



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Understanding Sir Gawain and The Green Knight

Please obtain a copy of the book length medieval poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Marie Boroff edition) or use the following link to read and complete the activities below.

<http://introtoliterature.pbworks.com/w/file/105858819/Sir%20Gawain%20and%20the%20Green%20Knight%20-%20Marie%20Boroff.pdf>

Learning goals: 1. To understand the characteristics of the medieval romance genre and to identify these characteristics in *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight*. 2. To analyze the importance and effect of characters, symbols, and archetypes (universal themes) in the story. 3. To connect the themes of *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight* to other pieces of literature and to our own lives. 4. Use the ICE method of writing to support a claim about the story.

### Medieval Romance Genre

### Evidence of this in Sir Gawain and The Green Knight

Medieval romances are stories of **adventure** in which the chief parts are played by knights, famous kings, or distressed ladies, acting most often under the impulse of love, religious faith, and/or a desire for adventure. A medieval romance is usually characterized by the following...**please find examples from the poem of each and write it and label it in the evidence column or on a sheet of paper:**

1. An idealization of **Chivalry** (qualities expected of an ideal knight, especially courage, honor, courtesy, justice, and a readiness to help the weak.)
2. An idealization of the hero/knight and his noble deeds
3. A knight's love for a lady
4. Imaginary or vague settings
5. Mystery and suspense / supernatural elements
6. A concealed or disguised identity
7. Repetition of the mystic number *three* or multiples of three.

These stories of the adventures of knights were popular among the aristocrats (nobility) of the time. *Why, do you think, the nobles enjoyed these stories?* Please use evidence from your reading or reasearch to answer this question and unpack your answer completely. Use a separate piece of paper if you need to.

Elements of this poem continue to be used in contemporary film and literature. **Why do think so?**

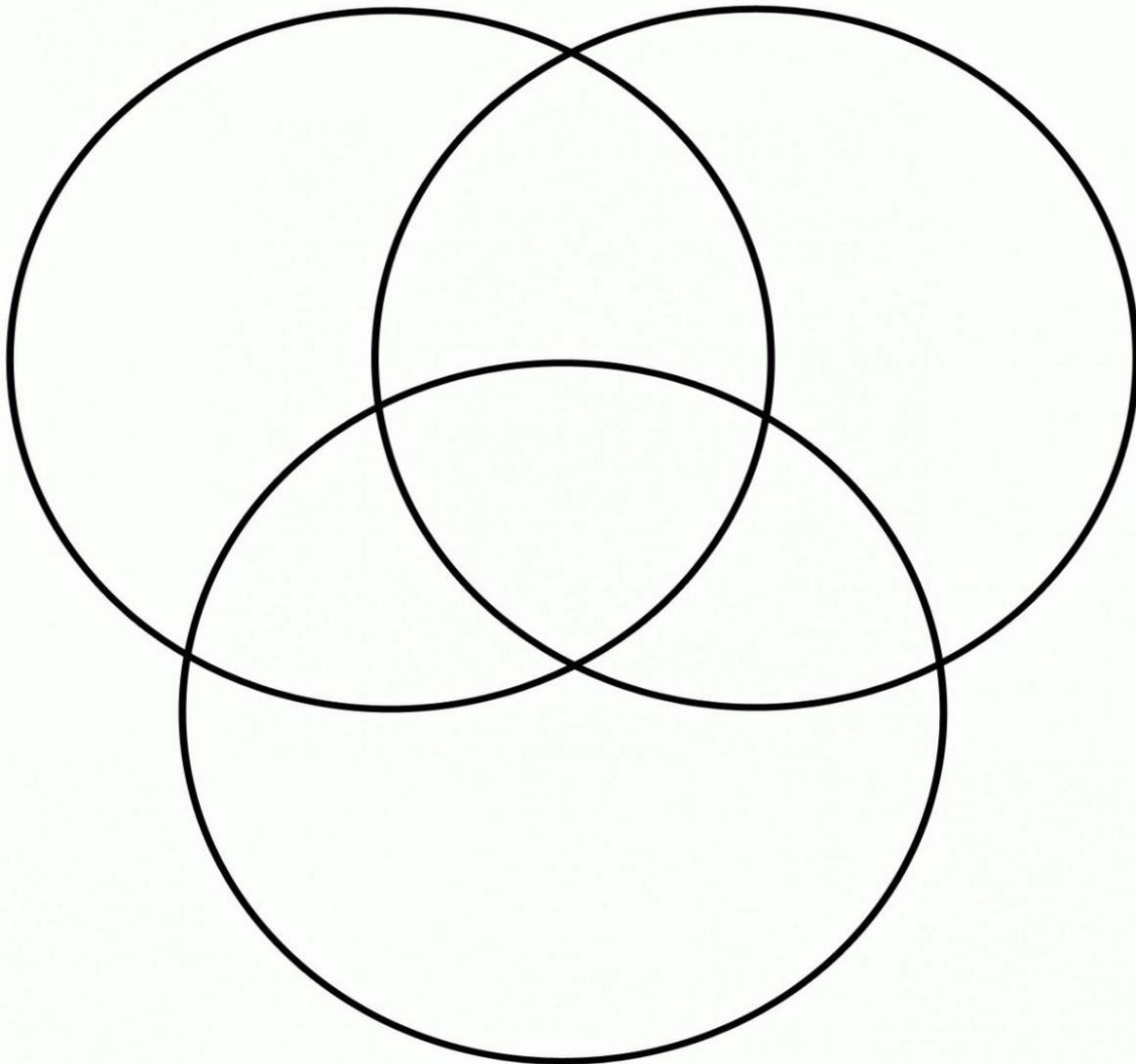
**What is universal about this poem? Think about which characteristics of this poem are common in most cultures?**

