



OUR GOALS

Whether you are using *Tapestry's* Integrated, Spools, or Stitches products, our Dialectic Literature studies are designed for students—approximately aged 11-14 (6th through 9th grades)—who have moved beyond elementary level work but are not yet ready to study adult world classics. Using a booklist made up of classics and historical fiction to illustrate each historical era, our Literature Studies provide a strong foundation in literary analysis skills and worldview studies, as well as composition topics for writing on literary topics.

This document explains the goals and program components of *Tapestry's* Literature programs for Dialectic students. Towards the end, we will also share tips for grading and customization. Let's begin with goals:

1. Read well-written, interesting, and thought-provoking books that demonstrate historical worldviews.
2. Learn to understand, evaluate, and enjoy literature, in terms of worldviews and artistry, through literary analysis.
3. Fulfill requirements for Literature as a school subject at the 6th, 7th, 8th, or 9th grade levels.
4. OPTIONAL: Write creative, analytical, and mimetic (imitative) papers based on literature.

PRACTICAL APPROACH

GOAL 1: THE BOOKS

Our booklist is chosen partly to display historical worldviews in ways that can be understood and biblically evaluated by young adult students. We want to prepare them for possible later studies in adult world classics, and for the ongoing exploration of worldviews in their adult lives beyond college.

Though we do use simplified versions of great works such as *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, and *The Aeneid*, our Dialectic Literature studies do not constitute a Great Books program.¹ These studies are designed to fit the requirements of a solid middle school and early high school program by the standards of today, and we intend that they should begin the work of helping students understand, evaluate, and build worldviews.

We try to use the best available young adult historical fiction for each time period, and we also include simplified versions of great world literature where possible. In this way, your student may encounter half a dozen worldviews and learn about some of the major cultural elements that have affected literature throughout history.

Sadly but unsurprisingly, it is hard to find literature that expresses different worldviews and historical literary eras without exposing the student to some degree of objectionable material. We have four general categories for objectionable material: 1) sexual, 2) profane or rude, 3) violent, and 4) disgusting or scatological.

In our Beginning Level track for younger students (typically aged 11-12, 6th-7th grade), we try to assign readings in such a way as to avoid objectionable sections as much as possible. Older, Continuing Level students (typically aged 13-14, 8th-9th grade) are exposed to more because they are better able to evaluate it. Of course, even for older students, human sin is still painful and confusing.

As a second line of defense, we provide detailed warnings to you, the teacher, so that you can decide what to let your student read. For Stitches products, these warnings can be found on the title page of each study so that you will know (before purchasing!) what objectionable materials may be found in the book. The same warnings are available in Dialectic Literature products for Integrated *Tapestry* and *Tapestry* Spools, but are located in the Glance rather than on a title page. These warnings also make it easier to tailor books to your student's maturity level (by perhaps blacking out some words or sections).

If you wonder why we choose to include studies on secular as well as Christian literature, a detailed explanation of our views can be found in your student's literary analysis handbook: the *Literary Toolbox*. It is in a section called "Believers and Unbiblical Literature." You may wish to consider this in advance, especially since it is assigned to your student.

¹ To reach that goal, we recommend instead that you consider our Rhetoric Literature program, also available in *Tapestry of Grace* Integrated, Spools, or Stitches formats, which applies systematic literary analysis to the Great Books themselves. This course is normally recommended for students aged 15-18 (10th to 12th grade), but some students are ready to begin it earlier.



TEACHING DIALECTIC LITERATURE

GOAL 2: LITERARY ANALYSIS

It is easy for many of us to see why training in worldviews might benefit our students, but what about literary analysis? What is that, and why is it ranked next to worldviews training as a goal of this program?

We practice something called “systematic literary analysis,” which is simply a technical term for the process of teaching students about literary categories and terms (plot, settings, characters, themes, etc.), and giving them the tools that they need to unpack literature for themselves. Systematic literary analysis training used to be a standard part of classical education, and we have found it extremely effective in these ways:

- Gives students the tools that they need to understand how worldview beliefs are being presented in stories.
- Positions students to truly understand and enjoy literature as art because it teaches literary artistic techniques.
- Helps students to enjoy literature more. We have found that the most common complaint from students is, “I don’t understand literature.” However, so many of them are delighted (once their hard work begins to pay off) to be equipped with tools that allow them to unpack literature. We especially love to see students understanding the Bible better!
- Prepares students well for the literary analysis section on SAT, AP, and CLEP tests. We have had many success stories from students who used our systematic literary analysis approach in their high school literature studies and went on to do extremely well on these tests and in college.

