

## 1 from the Divine Comedy: Inferno



### Dante Alighieri (1265–1321)

Dante Alighieri (dān' tā al əg yer' ē), whose visions of Hell have haunted readers for centuries, is widely considered one of the greatest poets of Western civilization.

T. S. Eliot wrote,

"Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between them. There is no third."

**Political Chaos** Dante was born into a poor but noble family in Florence, Italy. At the time, Italy was not a unified country but a collection of independent city-states. These city-states were marked by fierce political turbulence and power struggles between ruling families. The states were constantly at war with each other while they simultaneously battled civil unrest within their own borders.

**Painful Exile** As a member of the nobility, Dante became an elected official. Along with six other officials, he ran Florence's government. However, in 1300, a street accident led to a skirmish, which escalated into a full-blown civil war. Dante's political party and all its representatives were overthrown. In 1302, Dante was officially exiled from his beloved city, never to return. His experience of exile would later play an important role in his writing.

**Writing in Italian** Scholars believe that Dante studied law and rhetoric at the University of Bologna, one of Europe's most prestigious institutions of higher learning. Bologna also boasted a great poetic tradition, and it was there that Dante discovered a school of writers who sought to free poetry from the limitations imposed by the church and government. At the

time, most writers wrote in Latin, the language of scholars. Dante believed that poets should write in the language of the people—in his case, Italian. In 1304, he published *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, in which he argued for the use of the common tongue in works of literature. He wrote many lyric poems in Italian; however, it was with his *Divine Comedy* that he created the crowning achievement of medieval literature.

**Principle of the Trinity** Completed shortly before his death, the *Commedia*, which later gained the honorific title *Divina*, documents the physical and spiritual journey of a man who is also named Dante. Dante used the number three, which represents the Christian concept of the trinity, as an organizing principle for the *Divine Comedy*. Consisting of 100 cantos, the poem is divided into three parts—the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso*. Each part contains thirty-three cantos; there is also an introductory first canto for the *Inferno*, the only one that takes place on Earth. Within each canto, the verse form is *terza rima*, a stanza of three lines. In addition, Dante's journey takes three days, beginning on Good Friday and ending on Easter Sunday.

**The Love of His Life** Guiding Dante on his pilgrimage is his beloved Beatrice, whose name means "she who blesses." It is believed that Dante modeled his literary Beatrice on the real-life Beatrice Portinari. Although evidence suggests that Dante saw the real Beatrice only twice in his life—first when he was nine years old and then again nine years later—she became for Dante the force that led him out of his despair. She was first the subject of his love poetry; later, she became both the object of his religious quest and a symbol of spiritual purity. Beatrice, the guiding presence in Dante's life and in his poem, is literally and symbolically his link between heaven and Earth.

In 1321, shortly after completing the *Paradiso*, Dante died in the city of Ravenna in northern Italy.

### ation

students' attention by g that the selection describes ic journey. Ask students to airs to brainstorm for other oems, films, songs, or works it use the theme of a journey. unteers explain the journey in he works cited, its symbolic ice to the narrator or main r, and why the creator might d a journey as the theme in he works cited. Then, have list features of journeys that em appropriate symbolic s.

### ckground

#### About the Author

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### raphy Note

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**Facilitate Understanding**

Ask students whether they have ever visited a haunted house or house of horrors. Inform them that Dante is about to take them on a journey that is in some way comparable to such an adventure. Then, ask them to describe briefly the feelings they experienced when they first approached such attractions.

**1 About the Selection**

In this vivid and gripping canto, the first of the *Inferno*, Dante describes the horrors of Hell. The poet is beginning a journey from despair to hope, as he confronts the nature and consequences of sin.

Canto I relates how the middle-aged poet, having lost faith, finds himself lost and alone in a dark wood. There he finds a guide, the Roman poet Virgil, who will lead him out of his errors and back onto the path toward hope.

**2 Humanities**

*The Forest, Inferno I*, by Gustave Doré

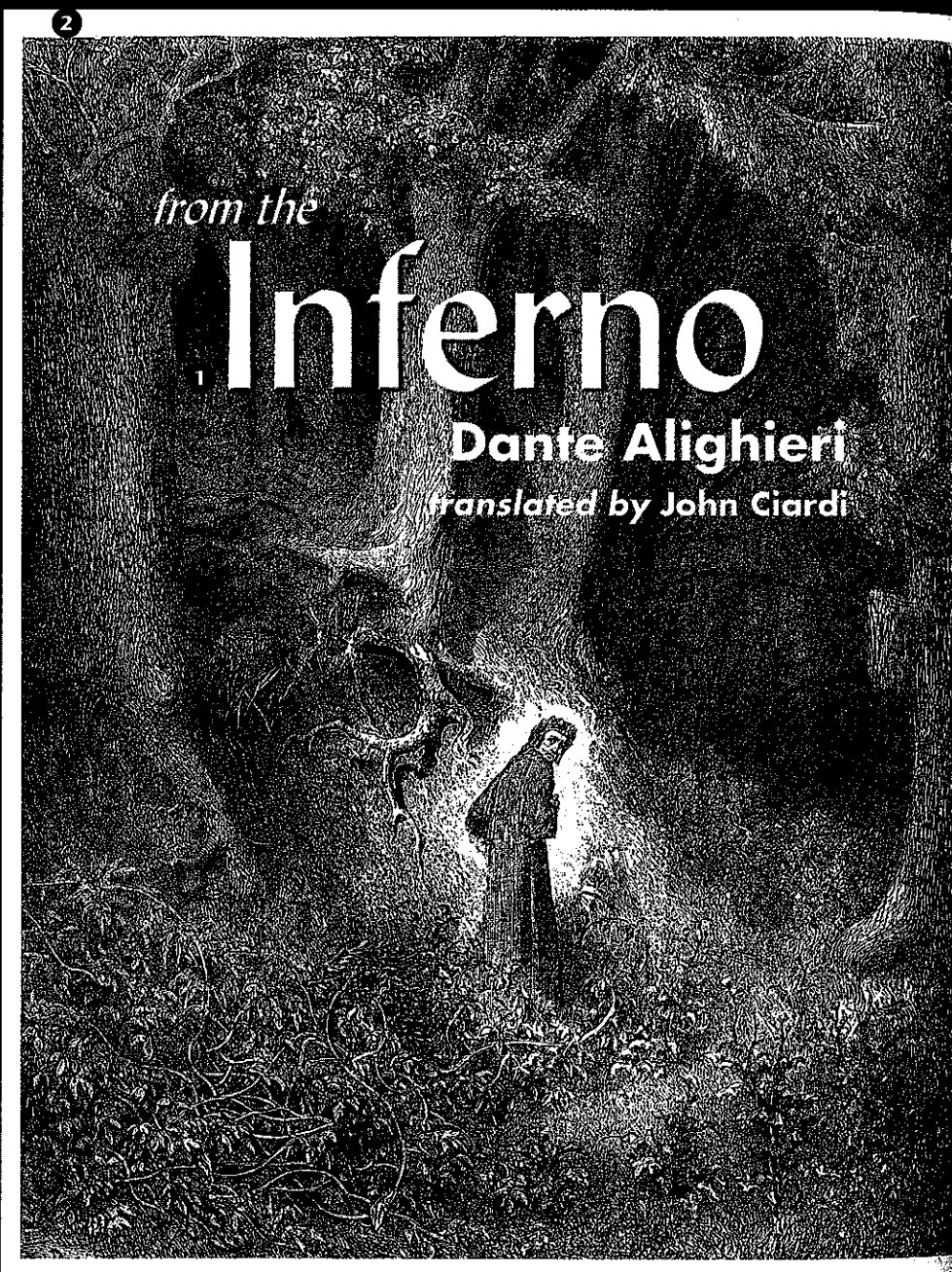
The French artist Doré (1832–1883) published several large-scale illustrated books at the height of his career. He lavishly illustrated these deluxe editions with engravings of his drawings. Dante's *Inferno*, one of the works selected, enjoyed tremendous success.

In this engraving, the poet is shown standing "alone in a dark wood."

Use the following questions for discussion:

- Why do you suppose the figure is looking around?  
**Answer:** He is worried and wants to make sure that nothing dangerous is nearby.

- What lines in the poem might the artist have been referring to when creating his illustration?  
**Answer:** The artist might have been referring to lines 1–7.



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**Differentiated Instruction**

Solutions for All Learners

**Accessibility at a Glance**

	Canto I	Canto III
<b>Context</b>	Dante realizes his problem and meets his guide, Virgil.	Virgil leads Dante through the Gate and into Hell.
<b>Language</b>	Long sentences with symbolic words	Some dialogue within poetic narration
<b>Concept Level</b>	Accessible (Sin is dangerous.)	Accessible (Sinners will be punished.)
<b>Literary Merit</b>	Classic allegorical epic poem	Classic allegorical epic poem
<b>Lexile</b>	NP	NP
<b>Overall Rating</b>	Challenging	Challenging

**Background** The *Divine Comedy* is composed of three sections—the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso*. In the *Inferno*, the poet Virgil has been sent by Beatrice to lead Dante through Hell. Hell, a series of downward spiraling circles, is organized according to the gravity of the sin being punished. The lowest circle is reserved for traitors and Lucifer himself, the ultimate betrayer.

In Canto I of the *Inferno*, Dante first awakens to his plight and meets his guide. In Canto III, Virgil leads Dante through the Gate and into Hell itself.

**Canto I**

THE DARK WOOD OF ERROR

Midway in his allotted threescore years and ten, Dante comes to himself with a start and realizes that he has strayed from the True Way into the Dark Wood of Error (Worldliness). As soon as he has realized his loss, Dante lifts his eyes and sees the first light of the sunrise (the Sun is the Symbol of Divine Illumination) lighting the shoulders of a little hill (The Mount of Joy). It is the Easter Season, the time of resurrection, and the sun is in its equinoctial rebirth.<sup>1</sup> This juxtaposition of joyous symbols fills Dante with hope and he sets out at once to climb directly up the Mount of Joy, but almost immediately his way is blocked by the Three Beasts of Worldliness: *The Leopard of Malice and Fraud*, *The Lion of Violence and Ambition*, and *The She-Wolf of Incontinence*.<sup>2</sup> These beasts, and especially the She-Wolf, drive him back despairing into the darkness of error. But just as all seems lost, a figure appears to him. It is the shade of Virgil,<sup>3</sup> Dante's symbol of Human Reason.

Virgil explains that he has been sent to lead Dante from error. There can, however, be no direct ascent past the beasts: the man who would escape them must go a longer and harder way. First he must descend through Hell (The Recognition of Sin), then he must ascend through Purgatory (The Renunciation of Sin), and only then may he reach the pinnacle of joy and come to the Light of God. Virgil offers to guide Dante, but only as far as Human Reason can go. Another guide (*Beatrice*, symbol of *Divine Love*) must take over for the final ascent, for Human Reason is self-limited. Dante submits himself joyously to Virgil's guidance and they move off.

3 Midway in our life's journey,<sup>4</sup> I went astray from the straight road and woke to find myself alone in a dark wood. How shall I say

1. **equinoctial** (ē' kwi nāk' shəl) **rebirth** After the vernal equinox, which occurs about March 21, days become longer than nights.
2. **Incontinence** (in kən' te nens) *n.* lack of self-restraint.
3. **Virgil** (vir' jəl) great Roman poet (70–19 B.C.).
4. **Midway in our life's journey** The biblical life span is threescore years and ten—seventy years. The action opens in Dante's thirty-fifth year, i.e., A.D. 1300.

4 **Critical Viewing** Which elements in this engraving portray Dante's "dark wood of error" as an ominous, threatening place? [Analyze]

**Literary Analysis**

**Allegory** Which details in the opening lines immediately suggest the allegorical nature of the poem? Explain.

5 **Reading Check**

At what time of year does Dante's tale take place?

from the *Inferno: Canto I* ■ 659

**3 Literary Analysis**

**Allegory**

- Review with students the defining characteristics of an allegory on p. 657.
- Have students review lines 1–3 and consider details that indicate allegory. For example, point out the use of both the plural and singular first-person pronoun ("our" and "I"). Explain that this usage suggests the poem will be about both a single man, the poet, and, allegorically, about the entire human race.
- Then, ask students the Literary Analysis question: Which details in the opening lines immediately suggest the allegorical nature of the poem? Explain.  
**Answer:** The reference to a life's journey, to veering from the straight road, and to being alone in a dark wood all suggest an allegorical, not literal, journey.

**4 Critical Viewing**

**Answer:** Students might note the shadows; the tiny figure amidst a large, dark wood; and the tangled undergrowth as elements that suggest an ominous, threatening place.

**5 Reading Check**

**Answer:** It takes place in the spring, near the Christian holiday of Easter.

**Differentiated Instruction**

Solutions for All Learners

**Strategy for Less Proficient Readers**

Have students write out difficult passages and work to identify sentence parts. If necessary, help students paraphrase sentences or rearrange the syntax to clarify meaning. Also, urge students to use the dictionary to find the meanings of unfamiliar words not treated in the accompanying notes.

**Support for English Learners**

Before students read, choose some longer sentences and model the process of breaking a sentence into its main subject and verb to determine its basic meaning. Ask: "Who is this sentence about? What is happening to this subject? What symbolic meaning might the text have?"

**Enrichment for Advanced Readers**

Challenge students to discuss their experiences with films and stories that contain elements of allegory. Remind them of how allegory works in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, a novel many will know. Ask them to explain how the characters in this novel represent concepts.

## 6 Reading Strategy

### Interpreting Imagery

- Read aloud the bracketed passage. Point out that the speaker describes his state as “drugged and loose with sleep.”
- Ask students to describe the image that these words bring to mind.
- Ask students what sense this narcotic state gives to Dante’s tale. **Possible response:** It gives the story a surreal quality, as if it were a dream.

## 7 Literary Analysis

### Allegory

- Ask a volunteer to read aloud lines 31–36. Have students identify the character of the leopard introduced here.
- Explain that the animal is a real threat but that it also represents an abstract idea. Recall with students the old story about the leopard that changed his spots to fool the other animals.
- Ask students to predict what abstract ideas Dante might represent through the leopard. **Possible response:** Predictions should include ideas of danger, deceit, or fraud.

## 8 Critical Viewing

**Possible response:** The illustrations emphasize the fierce and frightening qualities associated with each animal. The illustrations are not intended to be realistic; rather, they portray the animals in a way that taps into the viewer’s primal fear of what is “wild.”

what wood that was! I never saw so drear,  
so rank, so arduous<sup>5</sup> a wilderness!  
Its very memory gives a shape to fear.

