

Examples of Analytic Creative Writing Tasks

FIRST TASK

Write BRIEFLY on ONE of these two scenarios:

You are one of Arthur's liegemen in Italy. Write FIVE (5) lines of alliterative verse (in Middle English if you can manage it!) complaining to Arthur that he has not supplied you with the kind of magic restorative that Priamus and Gawain use, and that you feel you are being sacrificed to his dreams of Empire and will probably be wounded and left to die far from home.

Examples of student's response:

1.
I cannot command my king to share his regal wealth
Though you may gain more ground I heave from lack of health
You deem that I should die some hundred miles from home
But I am born of Britain though you may rule all Rome.

[Teacher's Comment: [the gap represents the caesura; Matt had not noticed that rhyme is not used with alliteration!]

2. (collaboratively written)
My Lord King Arthur, why leve you a loyal knight lying here,
Blood bursting from brasten blue veins,
Whilst you enliven Gawain and Priamus with exhilarating elixirs?
Thou selfish swine, wilt thou sacrifice a chivalrous knight for
self-serving desires?
With mensk I implore you, Arthur, may mercy lead you to mend me.

[Teacher's comment: mensk is 'courtesy': they did well to learn this from the text]

3.
I beseech you, sir, let me sip of that potion
Cleanser of wounds, bestowed upon those knights.
Alas, the unjust sacrifice, of a worthy servant like myself,
Left to die, down on the dirty ground
Whilst bright star Britain shines, and bounds across the earth.

[Teacher's comment: this took in the comet that announces Arthur's birth, and the dream he has on his journey to Rome, and was the best alliterative verse too!]

SECOND TASK

2. You are a country gentleman listening to a reading of the Alliterative Morte Arthure which you have commissioned, and find that the 'death' of Arthur is quite different from the version you know (and love?). **EITHER:** Write a brief letter of complaint (about five lines of prose, in Middle English if you like!) to the poet, explaining why you will be reducing his fee because his version is inferior.

OR: write a letter of commendation (about five lines of prose, in Middle English if you like!) to a country squire of your acquaintance letting him know about this wonderful poet who has updated the Arthur story, and explain how and why it is so effective (if you like the film First Knight this is probably the line you will take), suggesting he should employ this poet too.

Student's response:

Certes, that the tale be told, of great king Arthur's end. Yet you have been bold, claiming auctors allege that a mortal was our king! No moneywill I send.

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