

- *Don Quixote* is considered to be one of the first modern novels. In small groups, have students conduct research to discover what is meant by the term "modern novel." Students should also investigate other novels that fall into this category and look for defining characteristics.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our Web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- quixote.mse.jhu.edu
Students can take a virtual tour through "The Don Quixote Exhibit." This site contains useful information about the novel and the author, along with drawings and photographs.
- www.davis.k12.ut.us/curric/languagearts/grade12.html
This site contains a lot of useful information regarding a variety of literary classics, including *Don Quixote* and Cervantes. It includes a reader's guide and links to other resources.

Suggested Print Resources

- de Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel. *Don Quixote*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, NY; 1998.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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WORLD LITERARY CLASSICS

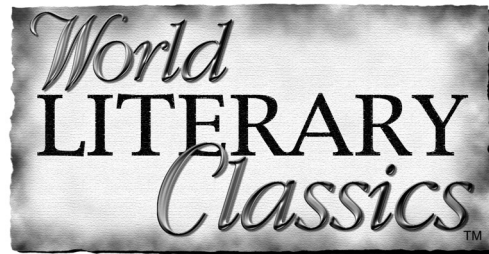
- BEOWULF
 - DON QUIXOTE
 - MOBY DICK
 - SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT
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DON QUIXOTE

Grades 9 & up

The study of literature is the study of human history, psychology, sociology and politics. When we study literature, we, in essence, study ourselves and the societies we have created. The stories we tell, and the characters we use to tell them, reveal to us our true nature: what we think is important, what makes us laugh, what we love and what we are willing to die for. The importance of literary classics to any particular culture is evidenced not only by their longevity, which attests to their relevance across centuries, but also by how often they are adapted, quoted, studied and discussed. The study of literature allows us to learn about the way things were, analyze how things are, and imagine how things might be.



***Don Quixote de la Mancha* and Miguel de Cervantes**

There is an old story that one day King Phillip III of Spain was looking out of one of the palace windows and saw a man sitting by the side of the road reading a book. The man was laughing so hard that tears were streaming down his face. "That man," the king said, "is either crazy or he is reading *Don Quixote*." It is impossible to know whether this story is really true, but the fact that it lingers as a folktale demonstrates how enormously popular *Don Quixote* or *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha* was during Cervantes' lifetime.

Don Quixote was published in two parts; Part I in 1605 and Part II in 1615. It tells the tale of Quesada, an elderly Spanish gentleman who quite literally goes mad from reading too many of the chivalric romances that were popular during the 17th century. Convinced that he is a knight, he dubs himself Don Quixote, and sets off on his horse Rosinante with his faithful companion, Sancho Panza to battle the world's injustices all in the name of Dulcinea, his beloved and imaginary lady. Of course, Quixote's madness colors everything he sees and he mistakes windmills for monsters, an inn for a castle, and a barber's basin for a golden helmet.

Since its publication, *Don Quixote* has been called many things from a satire of chivalric romances to an epic, and an attack on both the Catholic Church and the Spanish politics at the time. Whatever the differences of opinion may be regarding the genre, most would agree that Cervantes' masterpiece is one of the first modern novels ever written. Cervantes is credited with influencing the likes of Swift, Defoe, Dickens, Melville, Dostoyevsky and Joyce. Even Shakespeare, a contemporary of Cervantes, read the great *Don Quixote*.

The influence of Cervantes' masterpiece is still very much evident today, from the passing into the language of the word 'quixotic' (meaning foolishly impractical), to the stage musical "Man of La Mancha" and a film of the same name. Also, like his contemporary, Shakespeare, Cervantes has given the world many of its most famous and used expressions, like "Honesty is the best policy," and "Thank you for nothing."

Cervantes began his literary career in 1580. He wrote many plays and verses before he penned his most famous work. Although *Don Quixote* was immediately successful, Cervantes himself made no money from it and died penniless. Near to his death he wrote, "Good-bye, pleasant fancies; good-bye merry friends, for I perceive that I am dying. My wish is to see you happy in the other life."

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Have a discussion with your students about literary satire. Provide examples of satire from either other books or films.
- Discuss with your students the concept and medieval practice of chivalry. Share with students some examples of chivalric romances so they may better understand what Cervantes was satirizing.

Focus Questions

1. What causes Don Quixote's madness?
2. How do the townspeople in La Mancha respond to his madness?

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3. What is Don Quixote's stated mission?
4. In whose name does Don Quixote perform his good deeds?
5. Why does Sancho Panza decide to accompany Don Quixote?
6. What are some examples of Don Quixote's madness?
7. Who comes to the ultimate rescue of Don Quixote?
8. Describe the circumstances of Don Quixote's return to La Mancha.
9. What causes Don Quixote's death?
10. Describe how Don Quixote is dubbed a knight?

Follow-up Discussion

- In *Don Quixote* the protagonist goes mad from reading too many books. Is it possible for human beings to be so influenced by something that they saw, read or heard that they could become "crazy" or behave in a manner that is uncharacteristic?
- Have students discuss the nature of Don Quixote's madness. Was Quixote's madness a positive or a negative thing?

Follow-up Activities

- Cervantes is credited with penning some of the world's most famous and used expressions, most of which come from *Don Quixote*. In small groups, have students conduct research to discover some of these expressions. Useful resource: www.bartleby.com/100/733.html
- *Don Quixote* has been described as a chivalric romance. In small groups, have students conduct research on the medieval code of chivalry and courtly love. Each group can create a guide to chivalry and provide accompanying illustrations. Useful resource: www.wmich.edu/medieval/mdvl145/resource/codes/chivalry.htm
- In small groups, have students do a study which compares and contrasts the book *Don Quixote* with the program. Have students think about what material from the book was included and what was omitted; if there were any changes that fundamentally altered the story; and why these choices were made.
- In small groups, have students investigate satire by analyzing political cartoons. An excellent resource, complete with teacher's guides and activities can be found at: cagle.slate.msn.com/teacher
Important Note to Teachers: This website contains a wide variety of political and satirical cartoons. Each teacher will have to view the website beforehand and select cartoons appropriate for his or her students. Many cartoons reflect varying political opinions and send-ups of politicians and current events.
- Students can experiment with writing literary satire by creating a satirical fairy tale. For example, Cinderella may be forced to scrub an entire house with a broken toothbrush and one arm tied behind her back. Students may also want to experiment with writing a satirical chivalric romance. sunsite.berkeley.edu/OMACL/Lancelot/ contains Arthurian Legends which will help students understand what it is that they are satirizing.

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