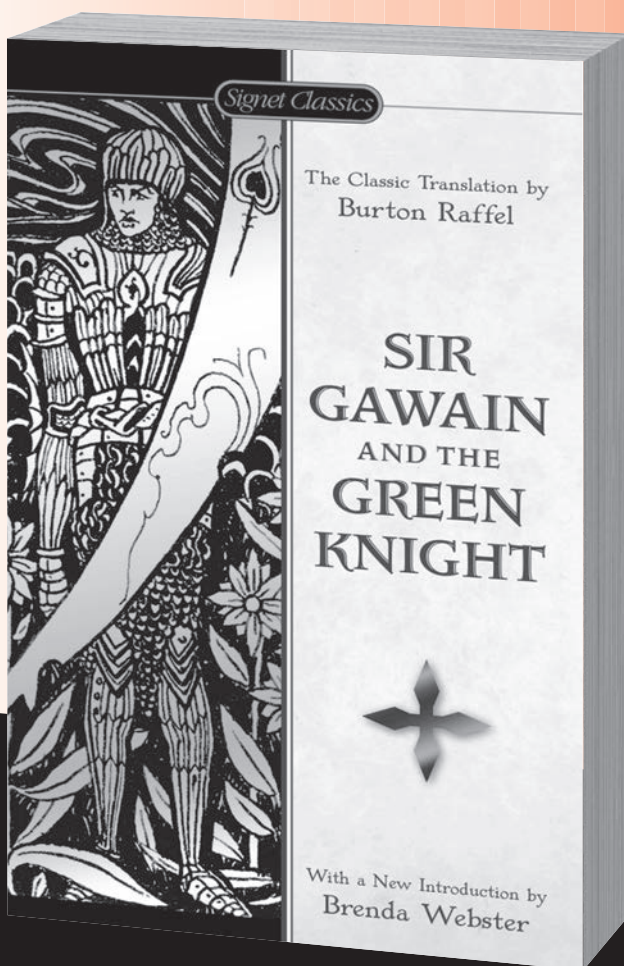


A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE SIGNET CLASSICS EDITION OF

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT



BY KELLI McCALL SELF

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
LIST OF CHARACTERS.....	3
SYNOPSIS OF THE POEM.....	4
PREREADING ACTIVITIES.....	6
I. BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE IN HISTORY AND LITERATURE	6
II. BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE THROUGH INITIAL EXPLORATION OF THEMES	10
DURING READING ACTIVITIES.....	13
I. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	13
II. ACTIVITIES TO GENERATE RESPONSE AND EXPLORATION OF THE TEXT	15
AFTER READING ACTIVITIES	16
I. TEXT-BASED TOPICS FOR ESSAYS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	16
II. GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS THAT EXTEND THE TEXT	17
III. PARALLEL OR EXTENDED READING	19
IV. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	20
ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE	21
ABOUT THE EDITORS OF THIS GUIDE	21
FREE TEACHER'S GUIDES.....	23

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Printed in the United States of America

INTRODUCTION

Cue: sweeping orchestral music

Cue: close up of horse thundering through the forest

Cue: overly dramatic narrator

**“In a world where men are men and monsters rule,
In a time when nature is a formidable foe,
One man holds the fate of a kingdom in his hands while
One woman holds the key to his heart—
A tale of violence, intrigue, treachery, romance, and magic.”**

Although it's not the latest blockbuster movie of the summer, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* combines the elements of traditional Middle English literature with colorful, descriptive language, a compelling plot, and violence enough to please even a modern audience of teens reared on *Avatar* and *The Avengers*.

In the classroom, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* will spark discussions about pride, bravery, honor and humility—virtues relatable to the lives of young adults today. It can be used as a stand-alone text or as a companion to modern pieces of literature which focus on archetypes such as the hero, the trickster, the temptress, the journey or quest and the temptation or test.

This guide offers information and activities designed to spark interest in the poem and activate students' prior knowledge of the historical and literary time period of the Middle Ages. The During Reading activities will help keep discussions on track, allowing students to notice connections they might have missed, and include activities designed for students to reflect and extend their knowledge of the poem and its thematic elements. The After Reading activities encourage students to apply their knowledge and focus on the use of Web 2.0 and 21st Century tools.

LIST OF CHARACTERS

King Arthur: young and beardless; knows nothing of fear; stresses entertainment before food; holds an opulent court in which excess seems to be common and the knights have no need to fight for territory or defense

Sir Gawain: humble, thoughtful, and courageous; gallantly volunteers to take the challenge of the Green Knight in Arthur's place

Green Knight: huge, square, thick, and, at the same time, graceful; a big, green mystical knight on a big, green mystical horse; revealed to be Bercilak in disguise (Gawain's host) doing Morgana Le Fay's bidding

Bercilak (the Lord of the House): Gawain's accommodating and cheerful host at the castle before he meets the Green Knight at the Chapel; tall and strong with a beard the color of a beaver and a fiery red face

Bercilak's Wife (the Lady of the House): stunningly beautiful, smart, and demure; tempts Gawain three times to kiss her and to seduce her while her husband is otherwise occupied; presents Gawain with the green silk girdle he believes will save his life

Morgana Le Fay: Arthur's half sister and Gawain's aunt; concocts the challenge in hopes of scaring Queen Guenevere to death and bringing shame on Camelot; may be the old woman who accompanies Bercilak's wife

Guenevere: Arthur's wife; Queen of Camelot

SYNOPSIS OF THE POEM

Part One: (II.1-490)

Celebrating Christmas and preparing for New Year's Day, King Arthur and his court praise their good fortune with feasting and celebration. Suddenly, a ghastly green knight mounted on a huge green horse bursts in, interrupting the merriment. He first praises Arthur and the reputation he and his knights have for bravery, strength, and pride. Then, he proposes a challenge: any knight in the court can use his axe to take a swing at him while he sits still. In return, the knight must agree to take a blow from the challenger's axe in one year's time. When the court sits in stunned silence, the Green Knight mocks them, wondering where all the courageous men have gone. Shamed, Arthur angrily volunteers to take the challenge himself until Gawain humbly asks leave to accept. Arthur agrees and reminds Gawain of the details of the bargain. Gawain braces himself and swings the mighty axe, beheading the Green Knight swiftly and easily. The now headless Green Knight picks up his head, holding it by the hair, and mounts his horse. The head opens its eyes and reminds Gawain that he will be expected at the Green Knight's Chapel in one year's time to complete his end of the bargain. Then, as quickly as he arrived, the Green Knight is gone in a flourish, his head in his hands. Arthur, masking his true feelings of fear, insists the queen and the ladies take no note of the events and proceed with the celebration. They hang the huge axe against a tapestry and continue celebrating.

