


## Rising 6th Grade (Omnibus I)

### The Book: *Mythology* by Edith Hamilton

You will need to read sections 4 through 14 (pages 95-290) of Edith Hamilton’s *Mythology*. The purpose of this book is to help you become familiar with the myths and characters of Ancient Greece and Rome. As you read, remember that these are the stories that the people of Ancient Greece and Rome not only knew by heart, but fully believed. Try to imagine a world in which Athena could come to aid you in your troubles, or Zeus could fall in love with you. This is a world in which everything – from the fire in your hearth to the flowers in the field to the mighty roaring sea—was alive and imbued with a spirit.


The Ancients told stories (myths) about what they saw in the world to explain phenomena they couldn’t understand. For example, they would explain a storm as an effect of two gods fighting. See how many of these “story explanations” (or myths) you can find throughout your reading.

**Annotate:** As you read this book you might be a bit overwhelmed by how many gods and goddesses there are, and it might be tricky to keep all of these stories straight. Try some of the following annotation strategies to help you be able to reference the content of the book in future discussions. **(This is not a part of the assignment, but you will be using these techniques in class this year so this is a great time to practice these skills!)**

 **Circle :** Circle any new character you meet and write a brief description of them in the margin

**Text Underline :** Underline any important plot detail to draw your eye to it later when discussing.

**? Question Mark:** Write a question mark by any material you don’t understand, then write a brief question (or the reason you are confused) in the margin so you can ask your teacher about it in class.

 **Box:** Put a box around any words you can’t define. Take the time as you go to look

these words up in a dictionary and then write an abbreviated definition in the margin.

★ **Star:** Put a star next to any BIG IDEA, theme, or message you think the author is trying to tell you. For example, when a character learns a lesson, solves a problem, or comes to a realization put a star in your text to mark this as an important piece of the text.

+ /- **Plus and Minus:** Write a “+” next to ideas you agree with, write a “-“ next to ideas (or actions characters make) you don’t agree with.

⇒ **Arrow:** See a connection with another part of the book? Does this story remind you of another story or book you’ve read? Draw an arrow and summarize your thoughts in the margin.

**The Reading Guide:** The following assortment of questions are to help guide you through your reading. You may wish to make notes to ensure you have a complete understanding of the book and are ready to discuss it on the first day of class!

#### **Chapter 4 The Earliest Heroes: Who are they and what are their stories?**

pp. 95-120

1. Prometheus and Io
2. Europa
3. the Cyclops
4. the Flower myths

#### **Chapter 5 Cupid and Psyche pp. 121-134**

5. How does Psyche compare in beauty with her sisters? What plan does Venus have for Psyche?
6. What happens when Cupid meets Psyche?

#### **Chapter 6 Eight Brief Tales of Lovers pp. 135-159**

7. How does the Pyramus and Thisbe myth explain the deep red color of the mulberry bush?
8. How does the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice explain the sweetness of the nightingale’s song?

9. How does the myth of Ceyx and Alcyone explain the idea of Halcyon days?
10. How does the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea illustrate the power of love?
11. How does the myth of Baucis and Philemon illustrate nature as a symbol of eternal love?

**Chapter 7 The Quest of the Golden Fleece** pp. 160-180

12. What is the Golden Fleece? Why does Jason seek the Golden Fleece?
13. How does the King of Colchis treat Jason when he arrives? What tests does he put Jason through?
14. How does Medea figure in these events? What does Jason do to Medea at the end?

**Chapter 8 Four Great Adventures** pp. 181-195

15. How does the myth of Phaëthon explain the poplar trees that grow along the bank of the river Eridanus?
16. Why does Bellerophon believe that he can be equal to the gods? What does Bellerophon forget?
17. How does the myth of Otus and Ephialtes also show the foolishness of trying to rise above the gods?

**Chapter 9 Perseus** pp. 196-207

18. How is Perseus' birth magical?

**Chapter 10 Theseus** pp. 208-223

19. Before Theseus can go to Athens and claim King Aegeus as his father, what great test of strength is he required to perform? Why is Theseus loved by the Greeks before he ever meets his father?
20. What kind of ruler is Theseus when he becomes King of Athens?

