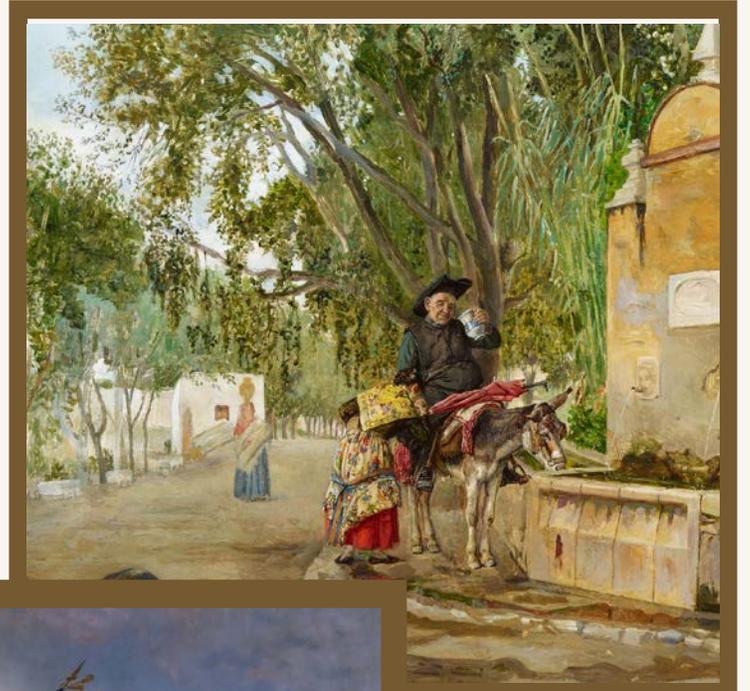


Excellence in Literature

The Complete Curriculum:
Literature and Writing for Grades 8-12



Janice Campbell

Dear Reader,

Thank you so much for taking a look at *Excellence in Literature*. I thought it would be handy if you had a one-sheet overview of the curriculum, so here it is. You'll find a few details about the curriculum, about how I chose the books, and a bit about me. I hope it helps you to quickly gain a birds-eye view of EIL.

The most important thing to know about the curriculum is that it's flexible. Although the books are arranged strategically, I want parents to feel absolutely free to pick and choose what to use when, whether to shorten assignments, take a little longer on a unit than suggested, or match literature levels with history studies. It's a curriculum that's meant to be a delight, and to spark joy in the discovery of wonderful stories, plays, and poems. I want students to emerge, not just knowing a lot about the literature of Western Civilization, but loving it. I hope you'll enjoy your time with EIL. If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at jceved@comcast.net.

I wish you joy!

Janice Campbell



How I chose the books

I've had many questions about how I chose the books for *Excellence in Literature*, so I wrote a nice, long explanation of all the factors that went into the final decisions. As you can guess, it wasn't an easy process to sort through many centuries of great literature to end up with 45 focus texts and about 45 honors texts, balanced between novels, drama, and epic poetry. It was fun, though—what a great excuse to read and read and read! Here are some of the questions I considered when choosing what to include:

- Is this work foundational to an understanding of Western Civilization and culture?
- Is it a classic work that is regularly alluded to in current conversation (including newspaper, radio, books, movies, etc.)?
- Does it tell the truth about life and consequences?
- Is there something compelling about this particular work that makes it, more than another, deserve a place in the curriculum?
- Does it offer a unique perspective on the culture of its time and place?
- Does it have the power to engage readers and cause them to think deeply about important issues?
- Is it well-written?
- Has it endured the test of time?

Read the complete article here: <https://www.doingwhatmatters.com/how-i-chose-great-books-for-excellence-in-literature/>

What's Special About Excellence in Literature?

- Self-directed courses encourage independent learning and college-style study habits.
- There are nine four-week modules with week-by-week lesson plans in each school year, which makes it easy to know what to do when.
- Every volume contains instructions, models, and a glossary, so you can start with any book and know exactly what to do.
- Context readings provide in-depth understanding of literature in its historic and artistic context (and links are regularly updated).
- Honors Option includes extra reading and provides the opportunity to earn advanced placement or college credit.
- Modules may be mixed and matched to create a custom study plan.
- Honors books may be substituted for focus texts if desired.
- American, British, and World Lit are co-published with Andrew Pudewa's Institute for Excellence in Writing.
- Each volume is available as a print book or e-book.
- Each one-year study guide is \$29. The curriculum is also available as *The Complete Curriculum*, which is all five levels in a binder.
- The *Handbook for Writers* is a reference guide for all the levels.
- You can read more about it at www.ExcellenceInLiterature.com.