Part Two: (II. 491-1125)

The seasons change and Gawain's dreaded appointment approaches. He is opulently armored and prepared for travel. In remembrance of his dedication to truth and his faith in God, his shield is decorated with a pentangle star (representing five knightly virtues) and a portrait of Mary (to remind him to be brave). Arthur sends Gawain on his way, regretting his decision to let the most promis-

ing of his knights accept the challenge. Gawain encounters many obstacles on his journey: dragons, wolves, satyrs, trolls, and the freezing elements. After thrice desperately praying to Mary to send him shelter and attempting to atone for his past transgressions, he finally reaches a huge castle. The drawbridge is lowered and he is welcomed to the castle with enthusiasm. The Lord assures Gawain he is pleased to have him as an honored guest and invites him to celebrate Christmas with them. Then he meets the Lady of the House, who is lovelier than Guenevere, and her companion, a hideously ugly old woman. Accommodations and celebrations at this castle are even more lavish than at Camelot, and Gawain is lulled into comfortable companionship with the Lord. After the feast, he shares the story of the Green Knight and his terrible errand, vowing that he'd rather "die than fail." The Lord encourages Gawain to take advantage of his hospitality: drink, eat, sleep, keep good company with his wife. As he parts from Gawain, he proposes a bargain between them: he will share with Gawain whatever he catches at the next day's hunt as long as Gawain shares whatever he gains during his day at the castle.

Part Three: (II. 1126-1997)

The Lord and his knights leave very early the next morning for the hunt, delighting in the chase. Gawain, still asleep, is awakened suddenly by a noise at the door, the Lady of the House quietly entering his room. He pretends to sleep, but, when she does not leave, he "wakes" and engages in courtly flattery with her. She subtly indicates that she is interested in him and his reputation as a knight, finally mentioning that a worthy knight would not hesitate to kiss a lady. He obliges and she leaves the chamber satisfied. Meanwhile, the Lord has finished his hunt; the poet pays particularly gruesome attention to the slaughter and butchering of the deer the hunters have killed. When the Lord returns to the castle, he presents the venison

to Gawain who praises the quantity and quality of the bounty. The Lord's end of the bargain met, Gawain courteously kisses the Lord as a noble knight, mentioning that the kiss was all he won that day. They laugh and feast long into the night, agreeing to the same bargain for the next day.

Again, early in the morning, the Lord leaves for the hunt. This time, the object is a wild boar, which poses quite a challenge. Once more, the Lady approaches Gawain while he is asleep. Once he wakes, she tells Gawain to teach her the "ways of love." He does not believe that she is ignorant of those ways and gracefully evades her advances. He offers her his lips for as long as she likes; they kiss twice and then she eventually leaves. On the hunt, the Lord continues to struggle with the ferocious boar, finally wrestling it to the ground and stabbing it with his sword. The poet again spends time describing the butchering. The Lord cuts off the boar's head and brings it to Gawain on a stick. Gawain is pleased and presents the Lord with two kisses. They feast joyously, while the Lady of the House flirts openly with Gawain who is embarrassed by her overt attention. As the feast winds down, the Lord proposes the bargain for one more day.

Morning arrives and the Lord and his men are ready to hunt again. This day's quarry is a fox. As the fox cleverly evades capture, the Lady of the House prepares to visit Gawain again, dressing provocatively, expecting to succeed in her seduction. Dreams of his impending encounter with the Green Knight have given Gawain a fitful night's sleep and he is comforted by her visit. Despite her best efforts, Gawain once again refuses to involve himself in an affair, citing his deep respect for the Lord of the House. She relents and offers Gawain a dazzling ring as a token of her affection. Gawain refuses it as it is "too rich a gift." She then offers Gawain her green silk belt, which he also refuses. However, when the Lady explains that whoever wears the belt will never be killed, Gawain accepts it, thinking of his battle with the Green Knight. She bestows upon him three kisses and leaves.

Meanwhile, the Lord and his greyhounds have finally cornered the sly fox; they surround and kill it. When the Lord returns from the hunt, Gawain presents him with the three kisses, but keeps the belt to himself. The Lord is embarrassed to present to Gawain the bedraggled hide of the lone fox. The people in the castle are sad Gawain will be leaving them the next day. At this point, the poet urges us to pay attention just a little longer to find out how his adventure ends.

Part Four: (ll.1998-2531)

The day dawns stormy and once again Gawain is armored and prepared for battle. This time, he has the protection of the green silk belt wound twice around his royal red tunic. He bestows a blessing on the castle and its inhabitants, and, with the help of a guide, rides off in search of the Green Knight's chapel. The guide attempts to dissuade Gawain from approaching the Knight, convinced that he will surely die. Gawain will hear nothing of his protests vowing that God will guide him. As Gawain approaches the chapel, he hears the noise of a grinding stone and knows that the Knight is preparing the axe for him. The Knight is ready for Gawain and frolics about on the shore waiting for his arrival. The Knight praises Gawain for keeping their appointment and gets down to business. Gawain bares his neck for the axe blow, but flinches slightly as the Knight swings the axe. The Knight stops the blow and admonishes Gawain for flinching, citing his own steadfast performance a year ago. Gawain assures the knight that he will not flinch again. The Knight raises the axe and brings down a hard blow which only nicks Gawain's neck. Gawain is elated and ready to leave the chapel until the Knight reveals that he is, in fact, the hospitable Lord of the House, Bercilak de Haut-desert. He was directed by Morgana Le Fay, a witch who lives in his castle, to bring the scary challenge to Arthur's court to test their chivalrous reputation. He concludes that Gawain almost passed the test since he gave back the kisses but failed in that he kept the belt to save his own life.

Gawain is instantly ashamed and throws the belt at Bercilak, no longer wanting to be reminded of his cowardice. He refuses Bercilak's invitation to return to the castle and returns to Camelot, wearing the belt as a sign

of his shame. Embarrassed, he shares his story with Arthur who, in support of Gawain, decides all knights and ladies of Camelot will forever wear a belt of green as a badge of honor.

PREREADING ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to draw on and deepen students' background knowledge of the Middle Ages, poetic forms, archetypes, and themes they will encounter as they read the poem. Choose and adapt the activities that best meet students' needs and your teaching goals (Note: Consult other Teacher's Guides to Signet Classics; they contain ideas that can be adapted to prepare students to read and interact with this text).

I. BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE IN HISTORY AND LITERATURE

Understanding the Historical Context of the Poem: The Middle Ages

1. Poll your students' prior knowledge about the Middle Ages as a starting point for discussions and a way to reflect throughout the unit. Consider daily life, leisure, food, hygiene, society, the church, gender roles, chivalry, and warfare. Create a GoogleDoc spreadsheet, and as your students call out answers, type them into the spreadsheet. Don't worry about repetitions. Accept everything. After collecting the responses, paste the contents of the spreadsheet into a word cloud program such as Wordle (www.wordle.net). Using Wordle can instantly provide great analytics without having to break out the calculator. The words that appear numerous times will be larger and bolder than other words. Print this word cloud or embed it into your class website. It would be a great idea to do this very same activity at the end of the unit to mark how

perceptions have changed as a result of the information in the unit.

2. Prior to beginning this activity, go to Weebly for Education at <http://education.weebly.com/> (Weebly) to create a classroom account and set up accounts for the members of your classes or for groups as you divide them (directions are on the site). Assign each group an aspect of life in the Middle Ages such as food, work, feudalism, religion, weaponry, religion, literacy, and hunting as a social activity. After researching, have students create Weebly sites with the information they found. Once they've created the sites, have them present the information, noting when their perceptions of the Middle Ages differed from what they learned in their research. Some useful web sites to begin this research are:

<http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk/life.html> (*The Domesday Book Online*)

<http://www.learner.org/interactives/middleages/feudal.html> (Part of the Annenberg *Western Tradition* series)

Another interesting resource is *Crash Course*, a series of educational videos created by self-professed nerd, author, blogger, and YouTube celebrity John Green focusing on World History. He uses humor and hip wit to discuss historical happenings and concepts that have previously been tedious to study for most students. Although some of the delivery is silly, the historical basis is sound. You might wish to establish the context of the Middle Ages by having students view "The Dark Ages" at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QV7CanyzhZg>. Have stu-

dents listen for the reasons the Middle Ages were considered dark and to the description of feudalism. Have them compare their answers in groups before the whole class discussion.

3. Without the leadership of centralized government, many developing nations historically relied on some kind of feudal system based on territorial rights. This system provided a chain of command with regard to responsibilities, but its rigid system of rules rarely allowed any opportunity for advancement. Brainstorm with your students what they understand about feudalism and list these ideas in a graphic organizer. Ask students who have seen the film, *A Knight's Tale* (written, directed, and produced by Brian Helgeland, 2001), in which a hero aspires to be a knight even though he is not of noble birth, to add to the list of ideas about feudalism. You can also show your class the trailer to the film which is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH6U5y086hw> to aid their thinking.

Conduct a Google search with the class for images of the feudal hierarchy. Select one of these images, asking students to explain any additional information the image provides about the feudal system. Discuss with students: Where do they think most of the population fit into the hierarchy? What would be the nature of the relationship between the nobles and the peasants? Why did people accept this system? What did they gain? What did they lose? What was the basis of this system?

4. To begin to understand the influence of Christianity on the poet, have students create timelines tracing the history of Christianity in Europe during the Middle Ages from 449-1066 using online encyclopedias such as *Britannica* or *Encyclopedia.com*, if the school has a paid subscription to such a service. (www.britannica.com, www.encyclopedia.com). Have students create interactive multi-

media timelines to showcase their findings on Timeglider at www.timeglider.com. Timeglider gives students the ability to embed text, photos, video, and audio, ensuring a more active experience. Be sure to point out that the manuscript containing *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* was first shared around the late 14th century, while the beginning of the chivalric age was more likely in the 6th century. Discuss with students: Since the Gawain poet is a Christian (check the Preface, p. 13), re-telling an ancient story about a challenge to honor and pride, what might be the message he wants to convey to his listeners?

5. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* survived as part of a handwritten illuminated manuscript containing three other narrative poems: "Pearl," "Purity," and "Patience." All are thought to have been written by the same author, according to handwriting and style analysis. Illuminated manuscripts offer a rare glimpse into the culture of the audience at the time of authorship. As with the Pearl Manuscript, many times the illustrations are not relevant to the story on the pages, but rather artwork depicting cultural or religious subjects. Gain a glimpse into the life of people in the Middle Ages by visiting the British Library's Virtual Books online site at <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/virtualbooks/viewall/index.html#> Here you can find scanned copies of original illuminated manuscripts. One, in particular, called *Glimpses into Medieval Life* is useful as primary source material for contextualizing life during this time period. Access the site and have students study the pages, reading or listening to the accompanying narration, noting on a T-chart where they infer from the illustrations information that supports or refutes their assumptions about life in the Middle Ages in the following categories: Life, Religion, and Technology. In the left column, brainstorm assumptions. In the right column,

list information inferred from the illustrations in the manuscript.

Additional manuscripts:

<http://www.kb.nl/manuscripts/browse>

More information about illuminated manuscripts:

http://www.getty.edu/education/for_teachers/curricula/manuscripts/background1.html

BBC Program-Illuminations:

The Private Lives of Medieval Kings

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b019h3g2>

6. One of the most interesting facets of teaching about the literature of the Middle Ages is the romanticizing of the war hero who came to be known as the legendary King Arthur. In this activity, have your students access *The Middle Ages* website (http://www.themiddleages.net/people/king_arthur.html) and, using a double bubble map, compare and contrast the historical theories about Arthur with the romantic version, said to have been created by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *History of the Kings of Britain*. Why is it that we, as a society, believe the legend more often than the history? What aspects of the legend are improbable? What events in history parallel closely events in the legend? Also interesting to note are the writings of geographers and historians who enjoy tracing the historical basis for the King Arthur legend and the website of Caerleon, thought to be the location once known as "Camelot." Other useful resources are:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/history/top-10-clues-to-the-real-king-arthur-2024729.html>

<http://www.caerleon.net/>

Understanding the Genre of the Romance

1. Direct students to research the meaning of the term romance as a genre of literature by having them check several sites listing the etymology of words such as Dictionary.com or The Online Etymology Dictionary (www.dictionary.com and <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php>).

Ask them to look up variations of "romance," such as romantic and romanesque (or accomplish this as a whole group, projecting the site results). After they've explored the etymology of the term, give students a 12x12 sheet of aluminum foil and have them each sculpt a symbol representing an aspect of romance as it applies to the Middle Ages (you can purchase precut sheets for ease of use). After they have shared what their sculptures represent, display them in the classroom so the class can go back to them while reading the poem to discuss how their idea of romance as a genre of literature is developing.