**Chapter 11 Hercules** pp. 224-244

21. What happens to Hercules when Hera sends madness to possess him? Is he considered guilty of his crimes? What happens after Hercules completes the twelve labors?

**Chapter 12 Atalanta** pp. 245-252

22. What declaration does Atalanta make about marriage? And how does Melanion (Hippomenes) win her as his bride?

**Chapter 13 The Trojan War** pp. 253-290

23. What part does Paris play in the war? What about Achilles? Who was Hector? What is probably the most memorable scene from this section?

## Rising 7<sup>th</sup> Grade (Omnibus II)

Hello future 7<sup>th</sup> graders!

This summer, as an introduction to Medieval Omnibus, you will be reading *Man of Blessing: A Life of St. Benedict* by Carmen Acevedo Butcher. While you do not need to complete a formal assignment or project over the book this summer, you do need to be reading carefully and thoughtfully, as you will be assessed over the book when you return in August. To that end, we offer the following questions to guide your reading:

- What was the world like when Benedict was alive?
- What miracles does Benedict perform, and what lessons do they teach us?
- Benedict spends time living both in isolation and in community. What are the benefits and problems with each?
- What is humility? How does Benedict demonstrate it?
- What is obedience? How does Benedict demonstrate it?
- What makes Benedict a good Christian leader?

Come to school prepared to discuss these ideas in detail, as they will set the stage for much that we will be reading together this fall. (Also, this is an excellent opportunity to practice your newly acquired annotation skills! Remember that a book which has been annotated with these questions in mind will be an invaluable tool during class discussions our first week back.)

We look forward to seeing you next year!

-7<sup>th</sup> Grade Teaching Staff

## Rising 8<sup>th</sup> grade (Omnibus III)

BOOK: Miguel de Cervantes's Don Quixote, Part One (1605).

Many scholars and writers believe Don Quixote to be the greatest novel ever written. It is certainly one of the earliest examples of the novel in the Western Canon. For this, and many other reasons, we'll be reading the first published part of Cervantes's novel over the summer.

Read for the story (it's episodic but straightforward). Read for the humor (it's very funny and full of irony). And, as you enjoy the story, take note of moments that seem full of meaning that exceeds the literal.

Let me explain. One of the reasons people think the novel is so important is because they recognize so much potential meaning in the main character, Don Quixote. So, the question you'll be considering this summer, and the question we'll be considering in our first week back, is as follows: What might Don Quixote, the character, mean—in literature, in history, for us, in our lives and in our faith?

For the first day of class, you must complete the following:

1. Be prepared to summarize the general narrative of Don Quixote, Part One. Who is Don Quixote? Where does he live? What mistake has he made? What kinds of things does he run about the country-side doing? Who is with him? And so forth.
2. Select three specific passages in Part One that you feel “exceed the literal” and seem to need some other form of interpretation. Be prepared to discuss these and other passages on your first day back.

As a help, note the four especially medieval levels or ways of meaning listed below.

1. Literal – the most obvious reading. What is literally happening in the story? Example: Sancho Panza is hitting his donkey.
2. Allegorical – the actions of the story, the characters and their deeds, represent something else. Can this character be understood as representing an idea or concept?

Example: When Sancho Panza hits his donkey, this represents the will and the intellect. Sancho is the will – or affections. The donkey is intellect. The affections are what motivate the intellect to investigate the world, to get moving.

3. Moral – the ethical principles encouraged by the literal event. What does this passage encourage me to do?

Example: Just like Sancho Panza has to hit his donkey to get it moving, so I have to be made to do things that I do not care to do because they are right. I should also encourage others to do the right thing, even when they may not desire so to do.

4. Anagogical – what the literal events represent in the life of every Christian. What truth is here for every Christian who reads it?

Example: Sancho Panza is hitting his donkey. In a similar way, God's grace, coming to us suddenly, impels us toward belief—the movement of faith.

