

year. What are some of the main differences between literary realism and literary romance? Which dominated the literature of the Middle Ages?

- Literary realism purposes to present the world as it usually is—or as it usually seems to our earthly senses. Supernatural beings and influences are often ignored in works that are classified as “realistic.” Literary realism also tends to present human beings as they ordinarily are, with ordinary strengths and weaknesses.*
- Literary romance purposes to present the world as it is when supernatural beings are at work—or as it is when we are aware of supernatural beings who are always at work, but usually invisible. Literary romance also tends to present people in glorified form (heroic) or in vilified form (evil or even demonic).*
- The romantic approach was dominant in the Middle Ages.*

- Can realism and romance be combined and work together to present a complete picture of reality? *In Words of Delight, Leland Ryken comments that realism and romance work together in the Bible, because Scripture shows us a very “realistic” picture of our lives on earth and paints ordinary human beings as we are, but at the same time is “romance” in that it continually shows how our lives on earth are influenced by God and the supernatural realm, and how we should live our “natural” lives in light of supernatural, spiritual realities (39).*
- Medieval authors were extremely interested in God and the influence of the spiritual realm. Remembering that imaginative literature works by embodying content (meaning and message) in literary forms, what was one of the favorite forms used in the Middle Ages to embody content about the spiritual and supernatural? How does this method work?
 - One favorite medieval form for embodying content was allegory.*
 - To use this method, the author embodies abstract or spiritual realities in a concrete and physical story, in such a way that there is a clear correspondence between the abstract or spiritual and the concrete or physical.*
 - Most allegories accomplish this by transforming abstract or spiritual ideas into characters. Typical characters in an allegory might be Love, Faithfulness, or Good-Will.*
 - These characters are not like everyday people or the characters in a novel. Rather than having complex (and often conflicting) characteristics, allegorical characters usually have only one characteristic, since they are meant to directly represent the one abstract or spiritual quality for which they are named.*
 - Allegories typically embody the kind of spiritual and moral conflicts that we all experience within ourselves. They do this by making up a story full of physical conflicts between the characters who represent spiritual or moral ideas or behaviors. Thus, Love might become a lovely woman; Anger might be a villain who takes Love hostage, and so on.*
 - Allegory was extremely popular in the Middle Ages. In fact, many medieval theologians thought that parts of the Bible could or should be read allegorically.¹*

11. Discuss “The Parable of the Christ-Knight” and “The Dream of the Rood.”

- “The Parable of the Christ-Knight” is an excellent example of an allegory. Can you make an interpretation and tell which abstract or spiritual things are represented in the characters, events, and objects in this story? NOTE: Your student has not yet had any practice with literary analysis and interpretation, so he may need your help in order to discern what is going on in the story. However, since its author explains the allegory at the end, your student may easily be able to give answers to this question.
 - The lady is “our soul,” which refers to the human soul.*
 - The lady is being attacked by “enemies” (which represent devils or human sin).*
 - The king, of course, is Christ.*
 - The shield is the body of Christ, which He gave for our defense.*
 - The death of the king, which he performs in order to win the lady’s love, is Christ’s crucifixion.*
- Can you tell what is the theme (meaning or message) of this story? How might a reader apply this theme to himself and his own life?
 - The theme is the king’s sacrificial love-unto-death for the lady, which was completely undeserved on her side, yet was necessary in order to “attract her heart” and give her no excuse for denying his love.*
 - The application of the theme is that we, who are so unworthy and yet so loved, must not fail to love Christ. As the author writes, “Could he not have saved us without so much suffering?” “Yes, indeed... but he did not wish to.” “Why?” “To deprive us of any excuse for denying him our love, since he had paid so dearly for it” (159).*

¹ For more on the topic of allegorical interpretation of Scripture in the Middle Ages, please see *Frameworks*.

