*Second Edition*

***Draft***

COMMON CORE

CURRICULUM MAPS || ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

*Grade 12 CP* ► *Unit #1*

# Title: European Literature: Middle Ages

## Summary: In this six week unit, students explore the tension between humans and the divine in the literature of the Middle Ages.

## Essential Question: How did medieval man distinguish between the earthly and the divine?

**OVERVIEW**

Although the Middle Ages often is characterized as a period of darkness, the literature and art of the time typically suggest a more complex picture. Through a combination of close reading and exposure to an array of texts, students observe how satire reveals some of the contradictions and divergences within medieval literature and draw connections between literary form and philosophy. In addition, they consider how certain traits of medieval literature can also be found in the art of the period: for instance, how characters have symbolic meaning both in literature and in iconography. Students write essays in which they analyze a work closely, compare two works, or trace an idea or theme through the works they have read.

**FOCUS STANDARDS**

These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.

* **RL.11-12.5:** Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
* **RI.11-12.2:** Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
* **W.11-12.1:** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
* **SL.11-12.4:** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range or formal and informal tasks.
* **L.11-12.3(a):** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

**STUDENT OBJECTIVES**

* + - Analyze how medieval literature exhibits many tendencies rather than a single set of characteristics.
    - Note the literary elements (e.g., allegory, farce, satire, and foil) in medieval literary works and identify characteristics of medieval literary forms.
    - Explain how literary elements contribute to meaning and author intention.
    - Note glimpses of the Renaissance in certain works of medieval literature and art.
    - Explain how medieval literary and artistic forms reflect the writers’ and artists’ philosophical views.
    - Examine the literary, social, and religious satire in Chaucer’s *The* *Canterbury Tales*.
    - Explain the role of the framed narrative in Chaucer’s *The* *Canterbury Tales*, Dante’s *Inferno*, and other works.
    - Compare works of medieval literature and art, particularly their depiction of character and their focus on the otherworldly.

**Suggested Works**

(E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text.

(EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

#### Literary Texts

##### Drama

* *The Summoning of Everyman* (Anonymous)

##### Novel and Novella

* *The Decameron* (excerpt) (Giovanni Boccaccio)
* *Life of Pi* Yann Martel

##### Poetry

* The General Prologue in *The Canterbury Tales (*Geoffrey Chaucer) (E)
* ”The Pardoner’s Tale” in *The Canterbury Tales* (Geoffrey Chaucer) (E)
* ”The Wife of Bath’s Tale” in *The Canterbury Tales* (Geoffrey Chaucer) (E)
* *Inferno* (Cantos I-XI, XXXI-XXXIV) (Dante Alighieri)
* “Lord Randall” (Anonymous)
* *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (excerpt) (Anonymous)

#### Informational Texts

* To be determined

#### Art, Music, and Media

##### Art

* Cimabue, Maestà (1280)
* Duccio, Maestà (1308-1311)
* Giotto, Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel frescos, Padua (after 1305): Joachim Among the Shepards, Meeting at the Golden Gate, Raising of Lazarus, Jonah Swallowed Up by the Whale
* Lorenzo Ghiberti, Gates of Paradise (1425-1452)
* Masaccio, The Tribute Money at the Brancacci Chapel, Florence (ca. 1420)

##### Media

* To be determined

##### Additional Resources

* + - [*Canterbury Tales Project*](http://www.canterburytalesproject.org/) (ITSEE, University of Birmingham)
    - [*Chaucer's Wife of Bath*](http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/chaucers-wife-bath)(National Endowment for the Humanities) (RL.11-12.3)
    - [*Digital Dante*](http://dante.ilt.columbia.edu/new/)(Institute for Learning Technologies, Columbia University)
    - [*Danteworlds*](http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu/)(The University of Texas at Austin) (RL.11-12.1, SL.11-12.3)

**ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENTS**

1. **Essay (Informative/Explanatory Writing):**

Compare and contrast *Sir Gawain* and the *Green Knight* and "The Knight’s Tale.” What are the qualities of the ideal knight? Do they differ at all? Use textual evidence from both texts to support an original, concise thesis. (Note: In-class writing)

**Standards:** RL.11-12.1. RL.11-12.3. SL.11-12.1. SL.11-12.4. W.11-12.2.

1. **Discussion**
2. **Art, Speaking and Listening:**

Compare earlier images from the medieval period to later ones. For instance, compare Giotto’s Arena Chapel frescos with Masaccio’s at the Brancacci Chapel. How do we see depictions of man change? Do religious figures begin to take on earthly characteristics as the Middle Ages wane? What changes do you observe in the various depictions of Jesus, both as a child and as an adult (consider comparing both Maestà images)?

**Standards:** SL.11-12.1, SL.11-12.2, SL.11-12.3, SL.11-12.4, SL.11-12.5

1. **Seminar Question and Writing (Argument):**

Read Dante’s Inferno. How does the allegory reveal the values of the Middle Ages? What sins are punished most severely and why? Do you agree with the hierarchical circles of hell that Dante creates? Use textual evidence to support an original, concise thesis statement.

**Standards:** RL.11-12.1, RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.6, RL.11-12.5, SL.11-12.1, SL.11-12.4, W.11-12.2

**Seminar Question and Writing (Argument):**

Is the Wife of Bath from The Canterbury Tales a feminist? Use textual evidence to support your position. (Note: In-class writing)

**Standards:** RL.11-12.1, RL.11-12.3, SL.11-12.1, SL.11-12.4, W.11-12.2

1. **Essay (Argumentative Writing):**

“To what degree does medieval literature regard human existence as secondary to the divine?” Use textual evidence from one of the texts read in this unit to support an original, concise thesis statement.

**Standards:** RL.11-12.2, W.11-12.1, SL.11-12.1, SL.11-12.3

1. **Language and Usage:** To be determined

**terminology**

* Allegory
* Anonymity
* Caesura
* “Dance of death”
* Epic
* Fabliaux
* Farce
* Foil
* Framed narrative
* Hyperbole
* Icon (religious art)
* Miracle, mystery, and morality plays
* Perspective (art and literature)
* Symbol