**Ninth Grade Summer Reading Assignment**  
**Homer, *The Iliad*, Books 1-6 ONLY**

**Turn this in the first day of school with your name on it.**

Note: The Greeks are interchangeably referred to Achaeans, Argives and Danaans.

1. Look up the following terms and write a brief definition.
  - a. Epithet \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Patronymic \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Homeric simile \_\_\_\_\_
2. Mark at least six similes by drawing a vertical line in the margin of your book next to the simile.
3. As you read, underline epithets and patronymics (which sometimes end in ‘ides’) in the text. Write down one or two of those for each of the following characters. Feel free to use the glossary in the back of the book for help.

Achilles \_\_\_\_\_

Agamemnon \_\_\_\_\_

Menelaus \_\_\_\_\_

Apollo \_\_\_\_\_

Athena \_\_\_\_\_

Hera \_\_\_\_\_

Zeus \_\_\_\_\_

Thetis \_\_\_\_\_

Nestor \_\_\_\_\_

Odysseus \_\_\_\_\_

Hector \_\_\_\_\_

Ajax (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Ajax (2) \_\_\_\_\_



**Book I**

4. An epic proem introduces the epic and tells the reader very succinctly what the poem is about. In the *Iliad*, the proem is Book I, lines 1-8. What does the proem tell us this epic is about?

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5. Why is Apollo angry?

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6. Why does Achilles get angry?

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7. Why does Agamemnon get angry?

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8. What is the result of all this anger (by the end of Book I)?

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**Book II**

9. What dream does Zeus send to Agamemnon, what are its consequences and how is the problem resolved?

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**Book III**

10. What impression do you get of Helen in Book III? What kind of person is she? How does she feel about the situation?

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11. What is your impression of Paris in Book III?

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**Book IV**

12. What happens at the council of the gods? What is revealed about the fates of the Greeks and the Trojans and about the gods' involvement in human affairs?

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**Book V**

13. In what ways do the gods get involved in the fighting? Do there seem to be limits to their interference?

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**Book VI**

14. What is Paris' great flaw? What effect is this having on Troy?

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15. How is Hector contrasted with Paris? What are Hector's good qualities?

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## Tenth Grade, Omnibus V Summer

*“Frequent researches ad hoc sadly impair receptive reading, so that sensitive people may even come to regard scholarship as a baleful thing which is always taking you **out of** the literature itself. My hope was that if a tolerable (though very incomplete) outfit were acquired before and taken along with one, it might lead **in**.”*

**Reading Assignment:** *The Discarded Image*, by C.S. Lewis

**Background:** *The Discarded Image* is based on a series of introductory lectures that C.S. Lewis gave while he was a professor of medieval literature at the University of Oxford. Because their purpose was to give students a basic understanding of the medieval worldview before diving into reading medieval literature proper, this book provides the perfect introduction to our own study of the Middle Ages.

**Directions:** I would recommend thinking of the text as a series of lectures, instead of treating it as one continuous narrative. Read a chapter, then stop, reflect, and answer the question ascribed to that chapter with a short response (3-4 sentences) on a separate piece of paper. (If using notebook paper, skip lines. If typing your answers, use Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double-spaced.) Once you have done that, feel free to move on to the next “lecture” (chapter).

Do not feel as though you need to understand every reference Lewis makes—many of the texts he mentions are ones we will encounter over the course of our year—but rather, focus on attempting to understand the Medieval Mind and how it differs from our own Modern perspective of the world.

**Questions:**

Chapter 1 – Explain what Lewis means when he refers to “the overwhelmingly bookish and clerkly character of the Middle Ages.”

Chapter 2 – If the medieval Model being outlined by Lewis primarily influenced poets, what classes/groups of people were less intellectually interested in it? Why?

Chapter 3 – Summarize the importance of *one* of the four Classical sources Lewis elucidates in this chapter: (a) Cicero’s ‘Dream of Scipio’, (b) the works of Lucan, (c) the works of Statius, or (d) Apuleius’s ‘On the God of Socrates’.

