Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
1. How do the opening lines set the grand tone of the poem? Consider what allusions are present and what connections/associations the poet might be making.
2. How is Arthur’s castle/Camelot at Christmas time characterized? What is the mood?
3. How is Arthur initially characterized? How is his court characterized? → his knights, his queen, etc.
4. How is the Green Knight initially characterized/described?
   a. Besides his color, what other striking physical attributes does the Green Knight possess?
5. What does the Green Knight propose? Why do you think he sought out Arthur’s court?
6. What is ironic about Arthur’s knights’ initial response to the Green Knight’s challenge?
7. What compels Gawain to volunteer for the challenge? What reasons does he give?
8. What are the “terms” of the challenge?
9. Why might the poet go into such a gruesome description of the beheading?
10. What major archetypes do you notice in Part One?
11. In what ways is the chivalric code/idea of chivalry present?
12. What similarities and/or differences do you already notice between the Anglo-Saxon literature we’ve read and *Sir Gawain*?
Sir Gawain vs Beowulf

How does Gawain’s call to the Green Knight’s challenge differ in demeanor to Beowulf?

What does this tell us about the changing cultural values of heroes as well as the differences in an epic vs romantic tale?

Which of the codes of chivalry does Gawain uphold with taking the challenge in Arthur’s place? What about Arthur’s own stoic demeanor at the departure of the Green Knight?

Reminder of Codes of Chivalry:
1. Swear allegiance to his lord
2. Fight to uphold Christianity
3. Seek to redress all wrongs
4. Honor truth by word and deed
5. Be faithful to one lady
6. Act with bravery, courtesy, and modesty
The Green Knight is a figure of contrasts. Create a T-Chart and consider the descriptions of the Green Knight that are both positive and negative. Consider the images, symbols, and archetypes associated with him.
What stages of the Hero’s Journey are initiated in Part 1?
Cycles and Seasons

How does the poet’s use of imagery and personification at the opening of Part 2 to reflect life cycles as well as express the changing moods in Camelot as Gawain’s departure time arrives?
The Arming of the Hero

The visual depiction of the arming of the hero is a literary tradition dating as far back as the Greek epics to modern heroic tales. Why do you think the arming is a key aspect of the hero’s conquest?

This clip from *Troy* shows Hector and Achilles preparing for battle. Hector, a Trojan prince has killed Achilles’ closest companion Patroclus and Achilles is seeking vengeance.
Notice how we have music to help set the tone for us as our hero prepares for battle. Poets like the one of SGGK didn’t have an intense soundtrack to accompany them. The drama came from the detail of the armor.
The arming reinforces that the hero is always prepared for battle.
A hero arms to defend his virtues and the people most important to him.
The Pentangle Star

A key detail in the arming of Sir Gawain is the image of the pentangle star on his shield.

On each point of the pentangle, represent Gawain’s 5 virtues. Draw/create and color a symbolic representation of each virtue, and find a quote from parts 1 or 2 where Gawain upholds that virtue.

It is your responsibility to keep up with this assignment because we will be adding quotes from parts 3 and 4. After completing the entire poem, write whether you believe Gawain upheld his knightly duties with regard to each virtue and give a brief explanation of why or why not. Use textual evidence to support your opinion with page citations.
The Hero’s Journey

- The call to adventure
- Crossing the threshold
- The shadow realm
- Trial(s)/Test(s)
- Supreme test/Atonement with the Father
- Transformation/Revelation
- Ultimate Boon (Reward)
- Crossing the Return Threshold (The Return)
Ring Structure (Parts II - IV)

*Parts I*

- Feasts

*Parts II & III*

- Arming of the knight, and description of the shield

- Gawain’s journey to the castle

- Description of the castle

- Temptations

- Confession to priest

*Part IV*
A key detail in the arming of Sir Gawain is the image of the pentangle star on his shield.

On each point of the pentangle, represent Gawain’s 5 virtues. Draw/create and color a symbolic representation of each virtue, and find a quote from parts 1 or 2 where Gawain upholds that virtue.

It is your responsibility to keep up with this assignment because we will be adding quotes from parts 3 and 4. After completing the entire poem, write a paragraph discussing whether you believe Gawain upheld his knightly duties with regard to each virtue and give a brief explanation of why or why not. Use textual evidence to support your opinion with page citations. You must use a minimum of 2 quotes to support your discussion; however, you may use as many as needed.

Illustration & paragraph
Due on test day, Dec. 11th
Extra Credit

Take the concept of your Pentangle Star and turn it into a work of art. This could be a poster, a painting, a shield made from cardboard that you paint and detail. The sky and your imagination is the limit! Here is what it DOES need to include:

- Consider the actual description of the shield (the gold, the red, etc.)
- You must still find ways to incorporate your visual symbols for each of the points on the star AND 5 of your selected quotes. (each virtue must have 1 quote)
- The real point value in this lies in taking that artistic element up a notch from the star you created in class.
- This is due on Monday, December 17 and could add 5 points to your lowest test grade.