2. Have students read a brief selection from *Le Morte d'Arthur*, book 1, chapter 25, in which Arthur gets the sword Excalibur from the Lady of the Lake. It is available at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/mart/mart024.htm>.

Ask them to list the elements of the story, such as the adventure, the quest of the hero, magic, the wise man (Merlin), the lady, the warfare of knights, the code of honor. Then explain to students that these elements occur in the stories of the Middle Ages which are called romances or chivalric romances. Explain how these stories of the adventures of knights were popular among the aristocrats of the time. Discuss with students: Why, do you think, the nobles enjoyed these stories? Elements of these stories continue to be used in contemporary film and literature. Why? What is universal in these stories?

3. In groups have students read various medieval codes of chivalry. A good source is the Baronage page at <http://www.baronage.co.uk/chivalry/chival1a.html>. Have students identify specific rules that relate to the Church and Christianity and those that only spell out humane behavior. Have students review their findings with the whole class and discuss how the ideal knight would behave when confronted with an enemy or interacting with his lord, a lady, a widow, and an orphan. Ask if students find anything surprising in the codes.

4. To help students understand the code of chivalry and the expectations of knightly behavior, ask them to read the portrait of the Knight and Squire in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* which was written around the same time as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (see p. 14 of the Preface for speculations about the date of the poem). A side-by-side translation of Middle English into Modern English is available from the Medieval Sourcebook at

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/CT-prolog-para.html>

Have students compile a list of the character traits of the Knight and his son, the Squire. Then discuss Chaucer's assessment of each character. Who does he admire more and why? What are the qualities of a knight and what behaviors are expected of knights?

Understanding Literary Devices

1. The "bob and wheel" metrical style of poetry, commonly associated with the alliterative style of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, is comprised of a short, one or two-stress "bob" followed by four three-stress lines which are the "wheel." The rhyme scheme is ABABA with the second and fourth lines of the wheel rhyming with the bob. Most modern translations of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* have all but done away with the intended meter and rhyme of the poem.

However, Burton Raffel, the translator of the Signet Classics edition stayed true to the poet's intent by including, wherever possible, this poetic device (pp. 152-153 of the "Afterword"). Use the original Middle English translation on pp. 10-11 of the "Preface" in the Signet Classics edition and have students identify the bob and wheel, noting the meter and rhyme. The companion translated lines begin on Line 421 in the text. Now, have students flip through the text of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* choosing bob and wheel stanzas at random. Have them identify the meter and rhyme, noting when it was kept true to the original form and intent. For a definition of bob and wheel and a further example students can be directed to http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_B.html.

2. Archetypes are recurring characters, images, or situations that are found across multiple cultures and that therefore speak to some universal truth of human experience. Carl Jung, a psychologist and contemporary of Freud, theorized that archetypes express the unconscious mind and that humans have access to a collective unconscious that explains common patterns of behavior. Reading the poem, students will encounter the archetypes of the trickster, the temptress, and the hero on a journey or quest.

The trickster is someone who plays tricks and generally exhibits unconventional behaviors. Students may be aware of trickster characters from the study of folklore, such as Robin Hood in British tradition and Brer Rabbit from Uncle Remus Tales. Ask students to make a list of the common behaviors or characteristics of these characters. What inferences can students make about this type of character? Do they mean to do harm to others? What is their role? You can remind students of their ideas when the class first encounters the Green Knight who appears at Arthur's Christmas feast as "half an ogre, a giant,/But clearly the

biggest creature in the world” (ll. 140-141) and totally green from head to foot. Does the poet’s description alert the listener/reader to the possibility that the knight is a trickster?

The temptress is beautiful and seductive, intelligent and manipulative. She tempts the hero generally to give into immediate pleasure and to forget his duty or responsibility. In classic myths, the sirens called men to their death by their pleasurable songs. Ask students to name some classical, biblical, or contemporary examples of the temptress. What do these characters have in common? Are some more dangerous than others? What is their role in the testing of the hero/heroine?

II. BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE THROUGH INITIAL EXPLORATION OF THEMES

Man vs. Nature

Have students create their own Google Map to locate and pinpoint the following places, traditionally thought to represent Gawain’s journey (there are lots of tutorials on Google, <https://maps.google.com/> and on YouTube if this is your first time creating maps):

- Caerleon (Geoffrey of Monmouth thought this to be the basis for Camelot)
- Anglesey Islands (mentioned in line 698)
- Holywell (line 700)
- Wirral (lines 700-701)
- Other locations: the River Dee, River Mersey, Peak District, Roaches, and Lud’s Church in Staffordshire (thought to be the location of the Green Knight’s Chapel)

After noting the topographical features of Gawain’s journey, use the locations on the map and a weather service such as Yahoo! or UK Weather.com to chart the average weather conditions during the year, including highs, lows, and average rainfall. Students will likely have to convert the information

from the metric system. Compare those conditions to where you are located. Any similarities? How might weather affect a person? Are there times when the weather and nature can be a force against a person? What are some examples from literature or life?

Quest

Is a quest a journey from here to there or is there more to it? How does it differ from a pilgrimage such as the one in Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*? Have students simply put “What is a quest?” in the Google search window. Based on what they learn from this search, ask them to create a three way Venn Diagram comparing a quest, a journey, and a pilgrimage. What are the defining characteristics of each? What commonalities do they share? What happens to persons who engage in these experiences?

Codes of Rules of Behavior

1. Throughout history, games have been used as allegory for historical happenings or personal relationships, and they all have something in common: a set of rules or behaviors, much like the expected behaviors of knights with regard to their kings and their ladies. Each move has a consequence. Just as Gawain’s moves have consequences, so do the moves on a chessboard. Have students bring in actual chess boards or use a free online chess site such as Chess.com to have students experience the complicated rules of this game. The game of chess reflects the authoritarian rule imposed on society during a feudal system, so discussion could certainly go in that direction as well. Don’t worry if you don’t have experience with chess strategies. Poll students at the beginning of the activity and pair experienced chess players with inexperienced players (masters and novices). After students have played part of a game, discuss: What happens when you don’t follow the rules? What if you don’t know the rules? Who is in control? What

are the rules or codes of behavior that apply to knights or soldiers? What are the rules of hospitality, of courtship? Can they think of other behaviors that have set rules?