GOAL 3: FULFILL GRADE-APPROPRIATE REQUIREMENTS

These Literature studies are aimed at young adults in the “dialectic” learning level (roughly grades 7-9). First, for the purposes of “placing” your student, these are some of the characteristics that separate a “dialectic” learning level from the “grammar” level (roughly grades K-6) below it and the “rhetoric” level (roughly grades 10-12) above it:

- Grammar Level Students
 - Less developed brain, less articulate communicator, and lower reading level.
 - Still learning the “who, what, and where” of things, as well as basic categories.
 - If you can imagine a child building with blocks, these students are still learning the shapes and colors of their blocks.
- Dialectic Level Students
 - More likely to probe and test, and to need guidance in understanding more complex ideas. They have a higher (but not fully adult) reading level.
 - These students are now interested in making comparisons, connections, finer distinctions, and more nuanced definitions, as well as building or taking apart arguments. They are beginning to do analysis work.
 - These students have stored up a lot of “who, what, and where” knowledge. They have also developed the ability to get more of this kind of knowledge quickly. Typically, they are becoming more interested in “when” and “how,” and are beginning to wonder about “why.”
 - This is like the child who has graduated from blocks to legos and is trying to figure out how to build a spaceship. He wants more. He may be curious, bold, fearful, and argumentative all at once.
- Rhetoric Level
 - Students at this learning level generally have an adult reading level (especially if they were exposed to well-written books at younger ages). They are often able to follow complicated directions and experiment with useful or beautiful variations of their own.
 - These students not only know how to find good definitions and make comparisons, connections, or fine distinctions, but can also build or take apart logical arguments and conduct analyses. They are learning how to synthesize solutions to problems and practice the finer points of elegant written communication.
 - These students can juggle “who, what, where, when, and how” with comparative ease, and are now fully engaged in “why.”
 - This is like a student who has graduated from building a spaceship to building whole cities out of legos.



Grade-Appropriate Requirements for Students: Beginning and Continuing Level Tracks

Your student may fall squarely into the description of the Dialectic student that you just read. However, these middle school years are often tricky: your student might lean more towards the Grammar stage or towards the Rhetoric stage. For that reason, we provide two distinct tracks—Beginning Level and Continuing Level—in our Dialectic Literature studies. There are several factors that affect your student’s placement in one of these tracks: age, ability, time, and interest. Here are some common combinations of factors:

- ❑ **Beginning Level Track**
 - ❑ This track requires the student to read assignments, understand literary analysis tools, and fill out weekly worksheets that are designed to help him apply literary analysis concepts to those books. In this track, there is no weekly class discussion. Depending on the student’s aptitude and interest, and how much work is assigned (some weeks are lighter than others) we think that this track will take the student **about 1-3 hours per week**.
 - ❑ This track may be a good choice for students who need time to focus mostly on their writing, or for younger students who are not ready to participate in a thoughtful discussion, or simply for students who are new to our program and need time to adjust.
 - ❑ This track should be a good fit for most students in 7th (or even 6th) grade with average ability who have interest and time. It may also work for some 8th grade students who have a little less ability or less interest and time to devote exclusively to Literature, but it is not enough for 9th grade students who are trying to earn a high school English credit.
- ❑ **Continuing Level Track**
 - ❑ In addition to the above, this track often requires more difficult or extra reading. It always requires the student to perform additional written exercises (and sometimes more complicated versions of the Worksheet exercises). Continuing Level students must also consider thinking questions in preparation for a class discussion with their teachers. Depending again on aptitude, interest, and the weightiness of a given week’s assignments, we estimate that this class will take the student **about 3-5 hours per week**.
 - ❑ This track may be a good choice for students whose writing skills are already improving rapidly, for older students who are interested in discussing their readings, or simply for more experience students who are ready to be challenged by a new level of the Dialectic Literature program.
 - ❑ This track may work for some 7th grade students with advanced ability who have interest and time, and it should be a good fit for 8th grade students with average ability who have interest and time. The Continuing Level is appropriate for 9th grade students of average or a little less than average ability who wish to earn an English credit. Especially if completed with writing exercises, it is also a good transition program for students who plan to tackle a Great Books program (such as *Tapestry’s* Rhetoric Literature) in 10th grade.¹
 - ❑ The student is assigned more to read in some books, or sometimes he is assigned a more challenging book.
 - ❑ The student is required to complete worksheets, but occasionally the Beginning Level worksheets are replaced by a more advanced version.