Death could scarce be more bitter than that place!  
But since it came to good, I will recount  
all that I found revealed there by God’s grace.

6 How I came to it I cannot rightly say,  
so drugged and loose with sleep had I become  
when I first wandered there from the True Way.

But at the far end of that valley of evil  
whose maze had sapped my very heart with fear  
I found myself before a little hill

and lifted up my eyes. Its shoulders glowed  
already with the sweet rays of that planet<sup>6</sup>  
whose virtue leads men straight on every road,

and the shining strengthened me against the fright  
whose agony had wracked the lake of my heart  
through all the terrors of that piteous night.

Just as a swimmer, who with his last breath  
flounders ashore from perilous seas, might turn  
to memorize the wide water of his death—

25 so did I turn, my soul still fugitive  
from death’s surviving image, to stare down  
that pass that none had ever left alive.

And there I lay to rest from my heart’s race  
till calm and breath returned to me. Then rose  
and pushed up that dead slope at such a pace

7 each footfall rose above the last. And lo!  
almost at the beginning of the rise  
I faced a spotted Leopard,<sup>7</sup> all tremor and flow

5. **so rank, so arduous** (ar’ jō əs) so overgrown, so difficult to cross.
6. **that planet** the sun. Medieval astronomers considered the sun a planet. In the *Divine Comedy*, the sun is also symbolic of God.
7. **a spotted Leopard** The three beasts that Dante encounters are taken from the Bible, Jeremiah 5:6. While numerous interpretations have been advanced for them, many scholars agree that they foreshadow the three divisions of Hell (incontinence, violence, and fraud), which Virgil explains at length in Canto XI, 16–111.

**Vocabulary Builder**  
flounders (floun’ derz) *v.*  
struggles to move



8 **Critical Viewing**  
Do you think these illustrations of the leopard (this page), the lion, and the wolf (facing page) emphasize each animal’s realistic appearance or its symbolic meaning? Explain. **[Make a Judgment]**

### Enrichment

#### Language of the Common People

Dante was one of the first great authors in history to write in the language spoken by ordinary people in his time and country. By choosing Italian instead of Latin, Dante knew that his writing and message would reach more people.

At the time, learned people from many countries would have known Latin and would have communicated with one another in that language. Even today, some Roman Catholic religious orders communicate to members

across the world in Latin, and the supporters of Esperanto seek to encourage the development of a common language to be used throughout the world. Ask students to brainstorm for challenges that Dante would have faced, as well as advantages he would have gained, by his decision. Then, have students speculate on the advantages of having a more universal language, like the Latin that Dante put aside when writing *The Divine Comedy*.

7 and gaudy pelt. And it would not pass, but stood  
so blocking my every turn that time and again  
I was on the verge of turning back to the wood.

This fell at the first widening of the dawn  
as the sun climbing Aries with those stars  
that rode with him to light the new creation.<sup>8</sup>

40 Thus the holy hour and the sweet season  
of commemoration did much to arm my fear  
of that bright murderous beast with their good omen.

Yet not so much but what I shook with dread  
at sight of a great Lion that broke upon me  
raging with hunger, its enormous head

45 held high as if to strike a mortal terror  
into the very air. And down his track,  
a She-Wolf drove upon me, a starved horror

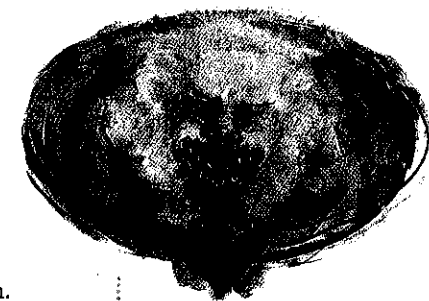
ravaging and wasted beyond all belief.  
50 She seemed a rack for avarice,<sup>9</sup> gaunt and craving.  
Oh many the souls she has brought to endless grief!

55 She brought such heaviness upon my spirit  
at sight of her savagery and desperation,  
I died from every hope of that high summit.

And like a miser—eager in acquisition  
but desperate in self-reproach when Fortune’s wheel  
turns to the hour of his loss—all tears and attrition!<sup>10</sup>

60 I wavered back; and still the beast pursued,  
forcing herself against me bit by bit  
till I slid back into the sunless wood.

8. **Aries . . . new creation** The medieval tradition held that the sun was in the zodiacal sign of Aries at the time of the Creation. The significance of the astronomical and religious conjunction is an important part of Dante’s intended allegory. It is just before dawn of Good Friday A.D. 1300 when he awakens in the Dark Wood. Thus, his new life begins under Aries, the sign of creation, at dawn (rebirth) and in the Easter Season (which commemorates the resurrection of Jesus). Moreover, the moon is full and the sun is in the equinox, conditions that did not fall together on any Friday of 1300. Dante is poetically constructing the perfect Easter as a symbol of his new awakening.
9. **a rack for avarice** an instrument of torture for greed.
10. **attrition** (ə trish’ ən) *n.* weakening; wearing away.



**Literary Analysis**  
**Allegory** In what ways is Dante’s reaction to the beasts more realistic than heroic? Explain.

**Reading Check**  
What does Dante see on the other side of the “valley of evil”?

## 9 Literary Analysis

### Allegory

- Point out that Dante faces a leopard, a lion, and a wolf. Then, discuss the qualities of a hero: larger than life, extraordinarily brave.
- Invite a volunteer to read aloud lines 43–60, conveying the emotions reflected by the situation and language.
- Then, ask students the Literary Analysis question: In what ways is Dante’s reaction to the beasts more realistic than heroic? Explain. **Answer:** Dante’s reaction is more realistic than heroic because Dante shakes with dread, feels despair, and runs from the beasts, whereas a heroic character would likely face down the beasts and fight.

➤ **Monitor Progress** As students consider the questions, urge them to think about how Dante’s ordinary reactions function allegorically.

## 10 Critical Thinking

### Infer

- Discuss Dante’s reaction to the She-Wolf.
- Ask students why Dante seems so frightened of the She-Wolf and convinced that the animal will destroy his hopes for reaching the “high summit.” **Answer:** Representing the temptation to sin, the She-Wolf, as Dante knows, has “devoured” many—that is, many have been destroyed by their greed.

## 11 Reading Check

**Answer:** Dante sees a spotted leopard.

## Differentiated

### Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

#### Support for Special Needs Students

Some students will have difficulty with imagery. Give them a copy of **Reading Strategy Graphic Organizer B**, p. 118 in *Graphic Organizer Transparencies*. They can use the completed graphic organizer as a model for identifying an image, determining what senses are involved in the image, and interpreting imagery as they read.

#### Strategy for Less Proficient Readers

Encourage students to read each canto all the way through in one sitting. Suggest that they make notes about passages they find confusing, such as Dante’s encounter with the three beasts. Reading further may clarify points. If this strategy does not prove helpful, students can return to the passages and ask questions.

#### Support for English Learners

Students may have difficulty interpreting Dante’s verses and imagery. Review the Reading Strategy instruction on p. 637. Then give them **Reading Warm-up A**, page 45 in *Unit 5 Resources*. Have students keep a list of images they encounter as they read. Encourage them to ask questions about the meaning of those images they do not understand.



## 12 Humanities

### 15th-century Italian manuscript illumination from Dante's *Inferno*

This illustration appeared as the frontispiece for Dante's *Inferno*. Created as an illumination, it would have featured strong colors, such as this red.

Use the following question to stimulate discussion:

How does the artist use color to focus viewers' attention on important elements?

**Answer:** Virgil and Dante, both crucial elements of the image, appear in vibrant red and blue (respectively), colors that attract viewers' attention.

## 13 Critical Viewing

**Possible response:** Virgil may be reassuring the poet. He also may be telling Dante to trust and rely on him for help.

## 14 Critical Thinking

### Interpret

- Read aloud the bracketed passage. Ask students to discuss what Virgil means by "false and lying gods."
- Then, **ask** why this statement points to a significant difference between Virgil and Dante.

**Answer:** Virgil implies that he was not a Christian in life but rather a follower of the ancient Roman religion; therefore, although he represents the highest insights open to unaided reason, he is lacking the insights Dante believed Christianity offers as well as the accompanying sense of hope.

## 15 Vocabulary Builder

### Latin Root -trem-

- Call students' attention to the word *tremulous* and its definition. Explain that the Latin word root -trem- means "tremble."
- Discuss how and why a voice might tremble.
- Invite volunteers to demonstrate a tremulous voice.

And as I fell to my soul's ruin, a presence gathered before me on the discolored air, the figure of one who seemed hoarse from long silence.

At sight of him in that friendless waste I cried:  
"Have pity on me, whatever thing you are, whether shade or living man." And it replied:

"Not man, though man I once was, and my blood was Lombard, both my parents Mantuan.<sup>11</sup> I was born, though late, *sub Julio*,<sup>12</sup> and bred

in Rome under Augustus in the noon of the false and lying gods.<sup>13</sup> I was a poet and sang of old Anchises' noble son

who came to Rome after the burning of Troy.<sup>14</sup> But you—why do *you* return to these distresses instead of climbing that shining Mount of Joy

which is the seat and first cause of man's bliss?"  
"And are you then that Virgil and that fountain of purest speech?" My voice grew tremulous:

"Glory and light of poets! now may that zeal and love's apprenticeship that I poured out on your heroic verses serve me well!

For you are my true master and first author, the sole maker from whom I drew the breath of that sweet style whose measures have brought me honor.

See there, immortal sage, the beast I flee.  
For my soul's salvation, I beg you, guard me from her, for she has struck a mortal tremor through me."

11. **Lombard . . . Mantuan** Lombardy is a region of northern Italy; Mantua, the birthplace of Virgil, is a city in that region.
12. **sub Julio** in the reign of Julius Caesar. It would be more accurate to say that he was born during the lifetime of Caesar (102?–44 B.C.). Augustus did not begin his rule as dictator until long after Virgil's birth, which occurred in 70 B.C.
13. **under Augustus . . . gods** Augustus, the grandnephew of Julius Caesar, was the emperor of Rome from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14. The "lying gods" are the gods of classical mythology.
14. **and sang . . . Troy** Virgil's epic poem, the *Aeneid*, describes the destruction of Troy by the Greeks and the founding of Roman civilization by the Trojan Aeneas, son of Anchises (an kī sēz).

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**13** **Critical Viewing** In this fifteenth-century illustration of Canto I, what do you think Virgil, in red, is telling Dante? [Connect]



### Vocabulary Builder

**tremulous** (trēm' yōō les)

adj. quivering; shaking

**zeal** (zēl) n. ardor; fervor

And he replied, seeing my soul in tears:  
"He must go by another way who would escape this wilderness, for that mad beast that fleers<sup>15</sup>

before you there, suffers no man to pass. She tracks down all, kills all, and knows no glut, but, feeding, she grows hungrier than she was.

She mates with any beast, and will mate with more before the Greyhound comes to hunt her down. He will not feed on lands nor loot, but honor

and love and wisdom will make straight his way. He will rise between Feltro and Feltro,<sup>16</sup> and in him shall be the resurrection and new day

of that sad Italy for which Nisus died, and Turnus, and Euryalus, and the maid Camilla.<sup>17</sup> He shall hunt her through every nation of sick pride

till she is driven back forever to Hell whence Envy first released her on the world. Therefore, for your own good, I think it well

you follow me and I will be your guide and lead you forth through an eternal place. There you shall see the ancient spirits tried

in endless pain, and hear their lamentation as each bemoans the second death<sup>18</sup> of souls. Next you shall see upon a burning mountain<sup>19</sup>

souls in fire and yet content in fire, knowing that whensoever it may be they yet will mount into the blessed choir.

15. **fleers** (flīrz) laughs scornfully.
16. **the Greyhound . . . Feltro and Feltro** The Greyhound almost certainly refers to Can Grande della Scala (1290–1329), a great Italian leader born in Verona, which lies between the towns of Feltre and Montefeltro.
17. **Nisus . . . Camilla** All were killed in the war between the Trojans and the Latians when, according to legend, Aeneas led the survivors of Troy into Italy. Nisus and Euryalus (*Aeneid IX*) were Trojan comrades-in-arms who died together. Camilla (*Aeneid XI*) was the daughter of the Latian king and one of the warrior women. She was killed in a horse charge against the Trojans after displaying great gallantry. Turnus (*Aeneid XII*) was killed by Aeneas in a duel.
18. **the second death** damnation.
19. **a burning mountain** Mountain of Purgatory.

### Literary Analysis

**Allegory** Based on Virgil's comments, do you think the She-Wolf symbolizes Dante's social, political, religious, or moral concerns? Explain.

## 16 Literary Analysis

### Allegory

- Explain that gluttony is one of the seven deadly sins in Christianity, so Dante's depiction of the She-Wolf suggests concern about excessive appetite in some area.
  - Draw students' attention to footnote 16, and point out the political context that it suggests. Discuss how appetite could pose problems in the political context.
  - Then, read aloud the bracketed passage. **Ask** students the Literary Analysis question: Based on Virgil's comments, do you think the She-Wolf symbolizes Dante's social, political, religious, or moral concerns? Explain.
- Possible response:** The wolf symbolizes Dante's political concerns—perhaps his political ambition, which can consume all judgment.

## 17 Critical Thinking

### Interpret

- Have a volunteer read aloud lines 111–112. **Ask** students what Dante might mean by "souls in fire and yet content in fire."
- Possible response:** The souls are in pain but willing to submit to the pain for some reason.
- **Ask** why someone might be content to be in great physical or psychological pain.
- Possible response:** As the footnote says, the burning mountain refers to Purgatory, where Dante will travel after passing through Hell. In Purgatory, the suffering is borne in hope because it is a part of purification that will result in the ascension to Paradise.

## 18 Reading Check

**Answer:** Virgil offers to be Dante's guide, to lead him through the dangers of Hell and Purgatory to the far reaches of Heaven.

### Reading Check 18

What assistance does Virgil offer Dante?

from the *Inferno*: Canto I ■ 663

## Differentiated

### Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

#### Strategy for

#### Special Needs Students

Focus attention on the introduction of Virgil as Dante's guide. Explain that on p. 664, Dante asks Virgil to be his guide on his journey through the "sad halls of Hell." Ask what person, either real or fictional, students might choose to guide them on a difficult but important journey. Have them explain their choices.