2. A tradition that continued from the Anglo Saxon period into the literature of the Middle Ages was the all important boast or “*beot*.” The boast, although scorned as “sinful pride” once society became Christianized, was an integral part of any storytelling event and served to focus attention on the hero, establishing him as a person of conviction, character, and strength. In modern society, students will have experience with boasting in the world of sporting events such as professional wrestling and football. In order to “rouse the troops,” and establish their prowess, have your students write boasts of one minute or less. You can modernize them or keep them traditional by including elements such as the particular enemy to be vanquished, the history of success in the past, and the name of the weapon to be used in the fight. You can have students deliver them live, but, for an added dimension, use an avatar program or text-to-speech program such as Voki (www.voki.com) or Xtranormal (www.xtranormal.com). Students who would feel silly bragging (because, for the most part, society continues to frown upon such behavior), will not feel self-conscious at all when using an electronic avatar.

3. Since Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, a treatise from the 4th century, the art of persuasion has been a skill studied worldwide by people in powerful positions. Understanding the elements of rhetoric is not only important in order to get what we want, but also to protect ourselves from those who would use it against us (as might the Green Knight or Lady Bercilak). Use an example from the American Rhetoric website at www.americanrhetoric.com to analyze a speaker’s familiarity with these ancient pillars of rhetoric, and to help your students familiarize themselves with the prevalence of their use. Print out the words individually and assign each of the elements to students in the class. Have the class brainstorm examples of each in the context of a discussion in which the student is trying to persuade a teacher to change a grade or as a child trying to persuade a parent to do something. Then, as you read aloud the piece of rhetoric you have chosen from the website, have students pop up and shout out their element when they hear evidence of its use. Discuss any disparities as they arise. As you get into the text of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, use the knowledge of rhetoric to analyze the Green Knight’s persuasion of the knights and Lady Bercilak’s persuasion of Gawain.

The Purposes	Informing	Persuading	Motivating
The Modes	Ethos (establishing trust)	Logos (arguing the point)	Pathos (playing on emotions)
The Elements	Similarity	Differences	Repetition

Bravery vs. Moral Courage

1. Have students create a Venn Diagram using “Bravery” and “Moral Courage” as the elements to be compared. Where do they differ? Where are they similar? Go to your local library or bookstore and choose a picture book such as *Courage* by Bernard Waber (Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 2002) which addresses in very simple terms the concept of bravery and/or moral courage. As you read the book aloud to the class, have them mark on a T-Chart the Actions and the Consequences involved in the book. Compare the Venn Diagram and the
2. Lawrence Kohlberg, a student of Jean Piaget’s work on cognitive development, asserted that there were three stages of moral development under which behavior might be categorized. The table below explains the stages:

Level 1: Preconventional	Obedience; Punishment avoidance	Self-Interest Orientation	How can I avoid punishment? What’s in it for me?
Level 2: Conventional	Conformity to Societal Norms	Following Authority	What is good behavior? What does the law say?
Level 3: Postconventional	Democratic expectations	Do the greatest good (martyrdom)	How will it affect the world?

Students have read or viewed stories involving bravery or moral courage (*Beowulf*, *The Odyssey*, *Antigone*, various fairy tales or even popular movies, such as *Star Wars*). Have them categorize decisions made by protagonists according to Kohlberg’s levels of moral development. How do we, as an audience, react to the hero’s actions? What level do we expect of heroes?

3. Have students create visualizations using Vuvox, a multimedia collage creator, (<http://www.vuvox.com/>) to illustrate the essential question: What is bravery? Vuvox will allow students to place photos, video, audio, and text into a seamless slideshow presentation. You can also use SlideRocket, a tool available to Google users which has an interface much like PowerPoint. Have students embed the

visualizations in a website or have them present them to the class. A good way to collect the presentations for later use is to set up a Google Form in which students fill in their names and then paste in the URL (web address) of the presentation which is usually available on the publishing page when they finalize the presentation. After they have filled out the form, you will have a spreadsheet with all the group names and the clickable URLs of their presentations. After viewing their collages, ask students what are the similarities/differences in their depiction of the concept of bravery? Is bravery all about overcoming physical odds or are there forms of bravery that do not involve a physical struggle? When is spiritual or mental bravery even more difficult than physical bravery?

Excessive Pride

Have students read Proverbs 16:18 from the Bible: “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.” Have students discuss the meaning of this proverb in small groups and to think up an example from life or from literature that applies the moral of the proverb. After students present their example to the class, you can present the fable from Aesop, “The Fighting Cocks and

the Eagle,” which is available at <http://www.aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?2&TheFightingCocksandtheEagle>.

Discuss with students: What is pride? What is the difference between pride and humility? When is pride an appropriate human feeling and when is it excessive or misguided? When people fall from excessive pride, how might they redeem themselves or regain what they have lost?

DURING READING ACTIVITIES

I. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions ask students to take a closer look at the text, draw inferences and make connections. Students can address these questions independently or in small or whole group discussion. You may choose some of these questions for journal or quick write responses to spark discussion.

Part One

1. What descriptors give the reader the feeling of excess and abundance in lines 25-80?
Why might this appeal to the audience of the Middle Ages? Today's audience?
2. What gives the impression that Arthur is an unusual kind of king? How does that affect our impression of him as a leader (l. 85)?
3. The author spends lots of time describing the Green Knight in lines 137-205. What first impressions do you have of this character?
4. Why would the poet describe the Green Knight as both huge and graceful? Ghastly and opulent? What effect does this use of paradox have on our perception of the Knight (ll. 140-145)?
5. Why has the Knight sought out the men in Arthur's court? Why not another king's court (ll. 257-283)?
6. Compare the description of the Knight to that of other heroes from literature such as Odysseus (l. 305; both are described alliteratively as having “bristling brows”).

7. Why is Gawain facing the Knight instead of Arthur (l. 345)? What are Gawain's apparent virtues and strengths?
8. How does the Knight's description of the stellar reputation of Arthur and his court spur the knights on to accept the challenge? How is *hubris*, or excessive pride, involved (ll. 257-338)?
9. Should a knight in Arthur's court have accepted the challenge of the Green Knight? Why or why not?
10. What is Gawain's motive for accepting the challenge?
11. Why did the poet include such a gruesome description of the beheading of the Knight in lines 424-443?

Part Two

1. How does the storyteller indicate the passage of time in lines 500-530? What is the effect?
2. To what is Gawain compared as he is being armored? How is this compared to the Knight (ll. 570-590)?
3. What is the significance of the number 5 in lines 640-665?
4. Why do the members of Arthur's Court regret allowing Gawain to take the challenge (ll. 675-685)?
5. How is Gawain in conflict with nature on his journey to the Green Knight's chapel (ll. 710-739)?

