

Honors English 9-10 (World Literature II)

Dr. G.'s Summer Assignment

I believe Honors-level English classes are earned privileges. Hence, I expect interested students to complete – thoughtfully and thoroughly – an assignment that involves the reading and analysis of a text. Failure to complete this assignment will seriously compromise your ability to take Honors English 9-10.

You must submit this assignment to me via email (garonsc@gwcommunityschool.com) no later than end of day **August 1**. I expect it will take you approximately 6-8 hours to complete. You should include both portions of the assignment in a single document. Please read the following instructions very carefully.

Assignment Instructions

1. Carefully read the attached 20-page excerpt from the *Song of Roland*. You may need to read some sections more than once to understand what is happening in the text. As you read, be sure to look at the side notes on the historical, cultural, and literary context as well as all the footnotes. As with any reading, I expect you to look up unfamiliar words.
2. After reading the first 10 pages (from 569 – 579), answer the five Interpreting questions on page 579 in complete sentences. You should review the questions before you begin reading.
3. After you have completed reading the entire excerpt, write a persuasive essay of 500 - 600 words in length on the topic below. When writing a persuasive essay, you should first consider various positions/judgments on the topic, decide which one makes the most sense to you, and persuade your readers that your conclusion is valid by providing reasons for your opinion. This means you must clearly state your position (take a stand and stick by it) and provide support from the text (details, examples) for your position.

Essay Topic and Instructions

Note: You should not use any outside sources to complete this essay; you should only use the *Song of Roland* excerpt. In one of the most frequently discussed passages from the *Song of Roland*, the poet comments: “Roland is fierce, and Oliver is wise...” (Canto 87, line 43). (The attached version describes Roland as “good” instead of fierce, but for the purpose of this essay, substitute “fierce” for “good.”) Some readers think this suggests that Roland’s refusal to call for help when Oliver first sees the Saracens was “fierce” rather than “wise,” while others defend his decision.

Review the text to make your own evaluation of Roland’s actions in the passage of the poem in terms of their fierceness or wisdom, then write a 500-600 word essay in which you justify your evaluation. In writing your essay:

- (1) Include an introductory paragraph with a clear thesis statement that sets out your opinion about Roland’s fierceness or wisdom
- (2) Assume your reader knows nothing about the *Song of Roland*, so you may need to provide a high-level summary of the events described in the poem
- (3) Consider Oliver’s criticism of Roland (selective use of quotes suggested)
- (4) Consider what Roland says in his own defense (selective use of quotes suggested)

For assistance with formatting quotations: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/03/>