

World Literature and Composition (PC)
Salem High School
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Travelling Around the World through Literature

I look upon travel as a means of spiritual testing. What gives value to travel is fear. It is the fact that, at a certain moment, we are so far from our country . . . we are seized by an instinctive desire to go back to the protection of old habits. This is the most obvious benefit of travel. At that moment, we are feverish, but also porous, so that the slightest touch makes us quiver to the depth of our being. By exercising our most intimate senses, we understand a culture. It is through travel that we learn about ourselves. (*Albert Camus*)

Border Crossing and Cultural Clashes

Essential Questions:

- What forces influence individuals to cross borders and cultures?
- How does what we know about the world shape the way we view ourselves?
- What are the benefits and detriments of crossing borders?
- How does the experience of crossing borders and experiencing diverse cultures affect an individual's identity?

Literary Texts:

- *Into Thin Air*
- *Things Fall Apart*
- *Metamorphosis*
- *The Joy Luck Club*
- *Sold AND A Long Way Gone* (literature circle)

The Human Condition and the Search for Meaning

Essential Questions:

- In the face of adversity, what causes some individuals to prevail while others fail?
- What is the meaning of life, and how does an individual's perception of that meaning affect beliefs regarding death?
- Are we governed/guided by fate, free will, a greater power, or do we fall somewhere on the spectrum between?
- How do we make decisions for ourselves about our identities in cultures where we are bombarded with other people trying to define us?

Literary Texts:

- origin myths
- excerpts from *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Iliad*, *Sundiata: an Epic of Old Mali*
- excerpts from *The Analects*, *The Koran*, *Bhagavad-Gita*, Taoist writings
- *Oedipus Rex*
- *The Stranger*
- *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*
- *Siddharta*
- NPR's *This I Believe*

Darkness Within: Man's Inhumanity to Man and Self

Essential Questions:

- Is humankind inherently good or evil?
- What is the relationship between freedom and responsibility?
- Do individuals have a moral obligation not to allow their own freedom to negatively impact other human beings?
- How do individuals control their dark side and reconcile their dual natures?

Literary Texts:

- *Night*
- *Lord of the Flies*
- *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*
- *Les Miserables*
- *The Kite Runner*
- *The Tempest*

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Love and Relationships

Essential Questions:

- What are the qualities of a successful relationship?
- If any, what are the boundaries of love and sacrifice, and where does one draw the line between them?
- What are the factors that move individuals to great sacrifice and change, and what are the consequences?
- What characteristics contribute to a strong marriage?
- How is conflict an inevitable part of relationships?
- How are people transformed through their relationships with others?

Literary Texts:

- *Cyrano de Bergerac*
- *A Doll's House*
- *Medea*
- *Dracula*
- *A Fine Balance*