Regardless of which track you choose for your student, remember that one of the benefits of this program is the ability to “slide” up and down at will! If you begin with the simpler track and move to the more complex one, you can adjust back to the simpler one as needed. Or, if your student finds mid-year that he is bored and ready for more, you can move him up easily simply by instructing him to begin to do the extra readings (where applicable) and the “preparation for discussion” section, as well as some of the items marked OPTIONAL or Continuing Level.

¹ These Dialectic Literature studies are not ideal for grades 10-12 if you plan to expose your student to Great Books, though with a strong writing program our Dialectic Literature will fulfill the requirements for a high school English credit in all four years.



TEACHING DIALECTIC LITERATURE

Requirements for Teacher Preparation

As with all programs, the amount of time required each week for teacher preparation depends on how comfortable you are with the subject material, how you apply the program, and how much help your student needs. For example, if you are brand new to the concepts of worldviews studies and literature analysis, you will need extra time to come up to speed! There is also the question of whether you intend to read the assigned stories yourself. (We do provide full summaries of the books that students are reading, so it is not necessary—though it is always ideal—for you to read the books themselves in order to teach.) A minimum summer preparation for you, if you have never taught this program before, would look like this:

- Read *Teaching Dialectic Literature* in full.
- If you are not already familiar with systematic literary analysis, listen to the audio-visual presentation, *Introduction to Systematic Literary Analysis*, available for free on our website.
- If you are using our Dialectic Literature program as part of *Tapestry's* Integrated or Spools programs, be sure to consult any sections of Unit Introductions that address Dialectic Literature for the units you will teach.
- Browse the student's *Literary Toolbox* readings for at least the first few book studies or unit (you can find these tabulated in Unit Introduction charts if you are using *Tapestry's* Integrated or Spools programs, or in the Student Manual—and summarized on the title page—for *Tapestry's* Stitches Dialectic Literature Studies).
- Decide which books you will purchase and which you will leave out. If you wonder whether a book's content is suitable for your child, we recommend you check the "Warnings" section (found in the Glance Ahead at the end of each week's Teacher's Notes in *Tapestry's* Integrated or Spools, or at the bottom of the title page for each of *Tapestry's* Dialectic Literature Stitches Studies page or at the beginning of the Teacher Materials. We also recommend consulting reviews from other *Tapestry* users.
- If you have extra time after the Literature books arrive, browse them and the Teacher's Notes for the first book study (Stitches) or for the first unit (Integrated or Spools).

What follows are our estimates for teacher preparation time during the week,¹ assuming that you have already read or do not intend to read the assigned stories:

- Beginning Level:** This track requires the teacher to assign work, help students understand literary analysis tools, and check work. **This might take 30-90 minutes of your time per week for one to three students**, depending on your knowledge of literary tools. For instance, a teacher proceeding through our program for a second time with a student in his second year could complete the entire experience (class time included) in 30-45 minutes per week. A teacher who is new to the program, with a student new to the program, might need to factor in 30 minutes of teacher prep time followed by two class sessions of 30 minutes each with the student(s).
 - For One to Three Students in the First Year**
 - For many people who are new to the program, it often works best to hold at least a **30-minute** session towards the beginning of the week to explain literary concepts from the *Literary Toolbox* and take student questions about application. You may also wish to model the process of finding answers and explain what a good answer would look like from the Teacher's Notes.
 - We recommend that you plan to review the student's worksheet in a separate session later in the week, and we suggest that you budget **15-30 minutes** for that session as well.
 - In your student's second semester, these introductory sessions can typically be shortened and eventually removed altogether. They should not be necessary at all in your student's second year and beyond, though students will still need to brush up on literary terminology and analysis at the beginning of each year.
 - For Three or More Students**
 - At three students or more in the class, we recommend lengthening one of your weekly sessions (or both) to **45-60 minutes**. The question of which session to lengthen depends on your students: some need more help with explanation while others need more time for review.

