

Tapestry of Grace Year 2
Rhetoric Literature
Assignment due: Co-op #3 (September 15)

Materials needed:

**Inferno* by Dante (preferred translation – Mark Musa) (this is just the first of the three sections of *The Divine Comedy* by Dante – we will discuss the others in class)

*Life and Work of Dante Supplement (found at the end of Week 6 in my older version) (if you have a newer/digital version, look for the first week that Dante is listed as a literature assignment – the supplement should be at the end of that week's section).

- includes biographical info about Dante
- includes graphic diagrams of Inferno, Purgatorio, & Paradiso
- please bring this to class

**Poetics* (should be in your binder;)

**Words of Delight* pg. 107-109

1. Read Biographical information on Dante in Supplement
2. Read this World Book excerpt on the *Commedia*:

The poem begins with Dante lost in a dark forest, symbolizing what he felt was his own unworthy life and the evil he saw in society. On Good Friday, after a night of painful wandering, he meets the Roman poet Virgil, who promises to lead him out of the forest and guide him on a journey through the otherworld. They enter hell, a horrible pit shaped like a cone, located deep within the earth. It has nine circles where they find crowds of suffering individuals who are being punished for their sins by monsters, devils, and other creatures. The damned are well-known historical figures some from the past, but most from Dante's own time.

Dante and Virgil leave hell and reach the mountain of purgatory. From there they climb to bright terraces where the dead, who have gained salvation, seek forgiveness for misdeeds committed on earth. An atmosphere of peace and hope fills this place of purifications, in contrast with hell's suffering and despair.

On reaching the earthly paradise, on top of Mount Purgatory, Virgil entrusts Dante to a new guide, Beatrice. She guides Dante through the 10 spheres of heaven where Dante meets the souls of the blessed. They finally arrive at the throne of God, set among hosts of angels.

3. Read *Inferno* by Dante

- refer to Supplement diagrams as you read
- actual readings start on page 67
- the work is divided into Cantos (34)
- in this translation, there is a summary at the beginning of each canto and notes of explanation following (you may choose to read these notes as needed)
- the last 38 pages of the book is a glossary of names and places for reference
- GOOD NEWS: this work is not nearly as long as the book looks☺

4. Copy these literary terms into your vocabulary section of your notebook.

Terza rima: a metrical pattern consisting of three-line stanzas which follow the rhyme scheme aba bcb cdc. (Dante invented this pattern for his *Commedia*, in which each line of the original Italian also contains exactly eleven syllables for a total of thirty three per stanza.)

Symbol: Any detail in a work of literature that in addition to its literal meaning stands for something else.

Symbolism: A literary technique where the author represents things through symbols.

Allegory: A genre in which the primary characteristic is that many of its concrete elements (characters, settings, plot structures, etc.) have a secondary meaning beyond their literal meaning.

5. *Poetics* – review the section on Purgatory

(type answers to 6-8 on a separate paper)

6. Dante is both the author and the main character in this work. Review the characteristics of a hero in Words of Delight (pg 107-109). Is Dante a hero?

7. Review the characteristics of an epic. Is this work an epic? If yes, give the characteristics that make it so. If not, what are some possible genres?

8. Compare Dante and Virgil. Make a section for similarities and a section for differences.