#### Enrichment for

#### Gifted/Talented Students

Challenge students to explain why Dante's view of Virgil led him to include the ancient poet as his guide through the *Inferno*. Ask them to research and prepare a short presentation on Virgil and his epic, the *Aeneid*. Urge them to demonstrate why Dante held Virgil in high esteem.

#### Strategy for

#### Advanced Readers

Tell students that at this point in the epic, Dante gains his remarkable guide for his journey through Hell: Virgil. As students read, have them analyze Virgil's role and what he symbolizes. Ask students whether Virgil is lacking any quality or characteristic that might prevent him from being the perfect guide.

## Enrichment

### Mentoring Programs

Dante calls Virgil his "true master" and means it in two senses: Virgil was his poetic model and has now become his guide and teacher on his journey through Hell and Purgatory. The word *mentor*, meaning a wise and trusted advisor, also comes from a classical epic. Mentor was the teacher of Telemachus, the son of Odysseus, hero of Homer's great epic poem the *Odyssey*. Today, many communities have instituted mentoring programs, in which older people become mentors to younger people. These

programs have been especially successful in helping young people learn about careers, take personal responsibility in their lives, and improve their communities.

Ask students to work together in small groups to research the availability and activities of mentoring programs in your community. After student groups report to the class on their findings, have them compare activities of community mentors with the help Virgil provides to Dante.

## Literary Analysis

### Allegory

Remind students that the central allegory in the poem is the journey as a symbol for life. Remind them that Dante divides the poem, and his journey, in three: He travels from Hell (sin) to Purgatory (penitence) to Paradise (beatitude).

Then, **ask** students the Literary Analysis question.

**Possible response:** Readers who are aware of Dante's route and ultimate destination will grasp that his journey corresponds allegorically to the education of the soul, passing from sin to redemption.

## ASSESS

### Answers

**Possible response:** Students might find the experience of facing the angry She-Wolf most terrifying.

2. (a) The Leopard, the Lion, and the She-Wolf block Dante's path. (b) The leopard represents deceit; the lion, pride or cruelty; and the She-Wolf, greed. (c) The leopard's looks vary and can fool viewers, depending on how many spots it has; people often think of the lion not only as the proud king of the animals but also as a cruel hunter; the wolf is viewed as ravenous.

3. (a) The Roman poet Virgil rescues Dante. (b) It suggests that Dante values the literature and ideas of ancient (or classical) times.

4. (a) **Possible response:** In lines 40–54, Dante speaks of his dread of the Lion and the She-Wolf; in lines 79–88, Dante speaks of his admiration for Virgil. (b) Dante is learned and educated. He values antiquity and lacks arrogance. He is emotional and perhaps feels repentant. (c) He will be strongly affected by them because he feels emotion intensely.

5. **Possible response:** The situation seems like a fantasy—the characters appear much larger than life, the setting is reminiscent of scary stories, and a character (Virgil) appears from the afterlife.

**Go Online** For additional information about Dante Alighieri, have students type in the Web Code, then select A from the alphabet, and then select Dante Alighieri.

115 To which, if it is still your wish to climb,  
a worthier spirit<sup>20</sup> shall be sent to guide you.  
With her shall I leave you, for the King of Time,

who reigns on high, forbids me to come there<sup>21</sup>  
since, living, I rebelled against his law.  
120 He rules the waters and the land and air

and there holds court, his city and his throne.  
Oh blessed are they he chooses!" And I to him:  
"Poet, by that God to you unknown,

19 lead me this way. Beyond this present ill  
125 and worse to dread, lead me to Peter's gate<sup>22</sup>  
and be my guide through the sad halls of Hell."

And he then: "Follow." And he moved ahead  
in silence, and I followed where he led.

20. a worthier spirit Beatrice.

21. forbids me to come there In Dante's theology, salvation is achieved only through Christ. Virgil lived and died before the establishment of Christ's teachings in Rome and therefore cannot enter Heaven.

22. Peter's gate the gate of Purgatory. The gate is guarded by an angel with a gleaming sword. The angel is Peter's vicar and is entrusted with the two great keys.

## Critical Reading

- Respond:** Which part of Dante's experience in the Dark Wood did you find most frightening? Explain.
- (a) **Recall:** Which three beasts block Dante's path?  
(b) **Interpret:** What emotion or idea does each beast represent?  
(c) **Analyze:** Why is each beast an appropriate choice for the emotion or idea it represents?
- (a) **Recall:** Who rescues Dante? (b) **Infer:** What does the author's choice of rescuer and guide reveal about Dante's values?
- (a) **Interpret:** Identify at least two lines in Canto I that reveal strong emotion in Dante. (b) **Analyze:** Based on his thoughts, emotions, and actions thus far, how would you describe Dante's character?  
(c) **Speculate:** Based on your understanding of his character, how do you think Dante will respond to the sights and sounds of Hell? Explain.
- Evaluate:** Does Dante the character seem like a real man on a real journey, or does the whole situation presented in Canto I seem like a fantasy? Explain.

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## Enrichment

### A Dante Symphony

Dante's poem *The Divine Comedy* has inspired other artists, writers, and even composers. The great Hungarian composer, pianist, and conductor Franz Liszt (1811–1886) was one of the best-known figures of his day. His fame and charisma matched that of today's rock stars or professional athletes. In 1856, he composed his *Dante Symphony*, the first movement of which is entitled "Inferno." In this work, Liszt used music to re-create the emotions and ideas of Dante's poem.

Obtain a recording of the *Dante Symphony*, and play the first movement for students. Ask them to discuss how well Liszt succeeds in portraying Dante's thoughts and images, as well as differences in the way music and language portray emotional states. Have students point out passages in the music that they believe reflect the moods in Canto I and later in Canto III. Conclude by asking students whether they can name other musical works that are based on works of literature.

## Literary Analysis

**Allegory** At the end of Canto I, Dante lays out the structure of his entire poem. In what ways does this help the reader grasp the allegory?

## 20 Canto III

### THE VESTIBULE OF HELL

### The Opportunists

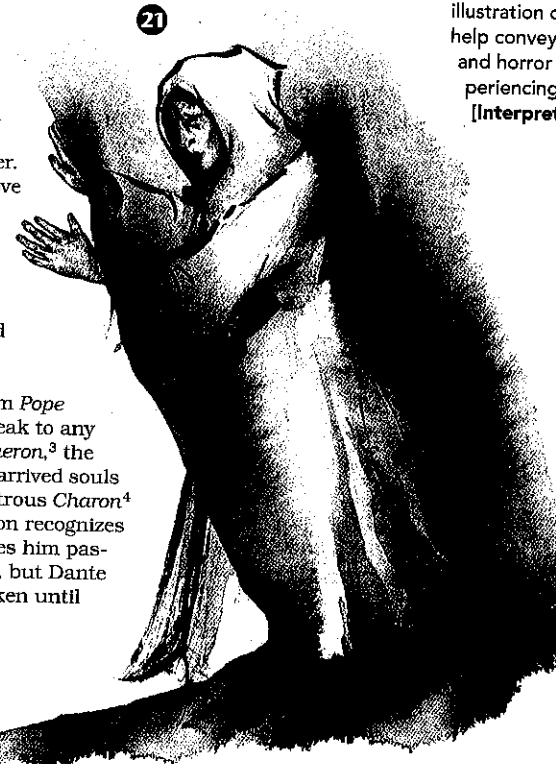
The Poets pass the Gate of Hell and are immediately assailed by cries of anguish. Dante sees the first of the souls in torment. They are *The Opportunists*, those souls who in life were neither for good nor evil but only for themselves. Mixed with them are those outcasts who took no sides in the Rebellion of the Angels.<sup>1</sup> They are neither in Hell nor out of it. Eternally unclassified, they race round and round pursuing a wavering banner that runs forever before them through the dirty air; and as they run they are pursued by swarms of wasps and hornets, who sting them and produce a constant flow of blood and putrid matter which trickles down the bodies of the sinners and is feasted upon by loathsome worms and maggots who coat the ground.

The law of Dante's Hell is the law of symbolic retribution. As they sinned so are they punished. They took no sides, therefore they are given no place. As they pursued the ever-shifting illusion of their own advantage, changing their courses with every changing wind, so they pursue eternally an elusive, ever-shifting banner. As their sin was a darkness, so they move in darkness.

As their own guilty conscience pursued them, so they are pursued by swarms of wasps and hornets. And as their actions were a moral filth, so they run eternally through the filth of worms and maggots which they themselves feed.

Dante recognizes several, among them Pope Celestine V,<sup>2</sup> but without delaying to speak to any of these souls, the Poets move on to Acheron,<sup>3</sup> the first of the rivers of Hell. Here the newly arrived souls of the damned gather and wait for monstrous Charon<sup>4</sup> to ferry them over to punishment. Charon recognizes Dante as a living man and angrily refuses him passage. Virgil forces Charon to serve them, but Dante swoons with terror, and does not reawaken until he is on the other side.

I AM THE WAY INTO THE CITY OF WOE,  
I AM THE WAY TO A FORSAKEN PEOPLE,  
I AM THE WAY INTO ETERNAL SORROW.



- Rebellion of the Angels** In Christian tradition, Satan and other angels who rebelled against God were cast out of heaven; see the Bible, Revelation 12:7–9.
- Pope Celestine V** He lived from 1215 to 1296.
- Acheron** (ak' er ən')
- Charon** (ker' en)

**Vocabulary Builder**  
putrid (pyoo' trid) adj.  
rotten; stinking

22 **Critical Viewing**  
Which details in this illustration of Dante help convey the fear and horror he is experiencing? Explain. [Interpret]

23 **Reading Check**  
What is the law of Dante's Hell?

from the *Inferno: Canto III* ■ 665

## 20 About the Selection

In Canto III, Dante and Virgil meet the boatman Charon and see the multitudes of damned. As might be expected, the journey is filled with macabre images.

## 21 Humanities

**Dante in the Dark Woods**, by Suloni Robertson

This image—as well as those of the leopard, lion, and wolf on pp. 660–661—was created by the graphic artist Suloni Robertson. Robertson's illustrations are featured in *Dante-worlds* (<http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu>), an online multimedia presentation that guides viewers through Dante's *Inferno*.

Use the following question to stimulate discussion:

What emotions does this illustration evoke? Explain.

**Possible response:** The dark tones of red and orange, Dante's pained expression, and his gesture evoke feelings of fear.

## 22 Critical Viewing

**Possible response:** Dante averts his eyes and uses his hands as if to protect himself from the horrors he sees. A heavy cloak and hood protect his figure.

## 23 Reading Check

**Answer:** The law of Dante's Hell is the law of symbolic retribution.

## Differentiated

### Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

#### Support for Special Needs Students

Ask students to consider the effect of first impressions when they enter a house or building. What purposes do entrances serve? How do they make people feel? Have students imagine different types of entrances: the front doors of a school, the mechanical doors of a supermarket, the pillars guarding the entrance to a public building. How does each make someone entering the building feel? Link answers to Dante's vestibule of Hell and the fear such an image suggests.

#### Support for English Learners

Help students clarify the central images that Dante uses to open Canto III, beginning with the title. Explain that a vestibule is a hallway or antechamber located at the entrance of a house or building. If possible, show pictures or take students to a vestibule on school property. Discuss how a vestibule could symbolize the beginning in the context of a journey, and help students see how this image fits with the overall journey structure of Dante's work.

## 24 Literary Analysis

### Allegory

• Discuss the many everyday journeys on which medieval people might pass through a gate. Remind students that cities had walls and that people had to pass through gates to enter the cities. Then, explain that gates, like doorways, often symbolize transitions or beginnings in literature.

• Have students read the bracketed text carefully and consider the situation it describes.

• Then, **ask** students the first Literary Analysis question: In what ways does Dante's use of a gate, an object familiar to all medieval people, make his allegory seem all the more real?

**Possible response:** Medieval people used gates to pass from field to field or from town to town. The image of passing through a gate to reach Hell makes the allegory seem very ordinary and possible.

## 25 Literary Analysis

### Allegory and Imagery

• Invite a volunteer to read aloud the bracketed passage. Call on another student to **review** the definitions of allegory and imagery.

**Answer:** Allegory is a literary work with both literal and symbolic meanings. Imagery is the use of language that creates mental pictures for readers by appealing to the five senses.

• **Ask** students the second Literary Analysis question: Why do you think the imagery at this point in the poem appeals almost solely to the sense of hearing?

**Possible response:** Perhaps because it is dark in Hell, Dante's imagery appeals to the sense of hearing. It might be the strongest sense in such a situation.

► **Monitor Progress** Ask students to discuss different types of images that would appeal to each of the five senses.

► **Reteach** Have students focus on two or three images. Explain that the sense of touch involves not only the fingers touching a surface or an object but also the sensations of heat, cold, wind, dampness, and so on.

SACRED JUSTICE MOVED MY ARCHITECT.

5 I WAS RAISED HERE BY DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE,  
PRIMORDIAL<sup>5</sup> LOVE AND ULTIMATE INTELLECT.

ONLY THOSE ELEMENTS TIME CANNOT WEAR<sup>6</sup>  
WERE MADE BEFORE ME, AND BEYOND TIME I STAND.<sup>7</sup>  
ABANDON ALL HOPE YE WHO ENTER HERE.

24 10 These mysteries I read cut into stone  
above a gate. And turning I said: "Master,  
what is the meaning of this harsh inscription?"

And he then as initiate to novice:<sup>8</sup>  
"Here must you put by all division of spirit  
15 and gather your soul against all cowardice.

This is the place I told you to expect.  
Here you shall pass among the fallen people,  
souls who have lost the good of intellect."

20 So saying, he put forth his hand to me,  
and with a gentle and encouraging smile  
he led me through the gate of mystery.

Here sighs and cries and walls coiled and recoiled  
on the starless air, spilling my soul to tears.  
A confusion of tongues and monstrous accents toiled

25 in pain and anger. Voices hoarse and shrill  
and sounds of blows, all intermingled, raised  
tumult and pandemonium<sup>9</sup> that still

25 whirls on the air forever dirty with it  
as if a whirlwind sucked at sand. And I,  
30 holding my head in horror, cried: "Sweet Spirit,

what souls are these who run through this black haze?"  
And he to me: "These are the nearly soulless  
whose lives concluded neither blame nor praise.

5. **primordial** (prī mōr' dē el) *adj.* existing from the beginning.