¹ If you are using *Tapestry's* Dialectic Literature Integrated or Spools products, and plan to adopt our various writing assignments as your student's combined Literature and Writing class for this year, you should budget an additional 60 minutes per week (at either worksheet or worksheet plus discussion levels) to do that work with him.



- ❑ For All Students: If you find yourself regularly adding more and more discussion of the book, it may be time to consider moving your student up to the Continuing Level and giving him pre-discussion questions to answer, but you should never hesitate to incorporate any discussion questions that look interesting to you even at the Beginning Level, provided they seem to benefit your student.
- ❑ Continuing Level: This track involves about the same amount of teacher preparation time (still assuming that you are not reading the Literature books yourself), or perhaps even a little less because Continuing Level students are familiar with literary terminology and do not require a separate **30-minute** introductory session.
 - ❑ Particularly if you are taking a student through this program for the second time, you can expect to need about **15 minutes** for teacher preparation and **45-60 minutes** for worksheet review plus discussion.
 - ❑ We *definitely* recommend at least a **60-minute class** period for a class of more than three students.
 - ❑ If you are leading a larger class (particularly if you are responsible for only a few sessions per year), you may also wish to read the Literature book yourself, which will add several hours to your preparation time.

GOAL 4: WRITING WITH DIALECTIC LITERATURE

One of the marvelous things about literary analysis worksheet exercises and class discussions is that these also tend to function as pre-writing for literature-based papers. For example, if your student has just completed an exercise in identifying and describing the use of nighttime imagery in three poems, he might easily convert that exercise into the basis of a comparison essay that details the way that each of the three poets uses images of night to achieve similar or different effects.

Our Dialectic Literature Stitches studies do not include complimentary activity suggestions or writing prompts, but our Dialectic Literature Spools or Integrated products do include both. The genres of writing (e.g. literary analysis paper, story writing, etc.) that we suggest can all be found in our Writing Aids¹. This resource also contains graphic organizers and grading helps for each genre.

In any class involving student writing, gaps in knowledge of English grammar will appear persistently until they are addressed. Free information about English Grammar is available on the Writing page of our website, and we also offer English Grammar practice sets (as well as teacher answer keys) for purchase. These can be used either sequentially or as-needed to address the student's weak areas with regard to English Grammar. There are four sets of English Grammar exercises available for each concept, and each offers practice sentences drawn from a different era of history. (This means that English Grammar review can often double as History review!)

¹ *Writing Aids* is available through our online Store.



COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

THE LITERARY TOOLBOX

The *Literary Toolbox* is a handbook explaining terms and tools for literary analysis. This content exists as a subscription web page, a digital text, and a print text. If you own any of the three versions of *Tapestry's* Dialectic Literature (Integrated, Spools, or Stitches), your student will receive free access to the entire online *Literary Toolbox*. To all, regardless of your version of *Tapestry's* Dialectic Literature materials, you may purchase a digital or print copy of the *Literary Toolbox* if you would like to download it or put it on your shelf.

For those using Integrated or Spools, please note that you will see more new readings in the *Literary Toolbox* assigned early in the year. The amount of new reading tapers off through the year as students master literary analysis terms and tools, though they will be regularly invited to review concepts as needed. For those using Dialectic Literature Stitches, you will find that each week regularly includes all the relevant *Literary Toolbox* readings so that you can proceed in any order with the book studies, mixing and matching them as you wish.

You can read the *Literary Toolbox* ahead as you prepare, or with your student. We recommend it! However, please note that key definitions and brief explanations taken from the *Literary Toolbox* will also be included in your Dialectic Literature teacher's notes or teacher manual each week. Therefore, it is often not strictly necessary that you read the *Literary Toolbox* with your student.

THE STUDENT PAGES

Whether you own Integrated, Spools, or Stitches versions of our Dialectic Literature studies, you will find that your product includes student pages marked by a blue header bar. Student pages may also show a green header bar in the case of literary supplements. These student pages include the following components.