Chapter 4 – Why is it often difficult to tell whether authors writing during the “Seminal Period” were Pagans or Christians?

Chapter 5 – After reading the entire chapter, take Lewis’s advice. “Go out on a starry night and walk about for half an hour trying to see the sky in terms of the old cosmology.” How does imagining the cosmos as the medievals did (the overall structure, luminosity of the heavens, music of the spheres, influence and personalities of planetary beings, etc.) change the way you think about the universe and our place in it?

Chapter 6 – How was the medieval idea of “Fairy” different from the nursery-rhyme version of fairies we commonly think of today?

Chapter 7 – Choose **one** of the following questions to answer:

- When considering the sections on medieval geography and zoology, how does what the medievals *knew* to be true (i.e. the “facts,” as we understand them) differ from what they *said* about these subjects (as in the *mappemounde* or medieval bestiaries)? What accounts for that difference?
- Describe the structure of the tripartite (three-part) soul and the function of each part.
- What is the medieval understanding of history, and how does it differ from the classical understanding?

Chapter 8 – How do the Model and the medieval faith in *auctors* contribute to Lewis’s claim that “a certain humility [is] the overall characteristic of medieval art”?

I hope you all enjoy Lewis’s fascinating introduction to what is undeniably the **best** period of Western history (but, I’m not biased or anything...), and I look forward to meeting you all in the Fall.

Have a great summer! ~ Miss Atwood

## Rising 11<sup>th</sup> Grade (Omnibus VI)

### Title and Epigraph:

The following is the full text of the poem Chinua Achebe alludes to in both the title and epigraph of his novel *Things Fall Apart*. Consider why Achebe would have chosen this particular poem to title his work – what themes or ideas are common between the poem and the novel? (No written response needed.)

“The Second Coming” (William Butler Yeats, 1919)

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
**Things fall apart**; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi  
Troubles my sight: a waste of desert sand;  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Wind shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?



## Questions

**Directions:** Answer each of the following questions in (short) paragraph form. Please **consider the whole question**, and then write a well-developed (doesn't have to be lengthy) and thoughtful paragraph to answer the entire question. The more thorough/detailed your answers the better your grade will be. **However, thorough and detailed answers are not necessarily the same as long answers: seek for substance rather than length.** At times I have provided parenthetical comments to guide you in answering the questions or to guide you in recognizing important details in each chapter – make sure to read these comments, but there is no need to respond to them in written form. **Choose 15 of the following 25 questions to answer . . . you may not just choose the first 15.**

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### Chapter One:

1. Identify the characters of Okonkwo and Unoka. Select at least two quotes from chapter one which depict various aspects of his character (physical traits, personality, attitudes or ideas).

### Chapter Two:

2. Who/what is the Oracle of the Hills and Caves and why is the Oracle important? Who is Ikemefuna and where is he to live while he's in Umuofia?

### Chapter Three:

3. What occurs when Okonkwo and Unoka visit the Oracle of the Hills and Caves? Discuss what is revealed about Okonkwo's earlier years (hint: to whom is he particularly indebted?)

### Chapter Four and Five:

4. Who is Ojiugo? What incident involving her causes Okonkwo to have to pay an enormous sacrifice? What exactly is the sacrifice he must pay? Why is his offense particularly serious at this time?

### Chapter Six:

5. Who is Chielo and why is she important to the tribe? Additionally. What does the wrestling match and rhythmic drumming show about the Ibo?

### **Chapter Seven:**

6. According to Ezeudu, what is it that “Umuofia has decided?” Then retell the incident involving Ikemefuna. (Who delivers the final death blow? What fear does this character have which would motivate him to do this? How does Nwoye react toward this event?)

### **Chapter Eight:**

7. Who is Obierika? Describe his reaction to Okonkwo’s involvement in the killing.

### **Chapters Nine and Ten:**

8. Identify these terms and character – iba, ogbanje children, iyi-uwa, and Okabue, egwugwu. What function does the egwugwu serve in the ceremony presented in this chapter?