6. In what way does the description of the natural surroundings in lines 741-749 parallel the description of the Knight in Part One?
7. What leads to the turning point that occurs on line 765?
8. Compare the description of Gawain's accommodations beginning on line 854 with those of his home in Camelot.
9. In line 1067, Gawain states he'd rather "be dead than fail." What does this suggest about the code of knighthood? About Gawain?
10. Defend or refute this statement: "Gawain is only seeking fame through his encounter with the Green Knight."

Part Three

1. Examine lines 1209-1240. In what ways is the Lady of the House's behavior shocking to an audience who expects ladies to be shy and demure?
2. Why would the poet spend so much time describing the slaughter and butchering of the deer in lines 1330-1361?
3. What is the result of the bargain between Gawain and the Lord of the House? How does Gawain avoid telling the host he's had somewhat inappropriate interactions with his wife (l. 1379)?
4. Once again the Lady of the House visits Gawain. What does she want him to teach her (l. 1530)? What is his response? Did it surprise you (l. 1548)? How does Gawain's response fit with the code of chivalry?
5. Compare the ways the Lord's three hunts parallel what is happening in Gawain's bedchamber. Note: Once students have drawn their connections, you can direct them to the explication provided in the "Preface," (p. 30) to see if they agree with the critic's interpretation.
6. Why won't Gawain accept the ring from the Lady (l. 1828) while he accepts the green silk belt? Does this change your opinion of Gawain as a hero (ll.1856-1859)?
7. After each day's hunt, the Lord and Gawain exchange gifts. What are they? What might be the symbolism of each of the animals of the hunt?
8. Has Lady Bercilak succeeded or failed in achieving her goal? What was the goal?
9. Why might Gawain find Lady Bercilak more attractive than Guenevere? What qualities does she possess that he admires?

Part Four

1. In what way do the natural elements characterize Gawain's fate on his ride to the Green Knight's chapel (ll. 2003-2005)?
2. Who is Hector, referenced in line 2102? Why might the poet be making this reference to the Greek (classical) hero?
3. Why are Gawain's words in line 2131 ironic?
4. Why is the description of the Green Knight in lines 2229-2230 surprising or unexpected?
5. What action in line 2272 causes the Green Knight to pull back on the axe?
6. What surprising revelation is made in lines 2341-2357? How is it an example of irony?
7. Is the Knight angry about the relationship Gawain had with his wife (ll. 2350-2352)? Why/why not?
8. What effects do cowardice and greed have on chivalry (ll. 2374-2375)?
9. Who is the Green Knight, in reality? What does he reveal to Gawain about the charade? Why does this double the shame that Gawain is feeling as the Knight reveals the ruse (ll. 2444-2463)?
10. What is surprising about the invitation Bercilak extends to Gawain in lines 2467-2470? Do you think Gawain is tempted to return?

11. Why does Gawain wear the green belt back to Camelot?
12. When Gawain returns to Camelot, he expects to be shamed and shunned for his behavior. Describe his actual reception. Why do the knights react as they do (ll. 2513-2520)? Why does Arthur adopt the green belt as part of the uniform for the Knights of the Round Table? What is your response to Arthur's action? Why?

II. ACTIVITIES TO GENERATE RESPONSE AND EXPLORATION OF THE TEXT

These activities ask students to check their understanding of the events in the text, to re-read and make connections, and to analyze themes and the art of the poem.

1. The Gawain poet is skilled in using imagery to create vivid scenes. From the beginning of the poem, it is important that students “see” the scenes created by the poet. Ask students to draw a quick sketch or describe in their own words their visualization of certain scenes as they read the poem—such as Arthur's hall when the Green Knight arrives, Gawain's journey through the woods, the hunt scenes, Gawain's encounters with the lady of the house in the private space of his bedchamber.

Once students have shared their visualizations, you could show students one or more scenes from a BBC documentary authored by poet Simon Armitage which traces Gawain's journey from Camelot to the Green Knight's Chapel. The video, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74gl1lg1CQ>, is hip with current music and a poet's voice, and may increase the students' ability to visualize the scenes of the poem. Armitage pays lots of attention to the natural elements in the poem, even calling it one of the “world's first eco-poems.” The scene at Lud's Church is particularly enlightening, considering it's not really a church (maybe the Green Knight's chapel is not really a chapel). Warning: 36:00-38:00 contains graphic butchering of an animal (in parallel to lines beginning on p. 98, line 1330, the butchering of the deer). Students can then create and post visuals as they continue to read the poem.
2. Have students create a travel blog in the voice of Gawain that he would post to as he traveled. This is obviously an anachronistic exercise as Gawain would not have known how to write much less how to blog! A site such as Travelpod (<http://www.travelpod.com/>) will allow students to create free accounts then create entries and upload video based on his location. Students can even integrate locations on a Google Map. This activity will not only reinforce the events in the poem, but will also allow students to put themselves in Gawain's place, thinking deeply about his emotional state and reactions to events as they unfold.
3. Use a double column format to have students take notes as they read. Instead of overwhelming students with all of the elements of the poem and their significance, assign or allow students to choose from a list such as use of alliteration, things that happen in threes, use of color, Biblical allusions, persuasive speech, moral courage, temptation. As they read, have students note in the left column the information from the text that fits their category, including the line number. In the right column, have students explore the significance of the element as it fits into the story thus far. They can make predictions, ask questions, or note a pattern they see developing. Have students with like elements meet together at the end of the reading for the day to share elements they noted and their reactions. As the poem progresses, have students share what they have found with the rest of the class. Students tend to pay better attention to the reading if they are focusing on a particular element.

4. We often wish we could converse with the characters in literature to give them advice or warn them not to go down that road in the dark. How would the story be different if Nemo had listened to his dad or if Peter Parker had stayed home sick that day? As *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* progresses, have students use a sign generator (www.signgenerator.org) or paper and pen to create specific warning signs to post along Gawain's journey. After they create the signs, have students predict how the story would change given their warnings. Why did the poet make the intentional choice to have Gawain fail? What kind of impact would the warning signs have on the storytelling or didactic aspects of the poem? How would warning Gawain affect the poem's appeal?
5. During Gawain's stay with Bercilak, the bedchamber seductions scenes are purposefully interlaced with the hunting scenes, allowing a sense of urgency and conquest to develop on two different levels. Sexual lust is parallel to bloodlust; seduction parallel to the thrill of the kill. Use a comparison-contrast graphic orga-

nizer such as a Venn Diagram to have students compare the two scenes in each of the three instances (the first visit with hunting the deer, the second visit with hunting the boar, the third and final visit with hunting the fox). You could also use a copy of Freytag's Pyramid dramatic structure layout copied onto acetates to facilitate direct comparison of scenes when they are placed over one another. Encourage students to make inferences about how the specific words chosen, the length of the scenes, the attention to sensory detail, and the meter affect the rendering of the scene. Why did the poet structure his plot in this manner? What could be its impact on the audience of the Middle Ages/of today? What modern examples of interlacing from movies or television shows have similar effects on audiences today?

