

# Literature

General Lit  
Lit./Mythology

SAMPLE





### About the Course

This course includes the following topic(s): Lit./Mythology: Grades 7-8, General Lit: Grades 7-8

**About General Lit: Grades 7-8**

Students spend extended time with a 19th century novel and personal narrative and will find rich opportunities for discussion and inspiration.

**About Lit./Mythology: Grades 7-8**

Student get a glimpse of the world beyond English with a poetic biography and then focus on stories and myths created and collected in the 19th century, including Russian fairy tales, short stories from a variety of authors, and Dickens' famous text, A Christmas Carol.



### Placement & Combining Tips

**Literature: Grades 7-8**

Poetry lessons are also an integral part of the whole Literature program, so look at both literature and poetry selections together when placing students.

**General Lit: Grades 7-8**

Suitable for Grades 9-10. Due to more challenging content, we do not advise using these lessons with younger students if combining.

**Lit./Mythology: Grades 7-8**

Several readings are shared with Grades 5-6, though lesson plans include more advanced work for older students.



### Scheduling

GRADE	SCHEDULE INFO.	BOOKS
7-8	General Lit: Grades 7-8 1 time/week 30 min	Little Women Sir Gibbie Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
7-8	Lit./Mythology: Grades 7-8 1 time/week 30 min	The Lightning Dreamer: Cuba's Greatest Abolitionist A Christmas Carol The Man Who Invented Christmas directed Short stories and other writings

**Sample Weekly View**

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<b>Literature: Grades 7-8</b>				
General Lit: Grades 7-8				Lit./Mythology: Grades 7-8



### Planning & Prep

Permission to print for non-commercial use. See Alveary group use policy to use lessons in a group context.

**LINKS:** Click text or scan the QR code in the top corner of the lesson plan pages to view online resources associated with the lessons.

Responsibility for previewing all links rests with the teacher. All links were checked at the time of publication; however, websites change frequently and may contain objectionable content. Please report broken links by contacting us through our website.

### Term Prep & Teacher Tips

General Lit: Grades 7-8

Term 3 sensitive content: The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass contains several graphic descriptions of beatings, killing, and racial slurs. While the directness of his account was essential for communicating the horrors of slavery, parents or teachers should decide the best way to discuss the violence on the following pages with their students: 3-5, 7, 13-15, 21, 33 40-41.



## Books & Resources

For book rationales and purchase options, click the Book List link or scan the QR code below.

∞ [View Book List Details](#)

### Literature: Grades 7-8

#### General Lit: Grades 7-8



Little Women



Sir Gibbie



Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

#### Lit./Mythology: Grades 7-8



The Lightning Dreamer: Cuba's Greatest Abolitionist



A Christmas Carol



The Man Who Invented Christmas directed

Short stories and other writings



## Supplies

For supply list details and basic supplies helpful to have on hand, click the links or scan the QR code below.

∞ [View Basic Supplies](#)

(No Subject Supplies Assigned)



## Quick Links

### Literature: Grades 7-8

∞ [Extra Helpings](#)

∞ [Foundations \(See Section 9: Literature\)](#)

Click THIS text  
or scan the QR  
code for links.



SAMPLE

# Literature: Grades 7-8

## How To Teach



### Prepare

- Read through the lesson and gather any materials or find any necessary links.
- If you have not already read the book, you may want to read the selected pages in advance, especially for Shakespeare lessons. It is helpful to read the play or a preview of it beforehand.
- Choose which books to have students read independently. See Planning and Prep notes for recommendations.



### Recap

- Connect back to the previous lesson. Ask students to give a summary of what they remember and/or predict what might come next. (Full narration is not necessary.)
- If students have difficulty recalling, try showing an illustration, sharing something that you remember, or prompting them with the first sentence of the last reading. This will often refresh their memory enough to allow them to recall.
- If students still cannot recall anything from the last reading, then consider continuing anyway (with a shorter reading and/or using a combination of visual and audio support this time) or repeating the last lesson, depending on the reading and the nature of the book.



### Introduce

- Use a picture, map, or engaging question to pique the student's interest in the day's lesson.
- If necessary, you may talk about one or two unfamiliar words that will be crucial to understanding.



### Read

- Read the day's passage aloud or have students read independently. For Shakespeare, it is highly recommended that each student have their own copy of the play and that you read it aloud together or read along and underline/make notes while listening to the audio recording.
- Use supportive strategies and educational tools to reduce frustration and better engage the mind, as appropriate. These could include, but are not limited to, the use of eBooks, pictures, audio, read-aloud, buddy reading, colored reading strips, etc.
- Some students may benefit from having a notebook or piece of scrap paper available to externalize ideas by drawing, recording names, or making symbolic 'squiggle' notes.
- Students who have a difficult time sitting still or listening may benefit from: a fidget of their choice, such as a piece of putty or clay or an afghan; flexible positioning, such as a wobble seat or inverted sitting; or sensory modulation, such as a weighted vest or blanket or adjustment of light, temperature, or sound.
- Keep an eye out for things to add to your Book of Centuries, Citizenship Notebook, and Copywork book.



### Narrate

- Have students retell the passage orally or in writing. If writing, encourage students to use the full remaining lesson time and include as much detail as they can remember. For Shakespeare or

challenging books, it may be helpful to narrate more frequently and/or use props.

- Alternatively, learners may use words, pictures, Legos, dolls, etc., to process and convey ideas in the manner most natural to them.
- Students who used paper or a notebook to externalize may refer to these for support. Other students who need external support may benefit from looking at a map or picture from the book while narrating.
- Students who tend to use the same type of narration all the time can be encouraged to try another form of narration by first doing it together through play or discussion.
- Teachers may take turns to model.
- Narration is a complex skill that requires the coordination of several parts of the brain. If a student struggles to narrate in general, with a specific subject or book, or on one day but not others, then this is an opportunity to learn. Observe when they struggle with this or any other activity today; notice facial expressions and body language; listen to what they tell you about why it is hard or how they feel about it. Take note of these observations for later, tell them that you see how hard they are working, and then offer whatever support they need to end on a positive note or take a break for the day, if necessary.



## Discuss

- Give the student an opportunity to share thoughts on the lesson and any connections made.
- To stimulate discussion, you can ask an open-ended question or use an included discussion question.



## Term 1

### WEEK 1 30m General Lit: Grades 7-8 - Lesson 1

Materials: Little Women or Sir Gibbie

PREP (Option 1: Little Women): Read the bio and share parts with your students in the lesson.

∞ Article Link: Louisa May Alcott Bio

#### → INTRO

Little Women was published in 2 volumes. We will read Volume 1, published originally in 1868. Little Women was the first American novel written for girls, though it had wide appeal upon publication, with boys, adult women, and men as well. It was a move away from overly preachy children's literature and was an immediate success, changing how novels for young people were written.

#### → READ, NARRATE, & DISCUSS

Ch.1 "Playing Pilgrims"

- If you read Pilgrim's Progress in younger grades, keep an eye out for many different references or allusions to the book as you read Little Women. Did you notice any in this chapter? (Hint: the name of the chapter is one reference!)

#### → INTRO (OPTION 2: SIR GIBBIE)

George MacDonald was an author, poet, minister, and dreamer born on the rugged moors of northern Scotland in 1824. His early years were marked by loss, as his mother died when he was just eight years old. MacDonald entered Aberdeen University at sixteen, where he studied Chemistry and Physics, and then attended Highbury Theological College in London and entered the ministry. After being pushed out of his church for preaching that God was more loving and forgiving than most people dared to believe during that time, he turned to writing and became one of the biggest literary celebrities of his era. Part of his motivation for writing was to support his large family of 11 children! His wife, Louisa Powell MacDonald, served as his editor, critic, and business manager, and kept the large family afloat during severe financial struggles. He wrote over 50 books, including some children's books you may have read, such as *At the Back of the North Wind*, *The Princess and the Goblin*, and *The Princess and Curdie*. (If you haven't read them, they are great books for any age!) Despite the influence of MacDonald during his lifetime, much of his work was nearly lost to time after his death, including *Sir Gibbie*. MacDonald used his native Scots language extensively in several of his novels, like this one, which created a stumbling block for readers. Thankfully, several of his books have been rediscovered and republished with Scots and English translations for modern readers. Regarded as the "grandfather of fantasy literature," he inspired great writers like C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and G.K. Chesterton.

#### → READ, NARRATE, & DISCUSS

When starting a new book, it is helpful to look over the book's contents first. In addition to getting a feel for what the book will be about, you will often save yourself considerable time discovering tools and tips the author has already left for you! You'll notice on the title page that we are told there will be "Side-by-Side English/Scots Dialogue." By flipping through the book, you can see on page 2 what that will look like - the original Scots text on the left, the translated English text on the right. (The acknowledgements tell us more about this.) We are also given a list of MacDonald's other Scottish novels, so we can infer something about the author's nationality even if we haven't read one of his books before. You'll also notice a list of quotes about MacDonald from some very famous

#### ★ TEACHER TIP

(Little Women)

See Extra Helpings for suggested audio versions, as this can be a fun book to listen to in the afternoons or at other times to create flexibility in your schedule.

(Sir Gibbie)

∞ Article Link: George MacDonald biography

#### ● IMPORTANT DATES

Little Women published (1868AD)

Sir Gibbie Published (1879AD)



## Term 1

authors who were fans of his work! You may want to bookmark the cast of characters just before the start of chapter one to refer back to. If you flip to the back of the book, you'll find an appendix with literal translations of all the Scots poems that appear in the book. During this first week of lessons, take some time to look over the other new books you encounter before you start reading. It's a very helpful habit to develop!

- Read the "Cast of Characters" and then p. 1-7. Sometimes when starting a new book, it is helpful to read the first chapter aloud so you can get familiar with the rhythm and cadence of the writing. It will take a little bit to feel comfortable with MacDonald's descriptions, word choices, and sentence structure. Having someone else read the first couple of chapters to you may be another way to feel a bit more at home in the story.

- This story lends itself to many interesting ways of narrating. Drawing or painting a scene from each chapter is one way that would work well, as MacDonald's descriptive writing creates such vivid images in our minds. Can you picture Gibbie searching in the gutter looking for the earring? Or how about peering over the half door, looking longingly at the bread and penny rolls? Or maybe his joy at giving the now-found lost earring back to its owner? Another option for narrating would be to find another student or a friend of any age to tell the story to, chapter by chapter, as you read it each week. Read your chapters for school and then, sometime during the week, tell the story to someone else. Keep it up week after week until they know the story through your narrations! Discuss your thoughts with your teacher about how you would like to narrate.

→ **VIEW**

∞ Video Link: George MacDonald: The Man Behind Middle Earth and Narnia

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**WEEK 1** 📅 **30m Lit./Mythology: Grades 7-8 - Lesson 1**

*Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda*

📄 Materials: Lightning Dreamer

→ **INTRO**

Today we will begin a novel in verse about the Cuban-Spanish Romantic poet Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (1814-1873), who used her writing to speak out against injustice of all kinds. If you have not read her biography already, it is linked below.

∞ Article Link: Biography of Gertrudis Gomez de Avellaneda

→ **READ, NARRATE & DISCUSS**

1. p.169-174 "Historical Note"
2. p.ix "Historical Background"
3. p.3-10 "Books are door-shaped" - "like oxen or mules."

- Who are the people? Make a character list. Each week, as you read, think about the different perspectives of the poems and how each one sees the same situation very differently. Share your observations in your narrations.

- How do the alternating viewpoints allow the poems to speak to each other? Look for poems that discuss the same topic but from different perspectives.

• **EXTRA HELPING**

∞ Link: What Are Free Verse Poems

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**WEEK 2** 📅 **30m General Lit: Grades 7-8 - Lesson 2**

📄 Materials: Little Women or Sir Gibbie

→ **RECAP (OPTION 1: LITTLE WOMEN)**

Who are the "Little Women" and what is the setting for the book?

• **EXTRA HELPING**

(Little Women)

∞ Article Link: Christmas During the Civil War



## Term 1

### → INTRO

Name as many things as you can that are happening in the world during the late 1800s when *Little Women* was written and published.

### → READ, NARRATE, & DISCUSS

Ch.2 "A Merry Christmas"

- How do the March sisters show joy despite their circumstances?  
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### → RECAP (OPTION 2: SIR GIBBIE)

Recall what was happening in the story from last week.

### → READ, NARRATE, & DISCUSS

p.8-29 (Chapters 2-4)

### → NOTE (ABOUT READING SPEED)

You may find, at the beginning of the book especially, that it is taking you longer to read the assigned pages than you have minutes in the lesson. You have a few options if that is your situation. One would be to ignore the page numbers assigned and read what you can in 20 minutes each week, so you have time to paint or tell someone the story in the remaining 10 minutes of the lesson. Or if you want to schedule your painting or telling the story for another time later in the day, you could read for the full 30 minutes in the lesson. Another option is to read what you can in the lesson and then finish the assigned reading for the week in the evening or on the weekend. It all depends on whether you want to finish the book in the two terms it is assigned in or if you don't mind finishing it outside of lesson time if need be. You will probably find that you will be able to read a bit faster as you get further into the story, once the language becomes more familiar. Discuss your plan with your teacher if you find yourself pressed for time in the lesson. There is no point in rushing through the story and missing the enjoyment of reading it! Another option is to add 10 more minutes to this lesson so you can read comfortably if needed.

### → NOTE (ABOUT DISCUSSION OF THE STORY)

Depending on your setting and schedule, your teacher might want to add an additional 10 minutes to this lesson for discussion. Or you may decide to schedule a longer time once per week to discuss several of your readings from the week. Others may choose to discuss certain books at a meal with family members or friends. The point is to enjoy the books and to enjoy thinking and talking about them. Sometimes a Discussion Question will be provided, but there is plenty in every chapter to discuss, so feel free to change the question.

- Gibbie never speaks- yet from the first chapter, he is unmistakably present. How does MacDonald do that?

## WEEK 2 30m Lit./Mythology: Grades 7-8 - Lesson 2

*Lightning Dreamer, cont.*

Materials: *Lightning Dreamer*

### → RECAP

What were your first impressions of these poems?

### → READ, NARRATE & DISCUSS

p.11-24 "I feel like a new person" - "dark or light."

- How are the nuns able to support Tula?
- How did Tula's father influence her, and how has his death shaped who she is at thirteen?

### • EXTRA HELPING

Link: José María Heredia biography

### • COMPOSITION

What role do books and reading have in the story so far? How are the "rules" different for Tula? Caridad? The nuns?



## Term 1

- Why does Tula feel she is not so different from the slave girls she views from the barred window?
- Continue to add to your character list.

### WEEK 3 30m General Lit: Grades 7-8 - Lesson 3

Materials: Little Women or Sir Gibbie

#### → RECAP (OPTION 1: LITTLE WOMEN)

What was Christmas like in the March home?

#### → READ, NARRATE, & DISCUSS

Ch.3 "The Laurence Boy"

#### → RECAP (OPTION 2: SIR GIBBIE)

Recall what you read last time.

#### → READ, NARRATE, & DISCUSS

p.30-53 (Chapters 5-7)

- Try reading a passage aloud in Scots, then English. What is lost or gained?

#### • EXTRA HELPING

(Little Women)

∞ Article Link: Civil War Dresses

### WEEK 3 30m Lit./Mythology: Grades 7-8 - Lesson 3

Materials: Lightning Dreamer

#### → RECAP

How would you describe this book (so far) to someone who had never read it?

#### → READ, NARRATE, & DISCUSS

p.25-35

- How do the decisions Tula's mother made differ from what she expects from Tula? What is your impression of her mother so far?
- Why does Tula feel she can free herself "only with words"?
- Why is Tula not allowed to read books? What are her mother and stepfather afraid of happening if she reads books?