**Archetypes** are recurring characters, images, or situations that are found universally across cultures and that therefore speak to some universal truth of human experience. **On the right, make a list of the common behaviors or characteristics of these characters. What inferences can you make about this type of character? Do they mean to do harm to others? What is their role? Use a separate sheet of paper if you need to.**

<b>Archetype</b>	<b>Behaviors and Characteristics</b>
<p><b>The trickster</b></p> <p>(example: Robin Hood, Bugs Bunny, Bart Simpson, Odysseus, Captain Jack Sparrow) .</p>	<p>Someone who plays tricks and generally exhibits unconventional behaviors. <b>Who fulfills this role in Sir Gawain and The Green Knight? How do you know?</b></p>
<p><b>The temptress</b></p> <p>(example: sirens in stories like <i>The Odyssey</i>, <i>Percy Jackson</i>, etc., <i>Cat Woman</i>, many women in James Bond movies)</p>	<p>Beautiful and seductive, intelligent and manipulative. She tempts the hero generally to give into forgetting his duty or responsibility. <b>Who fulfills this role in Sir Gawain and The Green Knight? How do you know?</b></p>
<p><b>The hero</b></p> <p>(also Odysseus, Luke Skywalker, Indiana Jones, King Arthur, Shrek)</p>	<p>Fights for his people or ideals while on a quest, journey, or pilgrimage. <b>Who fulfills this role in Sir Gawain and The Green Knight? How do you know?</b></p>

# Mini Research-- Quest, Journey, or Pilgrimage?

Using the three-part Venn Diagram below or one you recreate if you need more space..., conduct a mini search on the internet for the similarities and differences among these three things: **quest**, **journey**, **pilgrimage**. **Label each of your sections clearly.** Then, decide which one best describes *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.



## Literary Elements in Sir Gawain

<b>Element</b>	<b>Significance &amp; Line number in the text</b>
Alliteration	
Things that happen in threes	
Use of color	
Biblical Allusions	
Persuasive speech	
<p data-bbox="321 1266 553 1304">Moral courage:</p> <p data-bbox="94 1352 732 1430"><b>Moral courage</b> is the courage to take action for moral reasons despite the risk of negative consequences.</p> <p data-bbox="94 1444 781 1562"><b>Courage</b> is required to take action when one has doubts or fears about the consequences. Moral courage therefore involves deliberation or careful thought.</p>	
Temptation	

## Main Characters in Sir Gawain and The Green Knight

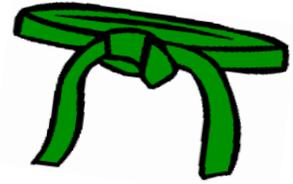
1. The host of the castle where our hero stays for 3 days
2. The leader of the hall that is said to be the home of the bravest and most worthy knights
3. Tries to be a model knight
4. The supernatural character who demands a dangerous New Year's game
5. The place where the beheading games begin
6. The meeting place for the end of the beheading game
7. The romantic hero

Character or place	List number(s) from above that describe
<b>King Arthur</b>	
<b>The Green Chapel</b>	
<b>King Arthur's Court</b>	
<b>The Green Knight</b>	
<b>Sir Gawain</b>	

## For each of the Green Knight's 3 strokes, explain:

	Physical effects on Sir Gawain	Effect on Sir Gawain's emotions (Explain how he reacts)	Symbolism (Explain how each stroke is justified later by the green knight)
1			
2			
3			

# Explaining the Significance of Sir Gawain's Girdle (Sash)



What does the girdle/sash look like?	
Who does it come from?	
Explain why Sir Gawain accepts the girdle? What does the girdle seem to symbolize at this point?	
What does Sir Gawain do with the girdle at the end of the story? What does it symbolize now?	

