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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1987 Volume II: Epic, Romance and the American Dream

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## **“The Odyssey” and “The Morte Darthur”: Reading and Making Observations for Writing and Discussion**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 87.02.02  
by Marie Pat Casey

This paper introduces the myths, legends, and themes from these two great classics of Western civilization to upperclassmen for the purpose of discussion and observation. These discussions and observations should lead to interpretations and the interpretations should or could become thesis statements for short papers, term papers or paragraphs elaborating the students thoughts.

Writing a paper on a literary theme is given as a project for senior year. For many students this is the first time they read any articles on literary criticism or try to make critical or interpretive comments on the literature. On a more basic level, it may be the first time they actually try to relate the characters from novels to themselves or real life students. Knowing content and discussing what has happened in a work is a stage that must precede thesis writing. Classroom units one and two involve close examination of content, mythic characters and themes. Unit three gives practice in finding evidence for the themes in the texts of the readings.

(Recommended for English III and IV classes, basic and college levels; and English II classes, college and honor levels)

### **Key Words**

*Homer Odyssey American Mythology Literature Travern Comparative The Odyssey & Morte Darthur Malory, Sir Thomas Morte D’arthur*

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