



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2024 Volume I: Myth, Legend, Fairy Tale

Myth, Allusion, and the Humanities

Guide for Curriculum Unit 24.01.05, published September 2024
by Alexander T. K. Elnabli

In this introductory unit to 9th grade ELA, students will learn how myths and spiritual stories ask and answer fundamental, humanistic questions about where we come from, who we are, and where we are going. While teachers may choose alternatives, this unit proposes Text Sets that pair a modern poem that contains an allusion to a classic myth or spiritual text with a relevant excerpt from that source. The text sets detailed below to fulfill the learning goals of the unit include selections from Old Testament Bible's Genesis along with Robert Frost's "Nothing Gold Can Stay," the siren excerpt from Homer's *Odyssey* along with Margaret Atwood's "Siren Song," and the Amar Chitra Katha graphic novel version of *The Gita* paired with T. S. Eliot's "The Dry Salvages. These foundational myths and spiritual stories are chosen because the concepts, themes, symbols, and images in them are highly alluded to in later and contemporary literature and philosophy and because they offer insights into humanistic questions that span across time and geography. Key Performance Task Prompt: *How does an author use allusion in order to communicate an answer to a fundamental human question? What is the value of studying ancient texts?*

(Developed for Freshman English, grade 9; recommended for AP Literature and Composition, grades 11-12; English 9 Honors, grade 9; and English 10, grade 10)

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2024 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University
For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>