## ICE practice:

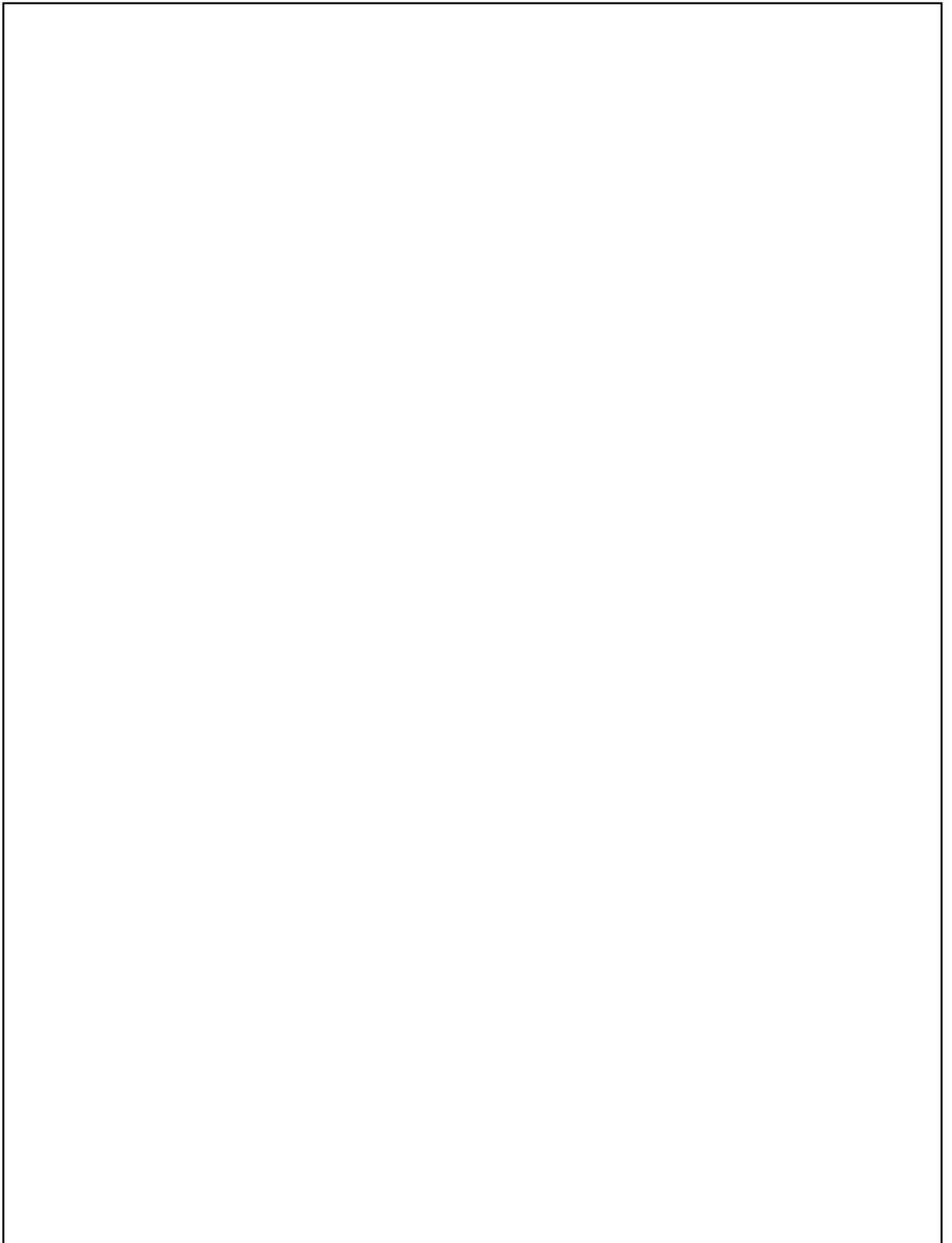
Body paragraphs in academic essays contain evidence that supports arguable claims that appear in topic sentences, and responsible writers make sure to **introduce, cite, and explain quotes and paraphrases used as evidence**. Answer the following question below using the ICE method.

