

# Unit 10.2: Stories in the Oral Tradition—Drama and Epic Poetry

Unit Two offers teachers the opportunity to choose a path through Homer, Shakespeare, or both. Depending on the needs and abilities of their students, teachers may have students study *The Odyssey* or a Shakespearean play in depth and examine portions of the other, or organize the unit completely around a single major work. By focusing on specific aspects of these classic texts instead of attempting to deliver a comprehensive and detailed interpretation of the complete work, teachers can engage students of all levels in the powerful

storytelling impulse behind both epic poetry and poetic drama, giving them the opportunity to

## Essential Questions

- How are stories intended for live performance different from primarily print-based texts?
- How do authors and artists play with the work of others to explore new perspectives?
- Why do certain stories continue to demand our attention?
- Who determines the meaning of a work?

## Enduring Understandings

- Audiences read, analyze, and evaluate performances in much the same way that readers analyze printed texts.
- Directors carefully consider multiple aspects of production in order to convey an overall theme.
- Authors draw on and transform source material in order to introduce new perspectives and arguments.
- Figurative language deepens our understanding of reality by transforming observations into experiences that have meaning.

see how these stories remain vibrant and alive in contemporary culture. Students may explore and even create modern poems that allude to Homer's characters or that express the human emotions experienced by Shakespeare's characters, in order to understand what makes these classic tales continue to be relevant many generations after they were first performed before live audiences.

---

## Common Tasks

- 10.2.1 Analyze how an author draws on or transforms source material.\*
- 10.2.2 Write a critical review of a live performance or film.
- 10.2.3 Write a narrative that continues or resolves the story of a character in a text.
- 10.2.4 Analyze an author's use of language in a passage and present an oral interpretation of that passage.

*\* Teachers who wish to make more time for re-teaching a common task may choose to omit these starred tasks or blend them into others, but the relevant skills and concepts must be incorporated into instruction during the unit.*

---

## Texts

At minimum, students will read one core text during the unit. Teachers may lead them through more but should emphasize the key ideas of the unit by including several of the shorter pieces suggested below, including essays, poems, short stories, and non-print texts. These lists of supplementary texts are not exhaustive; teachers may consider other, similar works that are appropriate for the objectives of the unit. A literature circle approach for part of the unit gives students choices about independent reading opportunities that they may then use for the common tasks and other assessments.

### Core Texts

<i>Julius Caesar</i>	William Shakespeare
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	William Shakespeare
<i>The Odyssey</i>	Homer
<i>The Piano Lesson</i>	August Wilson
<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	William Shakespeare

### Alternative Dramatic Texts

<i>Enemy of the People</i>	Henrik Ibsen
<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	Oscar Wilde
<i>Saint Joan</i>	George Bernard Shaw
<i>Measure for Measure</i>	William Shakespeare
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	William Shakespeare

---

## Poems

Poems based on *The Odyssey*

"An Ancient Gesture"	Edna St. Vincent Millay
"Argos"	Linda Pastan
"At Ithaka"	HD
"Circe's Power"	Louise Gluck
"Helen"	HD
"Ithaka"	Constantine P. Cavafy
"Odysseus"	W.S. Merwin
"Odyssey: 20 Years Later"	Peter Ulisse
"Penelope"	Dorothy Parker
"Penelope's Song"	Louise Gluck
"The Return of Odysseus"	Edwin Muir
"Sea Grapes"	Derek Walcott
"Siren Song"	Margaret Atwood
"The Son"	Linda Pastan
"The Suitor"	Linda Pastan
"Ulysses"	Alfred, Lord Tennyson
"You Are Odysseus"	Linda Pastan
"The Kermess"	William Carlos Williams
"Musée des Beaux Arts"	W.H. Auden
"On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"	John Keats
"To My Dear and Loving Husband"	Anne Bradstreet
"The Pomegranate"	Eavan Boland
Sonnets	William Shakespeare

## Selections from Other Epic Poems

<i>The Aeneid</i>	Virgil
<i>Beowulf</i>	translated by Seamus Heaney
<i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i>	translated by Herbert Mason
<i>Inferno</i>	Dante Alighieri

### Reading Skill Focus

characterization, conventions of genres, figurative language

### Writing Skill Focus

critical argument, poetic techniques, structure of an argument

## Unit 10.2 Course Terms

Allusion

Audience

Blocking

Characterization

Cinematic devices

camera angle

cinematography

film shot

point of view

Critique

Dialogue

Dramatic devices

aside

monologue

soliloquy

Figurative language

hyperbole

metaphor

oxymoron

personification

pun

simile

understatement

Imagery

Irony

dramatic

situational

verbal

Motif

Oral communication

intonation

pause

pitch

rate

stress

volume

Poetic devices

alliteration

apostrophe

assonance

blank verse

onomatopoeia

rhyme

Six Traits of Writing

ideas and development

organization

voice

diction (word choice)

syntax (sentence fluency)

conventions

Syntax

Voice

Writing process

inquiry

pre-writing

drafting

revision/deep revision

editing/surface revision

presentation/publishing

## Language Standards

Teachers plan instruction to incorporate language instruction into writing; the goal is for students to think clearly about ways to improve their own writing. Exercises in sentence combining, expansion, and imitation offer ways students can compose more sophisticated and effective sentences. Separated and simulated instruction may be used to introduce concepts; include integrated instruction to ensure that students apply these and other skills in their writing.

### Common Core Language Standards for Grades 9-10

- L.9-10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- Use parallel structure.**
  - Use various types of phrases** (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) **and clauses** (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.
- L.9-10.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- Use a semicolon** (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.
  - Use a colon** to introduce a list or quotation.
  - Spell correctly.
- L.9-10.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
- Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual (e.g., *MLA Handbook*, *Turabian's Manual for Writers*) appropriate for the discipline and writing type.
-

Teachers should also consult the list of [Language Progressive Skills](#) to identify those concepts initially taught in earlier grades that are most likely to require review and re-teaching, based on students' needs. The most relevant of these may include the following:

- Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting fragments and run-ons (L.4.1f).
- Correctly use frequently confused words (L.4.1g).
  - The document [Commonly Confused Words](#), found in the Course Materials section of the Instruction Center course page for English 10, outlines the expected sequence for teaching and reviewing the most common of these terms. Teachers should address those words identified at grade 10 but also use student writing samples and portfolios to review words that may need further instruction and practice from earlier years.
  - The words listed for English 10 include the following:

<b>advice/advise</b>	<b>imply/infer</b>
<b>allusion/illusion</b>	<b>lay/lie</b>
<b>complement/compliment</b>	<b>that/which</b>
<b>conscience/conscious</b>	

- Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language (L.6.1e).
  - Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style (L.6.3a).
-

Vocabulary acquisition continues to be a necessary and vital part of the English curriculum. Vocabulary study not only enhances understanding of the writer’s craft—how word choice creates character, defines mood, and sets tone—but also is the key to a richer reading of all texts. Determining meaning and understanding word structure give students the tools to become independent, strategic readers of challenging texts. As students learn about the variety and richness of English, they should be encouraged to use language that is both precise and expressive.

L.9-10.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- a) Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- b) Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy*).
- c) Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.
- d) Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.9-10.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- a) Interpret figures of speech in context and analyze their role in the text.
- b) Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

L.9-10.6 Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

---