watch the clock and wait till dawn
Or at least until we think it's so.

Not great poetry but definitely the rhyme scheme of ***A,B,B,A C,D,D,C***.

How about this one?

Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

Did you get *A, A, B, B*?

Let’s put it all together:

Using what we’ve learned, determine the rhyme scheme and rhythm pattern of the following Robert Frost poem:

Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sounds the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

SONNETS MADE EASY

A **sonnet** is a poem whose structure and content meet specific standards. Its success relies on exactness and perfection of expression. It is an art form that truly challenges a poet's artistry and skill.

Structure:

In general, a sonnet is a fourteen-line poem where each line is written in a particular musical rhythm called **iambic pentameter**. In addition, these fourteen lines have to conform to a specific rhyme scheme.

Don't be confused or put off by the term **iambic pentameter**. An iamb is simply a two-syllable unit of sound where the first syllable is unaccented and the second is accented. Words like ***today***, ***forget***, and ***garage*** are iambs. If you say these words aloud, you will notice that you accent the second syllable more strongly than the first.

Pentameter means *measure* (meter) of *five* (penta). So iambic pentameter simply means five iambs to each line. Check this line out: "Today I will forget to weep for you" Can you identify the five iambs?

On to rhyme scheme: Rhyme scheme simply means the pattern made by the ending sounds of each line.

Consider this:

Please listen to my voice above them all,
So you, my friend, be spared the pain and grief
Of failing, falling hard against that wall
Which makes a time of happiness so brief.

We mark the rhyme scheme of a poem by using the alphabet. The first line's ending sound is given the letter "A." Any similar ending sounds in that poem also are given the letter "A." The next new end-of-the-line sound is given the letter "B," the next "C," and so on.

The four lines above have the rhyme scheme ***A,B,A,B***. See?

Since there are two major types of sonnets**—**the ***Petrarchan*** (or *Italian*) and ***Shakespearean*** (or *English* or *Elizabethan*)—there are two major rhyme schemes.

Though rhyme scheme variations exist (particularly in the last six lines (**the sestet**), the Petrarchan (or Italian) sonnet rhyme scheme usually is

A B B A A B B A	An **OCTAVE**—the first eight lines-- states a proposition or raises a question.
C D E C D E	A **SESTET**—the last six lines applies the proposition or solves the problem.

A ***Shakespearean*** (or English or Elizabethan) sonnet is different:

A B A B	First QUATRAIN Image or example #1
C D C D	Second QUATRAIN Image or example #2
E F E F	Third QUATRAIN Image or example #3
G G	COUPLET Commentary on the preceding ideas

Now the hard part—a sonnet must have meaning, too. A Petrachan sonnet presents a situation or premise in the first eight lines (the octave) and provides some sort of resolution or statement about the situation in the final six lines (the sestet).

The Shakespearean sonnet, in contrast, presents three four-line (a quatrain) examples or premises, with the couplet at the end providing some sort of closure.

Examples? For a Petrarchan sonnet, how about this masterpiece:

Fourteen lines of iambic pentameter with a rhyme scheme of abbaabbacdecde and a structured message breaking at the end of the eighth line.

My college life has left me without sleep.
I study every night locked in my room.
The walls at times feel almost like a tomb;
The loneliness doth cause my soul to weep.
Great tears of sadness flow from eyes that keep
Returning to the text where answers loom,
Enshrouded in a chapter like a womb,
My eyes throughout the words do futilely creep.
I must a Big Mac eat or I will die
Of hunger gnawing at my fragile mind
That cannot read another word of this.
I also want a piece of apple pie
That Ronald has so patiently refined.
I must these eat or I will be a mess.

First note the rhyme scheme—it is one kind of Petrachan sonnet rhyme scheme (abbaabbacdecde). Next note how the thought changes direction after the eighth line. The first eight lines (the octave) develop the situation; the final six lines (the sestet) provide resolution.

Now on to a Shakespearean sonnet. Let's start with the same idea:

Fourteen lines of iambic pentameter with a rhyme scheme of ababcdcdefefgg and a structured message consisting of three four-line premises and a two-line (a couplet) resolution.

My college life has left me without sleep.
I study every night locked in my room.
The loneliness doth cause my soul to weep,
The walls at times feel almost like a tomb.

My social life has vanished in the haze
That drifts about me when I think of love,
And hours doeth creep by in a blurry daze
With hope of romance stolen from above.
My health is really starting to erode.
I cannot walk and talk 'cause I must pant
And wheeze because my bod cannot the load
Endure; and as to run, well I just can't.
So from the doctor I must seek some help.
I bet he will suggest I eat some kelp.

A classic? Time will tell, but while we wait, note the structure of the thought. The first, second, and third four-line groups (quatrains) provide examples of the situation. The final two lines, the couplet, provide closure.

Petrarchan and Shakespearean Sonnets

The two major types of sonnets are Petrarchan (or Italian) and Shakespearean (or English or Elizabethan).

Both types have fourteen lines of iambic pentameter with a specific rhyme scheme.

Petrarchan (or Italian)

A	
B	
B	
A	OCTAVE
A	states a proposition or
B	raises a question
B	
A	

C	
D	
C	SESTET
D	applies the proposition or
C	solves the problem
D	

Nature

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave her broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scare knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

--Longfellow

Shakespearean (or English or Elizabethan)

A
B — First QUATRAIN
A — Image or example #1
B

C
D — Second QUATRAIN
C — Image or example #2
D

E
F — Third QUATRAIN
E — Image or example #3
F

G — COUPLET
G — Commentary on the preceding ideas

That Time of Year

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon these boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie
As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

--William Shakespeare

HAMLET by William Shakespeare

Who's Who in the play

Hamlet--Prince of Denmark, son of the late king and of Gertrude

Claudius--present king of Denmark, Hamlet's uncle, became king because of Hamlet's father's death

Gertrude--Hamlet's mother, queen of Denmark, recently married Claudius

Ghost of Hamlet's father, the dead king

Horatio—Hamlet's friend and fellow student

Polonius—counselor to the king, Ophelia's father

Laertes—son of Polonius, brother of Ophelia—going to France to attend school

Ophelia—sister of Laertes, daughter of Polonius, Hamlet's love interest

Reynaldo—servant of Polonius

Rosencrantz and **Guildenstern**—former school friends of Hamlet

Marcellus, Barnardo, Francisco—soldiers

Voltemand, Cornelius—Danish ambassadors to Norway

Fortinbras—prince of Norway

A traveling theatre troupe

A gravedigger and his companion

A priest

Assorted lords, ladies, soldiers, messengers, attendants

Who's Who in the **Iliad**

The Greeks *[Greeks are also called Achaeans, Danaans, or Argives]*

Achilles:
Son of Peleus and the sea nymph Thetis; grandson of Aeacus, son of ZEUS; chief of the Myrmidons
Agamemnon:
Leader of the Greeks.
Calchas:
Son of Thestor; seer and interpreter of omens.
Helen:
Wife of Menelaus, seduced by Paris.
Menelaus:
Husband of Helen--king of Sparta
Odysseus:
Son of Laertes and husband of Penelope; king of Ithaca and leader of Cephallenians.
Patroclus:
Comrade and squire of Achilles.

The Trojans

Aeneas:
Son of Anchises and the goddess Aphrodite; leader of the Dardanians.
Andromache:
Wife of Hector
Cassandra:
Daughter of Priam and Hecuba; a prophet.
Hector:
Son of Priam; commander of the Trojan army.
Hecuba:
Wife of Priam; queen of Troy.
Paris:
Also called Alexander, son of Priam; seducer of Helen.
Priam:
King of Troy.

Gods and Goddesses *[Roman names are given in brackets]*

Apollo: A god--Zeus's son--favors the Trojans.

Athena [Minerva]: A goddess-Zeus's daughter--favors Greeks.

Hera [Juno]: A goddess--wife of Zeus; queen of the Gods--favors the Greeks.

Thetis: A sea nymph, wedded to a mortal, Peleus; mother of Achilles.

Zeus [Jupiter, Jove]: King of the gods and ruler of the sky; arbiter of human destiny.