### **Chapter Eleven:**

9. Retell the folk tale Ekwefi tells about the Tortoise. What role does the Tortoise traditionally play in African folklore?

### **Chapter Twelve:**

10. What is an *uri*? Describe the ceremony that takes place involving Akueke. Then describe Okonkwo’s actions the night Chielo takes Ezinma. What do these actions demonstrate about his character?

### **Chapter Thirteen:**

11. What tragedy occurs during Ezeudu’s funeral? (Hint: Who is responsible? How is this crime categorized?) What is the punishment for Ezeudu’s accidental death? (hint: Where does the guilty man go? How does he feel about this?)

### **Chapter Fourteen – Part Two:**

12. What kind of reception does Okonkwo receive from his mother's people? Identify these main characters. What can we infer about women in the Ibo culture from the women's mourning song?

### **Chapter Fifteen:**

13. In Okonkwo's second year of exile, Obierika visits him. What news about the village of Abame does he bring? (Also consider what role did the Oracle play in this decision?)

### **Chapter Sixteen:**

14. In Okonkwo's fourth year of exile, Obierika visits Okonkwo a second time and tells him that Christian missionaries have arrived in Umuofia. Which important character is among the converts and what word do they use to describe the converts and what does it mean?
15. Although "it was not the mad logic of the Trinity that captivated him," three tribal traditions or incidents are sufficient to persuade Nwoye to follow the missionaries. What are these three things?

### **Chapter Seventeen:**

16. What is Okonkwo's reaction to Nwoye when he enters his father's compound? In what way does Nwoye plot a "revenge." What fear does Okonkwo express as he stares into the fire?

### **Chapter Eighteen and Nineteen:**

17. Who/what are *osu*? Discuss the conflict surrounding their admission to the church.
18. What happens during the Easter week? What happens to Okoli? Why is the clan reassured by this?

### **Chapter Twenty – Part Three:**

19. What reason do the villagers give for not just “kicking out” the white men? What does the land dispute and the subsequent hanging of Aneto show about the new government?
20. What is the function of Obierika’s statement that the white man “has put a knife on the things that held us together and **we have fallen apart**”? (Keep in mind this quotation echoes the title of the novel!)

### **Chapter Twenty-One and Twenty-Two:**

21. Does Okonkwo’s return to Ibo society go as he planned? Why/why not?

### **Chapter Twenty-Three:**

22. What occurs when the District Commissioner calls a meeting with the village’s six leaders? What must the tribe do to secure the release of the prisoners? (Also consider how the tribal leaders are treated while they are held prisoner – what is the worst insult to Onkonkwo?)

### **Chapter Twenty-Four:**

23. Describe the debate at the town meeting. What are the two sides of the debate? Which characters seem to represent each viewpoint?

### **Chapter Twenty-Five:**

24. What does Obierika request of the District Commissioner and his band of soldiers? Why won’t the tribe take care of this? What is the title of the District Commissioner’s book? Why is the inclusion of Okonkwo in his book ironic?
25. The life of Okonkwo ultimately ends in tragedy. However, Okonkwo’s life can be viewed in a larger sense. What possibly could Okonkwo and his life stand for, represent, or symbolize in this larger sense?

## 12th Grade Summer Reading

### **Book: *The Scarlet Letter*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne**

Answer each of the following questions with 1-3 paragraph answers. Be ready to discuss each on the first day of class.

1. Why does Hawthorne start with the Custom House introduction? What does it add to the story? How does it frame the events of the 17th century story?
2. Describe Pearl. How does her mother view her? How do the townspeople? How do you as a reader?
3. How does Dimmesdale react to what happened to Hester? Why?
4. Why does Hester decide to tell Dimmesdale? Why hadn't she before?
5. What drives Chillingworth? Who is to blame for what he has become?
6. Before the final reveal, all of Hester's and Dimmesdale's choices seem wrong? What choice should they make? Why?
7. How does Dimmesdale escape Chillingworth's revenge?
8. Why does Hester come back?
9. What did you think of this book? Did you like it? What did you learn from it? What do you wish were different about it? Would you recommend it?