Literary Introduction

At the beginning of each week in the Student pages, there is a brief introduction which is intended to orient your student to that week's literary studies.

Reading

At the beginning of each class plan, you will find a list of the reading assignments given to your student. This will include assigned literature reading, *Literary Toolbox* readings, any applicable supplements, and any optional readings.

Sometimes you will find that students in different tracks are assigned different readings. Your student will need to know, when these weeks occur, which set of readings you would prefer him to do. This is one reason why it is important to determine early on whether your student is doing the Beginning Level track, or the Continuing Level track.

When there are optional readings, your student may ask you whether or not he should do them. You can find information about optional readings in the Teacher's Notes, typically either at the beginning or under a discussion topic based on optional reading, or both.

Basic Instructions for Students

Dialectic Literature Stitches Studies owners, please note that you will find the same "Basic instructions for students" section in the first week (or in the only week) of your student's pages. Integrated and Spools users, this section will appear for you only at the beginning of the year, or at most in the first week of each unit.

Defining Terms

This next section of the student pages lists literary terms that the student should learn (and will use to complete exercises) in the week ahead. Definitions are provided, and we encourage the use of flashcards. Interestingly, definitions of literary terms vary quite a bit from one educational institution to another—Oxford scholars might define "irony" or



“image” quite differently to American high school teachers, whose definitions might again differ from those of professors at American colleges and universities. There are “family resemblances” in most literary definitions, of course, but we have been amazed by the numerous variations that exist for these terms!

Since there is so much variation, we try to 1) define terms according to their practical usage in literary analysis, and 2) be faithful to the historical meanings of literary terminology. We also prepare students for the fact that they are likely to encounter other definitions of the same terms if they attend college, and encourage them to regard the variation of definitions as an interesting opportunity for comparison and continued learning. We try to help them understand that varying definitions are not necessarily a threat to their mental framework for understanding literature.

Worksheet

The main purpose of the worksheet is to help your student practice applying literary analysis terms and tools from the *Literary Toolbox* to the literature of any given week. For Beginning Level students, this is sufficient; Continuing Level students will find that the worksheet exercises also help them to perform the foundational work necessary for making connections or discovering insights in their Literature discussions as well.

During the early weeks of the year, worksheets will almost always ask the student to apply that week’s reading from the *Literary Toolbox*. Later in the year, when the student has been introduced to much of the *Literary Toolbox*, his worksheets may ask him to practice more with tools learned from previous units, or to use several tools together in a more sophisticated way.

Preparation for Discussion Questions

As a rule, a student who is preparing for discussion will also do the worksheet as part of that preparation. The worksheet is his starting point for more complex exercises or questions. Occasionally, Continuing Level a student preparing for discussion will be directed to a different and more complex form of worksheet instead of the one assigned for the Beginning Level track.

The activities under the “Preparation for Discussion” heading come in two basic flavors: written exercises and thinking questions. Both kinds are clearly labelled.

- ❑ **Written Exercises:** These appear in a variety of forms (charts, diagrams, lists of examples, short answers), but are generally aimed at helping the student to further apply literary principles from the *Literary Toolbox* to the specific story that he is reading. Again, these are normally in addition to the worksheet. They may add to the concepts applied in the worksheet, or help the student to apply a different literary analysis tool.
- ❑ **Thinking Questions:** These do not primarily help the student to apply literary analysis tools (though some do focus on literary or artistic topics). Rather, they help him to understand worldviews, make biblical comparisons, and make applications to his own life. These questions are meant to start your student’s mind going toward certain lines of thinking that will be brought up for discussion later in class.

We encourage the student to make a few notes to himself if he works through the thinking questions, but we do not require him to write out full answers. (Of course, you may make that requirement on your own judgment if you believe that writing out full answers would help him to *think* about the questions.)

Literary Comparisons

This section provides exercises that give students an opportunity to compare the assigned literature for that week to other pieces of literature that they may have read. Like the “In More Depth” section, this section is generally designed for students who have a particular interest in the book being studied, or who are generally more advanced.

In More Depth

The “In More Depth” section of the student pages is suitable for students who have a particular interest in the book being studied, or who are generally more advanced. This section sometimes includes additional Written Exercises and (or) Thinking Questions which you, as the teacher, may choose to assign.