6. **only . . . wear** The Angels, the Empyrean (the highest heaven), and the First Matter are the elements time cannot wear, for they will last forever. Human beings, being mortal, are not eternal. The Gate of Hell, therefore, was created before people.

7. **and . . . stand** So odious is sin to God that there can be no end to its just punishment.

8. **as initiate to novice as one who knows to one who does not.**

9. **pandemonium** (pan' de mō' nē em) word coined by English poet John Milton (1608–1674) to identify the demons' capital in hell; now describes any place or scene of noise, wild disorder, and confusion.

**Literary Analysis**  
**Allegory** In what ways does Dante's use of a gate, an object familiar to all medieval people, make his allegory seem all the more real?

**Literary Analysis**  
**Allegory and Imagery** Why do you think the imagery at this point in the poem appeals almost solely to the sense of hearing?

They are mixed here with that **despicable** corps  
35 of angels who were neither God nor Satan,  
but only for themselves. The High Creator

26 scourged<sup>10</sup> them from Heaven for its perfect beauty,  
and Hell will not receive them since the wicked  
might feel some glory over them." And I:

40 "Master, what gnaws at them so hideously  
their **lamentation** stuns the very air?"  
"They have no hope of death," he answered me,

"and in their blind and unattaining state  
their miserable lives have sunk so low  
45 that they must envy every other fate.

No word of them survives their living season.  
Mercy and Justice deny them even a name.  
Let us not speak of them: look, and pass on."

I saw a banner there upon the mist.  
50 Circling and circling, it seemed to **scorn** all pause.  
So it ran on, and still behind it pressed

28 a never-ending rout of souls in pain.  
I had not thought death had undone so many  
as passed before me in that mournful train.

55 And some I knew among them; last of all  
I recognized the shadow of that soul  
who, in his cowardice, made the Great Denial.<sup>11</sup>

At once I understood for certain: these  
were of that retrograde<sup>12</sup> and faithless crew  
60 hateful to God and to His enemies.

These wretches never born and never dead  
ran naked in a swarm of wasps and hornets  
that goaded them the more the more they fled,

10. **scourged** (skurj'd) *v.* whipped.

11. **who, in . . . Denial** This is almost certainly intended to be Celestine V, who became pope in 1294. He was a man of saintly virtue, but he allowed himself to be convinced by a priest named Benedetto that his soul was in danger since no man could live in the world without being damned. In fear for his soul, he withdrew from all worldly affairs and renounced the papacy. Benedetto promptly assumed the mantle himself and became Boniface VIII, a pope who became for Dante a symbol of all the worst corruptions of the church.

12. **retrograde** (re' tre grād') *adj.* moving backward.

### Vocabulary Builder

**despicable** (des' pi ke bel)  
*adj.* deserving to be despised; contemptible

### Vocabulary Builder

**lamentation** (lam' en tē shen)  
*n.* weeping; wailing

### Vocabulary Builder

**scorn** (skōrn) *v.* reject

### Reading Check 29

In the vestibule of Hell, with whom are the "nearly soulless" souls mixed?

from the *Inferno: Canto III* ■ 667

## 26 Background

### Comedy

Point out how the inhabitants here have been rejected by both Heaven and Hell. There is a bit of comedy, even if unintended, in Dante's description, which is similar to this old joke: "They said you weren't fit to live with pigs, but I defended you; I said you were."

## 27 Critical Thinking

### Connect

• Read the bracketed lines aloud for students. Have students **restate** the lines in their own words.

**Possible response:** What makes these people so terribly unhappy? They have no hope of ending their misery through death.

• **Ask** students to imagine situations in which death might seem welcome because of some circumstance. Invite them to suggest alternatives to despair.

**Answer:** Students may mention terminal illness or terrible grief. Alternatives could include counseling, support of clergy, or medication.

## 28 Reading Strategy

### Interpreting Imagery

• Remind students that imagery is the use of language that appeals to the senses and that creates mental pictures.

• After students read the bracketed passage, **ask** them what central image it contains.

**Answer:** It contains the central image of circles.

• Note that circles are endless. Then, **ask** students how this endlessness might contribute to the larger themes of Dante's work.

**Possible response:** It contributes to the theme of life as a journey that leads back to its beginnings.

## 29 Reading Check

**Answer:** These souls are mixed with the angels who would not commit to either God or Satan, choosing instead to serve their own interests.

## Differentiated

### Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

#### Support for Special Needs Students

Highlight dialogue and quotation marks in lines 11–18 and 29–39. Explain that dialogue is conversation between characters and that quotation marks indicate its beginning and end. Write lines 11–18 on the board; then, read aloud the lines in character. Stress the difference between the dialogue and narration in lines 11 and 13.

#### Support for Less Proficient Readers

Point out the dialogue in lines 11–18 and the quotation marks signaling the beginning and end of dialogue. Explain that Dante uses dialogue, or conversation, to give direction and purpose to the journey. Help students paraphrase lines 32–33: "these are the nearly soulless / whose lives concluded neither blame nor praise."

#### Strategy for English Learners

Review the dialogue in Canto III with students. Remind them that quotation marks signal the beginning and end of dialogue. Have students work in pairs to practice reading the dialogue in lines 11–18 and 29–39. If appropriate, have students read the passages aloud to gain experience in recognizing and reading English dialogue.



### 30 Literary Analysis

#### Allegory

- Review with students footnote 13, which identifies the old man as Charon, a figure from classical mythology.
  - Have students read the bracketed passage carefully, and draw their attention to the clue "ancient."
  - Then, ask students the Literary Analysis question: Judging from this character, in what ways has the mythology of ancient Greece and Rome provided Dante with source materials for his allegory?
- Possible response:** Mythology has given Dante characters, places, and concepts, which readers will recognize. He takes a figure from mythology and uses it for a Christian allegory.

- **Monitor Progress** Have students explain the allegory presented in the bracketed text. What do the shores and the river represent?
- Answer:** The shores are Life and Hell, or eternal punishment. The river is the boundary between these places.
- **Reteach** Use Literary Analysis support, page 47 in *Unit 5 Resources*, to reinforce students' understanding of allegory.

and made their faces stream with bloody gouts  
of pus and tears that dribbled to their feet  
to be swallowed there by loathsome worms and maggots.

Then looking onward I made out a throng  
assembled on the beach of a wide river,  
whereupon I turned to him: "Master, I long

to know what souls these are, and what strange usage  
makes them as eager to cross as they seem to be  
in this infected light." At which the Sage:

"All this shall be made known to you when we stand  
on the joyless beach of Acheron." And I  
cast down my eyes, sensing a reprimand

in what he said, and so walked at his side  
in silence and ashamed until we came  
through the dead cavern to that sunless tide.

There, steering toward us in an ancient ferry  
came an old man<sup>13</sup> with a white bush of hair,  
bellowing: "Woe to you depraved souls! Bury

here and forever all hope of Paradise:  
I come to lead you to the other shore,  
into eternal dark, into fire and ice.

And you who are living yet, I say begone  
from these who are dead." But when he saw me stand  
against his violence he began again:

"By other windings<sup>14</sup> and by other steerage  
shall you cross to that other shore. Not here! Not here!  
A lighter craft than mine must give you passage."

And my Guide to him: "Charon, bite back your spleen:  
this has been willed where what is willed must be,  
and is not yours to ask what it may mean."<sup>15</sup>

13. **an old man** Charon, the ferryman who transports dead souls across the Acheron in all classical mythology.
14. **By other windings** Charon recognizes Dante not only as a living man but as a soul in grace and knows, therefore, that the Infernal Ferry was not intended for him. He is probably referring to the fact that souls destined for Purgatory and Heaven assemble not at his ferry point but on the banks of the Tiber (a river that runs through Rome), from which they are transported by an Angel.
15. **Charon . . . mean** Virgil tells Charon to suppress his bad temper because God has ordained that Dante shall make this journey. Charon has no right to question God's orders.

#### Vocabulary Builder

**reprimand** (rep' re mand') v.  
chastise; blame

#### Literary Analysis

**Allegory** Judging from this character, in what ways has the mythology of ancient Greece and Rome provided Dante with source material for his allegory?

The steersman of that marsh of ruined souls,  
who wore a wheel of flame around each eye,  
stifled the rage that shook his woolly jowls.

But those unmanned and naked spirits there  
turned pale with fear and their teeth began to chatter  
at sound of his crude bellow. In despair

they blasphemed God, their parents, their time on earth,  
the race of Adam, and the day and the hour  
and the place and the seed and the womb that gave  
them birth.

But all together they drew to that grim shore  
where all must come who lose the fear of God.  
Weeping and cursing they come for evermore,

and demon Charon with eyes like burning coals  
herds them in, and with a whistling oar  
flails on the stragglers to his wake<sup>16</sup> of souls.

As leaves in autumn loosen and stream down  
until the branch stands bare above its tatters  
spread on the rustling ground, so one by one

the evil seed of Adam in its Fall<sup>17</sup>  
cast themselves, at his signal, from the shore  
and streamed away like birds who hear their call.

So they are gone over that shadowy water,  
and always before they reach the other shore  
a new noise stirs on this, and new throngs gather.

"My son," the courteous Master said to me,  
"all who die in the shadow of God's wrath  
converge to this from every clime and country.

And all pass over eagerly, for here  
Divine Justice transforms and spurs them so  
their dread turns wish: they yearn for what they fear.<sup>18</sup>

16. **wake** n. a watch over a corpse before burial, with a pun on waking up.
17. **Fall** This word has at least three different meanings: the season of fall, the fall of all humans with the sin of Adam and Eve, and the fall of individual sinners.
18. **they yearn . . . fear** Hell (allegorically, Sin) is what the souls of the damned really wish for. Hell is their actual and deliberate choice, for divine grace is denied to none who wish for it in their hearts.



## Themes in World Masterpieces

### The Vulgar Tongue 31

By composing the *Divine Comedy* in Italian, Dante implicitly rejected the use of Latin, the literary language of his day, in favor of the "vulgar" tongue. A vulgar tongue is the language spoken by the *vulgus*, the common people. In many cultures, centuries passed before the language spoken by ordinary people was accepted as a medium for the composition of literature. For example, in Japan, works written in Japanese were considered less significant than works written in Chinese until well into the twentieth century.

Works composed in "vulgar" tongues are more accessible to more people. As the common tongue becomes the dominant literary language, literature takes an increasingly important place in the life of a society. Literary works better express the real lives of the people; in turn, literature exerts a greater influence on the culture itself.

#### Connect to the Literature

Choose three or four words from this page and the facing page that seem to you to reflect the language of ordinary people.

#### 32 Reading Check

What hope does Charon tell the dead souls they must abandon?

### 31 Themes in World Literature

#### The Vulgar Tongue

In many cultures, the authors of important literature become prominent people in society with influence of their own. Dante, for example, is often seen as the father of Italian letters. Nearly all Italians, and many Italian Americans too, feel a great sense of pride in Dante's work. Like William Shakespeare to the British and James Joyce to the Irish, Dante represents the writer as national hero. In this sense the writer shares the celebrated status of military leaders, diplomats, and athletes. Streets and schools in Italy are named for Dante as well as for other writers.

**Connect to the Literature** Point out to students that this translation uses many words that are immediately recognized by most ordinary speakers of English. This word choice reflects Dante's use of the "vulgar" tongue—the Italian language—rather than Latin, so that ordinary people of Italy would be comfortable reading his epic poem. Ask students to list three or four words from these two pages that reflect such word choice.

**Possible response:** Students may select *bloody, pus, tears, beach, silence, bite, rage, naked, pale, fear, teeth, despair, God, parents, earth, weeping, or cursing.*

#### 32 Reading Check

**Answer:** The dead souls must give up all hope of Paradise.

### Enrichment

#### Classical Influences

Dante is basing his *Divine Comedy* in part on classical epics, particularly Virgil's *Aeneid*, which tells the story of the founding of Rome. Aeneas, the epic hero, flees Troy and wanders throughout the Mediterranean region in his quest for a new land. In Book VI of the *Aeneid*, Virgil describes Aeneas' descent into Hades, divided into the Elysian Fields where souls of good men and women wander, and the realm of punishment, where souls of the wicked suffer. Aeneas is

guided by the Cumaean Sybil and protected by a golden bough as he journeys toward self-discovery. The importance of this episode for Dante is hinted at by the numerous details the later poet transposes from the classical epic. Charon is found in Dante's Hell. Dante finds himself in places, like Cocytus, that originated in the classical Hades. But Dante replaces pagan ceremonies and creeds with his own religious beliefs.

### Differentiated Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

#### Support for Special Needs Students

Point out that a particular image or group of images seems to guide each canto. In Canto III, the ideas of decay and general unpleasantness are echoed throughout. For example, the image is repeated through words such as "despicable corps," "gnaws," "miserable," "wretches," "bloody gouts," "pus and tears," and "loathsome worms and maggots." Have student pairs reread the canto, listing words that repeat images. Students might look for words linked to movement, light, or carnality.

#### Enrichment for Advanced Readers

Highlight images such as "bloody gouts of pus," "wheel of flame around each eye," "eyes like burning coals," and recall that imagery is the use of terms that repeat or echo a particular quality. Discuss the quality or theme Dante seeks to echo (horror). Then, have students write a descriptive paragraph employing a variety of images, each of which conveys the same quality. The subject should be something or someone familiar to students.

### 33 Humanities

#### Fifteenth-century Italian manuscript illumination from Dante's *Inferno*

Like others of Dante's time, this fifteenth-century illumination features bright colors and gold or silver detailing. Illuminations were hand-painted in the days before printing, when books were hand-scribed as well.

Use the following questions for discussion:

- On which bank of the river do lighter colors predominate? On which do darker colors predominate?

**Answer:** The colors are lighter on the bank to the right, darker on the bank to the left.

- On the basis of the use of light and shadow, toward which shore do you think the boat is traveling? Why?

**Answer:** It is traveling toward the left side; this is the darkness of Hell.

### 34 Critical Viewing

**Answer:** The ferryman stands erect and seems unafraid of and unmoved by his surroundings. Virgil is calm and protective of Dante. Dante, seated with Virgil in the boat, is visibly shocked.

