

# World Literature

## Group Reading and Writing Workshop

This is a **generic, reusable group reading and writing workshop framework** designed to work with **any of the major world literature texts** including epics, drama, novels, religious/philosophical texts, poetry. This format is **plug-and-play**: you can drop in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Odyssey*, *Things Fall Apart*, *The Divine Comedy*, *Don Quixote*, *1984*, etc., without rewriting the structure. It is aligned for **ELA, World History, Humanities, AP World, AP Lit, and IB-style courses**, and works well for **mixed reading levels** and **group-based classrooms**.

### Essential Questions

- What universal human questions does this text explore?
  - How does this work reflect the culture, beliefs, and historical context of its time?
  - How do literary elements shape meaning across different cultures and eras?
  - Why does this text continue to matter today?
- 

## Workshop Structure Overview

**Groups:** 4–5 students per group

**Texts:** Any world literature work (epic, novel, play, poem, sacred text)

**Time Frame:** 5–8 class sessions (flexible)

**Final Products:** Analytical writing, comparative reflection, creative or argumentative response

---

## Group Roles (Rotate Each Session)

- **Discussion Leader** – Guides conversation using focus questions
  - **Textual Evidence Specialist** – Locates and explains key passages
  - **Context Historian** – Researches cultural, historical, or philosophical background
  - **Literary Analyst** – Tracks themes, symbols, and literary devices
  - **Recorder/Presenter** – Synthesizes ideas and presents group findings
- 

## Session 1: Context & First Encounter

### Group Reading

Students read:

- Opening section, invocation, or first chapter/scene
- For long works, assign excerpts representing the beginning

### **Group Tasks**

- Identify setting, time period, and cultural clues
- Predict major conflicts or themes
- Note unfamiliar concepts or values

### **Writing Task**

#### **Quick Write (Individual):**

What questions does this opening raise about human nature, society, or morality?

---

## **Session 2: Plot, Structure, and Conflict**

### **Group Reading**

- Assigned middle section(s) or key episode(s)

### **Group Tasks**

- Map major conflicts (internal, external, societal, cosmic)
- Identify protagonist(s) and opposing forces
- Discuss how structure (episodic, linear, circular) shapes meaning

### **Writing Task**

#### **Group Paragraph:**

Explain how conflict drives the message of the text using at least two passages.

---

## **Session 3: Themes & Universal Questions**

### **Group Reading**

- Select 2–3 key passages that reflect central ideas

### **Group Tasks**

- Identify recurring themes (fate, justice, love, power, identity, duty, suffering, freedom)
- Discuss how the text answers or complicates universal questions
- Compare group findings across the room

## **Writing Task**

### **Analytical Response:**

Choose one theme and explain how the author develops it through character, events, or imagery.

---

## **Session 4: Culture, Beliefs, and Worldview**

### **Group Reading**

- Passages showing religion, philosophy, social norms, or moral codes

### **Group Tasks**

- Identify values emphasized in the text
- Discuss how the work reflects or challenges its society
- Make connections to historical or cultural context

## **Writing Task**

### **Short Essay or Chart:**

How does this text reflect the worldview of its culture and time period?

---

## **Session 5: Literary Craft & Style**

### **Focus Areas (Choose Based on Text)**

- Epic conventions
- Symbolism
- Imagery and metaphor
- Dialogue and rhetoric
- Narrative voice or point of view
- Dramatic structure or poetic form

### **Group Tasks**

- Identify specific literary techniques

- Discuss how craft strengthens meaning

## **Writing Task**

### **Close Reading Paragraph:**

Analyze one passage and explain how literary technique contributes to the text's message.

---

## **Session 6: Comparative Thinking (Optional but Strongly Recommended)**

### **Group Tasks**

Compare this text with:

- Another world literature work
- A modern text, film, or song
- A historical event or belief system

### **Writing Task**

#### **Comparative Response:**

How do two works from different cultures or periods explore a similar human question?

---

## **Session 7: Synthesis & Presentation**

### **Group Product Options**

Choose one:

- Mini-presentation
- One-pager or visual synthesis
- Podcast-style discussion
- Annotated thematic map
- Dramatic reenactment with commentary

### **Writing Task**

#### **Reflection:**

What does this text teach us about humanity across time and cultures?

---

## Final Writing Options (Choose One)

- Literary analysis essay
- Comparative essay
- Argumentative response to an essential question
- Creative reinterpretation with commentary
- Research-based cultural analysis

---

## Assessment Criteria (Generic)

- Use of textual evidence
- Depth of analysis
- Understanding of cultural context
- Clarity of writing
- Collaboration and participation

---

## Why This Workshop Works Well for World Literature

- Flexible for **ancient through modern texts**
- Supports **group accountability**
- Encourages **cross-cultural and historical thinking**
- Works with **full texts or excerpts**
- Easy to adapt for **AP-style writing or middle school scaffolding**