Literature Supplements

Most of the literature supplements in this program are intended for the student, though sometimes they are exclusively for the teacher's use. They are labeled "Student Supplement" and "Teacher Supplement" respectively, and will be mentioned as needed in the introductory sections of both student and teacher materials. Literature supplements typically provide descriptions of historical worldviews, explanations of cultural elements that help to set a story in its historical context, or worksheet helps. As a teacher, you are always invited and encouraged to read them. You may find them particularly useful as aids in class discussion.

THE TEACHER PAGES

Whether you own Integrated, Spools, or Stitches versions of our Dialectic Literature studies, you will find that your product includes teacher pages marked by a black-and-white header bar.

Notes for Teachers

At the beginning of most class plans, you will find quick notes for your preparation, including reading suggestions, reminders, options that may require a choice from you, and so on. Stitches product owners, please note that the first week of each book plan will tend to repeat the same basic instructions in this section just as the first week of the Dialectic Literature Stitches student materials will repeat the same basic instructions to them.

Reading

At the beginning of each class plan, you will find a list of the reading assignments given to your student. This will include assigned literature reading, *Literary Toolbox* readings, any applicable supplements, and any optional readings.

Defining Terms

Each week, students are given a list of the literary terms to be learned. The same list is provided to the teacher in this section. You may wish to have your students create vocabulary flashcards or memorize definitions (we recommend both). This section is also useful to the teacher as a "cheat sheet" of literary concepts that will be applied in that week's worksheet.

Literary Introduction

You will find a copy of your student's Literary Introduction included next in your teacher's notes.

Literature Summary

Though it is of course ideal to do so, we never assume that you have had time to read your student's assigned literature. Therefore, we try to provide a brief summary of any story, poem, or play being studied. This summary appears either near the top of your teacher's pages or in a Teacher Supplement. (If it is in a Teacher Supplement, the Notes for the Teacher will direct you to it.)

Sometimes, if the assignment is printed in a book that includes summaries at the head of each section, we will direct you to read those instead. In any case, our goal is to give you a summary that will orient you to the basic setting, characters, and plot of the literary work being studied.

We do not provide summaries for shorter poems because in many cases a summary or description of the poem may be longer than the poem itself! If you are leading a discussion on short poems in a given week, you may wish to take time to read the few specific poems discussed at more length in the class plan.

Answers to Worksheets

This section shows your student's original worksheet with its original questions and directions, as well as sample answers in italicized text and sometimes further comments in unitalicized text. Questions marked **OPTIONAL** may or may not have corresponding questions in the student pages. It is important to note that, whereas the instructions ask your student to give a few examples of a given literary analysis concept, we offer a variety of examples—more than your student should be expected to write down.



We give so many examples partly because we hope that by offering a variety we will make it more likely that your student's chosen examples appear on the list (and thus cut down on guesswork for you). We also provide a variety of examples so that, if your student is having trouble with a concept and not understanding the example you're using to explain it, you can switch to another example from his reading so that he may understand better.

In any case, we strongly urge that your student not be expected to provide as many examples as we provide, nor necessarily examples that are as detailed and as maturely expressed as those we list. Unless your student was asked to find a specific number, one or two examples of any given literary concept from your student is fine, so long as they are substantially correct. Also, just as importantly, you should never feel obligated to review our whole list of examples with your student in class, unless you both have plenty of time and desire to do so!

Class Topics

Our discussion topics typically include a series of questions with italicized answers that the student might be able to give from his reading. Sometimes, with the answers, there are also comments that are left unitalicized to indicate that the student should not be expected to give this answer, but that you might choose to mention during your discussion.

Our general approach is to move from broad principle to specific application and (or) example. Some topics (especially those based on written exercises) are specifically designed to help the student review his *Literary Toolbox* reading and (or) apply it to a particular work of literature.

The other common type of topic is based on one or more thinking questions. These involve the more open-ended, Socratic questions which ask for the student's opinion on issues of worldviews, artistry, and personal application. Questions might include, "How did this experiment in living affect you? Did you want to imitate it or did you want to avoid it?" or "What do you think this experiment in living and its results tell us about this author's view of what is right and wrong?"