You can find a list of printable graphic organizers such as Venn diagrams and spider maps at <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>. Freytag's Pyramid, a lesson in plot structure, including an animated plot diagram, is available at <http://tinyurl.com/freytag>.

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

After reading the poem, students can discuss the themes in greater depth and engage in projects that connect the poem to other texts.

I. TEXT-BASED TOPICS FOR ESSAYS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Gawain is an important character in most Arthurian legends and, in fact, there are more tales written about Gawain than Lancelot. In other romantic verse, Gawain is characterized as the "golden boy" whose purity helps to find the grail. In this poem, however, Gawain's character is more complicated. Look back through the text and trace the physical and psychological changes Gawain goes through. Be sure to note situations when he disregards his own high standards and how his failure is resolved.
2. Numbers clearly play an important role in this story. Trace the use of the number five in the poem. When and how often is it used? Why do you think that is significant? What about the number three—in the context of numerology or the context of religion? Consult this site explaining the significance of numbers in the Bible to gain additional background about the significance of certain numbers: <http://afgen.com/oldtest.html> Discuss what the use of these numbers contributes to interpretation of the poem.
3. One of the most important characteristics of knighthood is "service to a lady." Analyze the characterization of women in the poem. Discuss to what extent the women are worthy of respect. Based on your analysis of the women characters,

what can you theorize about the poet's view of women?

4. What role does color play in the poem? What is the symbolic significance of the color green? Consult the Color Matters website with its extensive collection of color theory to test your answers: <http://www.colormatters.com/>
5. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is a romantic poem of the chivalric era. Romances are generally stories of the adventures of knights which describe the behavior of the courtly society, such as the loyalty between a king and his subjects and the relationship of the knight to the Lady. Consider how the concept of the romance has changed from this original idea to the modern day romance novel. What elements of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* continue in romance novels of today? Why do these elements persist? What has been dropped off? Why?
6. After reading, survey the poem and identify the elements in the story that relate to Christianity and those that relate to myth or magic. How does the inclusion of these disparate elements affect the main conflict and the resolution in the poem?
7. A common denouement in literature is the hero's return home, bringing with him the object of the quest, but, most importantly, returning in a more enlightened state. Did Gawain return home enlightened? If so, in what way? What was the object of the quest? Did he complete the quest?
8. Compare and contrast Sir Gawain with Lady Bercilak in terms of their physical attributes, motivation, and behavior. How are they alike/different? Which of the characters is more virtuous? Explain your assessment of their characters.
9. Apply one of the codes of chivalry discussed in the Prereading section of this guide to evaluate Sir Gawain's actions in the poem. See <http://www.baronage.co.uk/chivalry/chival1a.html>. In what ways

does Gawain live up to the code, and in what ways does he fail? Overall, does Gawain emerge as a chivalric hero or as something different? If you applied modern day standards of conduct to Gawain's actions, how would that change your evaluation, if at all?

II. GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS THAT EXTEND THE TEXT

These projects are designed to extend the themes and archetypes found in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* to the daily lives of your students. Using the highest level of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (http://www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm), ask your students to create, design, develop, and formulate their ideas into a variety of texts, in order to get a deeper understanding of Gawain, the conflicts he faces, and universal themes of the poem.

1. Gawain returns home wearing what he perceives to be a sign of shame, the green silk sash he neglected to disclose to Bercilak for fear of losing his life in the challenge with the Green Knight. King Arthur turns this sign of shame into a learning experience and requires all of his knights to wear the belt. Discuss with students their individual perception of the girdle and what it represents. Then using materials from home or at school, have them create a physical representation of the belt that they could wear. If your school will allow it, have the students wear this badge/sign throughout the day, hopefully, prompting questions from other teachers and classmates. Prepare students to explain, briefly, the story of Gawain and why he and the other knights wear the belt. Once students have experienced wearing the girdle, discuss the reactions they received and the experiences they had teaching others about the story of Gawain and the choices he made.

2. In the "Afterword," Neil Isaacs addresses the question many people ask about works of literature: What is the poet's intention in telling this story (pp. 140-147)? He quotes noted scholars with different opinions, finally concluding that the appeal of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is its universality. Is it a romance? Yes (p.140). Is it an Everyman story? Yes (p. 144). Is it a comedy? Yes (p. 147). *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in its universal appeal contains within it all the elements of a modern Hollywood blockbuster: graphic violence, a vulnerable hero, a beautiful temptress, powerful magic, and a deep devotion to a higher power. Using a program such as iMovie, Windows Movie Maker, or Animoto (www.animoto.com/education), have students create a movie trailer for *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* rivaling that of Jerry Bruckheimer. First have each group focus on the tone that they picked up as they read the poem to decide the tone of their film. Will it be a comedy, a horror movie, a fantasy, a liturgical film, a chick flick? What would they use to encourage modern audiences to want to see this ancient story? Whom would they cast in the roles? What justifications can they make regarding those choices? Make sure to have them storyboard and pitch their ideas to you before they begin to make the experience more authentic and more organized. After the trailers are finished, hold a screening, complete with popcorn, and allow students to watch each other's trailers, voting for their favorites in categories such as Best Casting, Best Use of Narration, Most Likely to Make \$150 Million. To illustrate to your students how tone can make a difference in the audience's perception, show them a few trailers from *The Trailer Mash* (<http://www.thetrailermash.com>), a website where amateur filmmakers can submit their reworked movie trailers (such as *Mary Poppins* as a horror film and *The Shining* as a "feel good" relationship movie).
3. Since the invention of the MP3 player, music has become an even more important part of everyday life, accessible almost everywhere. Certainly, this is true for most students today. With Internet music sites such as Pandora (www.pandora.com), listeners have access to countless songs in countless genres any hour of the day they choose. Encourage students to research the music of the Middle Ages and create a Pandora music channel/genre (either in reality or in theory) that Gawain might have enjoyed listening to on his journey. What kind of music would it contain? Would it be mostly historical, traditional music, religious music, secular? Have them list the songs they would expect him to "thumbs up" and those he would skip with a "thumbs down" and have them justify their choices.