### 35 Reading Strategy

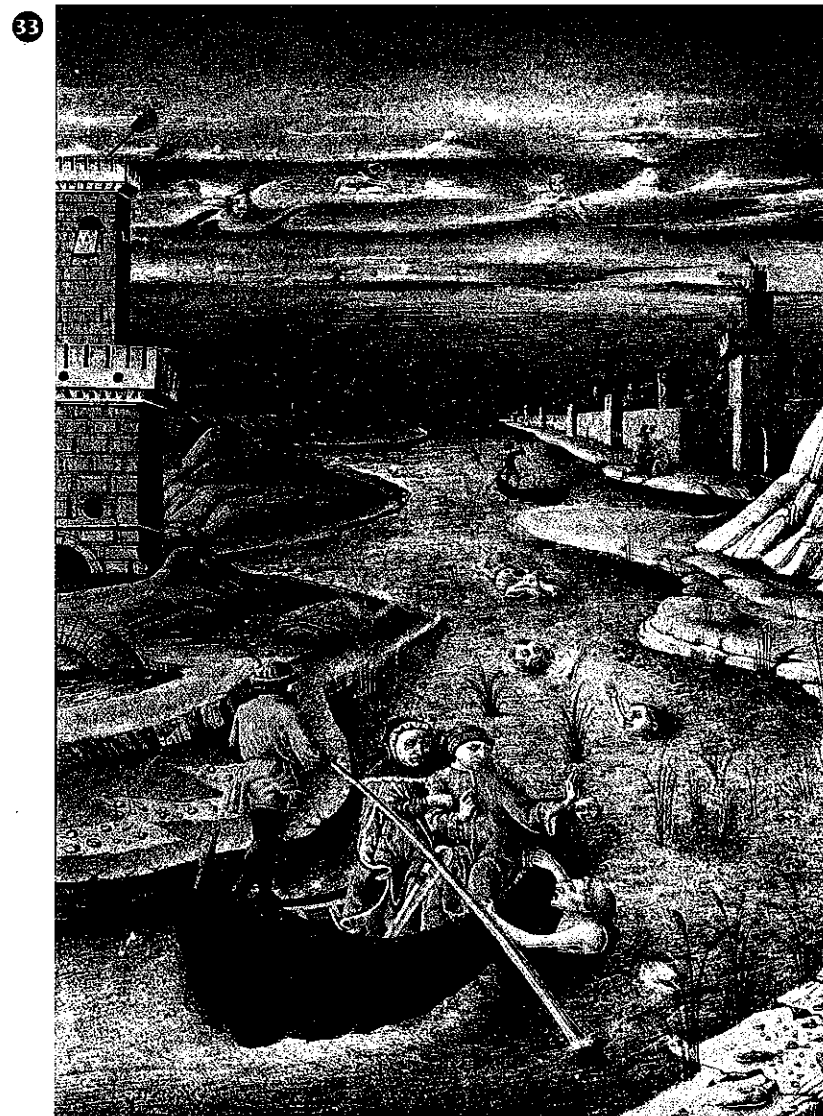
#### Interpreting Imagery

- Review the definition of imagery on p. 657, and have students name the five senses to which imagery can appeal.

- Then, have a volunteer read aloud the bracketed passage, as other students listen carefully for words that signal particular sensory images.

- Ask students the Reading Strategy question: To which senses do the images in this passage appeal?

**Answer:** The images appeal to the senses of hearing, sight, and touch.



125 No soul in Grace comes ever to this crossing; therefore if Charon rages at your presence you will understand the reason for his cursing."

35 When he had spoken, all the twilight country shook so violently, the terror of it bathes me with sweat even in memory:

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### 34 Critical Viewing

In this fifteenth-century illumination of Dante and Virgil crossing the river into Hell, how do Dante's posture and attitude compare and contrast with those of both Virgil and the ferryman? [Compare and Contrast]

**Reading Strategy Interpreting Imagery**  
To which senses do the images in this passage appeal?

130 the tear-soaked ground gave out a sigh of wind that spewed itself in flame on a red sky, and all my shattered senses left me. Blind,

36 like one whom sleep comes over in a swoon,<sup>19</sup> I stumbled into darkness and went down.

19. **swoon** the act of fainting. This device (repeated at the end of Canto V) serves a double purpose. The first is technical: Dante uses it to cover a transition. We are never told how he crossed Acheron, for that would involve certain narrative matters he can better deal with when he crosses Styx (stiks), another river of the underworld, in Canto VII. The second purpose is to provide a point of departure for a theme that is carried through the entire descent: Dante's emotional reaction to Hell. These two swoons early in the descent show him most susceptible to the grief about him. As he descends, pity leaves him, and he even goes so far as to add to the torments of one sinner.

### Critical Reading

1. **Respond:** Do you think that the Opportunists deserve the punishment Dante envisioned for them? Why or why not?
2. (a) **Recall:** According to the inscription on the Gate of Hell, which feeling must be abandoned by all who enter? (b) **Analyze Causes and Effects:** What effect do you think Dante intends this passage to have on the reader? Explain.
3. (a) **Recall:** Which creatures torment the Opportunists? (b) **Analyze:** In what ways do these small but fierce creatures suggest Dante's attitude toward the sins of the Opportunists? Explain.
4. (a) **Recall:** As they prepare to cross the river Acheron into Hell itself, what physical reactions do the spirits have? (b) **Interpret:** Judging from their outbursts, what emotional reactions do they experience? (c) **Infer:** Based on the details presented, what is the greatest spiritual torment of Hell? Explain.
5. **Analyze:** Why do you think Dante dwells on the physical torments of Hell?
6. (a) **Draw Conclusions:** What message does this Canto provide to readers about those who will not or cannot make a commitment to God? Explain. (b) **Synthesize:** What image might be appropriate to appear on the banner pursued by the Opportunists? Explain your answer.

#### Go Online Author Link

For More about Dante Alighieri  
Visit: [www.PHSchool.com](http://www.PHSchool.com)  
Web Code: ete-9503

from the *Inferno: Canto III* ■ 671

### Enrichment

#### Translation as an Act of Composition

The translation used in this book is that of the American poet John Ciardi. This translation is popular and critically acclaimed. Without maintaining accuracy on a lexical level, it conveys the spirit of the original.

Translation is an act of composition and betrayal; each translation represents a decomposition and rewriting. The word *translation* often means "to move or change into 'one's own language'." Literature, like language, is

a kind of social property, and the act of translating is like buying a new house. The structure remains the same but the change of ownership gives the house a different quality.

Have students examine other translations of the *Inferno* to compare and contrast approaches to the text. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Charles S. Singleton, Dorothy Sayers, Allen Mandelbaum, and Robert Pinsky have translated Dante into English.

### Assessment Practice

#### Evaluate and Make Judgments

(For more practice, see *Test Preparation Workbook*, p. 30.)

Many tests require students to evaluate and make judgments about characters or situations. Use the following sample test item, from Canto III of the *Inferno* (lines 19–21), to help students practice this skill:

So saying, he put forth his hand to me, and with a gentle and encouraging smile he led me through the gate of mystery.

According to the passage, what kind of guide do you think Virgil is?

- A kind
- B incompetent
- C deceitful
- D pushy

Lead students to recognize that the correct answer is A. Readers would not likely make the evaluations or judgments in choices B, C, and D based on the clues in the passage.

### 36 Reading Strategy

#### Interpreting Imagery

- Read the bracketed text aloud, emphasizing the word "down."
- Point out the repeated images of a downward, spiraling motion.
- Then, ask students how they imagine this motion would "feel." **Possible response:** It would feel frightening, as if the ground were falling away, as on a roller coaster.

### ASSESS

#### Answers

1. **Possible responses:** Yes; the punishment is just, for serving oneself above all represents selfishness. No; we have the right to put ourselves first, so the punishment is unfair.
2. (a) Hope must be abandoned. (b) **Possible response:** Dante wants readers to experience the horror of going to Hell and wants them to know that Hell's punishments are eternal.
3. (a) The Opportunists are tormented by a swarm of wasps and hornets and by worms and maggots at their feet. (b) **Possible response:** Just as they pursued their interests in life, the Opportunists are pursued by insects that try to sting the Opportunists' consciences. As the Opportunists' actions suggest moral filth, the sinners run eternally through worms and maggots.
4. (a) The spirits turn pale with fear, and their teeth chatter at the thought of crossing the river. (b) The spirits experience terror but also regret. (c) **Possible response:** The greatest torment may be the realization that one's own actions and attitudes have brought one to Hell and that the torment is endless.
5. **Possible response:** Dante dwells on the torments to make them concrete and more memorable.
6. (a) The canto warns the uncommitted by describing the torments of those damned for lack of commitment. (b) **Possible responses:** Images of mercy, heaven, or even of death as a release might be appropriate.



## 1 Literary Analysis

## Characterization

- Invite volunteers to read aloud the definitions of direct and indirect characterization.
- Confirm students' understanding by eliciting or providing examples of each.
- Highlight the point-of-view discussion under Reading Strategy, and discuss the limitations that a first-person speaker has for characterization. For example, such a speaker can describe characters only through his or her own view.

## 2 Reading Strategy

## Distinguishing Between the Speaker and the Poet

- Remind students that the speaker is the voice that tells a story. Stress that good readers analyze the speaker's views to determine whether they match those of the poet.
- Read aloud to students the text in the graphic organizer. Model its use by explaining that the first two boxes identify a text example, and the second two boxes features inferences made (on the basis of the examples) about the poet's views and purpose.
- Give students a copy of Reading Strategy Graphic Organizer A, p. 121 in *Graphic Organizer Transparencies*. Have them use it to distinguish between the speaker and the poet as they read.

## Vocabulary Builder

- Pronounce each vocabulary word for students, and read the definitions as a class. Have students identify any words with which they are already familiar.

*Inferno*, Cantos V and XXXIV

## 1 Literary Analysis

## Characterization

**Characterization** is the art of revealing character. There are two main types of characterization:

- In *direct characterization*, a writer simply tells the reader what a character is like.
- In *indirect characterization*, a writer suggests what a character is like by showing what the character says and does, what other characters say about him or her, or how other characters behave toward him or her.

As you read, notice the techniques Dante uses to paint vivid portraits of his characters.

## Connecting Literary Elements

An **allusion** is a reference within a literary work to something outside the work. Allusions are a kind of literary shorthand because they quickly add layers of meaning. For example, when Francesca alludes to the story of Lancelot, she associates her misadventure with the well-known romance of the tragic knight. Pay attention to Dante's use of allusions, and identify the layers of meaning they add to his tale.

## 2 Reading Strategy

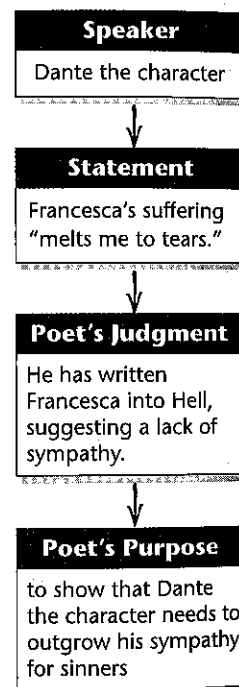
## Distinguishing Between the Speaker and the Poet

The *Inferno* uses the first-person point of view—the reader sees events through the speaker's eyes. Yet, the Dante who relates this tale is simply a literary character created by the poet. Along with Virgil, Francesca, and other characters, Dante the poet uses Dante the character to express his ideas. As you read, use a chart like the one shown to distinguish between the speaker and the poet.

## Vocabulary Builder

- grotesque** (grō tesk') *adj.* strangely distorted (p. 676)
- degree** (di grē) *n.* step; stage; level (p. 676)
- anguish** (anj' gwish) *n.* great suffering; agony (p. 677)
- tempest** (tem' pist) *n.* storm (p. 679)
- perilous** (per' ə les) *adj.* dangerous (p. 681)
- awe** (ə) *n.* feelings of reverence, fear, and wonder (p. 685)
- writhes** (rithz) *v.* twists and turns the body, as in agony (p. 686)
- nimble** (nim' bəl) *adj.* able to move quickly and lightly; agile (p. 687)

674 ■ The Middle Ages



**Review and Anticipate** In Canto III, Dante and Virgil paused at Hell's outer edge, where they witnessed the torments suffered by the Opportunists. As they prepared to cross the river Acheron into the first circle of Hell, Dante was so overcome by terror he fell into a swoon.

In Canto V, Dante and Virgil will enter the second circle of Hell, where they will observe the carnal sinners.

Then, in Canto XXXIV, Dante and his guide will enter the ninth and lowest circle of Hell, the lair of Satan himself. How do you think Dante will react when he witnesses the horrors ahead? Read to find out.

## Canto V

CIRCLE TWO

*The Carnal*

The Poets leave Limbo and enter the *Second Circle*. Here begin the torments of Hell proper, and here, blocking the way, sits *Minos*,<sup>1</sup> the dread and semi-bestial judge of the damned who assigns to each soul its eternal torment. He orders the Poets back; but Virgil silences him as he earlier silenced Charon, and the Poets move on.

They find themselves on a dark ledge swept by a great whirlwind, which spins within it the souls of the *Carnal*, those who betrayed reason to their appetites. Their sin was to abandon themselves to the tempest of their passions: so they are swept forever in the tempest of Hell, forever denied the light of reason and of God. Virgil identifies many among them.<sup>2</sup> *Semiramis* is there, and *Dido*, *Cleopatra*, *Helen*, *Achilles*, *Paris*, and *Tristan*. Dante sees *Paolo* and *Francesca* swept together, and in the name of love he calls to them to tell their sad story. They pause from their eternal flight to come to him, and Francesca tells their history while Paolo weeps at her side. Dante is so stricken by compassion at their tragic tale that he swoons once again.

So we went down to the second ledge alone;  
a smaller circle<sup>3</sup> of so much greater pain  
the voice of the damned rose in a bestial moan.

1. **Minos** (mī' nās) Like all the monsters Dante assigns to the various offices of Hell, Minos is drawn from classical mythology. He was the son of Europa and of Zeus, who descended to her in the form of a bull. Minos became a mythological king of Crete, so famous for his wisdom and justice that after death his soul was made judge of the dead. In the *Aeneid*, Virgil presents him fulfilling the same office at Aeneas' descent to the underworld. Dante, however, transforms him into an irate and hideous monster with a tail.
2. **many among them** The names that follow are those of famous lovers from legend and history: *Semiramis* (sī' mir' ə' mis); *Dido* (dī' dō); *Cleopatra* (klē' ə' pa' trə); *Achilles* (ə' kil' əz'); *Tristan* (tris' ten); *Paolo* (pā' ə' lō); *Francesca* (frān' ches' kə).
3. **a smaller circle** The pit of Hell tapers like a funnel. The circles of ledges accordingly grow smaller as they descend.