The discussion topics in a class plan are arranged to flow in a certain order, but you need not follow that order if the class conversation seems to favor a different progression. We also welcome you to mark up your class topics and note phrases or points that you definitely want to include in class, but note others to possibly leave out.

Our only caution as you consider omitting or customizing topics, especially if you are teaching students who know nothing about systematic literary analysis, is that you discuss any topic which is a review of your student's readings from the *Literary Toolbox*. We recommend that you go over these with your student, especially in the early weeks of the year, because the same analysis concepts are likely to come up later.

Remember that all topics are meant to give you and your student information for discussion and growth in understanding, evaluating, and enjoying literature. Each topic will be clear about *what* information or ideas it has to offer. But in the end, *how* you get that information into your own mind and your student's mind (and hopefully into his notes) is up to you. If you want to make a discussion into a class debate with two teams (you and your student, or groups of students) and a scoreboard, or if you decide that an analysis outline would be much more fun as a small workshop, or even a contest to see who can find out certain literary facts about a given work first, we say "amen." The more laughter and enjoyment you can get from class (provided that real learning still takes place), the better!

Also, remember, as with the worksheets, you should *never* expect your student to provide as many or as detailed examples as we do, nor to express them in mature language. Finally, you should never feel that you must review *every* example we give with your student. They are there to provide you with a variety of options to use and enjoy, not to ensnare you into repetitive drudgery!

Warnings

We always recommend parental review of books! In this section, which can be found on the title page (Stitches product) or in the Glance (Integrated and Spools), we provide specific page numbers for all content that we think you might find objectionable. Reading these should give you a good idea of what the upcoming literary work contains and where danger spots (if any) may be. You can also check the Teacher's Notes to find out whether any objectionable topics will be addressed (and you can always choose to leave them out)!



Here is a sample warning for *Eagle of the Ninth*:

Warnings:

- The main character, Marcus, worships and swears by a Roman god named Mithras (e.g. 38, 58, 78, 79). Romans in the story worship the Roman gods.
- The story also includes several British characters, including druids, who worship the old gods of Britain. There is a description of one of their religious rituals, which involves a dance by nearly-naked men, though no women are present and nothing sexual is suggested (184-192).

Observe that in these warnings we provide specific page numbers for all content that we think you might find objectionable. We do this so that you will be able to easily find, read ahead of time, and black out, cut out, or omit from your student’s reading assignment anything that troubles you. In some books, you may also wish to cut or black out lines that, although your student will not be assigned to read them, he may run across as he reads his assigned sections.

GRADING THIS PROGRAM

Grading Options

We can suggest four different ways of grading your student’s work:

- Option 1: Include Vocabulary Quizzes or Unit Tests and Writing Assignments
- Option 2: Include Quizzes/Tests Only
- Option 3: Include Writing Assignments Only
- Option 4: Include Neither Quizzes/Tests nor Writing Assignments

You can easily make up a vocabulary quiz yourself by consulting the Defining Terms section of a given week or by shuffling your student’s Literary Vocabulary flashcards and selecting ten at random. We recommend that you

The chart below shows what a complete evaluation scheme for a year of Dialectic Literature would look like in each of these four cases. The term “%” means “percent of the total score,” referring to the number of overall percentage points (which in each case adds up to 100% for the year) earned by each assignment.

GRADING DIALECTIC LITERATURE				
	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3	OPTION 4
ASSIGNMENT	%	%	%	%
Vocabulary Quizzes ¹	25%	50%	—	—
Class Preparation: <input type="checkbox"/> Worksheet OR Worksheet & Discussion Prep. <input type="checkbox"/> Participation	25%	50%	40%	100%
Compositions from writing assignments	50%	—	60%	—
All Assignments	100%	100%	100%	100%

¹ In order to give the student a margin for a “bad week” or for skipped weeks, we recommend that you plan to drop one or two of the student’s worst quiz grades before calculating his overall quiz grade.



Earning an English Credit

Students in Grades 6-8 must do some work in both writing and in Literature each year, but how much time they should spend on each is not strictly measured in terms of credits that will appear on transcripts in preparation for college. Also, these years are typically important ones for the student's progress in writing skills. Beginning in 9th grade, however, you must keep records that will prove your student has fulfilled the requirements for a high school English credit.