Note: You may wish to sample and share with students an album by Canadian recording artist Heather Dale called *The Green Knight*, which includes songs in the Celtic folk tradition about the Middle Ages, and one song, in particular called "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." This album is available at www.heatherdale.com.
4. Now that students have read the poem, they can outline the stages of a quest and create their own quest stories. The *Hero's Journey* site at <http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/smc/journey/main.html> based on Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, is a formatting service which guides students through writing their own quest story. Each section (Initiation, Departure, and Return) asks guiding questions about what characters will face in each step. The site scaffolds the process, but does not edit or interact with students as they create their stories, so they will need to pay attention to writing conventions such as spelling and grammar. This site, if you have the time to devote to it, is a great way for students to tap into their own creativity as storytellers while gaining exposure to the mythological and archetypal terms used in quest literature such as

“belly of the whale” and “apotheosis.”

Some students might prefer to create a more visual version of their quest stories. They can use a comic strip creator such as Make Beliefs Comix (<http://www.make-beliefscomix.com/>). Students can share the comics by printing and posting them on the walls of the classroom. You might have a gallery walk instead of an individual sharing time. Provide students with sticky notes on which they can identify and post archetypal elements of quests they find in the comics as they read them.

5. In this activity, students will stage a mock trial of one of the characters in the *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, once and for all establishing guilt or innocence in the shaming of King Arthur and his noble knights. Is Arthur to blame for not accepting the challenge himself? Is Morgana more culpable for concocting the plan in the first place? Could the Green Knight/Bercilak be the guilty party or is the ideal of Chivalry (personified) to blame? Use the resources found in the *NY Times* article “In Any Case: Conducting a Mock Trial” (<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/04/in-any-case-conducting-a-mock-trial/>) to help you structure the participants and the objectives. You could encourage students to wear appropriate clothing. Have them cite the text throughout the proceedings and have them practice the strategies they learned in the prereading activity on rhetoric to create persuasive arguments.
6. **“Art is the lie that enables us to realize the truth”—Pablo Picasso**

Using the list of themes you and your students have identified while reading *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ask students to perform a Google Image search using some search terms such as “Gawain” or “Green Knight” to identify images and art which correlate with the themes of the poem. Next, have them create an account on Popplet (www.popplet.com) and use its display features to respond to a piece of artwork they found with regard to the

poem, the themes, and their perceptions and conclusions. Your students can export their finished Popplets as .pdf or as .jpg for use in a class website or for printing and display. Popplet also has a collaboration feature within the “share” button so students who have created accounts can work together to create content.

III. PARALLEL OR EXTENDED READING

When Gawain returns home, he is filled with shame for the sins he has committed, fearing, above all, that he has disappointed Arthur and the other lords and ladies with his fall from grace. On the contrary, Arthur is overjoyed to have his most noble knight back in Camelot and the audience is reminded that flaws are part of human nature, even for legendary Knights of the Round Table. The lessons Gawain learns on this journey are applicable still today.

Ask students to read or view one of the following works which focus on relevant themes. Since *Sir Gawain* is a brief work, perfect for an in-class study, students could choose one of these novels as a parallel/companion piece to be read outside of class or during Sustained Silent Reading and discussed along with the poem.

As they read, have students practice interactive reading by annotating the text with margin or sticky notes any time they encounter one of these themes or a parallel to *Sir Gawain*. An interesting article from the *New York Times* website explores how marking up texts helps the brain process information more effectively (<http://tinyurl.com/interactivenotes>).

Man vs. Nature

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. NY: Scholastic, 2010.

Lewis, CS. *The Chronicles of Narnia*. NY: Harper Collins, 2005.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit, or, There and Back Again*. NY: Ballentine Books, 1966.

The Quest

Green, John. *Paper Towns*. NY: Dutton Books, 2008.

Gaiman, Neil. *Stardust: Being a Romance Within the Realms of Faerie*. NY: DC Comics, 1997.

Riordan, Rick. *The Lightning Thief*. NY: Hyperion Books for Children, 2005.

Rules and Order

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. NY: Penguin Group, 2003.

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2006.

Westerfeld, Scott. *Uglies*. NY: Simon Pulse, 2011.

Ambition and Pride

Buck, Pearl S. *The Good Earth*. NY: Pocket Books, 2005.

Colfer, Eoin. *Artemis Fowl*. NY: Miramax Books, 2005.

Flinn, Alex. *Beastly*. NY: Harper Teen, 2011.

Bravery v. Moral Courage

Lowry, Lois. *The Messenger*. NY: Bantam Books for Young Readers, 2006.

Philbrick, Rodman. *Freak, The Mighty*. NY: Scholastic Paperbacks, 2001.

Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.

IV. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Barnes, Daniel, dir. *Beastly*. CBS Films, 2011. Film.

This is a modern interpretation of the Beauty and the Beast story which is useful in studies of archetypal elements and romance.

Boorman, John, dir. *Excalibur*. Orion Pictures, 1981. Film.

This film introduces the King Arthur legend which begins before his birth and ends with his final journey to Avalon with the Lady of the Lake.

Cabot, Meg. *Avalon High*. New York: Harper Teen, 2007. Print.

In this young adult novel, set in a modern high school, a core group of characters discover they are reincarnations of King Arthur, Merlin, and the Knights of the Round Table.

Celtic Twilight: Legends of Camelot. At <http://www.celtic-twilight.com/camelot/oas.htm>

This huge collection of sources on King Arthur and the legends of Camelot includes links to poetry, plays, art, movies, and online resources.

Gillard, Stuart, dir. *Avalon High*. Sudden Motion Productions, 2010. Film.

This film is a modernized interpretation of a King Arthur legend based on the books by Meg Cabot.

Lucas, George, dir. *Star Wars*. Lucasfilm, 1977. Film.

This popular and familiar film can be used to introduce archetypes.

Stewart, Mary. *The Crystal Cave*. New York: William Morrow, 1970. Print. **The Arthurian Saga.**

This first novel in the Arthurian Saga begins before Merlin's birth and follows his development as a wizard. The novel provides a good overview of 6th century history.

The Western Tradition. 1989. WGBH Boston. DVD.

This series of historically-based documentaries has a useful historical section on the Middle Ages (also available online through the Annenberg Foundation website at <http://www.learner.org/resources/series58.html>).

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NOTES

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