- 2 **Reading Check**  
What function does Minos perform?

from the *Inferno*: Canto V ■ 675

## Facilitate Understanding

Ask students this question: How do you feel when friends talk about a movie that you have not seen? Explain that modern readers may feel "left out" by Dante's many allusions. Review the definition of allusion; then, direct students to the many footnotes in the selection. Explain that these notes will help readers understand Dante's allusions and add layers of meaning to the reading.

## 1 About the Selection

Canto V offers a poignant exploration of the battle between body and mind as Dante and Virgil travel into Hell proper. They meet the lovers Francesca and Paolo, and Dante learns of the danger facing those who succumb to uncontrolled emotion. He struggles with his own compassion for these damned souls.

## 2 Reading Check

**Answer:** Minos assigns each damned soul its specific torment.

## Differentiated

## Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

## Accessibility at a Glance

	Canto V	Canto XXXIV
<b>Context</b>	Virgil and Dante enter the second circle of Hell.	Virgil and Dante enter the last circle of Hell, where they find Satan.
<b>Language</b>	Footnotes identify Dante's many allusions.	Words describing physical sensations and many sensory images
<b>Concept Level</b>	Accessible (Dangers of uncontrolled emotions)	Accessible (Dangers of betrayal and the consequent punishments)
<b>Literary Merit</b>	Classic allegorical epic poem	Classic allegorical epic poem
<b>Lexile</b>	NP	NP
<b>Overall Rating</b>	Challenging	Challenging

### 3 Humanities

**Minos, the infernal judge, sitting at the entrance to the second circle of hell, waiting to pass sentence on the souls brought before him,** by Gustave Doré

Although he was self-taught, Gustave Doré (1832–1883) became the most accomplished and admired illustrator of his time. His editions of such authors as Milton, Coleridge, and Dante showcase his elegant and detailed drawings.

Use the following questions to stimulate discussion:

- On which lines in the poem is the engraving based?

**Answer:** The engraving is based on lines 4–12.

- What details in the artwork echo information from the poem?

**Answer:** Details such as Minos' tail and the cowering souls on the ledge echo information from the poem.

### 4 Critical Viewing

**Answer:** Minos is many times the size of those who stand before him. His size adds drama to the scene by emphasizing his power over these individuals.

### 5 Literary Analysis

#### Characterization

- Explain that the use of descriptive adjectives is one way a writer constructs a characterization.

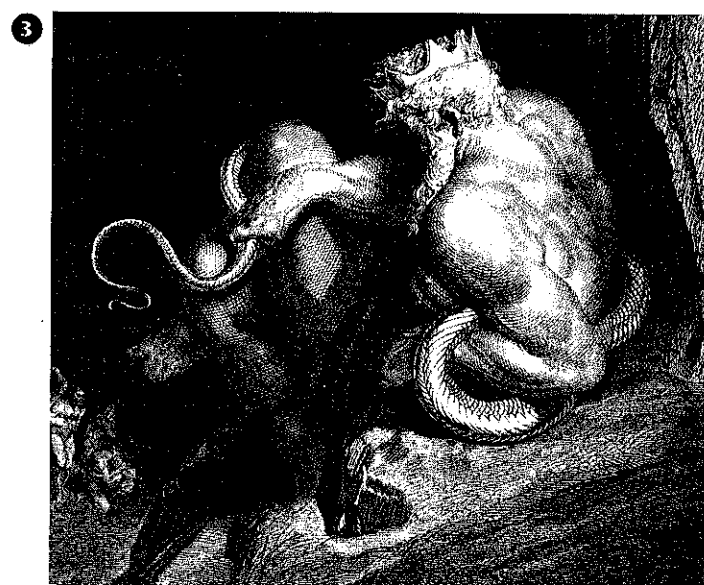
- Have a volunteer read aloud the bracketed line as students **identify** the three adjectives Dante uses to describe Minos.

**Answer:** Dante describes Minos as "grinning, grotesque, and hale."

- Discuss what each adjective means, referring students to footnote 4 for a definition of "hale."

- Then, **ask** students the Literary Analysis question: Dante uses three adjectives to directly characterize Minos. Which adjective do you find surprising? Explain.

**Possible answer:** The adjective "hale" may be most surprising because it contrasts dramatically with "grotesque." One might expect grotesqueness more than health in Hell.



Minos, the infernal judge, sitting at the entrance to the second circle of hell, waiting to pass sentence on the souls brought before him, Gustave Doré

5

There Minos sits, grinning, grotesque, and hale.<sup>4</sup> He examines each lost soul as it arrives and delivers his verdict with his coiling tail.

That is to say, when the ill-fated soul appears before him it confesses all,<sup>5</sup> and that grim sorter of the dark and foul

10

decides which place in Hell shall be its end, then wraps his twitching tail about himself one coil for each degree it must descend.

15

The soul descends and others take its place: each crowds in its turn to judgment, each confesses, each hears its doom and falls away through space.

"O you who come into this camp of woe," cried Minos when he saw me turn away without awaiting his judgment, "watch where you go

20

once you have entered here, and to whom you turn! Do not be misled by that wide and easy passage!" And my Guide to him: "That is not your concern;

4. **hale** (hā) *adj.* healthy.

5. **it confesses all** Just as the souls appeared eager to cross Acheron, so they are eager to confess even while they are filled with dread. Dante is once again making the point that sinners elect their Hell by an act of their own will.

### Enrichment

#### Carnival Celebrations

Recall the subtitle *The Carnival* for students. The theme of carnality—of the struggle between body and mind—runs throughout Canto V. Explain that the word *carnal* is based on the Latin word *carnalis*, meaning "fleshy" as opposed to "spiritual." Canto V deals with the punishment of the souls of people who have committed sins of the flesh.

Other English words share a common idea with *carnal*. *Carnival* is derived from the medieval Italian phrase *carne vale*, meaning "O flesh farewell!" In the Middle Ages, *carnival*

referred to Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday). Mardi Gras festivities were a last, boisterous round of amusement and pleasure on the eve of the Lenten season, during which Christians were required to abstain from meat. Lent is still observed by Christians; it falls during the forty days before Easter. Even though abstinence from meat during Lent is now optional in many denominations, Mardi Gras continues to be celebrated with exuberant carnival festivities in New Orleans and other cities around the world.

### 4 Critical Viewing

In this illustration of Minos sitting in judgment, how do the relative sizes of the figures emphasize the drama of the scene? [Interpret]

#### Literary Analysis

**Characterization** Dante uses three adjectives to directly characterize Minos. Which adjective do you find surprising? Explain.

#### Vocabulary Builder

**grotesque** (grō tesk') *adj.* strangely distorted

**degree** (di grē) *n.* step; stage; level

it is his fate to enter every door.

This has been willed where what is willed must be, and is not yours to question. Say no more."

25

Now the choir of anguish, like a wound, strikes through the tortured air. Now I have come to Hell's full lamentation, sound beyond sound.

6

I came to a place stripped bare of every light and roaring on the naked dark like seas wracked by a war of winds. Their hellish flight

of storm and counterstorm through time foregone, sweeps the souls of the damned before its charge. Whirling and battering it drives them on,

and when they pass the ruined gap of Hell<sup>6</sup> through which we had come, their shrieks begin anew. There they blaspheme the power of God eternal.

7

And this, I learned, was the never ending flight of those who sinned in the flesh, the carnal and lusty who betrayed reason to their appetite.

As the wings of wintering starlings bear them on in their great wheeling flights, just so the blast wherries<sup>7</sup> these evil souls through time foregone.

Here, there, up, down, they whirl and, whirling, strain with never a hope of hope to comfort them; not of release, but even of less pain.

As cranes go over sounding their harsh cry, leaving the long streak of their flight in air, so come these spirits, wailing as they fly.

And watching their shadows lashed by wind, I cried: "Master, what souls are these the very air lashes with its black whips from side to side?"

"The first of these whose history you would know," he answered me, "was Empress of many tongues.<sup>8</sup> Mad sensuality corrupted her so

6. **the ruined gap of Hell** At the time of the Harrowing of Hell—the supposed descent of Christ into Limbo to rescue and bring to Heaven his "ancestors" from the Hebrew Bible—a great earthquake shook the underworld, shattering rocks and cliffs.  
7. **wherries** (hwer' ēz) *v.* transports.  
8. **Empress of many tongues** Semiramis, a legendary queen of Assyria.

8 **Reading Check**  
What force whirls and batters the souls of the damned?

### 6 Reading Strategy

#### Distinguishing Between the Speaker and the Poet

- Review the definition of imagery from p. 657, and list the senses to which it can appeal: touch, sight, smell, taste, and hearing.

- Read the bracketed text aloud, as students work in pairs to list sensory details.

- Then, **ask** students the Reading Strategy question: Which images does Dante the poet use to convey the physical experience of Dante the character?

**Answer:** Images such as "choir of anguish," "sound beyond sound," "a place stripped bare of every light," "naked dark like seas wracked by a war of winds," "whirling and battering it drives them on" all paint a picture of what Dante the character is seeing and hearing.

### 7 Literary Analysis

#### Characterization

- Share the discussion of *carnal* and its meaning from Enrichment.

- Have students keep the definition in mind as they reread the bracketed text. Then, **ask** them to paraphrase Dante's definition of carnal sin.

**Answer:** Dante defines carnal sins as those that put the appetites of the flesh beyond the control of reason.

- Then, **ask** the Literary Analysis question: In lines 38–39, what does Dante's definition of carnal sin reveal about his values?

**Possible response:** Dante's use of the word "betrayed" suggests that he believes reason is a better guide to life, a more important value, than carnal appetite.

### 8 Reading Check

**Answer:** Uncontrolled desire whirls and batters the souls of the damned.

#### Vocabulary Builder

**anguish** (an' gwish) *n.* great suffering; agony

#### Reading Strategy

##### Distinguishing Between the Speaker and the Poet

Which images does Dante the poet use to convey the physical experience of Dante the character?

#### Literary Analysis

**Characterization** In lines 38–39, what does Dante's definition of carnal sin reveal about his values?

### Differentiated

#### Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

##### Support for Special Needs Students

Sometimes, it is hard for readers to find the sentence structure beneath the many descriptive images. Read lines 28–30 aloud for students, pausing after the word *dark*. Explain that in this context, *dark* is used as a noun rather than an adjective. The *dark* is "naked" and sounds like "seas wracked by a war of winds."

##### Strategy for Advanced Readers

Tell students that Dante frequently employs adjectives to create moods and to emphasize the point of his writing. For example, Dante's starlings (line 40) are "wintering starlings." Their flights are "great wheeling flights." Have students list other strings of adjectives employed by Dante in this canto. Then, have them follow Dante's example by writing a brief description of a familiar place, using adjectives to paint a vivid picture.

## Critical Viewing

**Answer:** The map shows the different layers of Hell that Dante and Virgil visit and thus helps readers follow the journey. It also shows which sins the poet considers least and most heinous.

## Humanities

**Dante's Inferno,** sixteenth-century woodcut. This illustration was created for a sixteenth-century Venetian edition of the *Divine Comedy*. Like a map, it provides a graphic reference to Dante's journey.

Use the following questions for discussion.

Where on the map does Dante's encounter with Minos appear?

**Answer:** Minos appears in the third layer from the top of the map (the layer just below Limbo).

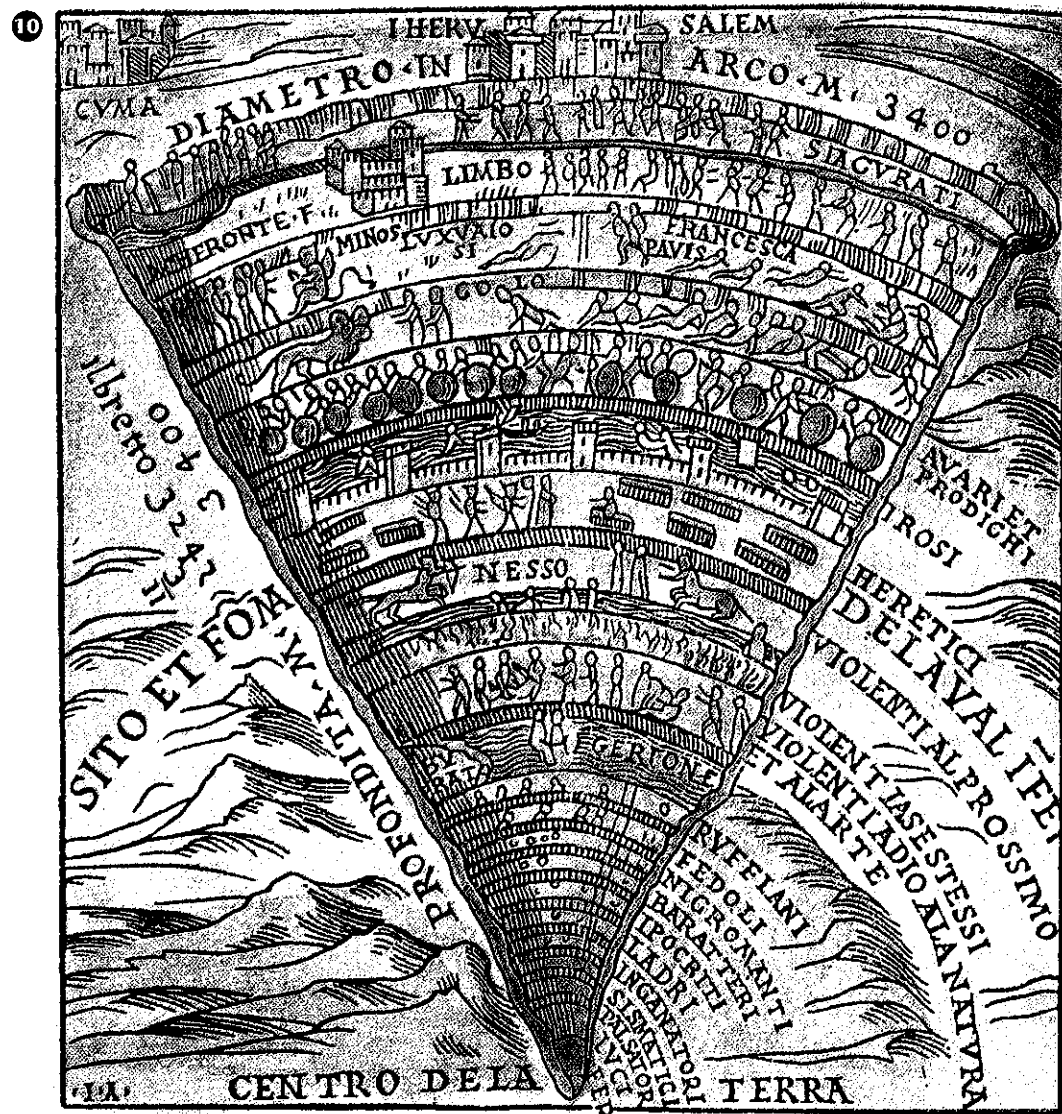
What does this placement suggest about the journey ahead?

**Answer:** It suggests that Dante has a long way to go to reach the bottom of Hell.

65 that to hide the guilt of her debauchery she licensed all depravity alike, and lust and law were one in her decree.

60 She is Semiramis of whom the tale is told how she married Ninus and succeeded him to the throne of that wide land the Sultans hold.

**9** **Critical Viewing** In what ways does this map of Dante's Hell help you better understand the poem? [Connect]



678 ■ The Middle Ages

The other is Dido;<sup>9</sup> faithless to the ashes of Sichaeus, she killed herself for love. The next whom the eternal tempest lashes

**11** is sense-drugged Cleopatra. See Helen<sup>10</sup> there, from whom such ill arose. And great Achilles,<sup>11</sup> who fought at last with love in the house of prayer.

And Paris. And Tristan.<sup>12</sup> As they whirled above he pointed out more than a thousand shades of those torn from the mortal life by love.

70 I stood there while my Teacher one by one named the great knights and ladies of dim time; and I was swept by pity and confusion.

**12** At last I spoke: "Poet, I should be glad to speak a word with those two swept together<sup>13</sup> so lightly on the wind and still so sad."

And he to me: "Watch them. When next they pass, call to them in the name of love that drives and damns them here. In that name they will pause."

Thus, as soon as the wind in its wild course brought them around, I called: "O wearied souls! if none forbid it, pause and speak to us."

As mating doves that love calls to their nest glide through the air with motionless raised wings, borne by the sweet desire that fills each breast—

- 9.** Dido Queen and founder of Carthage, an ancient kingdom in northern Africa. She had vowed to remain faithful to her husband, Sichaeus (sē kē' es), but she fell in love with Aeneas.
- 10.** Cleopatra . . . Helen Cleopatra was a queen of Egypt (51–49; 48–30 B.C.) and the mistress of the powerful Romans Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. Helen was the beautiful wife of the King of Sparta. According to legend, the Trojan War was started when she was forcibly taken away to Troy by Paris, a son of the Trojan King Priam.
- 11.** Achilles greatest warrior on the Greek side during the Trojan War; placed in this company because of his passion for Polyxena (pō iik' sē nē), the daughter of Priam. For love of her, he agreed to desert the Greeks and to join the Trojans, but when he went to the temple for the wedding (according to the legend Dante has followed), he was killed by Paris.
- 12.** Tristan knight sent to Ireland by King Mark of Cornwall to bring back the princess Isolde (i sōr' de) to be the king's bride. Isolde and Tristan fell in love and tragically died together.
- 13.** those two swept together Paolo and Francesca. In 1275, Giovanni Malatesta (jō vā' nē mā' lā tes' tā) of Rimini made a political marriage with Francesca, daughter of Guido da Polenta (gwē' dō dā pō len' tā) of Ravenna. Francesca came to Rimini and fell in love with Giovanni's younger brother Paolo. Paolo had married in 1269 and had had two daughters by 1275, but his affair with Francesca continued for many years. Sometime between 1283 and 1286, Giovanni surprised and killed them in Francesca's bedroom.

**Literary Analysis Characterization and Allusion** In what ways do these allusions to both historical and legendary figures add to the sense of reality in Dante's tale? Explain.

**Vocabulary Builder** tempest (tem' pist) n. storm

**Literary Analysis Characterization** How does the poet's use of the word "swept" enrich his characterization of Dante's character?

**13** **Reading Check** According to Virgil, what tore the souls in this circle of Hell from their mortal lives?

from the *Inferno: Canto V* ■ 679

## Literary Analysis Characterization and Allusion

• Read aloud footnotes 9–12 for students, and then read aloud the bracketed text.

• Discuss how meeting named people, of whom readers have a familiar image, might differ from meeting unfamiliar or unnamed characters.

• Ask students the first Literary Analysis question: In what ways do these allusions to both historical and legendary figures add to the sense of reality in Dante's tale? Explain. **Possible response:** Because historical and legendary figures are more familiar to readers, they seem more individualized and more real than unfamiliar fictional characters.

## Literary Analysis Characterization

• Recall the discussion about separating the speaker from the poet.

• Clarify that the word *swept* is used by Dante the character. Ask students what images and characteristics they associate with this word.

**Possible response:** Students may mention leaves swept on the wind or other images that suggest a lack of control.

• Have students read the bracketed text carefully and then respond to the second Literary Analysis question: How does the poet's use of the word *swept* enrich his characterization of Dante's character?

**Answer:** The character's use of the word *swept* suggests his acknowledgement of the uncontrollability of emotion. It sweeps one along. The poet's use of this word helps him suggest Dante's sympathy for those damned by uncontrolled emotion.

## Reading Check

**Answer:** Virgil says that the souls in this circle were torn from their mortal lives by love.

## Enrichment

### High and Low Art

Much respected art combines high and low forms of culture. Just as dandies and groundlings made up the audience of Shakespeare's plays, so do works themselves often combine the varied aspects of culture.

Dante's writing also attempts to combine diverse aspects of culture. Through his choice of language, he bridges these opposite ends of culture and raises the low form to a high level of art. He does this by writing in the vernacular, Italian, and rejecting Latin.

Dante's goals were many. In one sense, he was trying to address his audience directly.

Every day we employ many different modes of speaking depending on purpose and audience. For example, students may use slang among themselves but more formal language in the classroom.

## Differentiated Instruction

### Solutions for All Learners

#### Support for Less Proficient Readers

Help students identify the figures named in lines 61–67. Point out the text numbers, and refer students for explanation to footnotes 9–12. Read each footnote aloud, and have students explain why each character ended up in the *Carnal*.

**Answer:** Dido fell in love outside marriage; Cleopatra caused war by her passion; Achilles broke a promise in the pursuit of love; Tristan fell in love with Isolde, who was promised to his king.

#### Enrichment for Gifted/Talented Students

Review the historical and legendary characters to whom Dante refers in lines 61–67. Then, invite students to research each character. Encourage students to begin their research with the information in footnotes 9–12 and then to continue it with an Internet search that uses each character name as a key word. Students can share their findings with the class.



## 14 Literary Analysis

### Characterization

- Direct students to read the bracketed passage. Explain that the repetition that appears in the bracketed stanzas is called anaphora.
- Ask students the Literary Analysis question: What does the repetition of the word "Love" at the beginning of these three stanzas add to Francesca's characterization?  
**Answer:** The repetition suggests how important this concept is to her.

► **Monitor Progress** Have students review the definition of indirect characterization on p. 674. Clarify with them that Dante paints a picture of Francesca by his choice of the words she uses. Discuss with students how they draw conclusions about the characters of people they know on the basis of the words these people use.

► **Reteach** Have students use **Literary Analysis** support, p. 72 in **Unit 5 Resources**, to practice identifying examples of indirect characterization.

85 Just so those spirits turned on the torn sky  
from the band where Dido whirls across the air;  
such was the power of pity in my cry.

90 "O living creature, gracious, kind, and good,  
going this pilgrimage through the sick night,  
visiting us who stained the earth with blood,

were the King of Time our friend, we would pray His peace  
on you who have pitied us. As long as the wind  
will let us pause, ask of us what you please.

95 The town where I was born lies by the shore  
where the Po<sup>14</sup> descends into its ocean rest  
with its attendant streams in one long murmur.

Love, which in gentlest hearts will soonest bloom  
seized my lover with passion for that sweet body  
from which I was torn unshriven<sup>15</sup> to my doom.

100 Love, which permits no loved one not to love,  
took me so strongly with delight in him  
that we are one in Hell, as we were above.<sup>16</sup>

105 Love led us to one death. In the depths of Hell  
Caïna waits for him<sup>17</sup> who took our lives."  
This was the piteous tale they stopped to tell.

And when I had heard those world-offended lovers  
I bowed my head. At last the Poet spoke:  
"What painful thoughts are these your lowered brow covers?"

110 When at length I answered, I began: "Alas!  
What sweetest thoughts, what green and young desire  
led these two lovers to this sorry pass."

Then turning to those spirits once again,  
I said: "Francesca, what you suffer here  
melts me to tears of pity and of pain.

14. **Po** (pō) river in northern Italy.

15. **unshriven** unconfessed and so with her sin unforgiven.

16. **that we . . . above** Dante frequently expresses the principle that the souls of the damned are locked so blindly into their own guilt that none can feel sympathy for another. The temptation of many readers is to interpret this line romantically. The more Dantean interpretation, however, is that Paolo and Francesca add to each other's anguish as mutual reminders of their sin.

17. **Caïna . . . him** Giovanni Malatesta was still alive at the time this was written. According to Dante, his fate is already decided, however, and upon his death, his soul will fall to Caïna, the first ring of the last circle (Canto XXXII), where lie those who performed acts of treachery against their kin.

### Literary Analysis

**Characterization** What does the repetition of the word "Love" at the beginning of these three stanzas add to Francesca's characterization?



Paolo and Francesca, 1865; Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Tate Gallery, London

115 But tell me: in the time of your sweet sighs  
by what appearances found love the way  
to lure you to his perilous paradise?"

And she: "The double grief of a lost bliss  
is to recall its happy hour in pain.

120 Your Guide and Teacher knows the truth of this.

But if there is indeed a soul in Hell  
to ask of the beginning of our love  
out of his pity, I will weep and tell:

125 On a day for dalliance we read the rhyme  
of Lancelot,<sup>18</sup> how love had mastered him.  
We were alone with innocence and dim time.<sup>19</sup>

130 Pause after pause that high old story drew  
our eyes together while we blushed and paled;  
but it was one soft passage overthrew

18. **the rhyme of Lancelot** The story of Lancelot exists in many forms. The details Dante uses are from an Old French version.

19. **dim time** the olden time depicted in the Lancelot story. This phrase was added by the translator; the original reads, "We were alone, suspecting nothing."

### 16 Critical Viewing

This three-part illustration shows Paolo and Francesca in life, Virgil and Dante, and Paolo and Francesca in Hell. Do you think the artist shares Dante's sympathy for the doomed pair? Explain.  
**[Take a Position]**

**Vocabulary Builder**  
**perilous** (per' ə les) adj.  
dangerous

### 17 Reading Check

With which condemned soul does Dante speak?

from the *Inferno*: Canto V ■ 681

## 15 Humanities

**Paolo and Francesca**,  
by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Rossetti (1828–1882) was an English painter and poet. Well-read and educated, Rossetti worked extensively with literary subjects, such as Dante's lovers. As part of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, Rossetti and other artists looked for inspiration in the art that predated the Italian High Renaissance as typified by the painter Raphael Sanzio.

Use the following question for discussion:

How are the two images of the lovers similar and different?

**Answer:** Both images show the lovers embracing, but the image of them in Hell shows them clutching each other against the wind in a more desperate embrace.

### 16 Critical Viewing

**Possible answer:** The artist seems to share Dante's sympathy. He highlights the lovers' devotion by showing them each time in a passionate embrace. He also shows Dante and Virgil looking concerned rather than condemning.

### 17 Reading Check

**Answer:** Dante speaks with Francesca.

### Enrichment

#### Tale Within a Tale

Canto V includes Francesca's first-person tale, as recounted by Dante. As Francesca tells her story, she draws the pilgrim Dante into her tragedy. She captures his sympathy immediately by addressing him as "gracious, kind, and good" and invokes God to show her gratitude to him. Her repetition of "love" and her description of it as a noble sentiment render her argument all the more convincing. The pilgrim is immediately touched and anguished.

Francesca never speaks directly of her transgression and leaves the listener and reader to think that she is unjustly punished. Thus, the poet shows us the danger of the same language he himself uses. Anyone may mislead others by omitting certain details and emphasizing others. Here the reader learns to distrust the first-person narrative that has previously engaged his or her sympathy.

### Differentiated

#### Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

#### Support for Special Needs Students

Discuss Francesca's repetition in lines 97–105. Point out that repetition creates a rhythmic effect that sticks in listeners' minds. Ask students what chants they know. Point out that we remember chants because of repetition. Have students explain why Dante uses this technique here.

#### Enrichment for Gifted/Talented Students

Tell students that the tale of Paolo and Francesca has inspired artists and musicians such as Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Botticelli, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Have students research one work inspired by this story and its relationship to the story and then share their findings.

#### Enrichment for Advanced Readers

Invite students to think of *Romeo and Juliet* while reading Francesca's tale. Remind students that *Romeo and Juliet* is set in Verona and Mantua, two cities in northern Italy. Have students read the play and then make comparisons and contrasts between it and the tale of Paolo and Francesca.

## 13 Literary Analysis

### Characterization and Allusion

Remind students that an allusion is a reference within a literary work to something outside the work. Then, read aloud the bracketed passage.

**Ask** students to what Francesca is alluding in this passage.

**Answer:** Francesca is alluding to an Arthurian romance—specifically the story of Lancelot and Guinevere.

**Ask** students the Literary Analysis question: How is the *Divine Comedy*, in its message and purpose, quite different from the Arthurian romance Francesca describes?

**Possible response:** One of Dante's purposes is to instruct readers in the pitfalls of sin. By contrast, the tale of Lancelot and Guinevere, as it features in Francesca's story, has the effect of capturing the imagination. By making romantic feelings and situations intriguing, the tale inspires readers such as Paolo and Francesca to sin.