First, you should be aware that standards for Literature as a school subject in high school depend partly on the state that you live in, the calibre of the college that you want your student to attend, and other factors. It is always a good idea for you to check your state's requirements before getting started with any new academic program in the high school years.

For all states, it is true that in high school, literature work is now forming part or all of an English Credit, which is required and measured in number of hours (150-180 for the year is a good rule of thumb). The English Credit may consist of writing composition only, Literature only, or—as is most usual—a combination of the two. It is not appropriate for a student to do *only* writing composition or *only* Literature throughout all four years of high school, though for one year out of the four he may choose to focus only on one of these two related disciplines.

In high school, a full English credit requires about 4-5 hours of work each week for 36 weeks. These are usually divided between literature and writing, so we designed our worksheet and discussion track to provide the student with about 4 hours of coursework per week in order to leave some room for writing. (If you are using our complimentary writing assignments from Integrated or Spools as well, your student should be able to easily get 5-7 hours of work out of this program each week. Integrated and Spools owners, please also note that your *Loom* documents also offer sample course descriptions for high school Literature.)

One last thought: although these Dialectic Literature studies are designed as an introductory stepping-stone to a Great Books program for your student's later high school years, it is also true that you can use them all the way through high school (again, with writing) as a complete high school course.

CUSTOMIZING THIS PROGRAM

In the young adult years, literature is still something of a luxury. It is a desirable luxury that helps to fuel many students' interest in writing, but young adult students may need to spend more time working on their writing and may have less time for literature. If this is the case, skipping some weeks of literature may turn out to be a good plan. Life has a way of rearranging our plans. It may be necessary for you to skip some weeks due to illness or vacations or other "life happens" events. For this reason also, we try to make it easy for you to skip a few weeks!

Owners of our Dialectic Literature Stitches products, you have the easiest path to customization: you can choose whichever book studies you wish and do as few or as many as you wish.

Integrated and Spools owners, if you need to significantly lighten your student's literature load, the best way to do it is by removing reading assignments, together with their student activities and class sessions. In your Year Introduction, you will find a "cutting" chart in which we list all of your year's Dialectic Literature reading assignments and literary analysis concepts in the order in which they appear. There, too, we have noted in green six weeks that you can cut out without hurting the overall "flow" of your student's worldviews and systematic literary analysis training. Depending on your decisions concerning reading assignments, **you may need to buy fewer books**. Please check to see which books are affected by your editing before you buy.

As you cut reading assignments out, we encourage you to spread out the readings that you retain over a wider period of time using some of your now-blank weeks. Alternatively, you may wish to substitute some other works. The good news for the substitution plan is that our literary analysis system is broad and flexible enough to be applied to almost any work of literature. You can apply what your students is learning in the *Literary Toolbox* to any other works that you want to study—the only drawback is that you won't have a class plan to serve as a road map and answer key. However, remember the Dialectic Literature Stitches studies! There are more of these available than can be found in any one year plan. You may wish to purchase and substitute some of them for other Literature books.



TEACHING DIALECTIC LITERATURE

FOR THOSE TEACHING BOTH DIALECTIC AND RHETORIC

You may be teaching these Dialectic Literature studies alone, or you may also be teaching students taking *Tapestry's* Rhetoric Literature course. Even if that is not the case, you may wonder whether and how this program connects to Rhetoric Literature. The answer is that our Dialectic Literature program dovetails with *Tapestry's* historical and other studies, and is designed to snap in neatly as a “bridge” from Upper Grammar to Rhetoric literary studies. It is meant to ease the way through 9th grade so that students enter Rhetoric Literature studies better prepared to handle adult world classics in 10th grade.

We also designed our Dialectic Literature Integrated and Spools studies in such a way that, if you are teaching Rhetoric Literature in Integrated or Spools as well, you will be teaching some of the same stories and literary concepts in the same weeks. Less preparation for you! Keeping both levels on the “same page” as much as possible also makes it easier for you to “slide” your student between this program and Rhetoric Literature. If you consult your Year Introduction, you will find a chart showing how the two overlap. It uses [blue text](#) to indicate a match between Dialectic and Rhetoric Literature books, literary analysis concepts, or worldview topics in a given week.