

 **Mystery**

A mystery can be written as a novel, short story, play, or film. Typically, it is fiction and involves solving a crime or other bewildering event.

 **Narrative**

A narrative is a story or an account of events and can be either fiction or nonfiction.





 **Legend**

Legends are sometimes accepted as historical, are often based upon a national or folk hero, and are handed down by tradition.

 **Biography**

A biography is a true account of a particular person's life written by someone other than the person the biography is about.

Students were asked to identify the genre of each of the following works:

-  Aladdin and Other Tales from the Arabian Nights: *Folk tale*
-  Stories of Beowulf Told to the Children: *Epic*
-  Canterbury Tales: *Narrative*
-  Men of Iron: *Historical fiction*

LITERATURE: RHETORIC DISCUSSION OUTLINE

- You may also want to read the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*'s introduction to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (p. 160-162), plus our summary of the story below.
- We recommend that Continuing teachers review students' reading in *Frameworks* on courtly love as needed.

Summary of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and Arthurian Legend

Part 1 (p. 162-172): At the Christmas feast at Camelot, a strange green-skinned man, who also dresses in green and rides a green horse, arrives at the court and asks that someone play a game with him to prove whether Arthur's knights are as good as their reputation holds them to be. The Green Knight proposes that one of Arthur's knights strike the Green Knight with his own ax, and then allow the Green Knight to return the blow a year and a day later. No one is interested in this "game." The Green Knight taunts the court for its silence, at which Arthur himself volunteers to do it. His nephew, Sir Gawain, intervenes. This knight (who is considered a flower of chivalry) courteously suggests that it is not fit for the King (Arthur) to do this, and offers himself instead. Gawain strikes off the Green Knight's head with a single blow of the ax; but the Knight calmly picks up his head, tells Gawain to remember that he must come to the Green Chapel for the return blow in a year and a day, and rides away, carrying his head.

Part 2 (p. 172-185): Christmas, Lent, spring, and summer pass. On the feast of All-Hallows, Gawain leaves to seek the Green Knight. His armor is rich and his shield is marked with the pentangle—a five-pointed star that symbolizes truth. The court is grieved at his departure, since they all expect him to be killed. Gawain travels throughout Logres while the weather gets colder, but cannot find anyone who has ever heard of the Green Chapel. Finally, on Christmas Eve, he comes upon a castle in the forest and is welcomed there as a guest. He is greeted by the lord of the castle, his lady, and an old beldame (an old woman). Festivities in this castle continue until St. John's Day (Dec. 27). The lord of the castle then urges Gawain to stay longer, telling him that he is sure to get to the Green Chapel by the appointed day (New Year's). Then the lord of the castle sets up a "game"—he will hunt the next day while Gawain stays home, and at the end of the day they will exchange whatever they have gotten during the day. Gawain agrees.

Part 3 (p. 185-202): Early the next morning the lord sets out on a hunt for deer, in which he is greatly successful. Gawain sleeps late and is woken by the lady of the castle, who comes to visit him. Gawain is courteous, but pretends not to understand her hints at impropriety. Finally she asks him outright for a kiss, and he lets her kiss him. The lord comes back and gives Gawain the deer, and Gawain gives him a kiss. The next day they make the same bargain. The lord goes hunting and kills a boar. The lady comes to visit Gawain again—she seems to be trying to seduce him. Again he is gracious, and allows her to kiss him, but nothing else. That evening the lord gives Gawain the boar he killed, and

Gawain gives him a kiss. On the third day of the bargain the lord pursues a fox, while Gawain gets a third visit from the lady of the castle. She is more open this time, clearly telling him that she wants his love. He refuses her, and the ring she offers him—but when she gives him her green girdle, telling him it will keep the Green Knight from killing him, he accepts it. That night the lord gives Gawain the dead fox, and Gawain gives him only a kiss, hiding the girdle.

