

## **Inferno**

by Dante Alighieri (Italian)

**Time Period:** 13<sup>th</sup> century, Middle Ages

**Reading Level:** More challenging (epic poetry, somewhat lengthy)

**Time Frame for Completion:** 4-6 weeks, reading 2-3 cantos per day

### **Objectives**

#### Literary:

1. Understand epic poetry and its role in literary history
2. Evaluate comments about the work
3. Review or compare two works by the same author
4. Develop interview and ghost writing skills

#### Historical:

1. Research and understanding 13<sup>th</sup> century Florentine Italy
2. Orally narrate on specific historic figures and topics
3. Research and write about monks of that time period and geographic location

**Writing Warm-up (optional):** Recall a poem that you have read and enjoyed. What did you enjoy about it? How do you normally think of poetry concerning subject, length, etc.?

**Literature Assignments:** (PR –prior to reading; AR—as student reads, FR—following reading)

**PR, AR** 1. Epic poetry, such as this book, was very popular through the Ancients and Middle Ages. Why do you think people enjoyed it so much more then? Do you think it went out of style once the printing press came along? Why do you think that happened? Research and examine the role of epic poetry in history. Provide at least two more examples of epic poetry from early history. Write 2-3 paragraphs about your epic poetry research.

**FR** 2. This book was said to be written as “an exhortation to godliness”. What do you think the person meant by that statement? What evidence in the book itself would support that statement? Write 3-4 paragraphs, including examples and support from the book for this comment.

**PR, AR, or FR** 3. Dante wrote two other books in this trilogy. Research the titles and content. Write a brief overview, 2 paragraphs or so, of the content of each.

**AR, FR** (Honors) Read one of the two other books in this trilogy. How does it compare to the Inferno? You may do one of two assignments: a) write a book review of each or b) write a comparison/contrast essay of the two books.

**History Assignments:**

**PR, AR, or FR 1.** Imagine having been a writer in the Middle Ages. Research the life and culture during the 13<sup>th</sup> century Florentine period in Italy. Write a 2-3 page report describing what you discover.

**PR, AR, or FR 2.** Research and give oral narrations of the following topics: the Florentine government during Dante's life, Guelph party (Blacks and Whites) and Pope Boniface III.

**PR, AR or FR (Honors)** Research the Francisco and Dominican monks from the Middle Ages. What did young men, like Dante, study under the tutelage of these monks? Write a 4-5 paragraphs describing the monks and their lifestyle. Cite at least two different sources for your research.

**PR, AR or FR (Honors)** Dante had two mentors: Brunetto Latini and Guido Cavalcanti. Research these men and see what you discover. Write 2-3 paragraphs about each. Can you find information that would help you understand why Dante admired them?

**Evaluation Tips:**

Literature Assignments

*Assignment 1* – Be sure that the student responds to the questions presented, does thorough research and provides the examples requested. Basic writing skills should also be evaluated as discussed in Teaching Tips.

*Assignment 2* – It is essential that the student understand the statement before proceeding, so you may want to discuss what it means to insure comprehension. Any logical answer to the opinion question should suffice, but the support is the essential aspect of this assignment. A grade should only be given once sufficient support is provided.

*Assignment 3* – This assignment is pretty basic and the desire is only to expose the student to the rest of the trilogy and hopefully, promote interest in this literature. This assignment could easily be completed by a quick online trip to Amazon.com or a library. Do not grade this assignment heavily or allow it to be the primary assignment for this book study.

*Literature Honors Assignments:* Keep in mind that these assignments are not just additional or busywork activities, meaning that the student must demonstrate additional effort and proficiency. The levels of research, documentation and presentation signify the difference between a good student and an honors student. Specific evaluation tips are as follows:

- *Another Dante book* – this assignment is challenging because it requires reading more of Dante’s writing! However, it will truly benefit the advanced student to compare two of the works. For additional credit, have your student read the complete trilogy and write a summary of each comparing them. The writing assignments should be examined for evidence of comprehension and solid comparisons of the two or more books. Due to the depth of this assignment, the student’s grade should weigh more heavily overall than lighter assignments.

### History Assignments

*Assignment 1* – This is a straight historical report and should be graded as such. Make sure that your student includes details and facts that really present a picture of the time period. Follow the percentage scale for a written report as outlined in Teaching Tips.

*Assignment 2* – The amount of research the student completes will determine the thoroughness and grade of this assignment. As well, utilize the percentage scale for oral reports from Teaching Tips.

*History Honors Assignment* – Keep in mind that these assignments are not just additional or busywork activities, meaning that the student must demonstrate additional effort and proficiency. The levels of research, documentation and presentation signify the difference between a good student and an honors student. Specific evaluation tips are as follows:

- *Monks* – In order to write the amount requested, the student will need to do some in depth research. Make sure that the student used at least two sources, as required. Use the percentage scale for a written report as outlined in Teaching Tips.
- *Mentors* – Grade this assignment using the percentage scale for a written report as outlined in Teaching Tips. The research is the most valued part of this assignment, particularly the connection with Dante himself. Do not allow the student to just give an overview of each man, but remember that he is required to make a connection between the research subject and Dante, which may require more intensive research.

Teacher’s Notes: