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❧ JOHN MILTON ❧

from *Paradise Lost: Book I*

PRE-GRAMMAR | Preparation

Prepare to think about the poem and its Central One Idea by drawing upon your prior knowledge, experience, or interests.

1. What is your favorite epic battle from literature or film? Tell about it here, and why you like it.

GRAMMAR | Presentation

Discover essential facts, elements, and features of the poem through the Reading Notes, Words to Be Defined, and Comprehension Questions.

READING NOTES

1. **John Milton** (1608-1674) – For more information, read the biography given in the *Poetry Book II* anthology.
2. **Heavenly Muse** (l. 6ff.) – Urania, the muse of sacred poetry in Greek mythology. In these lines Milton connects Urania with the Holy Spirit, who in the Old Testament inspired “that shepherd” Moses to receive and interpret God’s word.
3. **Oreb and Sinai** (l. 7) – Mt. Horeb and Mt. Sinai, the locations where God delivered the Ten Commandments to Moses. The location of Mt. Horeb is unknown; Mt. Sinai is located on the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt.
4. **Chaos** (l. 10) – the ruler of the realm of confusion on the edge of hell
5. **Aonian Mount** (l. 15) – a mountainous region in Greece, specifically Mt. Helicon, the home of the Muses
6. **perdition** (l. 47) – eternal punishment; damnation
7. **adamantine** (l. 48) – unbreakable

8. **ken** (l. 59) – range of knowledge; perception
9. **durst** (l. 102) – past tense of the word *dare*
10. **Seraphim** (l. 129) – angels with three wings; members of the highest order of angels
11. **rood** (l. 196) – an archaic measure of land, about a quarter of an acre
12. **Pelorus** (l. 232) – a specific promontory; a high area of rock in Sicily
13. **Etna** (l. 233) – an active volcano on the east coast of Sicily, Italy
14. **epic poetry** – a long narrative poem in elevated or dignified language that tells the story of a hero and reflects the values of a culture
15. **enjambment** – In poetry, the continuation of a sentence without pause beyond the end of a line, couplet, or stanza. Milton uses this technique frequently in *Paradise Lost*; thus, **be sure to pay more attention to punctuation than to line breaks as you read the poem.**
16. **in medias res** – Latin: “In the middle of things.” For example, all of Shakespeare’s plays begin in the middle of action that has already begun before the opening of the first act.

WORDS TO BE DEFINED

Definitions Bank

a very steep drop	doubtful; uncertain
bitterly regret	heavenly; divine
blasphemous; heretical	lacking consciousness
brighten	refusing to change course of action; unyielding
celestial; heavenly	relating to punishment
cunning; slyness	to break or go against
defeated; conquered	wild; turbulent
disgrace; degradation	

1. **Illuminate**, what is low raise and support, *v.* (l. 23)
2. From their Creator, and **transgress** his will, *v.* (l. 31)
3. Th' infernal Serpent; he it was whose **guile**, *n.* (l. 34)
4. Raised **impious** war in Heaven and battle proud, *adj.* (l. 43)
5. Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' **ethereal** sky, *adj.* (l. 45)
6. In adamant chains and **penal** fire, *adj.* (l. 48)
7. Lay **vanquished**, rolling in the fiery gulf, *v.* (l. 52)
8. Mixed with **obdurate** pride and steadfast hate. *adj.* (l. 58)
9. With floods and whirlwinds of **tempestuous** fire, *adj.* (l. 77)
10. In **dubious** battle on the plains of Heaven, *adj.* (l. 104)
11. That were an **ignominy** and shame beneath, *n.* (l. 115)
12. Too well I see and **rue** the dire event, *v.* (l. 134)
13. The fiery surge, that from the **precipice**, *n.* (l. 173)
14. Not by the sufferance of **supernal** Power. *adj.* (l. 241)
15. Lie thus astonished on th' **oblivious** pool, *adj.* (l. 266)



Read *Paradise Lost: Book I*, marking the poem in key places.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What **poetic form** is the poem *Paradise Lost*? What is its **meter** and **rhyme scheme**?
2. What epic convention does Milton employ in lines 6ff. that announces his epic intentions?
3. Read lines 12-16. Whom does Milton invoke, and what highly significant aim does he announce?
4. Who first seduced them (our “*grandparents*”) to that foul revolt? Why did he do it? Quote a line or two from the poem for your answer.
5. Give a brief description of the place where Satan was thrown. Include a line or two from the poem for your answer.
6. What important resolution does Satan make at lines 94ff.?
7. Read lines 105-109. How does the use of **anaphora** add force to Satan’s growing resolution?
8. “*Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable ...*” (l. 157)
What does Satan, along with his followers, resolve to do in the following lines?
9. What **simile** is used to describe Satan in the stanza beginning at line 192? To whom is he compared?
10. Who leaves Satan “*at large to his own dark designs*”?

LOGIC | Dialectic

*Reason with the facts, elements, and features of the poem;
sort, arrange, compare, and connect ideas – and begin
to uncover and determine the Central One Idea.*

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

May be verbally discussed or answered in written form in your Literature Notebook.

1. **Summarize** lines 22-26. What is involved in what Milton asks? What is his aim?
2. How does Milton's pitting of God and Satan in opposition remind us of epics that involve famous battles?
3. According to Milton, why did God leave Satan "at large to his own dark designs" (l. 213)?
4. *The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.* (ll. 254-255)
Do you agree with Satan's words here?

RHETORIC | Expression

*Express in your own words the Central One
Idea with supporting points.*

RHETORICAL EXPRESSION

To be answered in your Literature Notebook.

1. In 2-3 sentences, **summarize** the poem.
2. Write the **Central One Idea** of the poem in a precise, eloquent sentence.
 - ◆ **Central Quote:** Choose a line or two from anywhere in the poem that you think best embodies the Central One Idea. With good penmanship, write it in your Literature Notebook.
- 1 Write the **Central One Idea** as expressed by the teacher.