Who's Janice Campbell?

Janice and her husband Donald homeschooled their four sons from pre-school into college, with an educational philosophy most closely aligned with the Charlotte Mason and Thomas Jefferson schools of thought. She holds a B.A. in English (honors) from Mary Baldwin College, and has worked as a freelance writer, editor, and conference speaker since the 1980s.

Janice has focused on writing and speaking at about things that matter for over two decades. She is the author of the *Excellence in Literature* curriculum for grades 8-12, *Transcripts Made Easy*, and *Get a Jump Start on College* and has published *Perfect Reading*, *Beautiful Handwriting*, and the 1857 McGuffey Readers.

Whether teaching high school students to love literature or teaching penmanship or calligraphy to all ages, Janice's focus is on lighting lamps so that others can more easily find their way. Her websites offer inspiration, resources, and a free e-newsletter.

Websites:

- Bookstore: EverydayEducation.com
- Education blog: DoingWhatMatters.com
- Literature resources: Excellence-in-Literature.com (This is where we keep EIL links updated and host many context resources.)

E1: Introduction to Literature	E2: Literature and Composition	E3: American Literature	E4: British Literature	E5: World Literature
<p>Unit 1: Short Stories by-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Orne Jewett: A White Heron • Edgar Allen Poe: The Purloined Letter (This one is not scary, if you're concerned about that.) • Guy de Maupassant: The Diamond Necklace • O. Henry: The Ransom of Red Chief • Eudora Welty: A Worn Path • James Thurber: The Secret Life of Walter Mitty <p>Unit 2: Around the World in Eighty Days by Jules Verne</p> <p>Honors: <i>20,000 Leagues Under the Sea</i> by Jules Verne</p> <p>Unit 3: A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court by Mark Twain</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Prince and the Pauper</i> by Mark Twain</p> <p>Unit 4: Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë</p> <p>Honors: <i>Shirley</i> or <i>Villette</i> by Charlotte Brontë</p> <p>Unit 5: Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw</p> <p>Honors: <i>Murder in the Cathedral</i> by T.S. Eliot</p> <p>Unit 6: Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson</p> <p>Honors: <i>Kidnapped</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson</p> <p>Unit 7: Animal Farm by George Orwell</p> <p>Honors: <i>1984</i> by George Orwell</p> <p>Unit 8: The Tempest by William Shakespeare</p> <p>Honors: <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> by William Shakespeare</p> <p>Unit 9: Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i> by John Bunyan</p>	<p>Unit 1: Robinson Crusoe by Daniel DeFoe</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Swiss Family Robinson</i> by Johann David Wyss or <i>The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe</i> by Daniel DeFoe</p> <p>Optional: The book of <i>Jonah</i> (any translation) and <i>Grace Abounding to the Chiefest of Sinners</i> by John Bunyan</p> <p>Unit 2: Walden by Henry David Thoreau</p> <p>Honors: "Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau and "Self-Reliance" by Ralph Waldo Emerson</p> <p>Unit 3: The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Man in the Iron Mask</i> or <i>The Three Musketeers</i> by Dumas</p> <p>Unit 4: The Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad</p> <p>Honors: <i>Manalive</i> by G.K. Chesterton</p> <p>Unit 5: Till We Have Faces by C.S. Lewis</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Screwtape Letters</i> by C.S. Lewis</p> <p>Unit 6: Death Comes to the Archbishop by Willa Cather</p> <p>Honors: <i>Country of the Pointed Firs</i> by Sarah Orne Jewett</p> <p>Unit 7: Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare</p> <p>Honors: <i>King John</i> by William Shakespeare</p> <p>Unit 8: Ivanhoe by Sir Walter Scott</p> <p>Honors: <i>Merchant of Venice</i> by William Shakespeare or <i>Rob Roy</i> by Scott</p> <p>Unit 9: The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde</p> <p>Honors: <i>Kim</i> by Rudyard Kipling</p>	<p>Unit 1: Autobiography by Benjamin Franklin</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson</i>, <i>Letters From An American Farmer</i> by J. Hector St. John De Crevecoeur</p> <p>Unit 2: Rip Van Winkle and The Legend of Sleepy Hollow by Washington Irving; Works by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow</p> <p>Honors: <i>Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.</i>, and <i>The Life of George Washington</i> or <i>Tales of the Alhambra</i> by W. Irving</p> <p>Unit 3: The Last of the Mohicans by James Fenimore Cooper</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Pioneers</i> by James Fenimore Cooper</p> <p>Unit 4: The House of Seven Gables by Nathaniel Hawthorne</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> by N. Hawthorne; <i>Walden</i> by Henry David Thoreau</p> <p>Unit 5: Moby Dick by Herman Melville</p> <p>Honors: <i>Billy Budd</i> by Herman Melville</p> <p>Unit 6: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain</p> <p>Honors: <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> by Frederick Douglass; <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> by Mark Twain</p> <p>Unit 7: The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Age of Innocence</i> by Edith Wharton; <i>Daisy Miller</i> by Henry James</p> <p>Unit 8: The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald</p> <p>Honors: <i>My Antonia</i> by Willa Cather</p> <p>Unit 9: The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway</p> <p>Honors: <i>A Moveable Feast</i> by Ernest Hemingway</p>	<p>Unit 1: Beowulf</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Dream of the Rood</i> and <i>Caedmon's Hymn</i> or <i>The Battle of Malden</i></p> <p>Unit 2: Canterbury Tales (selected) by Geoffrey Chaucer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prologue • The Nun Priest's Prologue and Tale • The Reeve's Prologue and Tale • The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale • The Magistrate's Prologue and Tale • The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue and Tale <p>Honors: <i>Piers Plowman</i> by William Langland</p> <p>Unit 3: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight; The Faerie Queene (Book 1) by Edmund Spenser; "Letters to Raleigh"</p> <p>Honors: <i>Le Morte d'Arthur</i> by Thomas Malory</p> <p>Unit 4: King Lear by William Shakespeare</p> <p>Honors: <i>Hamlet</i> by William Shakespeare</p> <p>Unit 5: Paradise Lost by John Milton</p> <p>Honors: <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i> by John Bunyan (if not read in English I) or <i>The Temple</i> by George Herbert (Poetry Collection)</p> <p>Unit 6: Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen</p> <p>Honors: <i>Persuasion</i> or other novel by Jane Austen and <i>Middlemarch</i> by George Eliot</p> <p>Unit 7: Great Expectations by Charles Dickens</p> <p>Honors: <i>Oliver Twist</i> or <i>David Copperfield</i> by Charles Dickens and <i>Vanity Fair</i> by William Makepeace Thackeray</p> <p>Unit 8: Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Tenant of Wildfell Hall</i> by A. Brontë or <i>Jane Eyre</i> by C. Brontë or <i>Frankenstein</i> by Mary Shelley</p> <p>Unit 9: To the Lighthouse by Virginia Woolf</p> <p>Honors: <i>Space Trilogy</i> by C.S. Lewis</p>	<p>Unit 1: The Odyssey by Homer</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Iliad</i> by Homer</p> <p>Unit 2: Antigone by Sophocles</p> <p><i>The Burial at Thebes: A Version of Sophocles' Antigone</i> by Seamus Heaney</p> <p>Honors: <i>Oedipus Rex</i> by Sophocles</p> <p>Unit 3: The Aeneid by Virgil</p> <p>Honors: <i>Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans</i> by Plutarch</p> <p>Unit 4: Divine Comedy: Inferno by Dante</p> <p>Honors: <i>Paradisio</i> and/or <i>Purgatorio</i> by Dante</p> <p>Unit 5: Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Pickwick Papers</i> by Charles Dickens</p> <p>Unit 6: Les Misérables by Victor Hugo</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Hunchback of Notre-Dame</i> by Victor Hugo or <i>Democracy in America</i> by Alexis de Tocqueville</p> <p>Unit 7: The Portable Nineteenth Century Russian Reader edited by George Gibian</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> by Fyodor Dostoyevsky</p> <p>Unit 8: Faust by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe</p> <p>Honors: <i>The Screwtape Letters</i> by C.S. Lewis (if you didn't read it in English II) and <i>The Picture of Dorian Grey</i> by Oscar Wilde or <i>Frankenstein</i> by Mary Shelley or <i>Doctor Faustus</i> by Christopher Marlowe</p> <p>Unit 9: Out of Africa and "Babette's Feast" by Isak Dinesen</p> <p>Honors: <i>Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life</i> by C.S. Lewis</p>

Module 1.3

***A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* by Mark Twain (1835–1910)**

*The rain . . . falls upon the just and the unjust alike;
a thing which would not happen if I were superintending the rain's affairs.
No, I would rain softly and sweetly on the just, but if I caught a sample of the unjust outdoors
I would drown him.*

— Mark Twain

Focus Text

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court by Mark Twain OR *Joan of Arc* by Mark Twain

Honors Text

The Prince and the Pauper by Mark Twain

Literary Period

Romantic

Module Focus

The author's use of irony and framed narrative in an entertaining story, designed to vividly convey the author's viewpoint on serious issues.

Introduction

American novelist Samuel Clemens is best known by his pseudonym, Mark Twain. His tales combine humor, irony, and a keen sense of observation.

In this module, we will read *A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court*, one of the few Twain novels in which the main action takes place outside the United States. The protagonist Hank Morgan, a Connecticut Yankee, receives a blow to the head and is transported back to the time of King Arthur, where he tries to improve medieval systems with Yankee ingenuity. Twain's satire is both funny and thought provoking.

Something to think about . . .

Twain wrote this novel about twenty-five years after the Civil War. What issues do you see in *Connecticut Yankee* that may be related to Twain's perception of the Civil War? Can you determine Twain's view on the issue of slavery?

Be sure to notice . . .

This story is told as a framed narrative, which is a story within a story. The narrative of Hank's adventures in the medieval world is framed by the story of his accident and recovery. This literary device appears in other famous classical works such as *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer. In this ancient book, the stories of the individual pilgrims are framed by the story of their journey to Canterbury. As you read, think about how the framing story affects your perception of the central narrative.

Context Resources

You will find a clickable list of the links in this chapter on the EIL website:

<https://excellence-in-literature.com/curriculum-user-content/e1-context-resources/eil-1-3-mark-twain-context/>

The Author's Life

There are so many good books about Mark Twain that it is hard to choose just one!

You may want to begin with the website, and then read the short biography of your choice.

<https://excellence-in-literature.com/mark-twain-bio-1911-eb>

The official website for Mark Twain contains a brief biography, photos, quotes about and by the author.

<http://www.cmgww.com/historic/twain/>

http://www.marktwainhouse.org/man/biography_main.php

Mark Twain: America's Humorist, Dreamer, Prophet by Clinton Cox (or other short biography available at your local library)

The Courtship of Olivia Langdon and Mark Twain by Susan K. Harris

The Autobiography of Mark Twain by Mark Twain

Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain: A Biography by Justin Kaplan

Mark Twain: An Illustrated Biography by Geoffrey C. Ward

Poetry

“The Idylls of the King” by Alfred, Lord Tennyson: This epic poem was extremely popular during Mark Twain’s lifetime, and may have influenced his writing of *A Connecticut Yankee*. Read the section, “The Coming of Arthur” and any others that appeal to you. It is included in many poetry anthologies, or you can read it at the link below:

<https://excellence-in-literature.com/>

[tylls-of-the-king-written-by-alfred-lord-tennyson](https://excellence-in-literature.com/tylls-of-the-king-written-by-alfred-lord-tennyson)

Mark Twain did not claim to be a poet, but he did write a few poems. Be sure to read the following poems at:

<https://excellence-in-literature.com/poetry-by-mark-twain>

- “A Sweltering Day In Australia”
- “Genius”
- “Ode to Stephen Dowling Bots”
- “The Aged Pilot Man”
- “Those Annual Bills”
- “To Jennie”

Audio

There is some evidence to suggest that Thomas Edison recorded Mark Twain's voice on wax cylinder. That recording is no longer available, but you may listen to interesting re-creations of some of Twain's lectures at:

http://classiclit.about.com/od/marktwainfaqs/f/faq_mtwain_voic.htm

Audiobook of *A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court* narrated by Stuart Langton

<http://amzn.to/2tNKpaZ>

Amateur recording from Librivox:

<http://librivox.org/a-connecticut-yankee-in-king-arthurs-court-by-mark-twain/>

Music

Mr. Mark Twain: The Musical (2009) You may listen online to brief samples of songs from the musical:

<http://amzn.to/2seNrTz>

Mark Twain's Mississippi music page at the University of Illinois offers recordings of some of the historic songs of Twain's time.

<http://twain.lib.niu.edu/music>

The Raging Canal: Listen to this popular canal song of the 1800's, which inspired *The Aged Pilot Man*, a parody by Mark Twain.

http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/song-midis/Raging_Canal.html

Video

The Adventures of Mark Twain (1944 and 1985)

<https://excellence-in-literature.com/the-adventures-of-mark-twain>

Mark Twain (2001) A television biography directed by Ken Burns.

