

Rutgers Learning Centers

At Camden Campus

READING: WORLD MASTERPIECES

Worksheet

In order to understand and appreciate world literature, you will need to read it with the following objectives in mind: to discover why the work is important, to learn about the author or narrator, and finally to analyze the work. Proceed through the work using the following steps:

Survey

◇ Read the introductory material to the period and to the work, ask about the **author**:

- Who wrote this work? when? where?
- Did the author conform to his/her contemporaries?

◇ Skim the work, ask about the **work**:

- Is it written in prose or in verse?
- Is it a narrative, play, epic, novel, short story, or essay?
- If written in verse, what are the verse's characteristics (rhyme, meter, form)?

Read and visualize

◇ Read difficult passages aloud with expression. Do not ignore footnotes. They are part of the text and often give necessary information.

◇ Visualize the **characters**:

- Are they round characters (complex, able to surprise)?
- Are they flat characters (may be recognized by one sentence)?
- Are they types (easily recognized by characteristics)?
- Are their names clues to their personalities?

◇ Visualize the **setting**:

- How is the physical locale described?
- How is the time, mood, culture, or environment described?

Turn page for last step. . . .

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Camden
Armitage 231
856/225-6442

College Ave
Kreeger LRC
732/932-1443

Cook/Douglass
Loree 124
732/932-1660

Livingston
Tillett 111
732/445-0986

Newark
Conklin 126
973/353-5608

Summarize

◇ Picture how the story is **framed**:

- What is the tone of the speaker(s) or narrator(s)?
- What is the time, place and environment of the work?
- What are the literary conventions (familiar subjects, styles)?
- What are the social conventions (hierarchy, class, family, economics, politics, religion)?

◇ Consider the work as a **whole**:

- Is it a simple story that tells events as they happened?
- Is there a plot built on clues leading to climax and outcome?
- Is there a sub-plot that can be summarized separately?
- Does the work have verisimilitude (semblance of truth)?

◇ Analyze the **issues** raised in the work:

- Are there parallels or contrasts among or between times, people, places and things?
- Are there similar or dissimilar people, places and objects that can be grouped?
- Are there recurrent themes, verbal phrases or circumstances?
- How do these issues compare with current times?

◇ Determine the narrator's and author's **intentions** for this work:

- Does the narrator want to persuade you to a certain point of view?
What is that point of view?
- Does the author want you to agree or disagree?