

#9186

GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

FILMS FOR THE HUMANITIES & SCIENCES

1996

Grade Levels: 9-13+

90 minutes



DESCRIPTION

A dramatization of the 14th-century poem, one of the best known of the Arthurian legends. The Green Knight issues a challenge at King Arthur's Christmas feast. Gawain accepts the conditions and travels to meet him a year later. Gawain struggles to keep both his word and moral code in his quest.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Language Arts

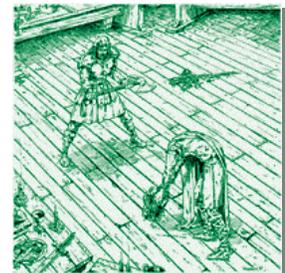
- Standard: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
 - Benchmark: Understands how themes are used across literary works and genres
- Standard: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media
 - Benchmark: Understands how literary forms can be represented in visual narratives

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To examine a historically significant Medieval English poem.
2. To study the universal human virtues of honesty, justice, bravery and morality.
3. To present this poem alongside the other significant epic medieval English poems.

VOCABULARY

1. chivalry
2. gallantry
3. heraldry/heraldic
4. knighthood
5. medieval



BEFORE SHOWING

1. Introduce the chivalric society of the Middle Ages.
 - a. Discuss the qualities of chivalry, courage, courtesy, loyalty, consideration to women and gallantry.
 - b. Display several quotes from the poem that examine some of these characteristics.
 - c. Discuss the several legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

2. Examine the idea of the "Quest" theme in Western literature.
 - a. Discuss the quest theme as it relates to other ancient works of Western literature; i.e., the Bible, *The Illiad*, and *The Odyssey*.
 - b. Discuss the quest theme as it relates to modern culture; i.e., films (*Star Wars*, for example), television or video games.
3. Provide a list of the main characters. Refer to each during the showing.
4. Explain the descriptive nature of epic poetry, the use of exposition, plot and character development to tell a complete story.
5. Contrast epic narrative poetry with rhyming poetry, sonnets and prose.



DURING SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Pause to point out the courtly dress of the time period. Ladies in long gowns and wimple headdresses and men in armor.
2. Pause as necessary to explain or clarify scenes in the drama as they relate to the poem.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Summarize the main elements of Sir Gawain's Quest and how they appeared in the dramatization.
2. Summarize the main elements of medieval chivalry found in the dramatization. How did the film depict loyalty, bravery and morality?
3. Analyze the three scenes between Sir Gawain and the Lady of the Castle.
 - a. Discuss Sir Gawain's refusal of the lady.
 - b. Discuss the use of the hunting theme as it relates to Sir Gawain and the Lady.
 - c. Discuss why Sir Gawain is given the green sash by the Lady.
4. Discuss why Sir Gawain is left alive by the Green Knight at the end.
5. Discuss what Sir Gawain has learned from his quest.

Applications and Activities

1. Choose one of the following to do as a group project:
 - a. Write a short modern epic poem using *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as a model. How would a modern character deal with loyalty, bravery, honesty and morality?
 - b. Write a short modern film script using the idea of the quest theme. How would a modern film character deal with loyalty, bravery, honesty and morality?
2. Create a list of the similarities and differences between the poem and the dramatization.
3. Research and report on other Arthurian legends.
4. Have the class read and perform scenes from the 15th- century morality play *Everyman*.

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- The Castle #3348
- Excalibur #6780
- Peasants' Revolt #2676



World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **LEGENDS: KING ARTHUR AND THE MATTER OF BRITAIN**

<http://www.legends.dm.net/kingarthur/>

Guide to Arthurian resources on the World Wide Web.

- **KNIGHTHOOD, CHIVALRY AND TOURNEMENTS RESOURCE LIBRARY**

<http://www.chronique.com>

Includes a wide variety of information such as knights in history, a code of chivalry, jousting tournaments, and swordsmanship.