A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court was filmed for television in 1989, but I have not seen it. If your library has a copy, it may be worth watching.

Visual Arts

Here are a few images of Mark Twain, including one of him playing the piano for his wife, Clara Clemens and a friend. It is interesting to look at the backgrounds in the photos to see how he lived.

<https://excellence-in-literature.com/mark-twain-images>

Steamboat Times depicts “a pictorial history of the Mississippi steamboating era,” complete with many interesting photos of Mark Twain and his family:

http://steamboattimes.com/mark_twain_gallery_1.html

Other Resources

Mark Twain’s Mississippi offers songs about the Mississippi River from 1830-1890, as well as maps, and other resources that “try to build a larger image of what the Mississippi Valley meant to people in Mark Twain’s time; how these meanings influenced his own interpretation of the place, and, finally, how his vision has fed into the many we hold today.”

<http://twain.lib.niu.edu/>

“A Curious Pleasure Excursion” is a humorous short piece by Mark Twain, written in response to a comet scare:

<https://excellence-in-literature.com/a-curious-pleasure-excursion-by-mark-twain>

At this University of Virginia site, read a brief, interesting article on “King Arthur’s Court In Mark Twain’s America,” and try out Twain’s Memory Game.

<http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/yankee/mtcamlot.html>

Twain was ultimately quotable, and you will enjoy browsing through this site that contains some of his most memorable quotes, plus newspaper and magazine articles, as well as quirky items such as a photo of Susy Clemens’ headstone, photos of other men that Twain was often mistaken for, and more.

<http://www.twainquotes.com/>

Take an interesting virtual tour of Twain’s unique Hartford, Connecticut house, where he lived and worked from 1874-1891.

<https://excellence-in-literature.com/mark-twain-house-video>

Ken Burns created a film about Mark Twain, which was shown on PBS in 2002. This companion site includes an interesting, interactive scrapbook about the life of Mark Twain.

<http://www.pbs.org/marktwain/>

Assignment Schedule

Week 1

Begin reading the focus work. Be sure to consider the questions below as you read.

- What are Hank Morgan's beliefs about superstition? Think about how and why he uses superstition in the story, and what he accomplishes by doing so.
- How does Hank Morgan view religion? Do you think his beliefs reflect Twain's? Why or why not?
- How does Hank use his power? Does he use it for the benefit of the people or for his own glory, or a combination of the two?
- There are two distinct views of knighthood in the novel. Consider these two views, and how they may reflect Twain's views of honor, especially in light of the rhetoric of the Civil War.
- Morgan le Fay plays an interesting role in the novel. How does she reflect Twain's view of the evils of the age?

Follow the model in the Formats and Models chapter to write an Author Profile. Be sure to refer to your writer's handbook if you have questions about grammar, structure, or style.

Week 2

Write an approach paper, using the instructions and samples in the Formats and Models chapter. In addition to the context links I have provided, you may use other resources such as your encyclopedia, the library, and quality Internet resources to help you complete this assignment.

As an alternate assignment, you may draw a graphic storyline of the major events in the book. This would be styled like a graphic novel or comic book, with one or more two-page spreads per scene. In addition to the context links provided, you may use other resources such as your encyclopedia, the library, and quality Internet resources to complete this assignment.

Week 3

Begin drafting a 500-word paper on the topic below. I recommend that you follow the writing process outlined in the “How to Write an Essay” chapter, consulting the models in the Formats and Models chapter and your writer’s handbook as needed.

Model: Literary Analysis Essay and MLA Format Model

Prompt: Although this book is a humorous time-travel story, Twain addresses a number of serious social issues through the Connecticut Yankee’s experiences. Consider how Hank Morgan’s story expresses Twain’s views on monarchy versus democracy, slavery and/or serfdom, or technology versus tradition. Choose one of these issues and show how Twain used Morgan’s experiences to express his views and how these views reflect the values of America during his time.

Week 4

Use the feedback on the rubric, along with the writing mentor’s comments to revise your paper. Before turning in the final draft, be sure you have addressed any issues marked on the evaluation rubric, and verify that the thesis is clear and your essay is well-organized. Use your writer’s handbook to check grammar or punctuation so that your essay will be free from mechanical errors. Turn in the essay at the end of the week so that the writing mentor can use the evaluation rubric in the “How to Evaluate” chapter to check your work.