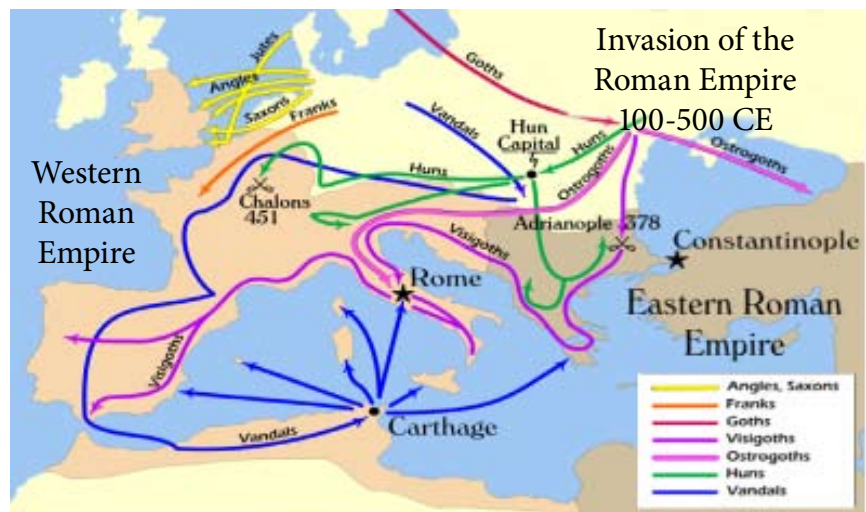
- ❑ Consider “The Dream of the Rood” for a moment. Why might this medieval author have used the context of a dream vision as a means of conveying his thoughts about the cross? Why did he not just make an allegory? *Answers will vary. After hearing your student’s thoughts, you may wish to make the following points:*
 - ❑ A medieval writer might use the dream setting because a reader would be more likely to believe fantastic happenings (such as a speaking tree) if they were set in that context. It is commonly accepted that strange things happen in dreams.
 - ❑ A medieval author might also use the idea of a dream vision to suggest a special supernatural revelation, like the dreams of Joseph in the Bible, or the visions of John in Revelation.

GEOGRAPHY: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As mentioned in the General Introduction to Year 2, this curriculum emphasizes geographic studies at every grade level during every year-plan. Your student will do some geography work most weeks. Many weeks this will be map work, and you must decide this week what kind of maps you would like to make. Please see the *Loom* for suggested approaches, and then purchase necessary materials to get you started:

- ❑ Make photocopies or print outs of maps for the first six weeks.
- ❑ Purchase transparency film for your printer for overlays to be placed in a notebook.
- ❑ Gather colored pencils or markers (find the proper type for your map surface).

This week, one goal is to understand the movements of barbarian tribes that hastened the fall of the Roman Empire. You can use this map¹ (right) for reference as you discuss the barbarian tribes.



“Invasion of the Roman Empire 1” *Wikimedia*. 9 June 2008. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 23 July 2008 < http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Invasions_of_the_Roman_Empire_1.png>.

FINE ARTS AND ACTIVITIES: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Review of Roman art and architecture:

Last year we learned that the Greeks were great inventors and the Romans were great administrators. With regards to the arts, the Romans appropriated and improved Greek architecture and art. For information on Roman architecture, see the sidebar on the opposite page.

Roman sculpture, painting, drama, oration, and buildings all bear an unmistakable Greek stamp, yet something distinctively Roman was added. Sometimes, as with oration and buildings, the Romans actually improved on Greek inventions. Sometimes, as in drama and sculpture, their efforts were but pale copies of brilliant originals.

CHURCH HISTORY: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

*World Book on Arianism*¹

Arianism, pronounced AIR ee uh nihz uhm, was an early Christian theological view taught by Arius, a priest of Alexandria, Egypt. About A.D. 318, Arius and his followers rejected the doctrine that the three Persons of the Christian Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—were equal. Arius denied that Jesus Christ, the Son and second

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¹ From a *World Book* article entitled *Arianism*. Contributor: William J. Courtenay, Ph.D., Professor of Medieval History, University of Wisconsin, Madison.