**Introduce** – Introduce textual evidence by providing necessary context for the reader to understand your claim. This should be at least one-two sentences.

**Cite** – Evidence (quotes) from the text that supports what you are claiming.

**Explain** – your explanation/interpretation/connection that links the evidence to your claim. This should be at least two or three sentences where you are unpacking your argument.

**Question: Sir Gawain is seen as a model of chivalry. How does Sir Gawain exhibit the characteristics of chivalry? Choose two chivalric traits he exhibits and provide support for your choices with textual evidence in two well-developed paragraphs.** (Color-code your ICE like I did. Make sure you have more yellow than any other color. It is best to use only a small section of text (the blue) to prove your point.) Either use the space below or a separate sheet of paper.

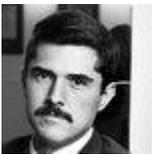


# Philosophical Chairs

Should chivalry die, be brought back, or evolve into a more inclusive ethos/idea that is appropriate for 2019?

## Perspective 1

### Chivalry Is a Nod to Differences Between the Sexes



*Brett McKay is the founder and editor in chief of [The Art of Manliness](#), a men's lifestyle blog. He runs the site along with his wife, Kate McKay.*

JULY 31, 2013,

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Many folks chafe at the idea of chivalry because it implies that women are weaker and more vulnerable than men and thus need special protection. It's sexism with a courteous hat tip, or so the argument goes.

Yet a few months ago Congress passed and the president signed (to great fanfare) an extension of the Violence Against Women Act, which allots federal funds to help fight violent crimes against women.

If we can have legislation that implies that men are (generally) physically stronger and women are (generally) more vulnerable and thus require federally mandated protection, is it really wrong, and could it not actually be beneficial, to have some social rituals that serve as a symbol and reminder of these differences between the sexes?

Small chivalrous acts like opening a door for a woman are symbolic ways for a man to signal that he recognizes that while men are physically stronger on a whole, he himself intends no harm. Chivalry is not about either the inferiority or the lofty superiority of women. Instead, it can foster mutual respect and remind us of our underlying biological differences and the complementary nature of the sexes. Some women will bear children, and some men will step up to be protectors should danger arise. One need not oppose the strides toward equality we've taken to honestly acknowledge and appreciate this fact.

## Perspective 2

### Chivalry Contributes to Chauvinism



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JULY

30, 2013

Picture a more romantic time, when women were prizes to be won, admired, and protected. In that not-so-distant past, one of every gentleman's supreme duties was to ensure permanent contentment for his lady and temporary comfort for damsels encountered along the way. Doors were opened, chairs pulled out, seats vacated and meals purchased ... all by him, of course. Ah, those halcyon days.

The problem with this idyllic picture is its tight focus. Expand the view enough to take in the whole scene, and you don't have to be Jane Austen's biggest fan to recognize chivalry's unsavory underbelly. A woman was too good to open doors and to pull out chairs, but incessant cleaning, cooking and tending to children fit her to the T, and were all well within the limits of her relatively meager mental gifts and physicality.

I guarantee you this: Most of the gallant men who stood up so eagerly for female passengers on crowded trains 100 years ago wouldn't have stood for the concept of a female boss in their office, let alone the Oval Office. Women, like children, were to be seen and not heard. Apparently, this was more easily accomplished if they never learned how to operate door handles or to use currency [money].

Today, chivalry is still no beacon of respect for women. Instead, it's a backward social contract that manages to be lopsided at both ends. At best, men walk away from chivalric transactions feeling slightly resentful and, at worst, deeply entitled. In exchange for minor niceties and material goods that ultimately amount to little more than emotional trinkets, women often unknowingly part with

In a gender-neutral modern world, chivalric acts are non-onerous rituals that faintly echo our relationship to each other when all the layers of civilization are stripped away; they serve to remind us that we need and should respect, appreciate and quite frankly enjoy each other.

fragments of their self-determination. In other words, chivalry actually contributes to chauvinism. It's just more proof that there's no such thing as a free lunch, ladies. Or dinner, for that matter.

**Which idea do you tend to agree with? Why? Handwrite your answer, it should be about 250 words and contain at least three body paragraphs, an introduction, and a conclusion. Please use the ICE method from your earlier lesson to create the essay. You may write your essay here or handwrite it on a separate sheet of paper.**