Part 4 (p. 202-213): Gawain leaves the castle, and a servant guides him to the Green Chapel. The servant urges him to flee certain death, but Gawain goes to meet the Green Knight. The Knight appears with his head in place and twice swings the ax at Gawain's neck without touching him, mocking Gawain when he flinches. The third time, the Green Knight lets the ax scratch Gawain's neck, but does not harm him beyond that. Then the Green Knight reveals that he is the lord of the castle, and that he gave Gawain the scratch in return for his lie about the girdle (his wife had pretended to seduce Gawain by her husband's order). The Green Knight was testing Arthur's court with the help of Morgan le Faye (the old beldame). Gawain returns to Camelot and tells his story, and thereafter wears the green girdle to remind himself of his failure. All the other knights and ladies take up a green baldric as their emblem.

Summary for the selection from Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*

Agravain and Mordred (two evil knights) decide to talk to Arthur about the affair going on between Lancelot and Guinevere, but Gawain, Gareth, and Gaheris (they're brothers) won't have anything to do with it. Agravain and Mordred talk to Arthur, and it is agreed that Arthur will go hunting and stay away all night while the knights watch and see whether Lancelot goes to visit Guinevere.

Arthur goes, and Guinevere summons Lancelot to her chamber. Bors (Lancelot's nephew) advises him not to go, but he does anyway. Agravain, Mordred, and twelve other knights go to Guinevere's chamber. Because Lancelot doesn't have armor, he kills one of the twelve knights, takes his armor, and then kills the others, all except Mordred. Mordred runs away and Lancelot flees from Camelot.

Arthur condemns Guinevere to be burned at the stake and insists that Gaheris and Gareth attend the execution, though they would rather not. Lancelot rides to rescue Guinevere, killing many people in the process. He accidentally kills Gareth and Gaheris, who are in the crowd unarmed. Lancelot carries Guinevere away to Joyous Garde, his castle.

Arthur is more grieved about the disbanding of the Round Table and the deaths of his nephews than for Guinevere's unfaithfulness. When Gawain learns of his brothers' deaths, he and Arthur weep and swoon, pledging themselves to revenge. They make war on Lancelot.

(Our selection skips a section in which a truce is arranged, Guinevere returns to Arthur, and Lancelot goes to France. Arthur and Gawain follow him to France and continue the war until they learn that Mordred has seized control of England. Arthur goes back, and Gawain dies in the first battle against Mordred.)

Arthur has a nightmare in which he sees Gawain, his dead nephew, who warns him to make a month-long treaty with Mordred. Arthur follows the dream's warning, but when someone draws his sword to kill a snake while the peace terms are being arranged, everyone begins fighting. There is a terrible battle in which practically everyone is killed, and at the end Arthur and two knights (Lucan and Bedivere) are the only ones alive on their side, and Mordred is the only enemy left.

Arthur attacks and kills Mordred, but Arthur himself is very badly wounded. Lucan dies trying to help Arthur. Arthur sends Bedivere to throw his sword Excalibur into the water, but Arthur has to ask three times before Bedivere finally obeys. The sword when thrown is caught by a white-clad arm. Bedivere carries Arthur to the water. Arthur is received in a boat by fair ladies who take him away, leaving Bedivere to weep.

(Our selection skips another section in which Lancelot and Guinevere both turn to monastic lives.)

Lancelot has a vision that Guinevere is dying. He goes to her abbey, finds her dead, performs her funeral Mass, and then takes her to be buried beside Arthur. Lancelot mourns deeply, hardly eats anything, and dies soon after. He dies a saintly death and the Bishop has a vision of him being carried by angels to heaven. Constantine (Arthur's nephew) is crowned king of England, and the rest of Lancelot's relatives remain hermits.

This week is your student's first opportunity to use a story analysis outline on his own. The goal is for him to begin to understand how to apply it; do not expect mastery yet! He will also learn about the themes of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The Continuing topic covers the final Unit 1 discussion of courtly love.

The subject for recitation or reading aloud this week is "Gawain and the Pentangle," lines 619-639 (*Norton Anthology of English Literature* 175).