## ASSESS

### Answers

- Possible response:** Students may share Dante's sympathy because it seems unfair to punish people for loving.
- (a) The lustful are trapped in everlasting flight. (b) Everlasting flight mimics being swept away by passion and lust.
- (a) The sinners relinquished reason. (b) Words and phrases are "debauchery," "depravity," "killed herself for love," "eternal tempest," "sense-drugged," and "such ill." (c) Dante condemns uncontrolled love. Those who put love above reason and control will suffer the consequences.
- (a) In line 72, Dante experiences pity and confusion. (b) **Possible response:** Dante feels pity and confusion because he understands how human it is to love beyond reason, but he also sees that such love is unhealthy. He is not sure whether to condemn or pity the sinners. In lines 50–51, Dante comments on the terrible torment of the sinners and in lines 113–114, he states his feelings. In line 71, he

130 our caution and our hearts. For when we read  
how her fond smile was kissed by such a lover,  
he who is one with me alive and dead  
135  
breathed on my lips the tremor of his kiss.  
That book, and he who wrote it, was a pander.<sup>20</sup>  
That day we read no further." As she said this,  
140  
the other spirit, who stood by her, wept  
so piteously, I felt my senses reel  
and faint away with anguish. I was swept  
by such a swoon as death is, and I fell,  
145 as a corpse might fall, to the dead floor of Hell.

20. That book . . . pander *Galeotto*, the Italian word for "pander," is also the Italian rendering of the name of Gallehaut, who, in the French Romance Dante refers to here, urged Lancelot and Guinevere on to love. A pander is a go-between in a love affair.

## Critical Reading

- Respond:** Do you share Dante's sympathy for Paolo and Francesca? Why or why not?
- (a) **Recall:** What punishment do the lustful suffer? (b) **Analyze:** In what ways does this punishment match their sins? Explain.
- (a) **Recall:** In line 39, what does Dante say the sinners relinquished in favor of "appetite"? (b) **Classify:** In lines 55 through 67, note words and phrases that liken sensual indulgence to madness. (c) **Evaluate:** What kind of love does Dante condemn in this Canto? Explain.
- (a) **Recall:** In line 72, what two emotions does Dante experience in reaction to the sight of the carnal sinners? (b) **Interpret:** Why does Dante feel each of these emotions? Support your answer with details from the text.
- (a) **Recall:** According to Francesca, what motivates her descent into sin? (b) **Infer:** What does Dante suggest about the effects of certain kinds of literature? (c) **Take a Stand:** Do you agree with Dante's assessment?

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Answers continued

- refers to the sinners as "the great knights and ladies of dim time," so clearly he admires them.
- (a) Reading the story of Lancelot motivates Francesca's sin. (b) Dante suggests that some literature can have damaging moral effects. (c) **Possible response:** Perhaps literature can influence people's views, but ultimately people are responsible for their actions.

## Literary Analysis

**Characterization and Allusion** How is the *Divine Comedy*, in its message and purpose, quite different from the Arthurian romance Francesca describes?

## 19 20 Canto XXXIV

NINTH CIRCLE: COCYTUS<sup>1</sup>

Compound Fraud

ROUND FOUR: JUDECCA

The Treacherous to Their Masters

THE CENTER

Satan

"On march the banners of the King,"<sup>2</sup> Virgil begins as the Poets face the last depth. He is quoting a medieval hymn, and to it he adds the distortion and perversion of all that lies about him. "On march the banners of the King—of Hell." And there before them, in an infernal parody of Godhead, they see Satan in the distance, his great wings beating like a windmill. It is their beating that is the source of the icy wind of Cocytus, the exhalation of all evil.

All about him in the ice are strewn the sinners of the last round, *Judecca*, named for Judas Iscariot.<sup>3</sup> These are the *Treacherous to Their Masters*. They lie completely sealed in the ice, twisted and distorted into every conceivable posture. It is impossible to speak to them, and the Poets move on to observe Satan.

He is fixed into the ice at the center to which flow all the rivers of guilt; and as he beats his great wings as if to escape, their icy wind only freezes him more surely into the polluted ice. In a grotesque parody of the Trinity, he has three faces, each a different color, and in each mouth he clamps a sinner whom he rips eternally with his teeth. *Judas Iscariot* is in the central mouth; *Brutus* and *Cassius*<sup>4</sup> in the mouths on either side.

Having seen all, the Poets now climb through the center, grappling hand over hand down the hairy flank of Satan himself—a last supremely symbolic action—and at last, when they have passed the center of all gravity, they emerge from Hell. A long climb from the earth's center to the Mount of Purgatory awaits them, and they push on without rest, ascending along the sides of the river Lethe, till they emerge once more to see the stars of Heaven, just before dawn on Easter Sunday.

"On march the banners of the King of Hell,"  
my Master said. "Toward us. Look straight ahead:  
can you make him out at the core of the frozen shell?"

5 Like a whirling windmill seen afar at twilight,  
or when a mist has risen from the ground—  
just such an engine rose upon my sight

stirring up such a wild and bitter wind  
I covered for shelter at my Master's back,  
there being no other windbreak I could find.

10 I stood now where the souls of the last class  
(with fear my verses tell it) were covered wholly;  
they shone below the ice like straws in glass.

- Cocytus** (kō sit' əs) Greek: "river of wailing."
- On . . . King** This hymn was written in the sixth century by Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers. The original celebrates the Holy Cross and part of the service for Good Friday, to be sung at the moment of uncovering the cross.
- Judas Iscariot** (is ker' ē ət) disciple who betrayed Jesus; see the Bible, Matthew 26:14, 48.
- Brutus and Cassius** They took part in a plot to assassinate Julius Caesar.

## 21 Reading Check

What is the source of the icy wind of Cocytus?

from the *Inferno*: Canto XXXIV ■ 683

## Go Online Author Link

For: More about Dante Alighieri  
Visit: [www.PHSchool.com](http://www.PHSchool.com)  
Web Code: ete-9503

**Go Online** For additional information about Dante Alighieri, have students type in the Web Code, then select A from the alphabet, and then select Dante Alighieri.

## Differentiated Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

### Background for Special Needs Students

Ask students whether they have ever seen a movie whose ending suggests that a sequel is likely. Offer *Star Wars* as one example, in which evil is overcome but not entirely conquered. Use this familiar example to explain that Canto XXXIV is the end of the *Inferno* section of Dante's work, but it introduces the beginning of the *Purgatorio* section.

### Background for Less Proficient Readers

Explain that this canto is the last in the *Inferno* but that it also introduces the second section, *Purgatorio*. Thus, *Purgatorio* is a kind of sequel. Tell students that the work is called a comedy not because it is funny but because at the end, all is well. Ask students to predict what will happen to Dante at the end of this canto.

### Background for Advanced Readers

Tell students that this last canto serves as both a beginning and an ending to sections of Dante's epic. Challenge students to find images that present this dual role. Urge them to find any other signs from Dante that convey this message. Invite volunteers to read on in the beginning of *Purgatorio* and report on how, if at all, it echoes Canto XXXIV.

## Facilitate Understanding

Before students read Dante's version of Satan, have them speculate on how he will be depicted. Give each student a chance to explain why he or she anticipates some special detail in the portrait of evil.

## 19 About the Selection

In this riveting end to Dante's odyssey into Hell, he and his guide reach its lowest depths. Shaken by what he sees there, Dante escapes from the underworld and emerges to find a brightening, star-studded sky.

## 20 Critical Thinking

### Relate

- Tell students that in this canto, the climax of the *Inferno*, they will come face to face with Satan, the symbol of everything evil for Dante.
- Ask students to describe other representations of Satan they have seen or read.
- Then **ask** them to speculate on how he will be depicted in this canto. **Possible response:** Satan may be depicted as grotesque, terrifying, and monstrous.

## 21 Reading Check

**Answer:** The beating of Satan's wings as he tries to escape creates the icy wind of Cocytus.

## 2 Humanities

### Dante in Hell,

by Gustave Doré

Gustave Doré is remembered today for the volumes of illustrated literary works he published during his career. Here, Virgil and Dante encounter evil-doers punished by immersion in ice up to their necks.

Use the following question for discussion:

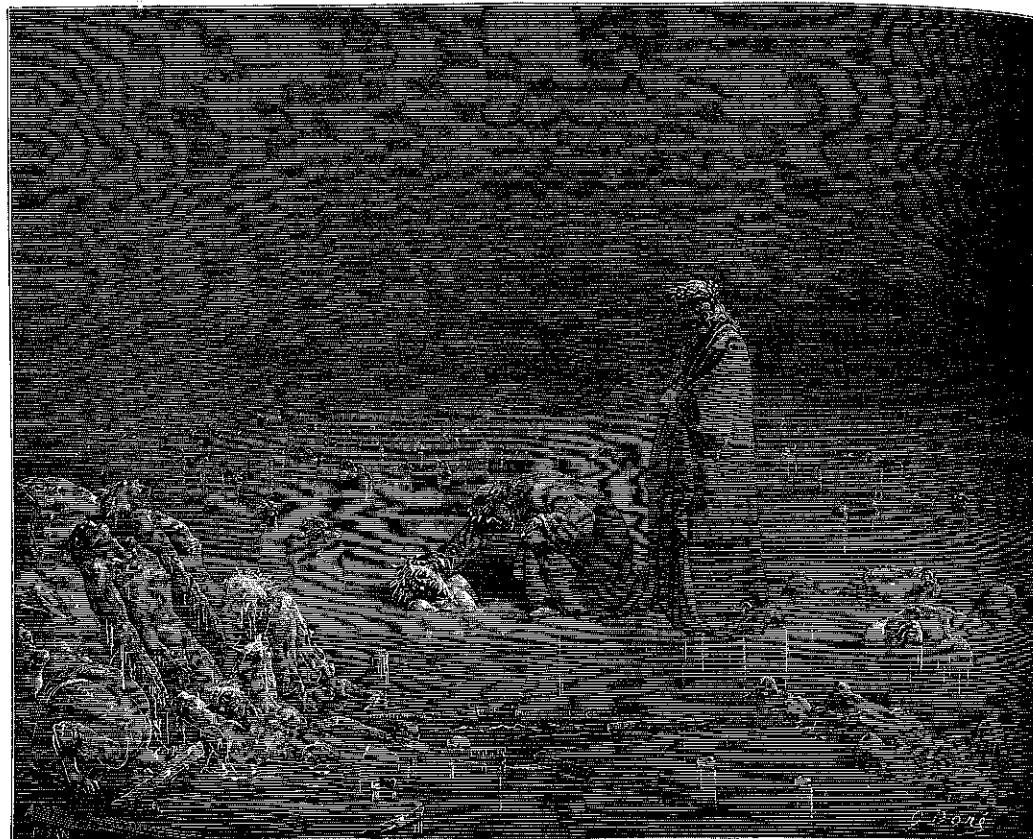
What role does the landscape play in creating the mood of this drawing?

**Answer:** The landscape is icy, harsh, and forbidding. It adds to the despairing mood of the image.

## 3 Critical Viewing

**Answer:** Dante kneels, while Virgil stands watching. Clues include lines 18–19, in which Dante says “he made me stop, and, stepping aside, he said: Now see the face of Dis!” Also, Dante has shown himself interested in and sympathetic to the tortures of the damned, whereas Virgil has seen them before.

22



Some lie stretched out; others are fixed in place upright, some on their heads, some on their soles; another, like a bow, bends foot to face.

18 When we had gone so far across the ice  
that it pleased my Guide to show me the foul creature<sup>5</sup>  
which once had worn the grace of Paradise,

19 he made me stop, and, stepping aside, he said:  
“Now see the face of Dis!<sup>6</sup> This is the place  
20 where you must arm your soul against all dread.”

5. the foul creature Satan.

6. Dis (dis) in Greek mythology, the god of the lower world or the lower world itself. Here, it stands for Satan.

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## 23 Critical Viewing

Which figure in this illustration is Dante, and which is Virgil? Explain how you know. [Distinguish]

24

Do not ask, Reader, how my blood ran cold  
and my voice choked up with fear. I cannot write it:  
this is a terror that cannot be told.

25

I did not die, and yet I lost life's breath:  
imagine for yourself what I became,  
deprived at once of both my life and death.

25

The Emperor of the Universe of Pain  
jutt[ed] his upper chest above the ice;  
and I am closer in size to the great mountain

30

the Titans<sup>7</sup> make around the central pit,  
than they to his arms. Now, starting from this part,  
imagine the whole that corresponds to it!

35

If he was once as beautiful as now  
he is hideous, and still turned on his Maker,  
well may he be the source of every woe!

26

With what a sense of awe I saw his head  
towering above me! for it had three faces:<sup>8</sup>  
one was in front, and it was fiery red;

40

the other two, as weirdly wonderful,  
merged with it from the middle of each shoulder  
to the point where all converged at the top of the skull;

the right was something between white and bile;  
the left was about the color one observes  
on those who live along the banks of the Nile.

45

Under each head two wings rose terribly,  
their span proportioned to so gross a bird:  
I never saw such sails upon the sea.

50

They were not feathers—their texture and their form  
were like a bat's wings—and he beat them so  
that three winds blew from him in one great storm:

it is these winds that freeze all Cocytus.  
He wept from his six eyes, and down three chins  
the tears ran mixed with bloody froth and pus.<sup>9</sup>

7. Titans giant deities who were overthrown by Zeus and the Olympian gods of Greece.

8. three faces There are many interpretations of these three faces. The common theme in all of them is that the faces are a perversion of the qualities of the Trinity.

9. bloody froth and pus the gore of the sinners he chews, which is mixed with his saliva.

## Reading Strategy

**Distinguishing Between the Speaker and the Poet**  
In what ways does Dante the character's direct address to the reader intensify both the drama and the sense of reality of this scene? Explain.

## Literary Analysis

**Characterization and Allusion** Why is an allusion to the Titans an appropriate detail in Satan's characterization? Explain.

## Vocabulary Builder

awe (ə) n. feelings of reverence, fear, and wonder

## Reading Check 27

In what substance are the souls of the damned trapped?

from the *Inferno: Canto XXXIV* ■ 685

## 24 Reading Strategy

### Distinguishing Between the Speaker and the Poet

• Ask students how they think direct address affects readers.

**Possible response:** It grabs readers' attention as a break in the narrative and makes readers feel closer to the story by including them in conversation with the author.

• Have a volunteer read the bracketed text aloud. Then, ask the Reading Strategy question: In what ways does Dante the character's direct address to the reader intensify both the drama and the sense of reality of this scene? Explain.

**Possible response:** The direct address, by drawing attention to the moment, increases drama. By mimicking a conversation with the reader, the direct address makes the scene seem more real.

## 25 Literary Analysis

### Characterization and Allusion

• Use footnote 7 to clarify that the Titans were giants.

• Direct students to read the bracketed text, paying careful attention to details about size.

• Ask students the Literary Analysis question: Why is an allusion to the Titans an appropriate detail in Satan's characterization?

**Possible response:** The Titans were giants. Alluding to huge creatures emphasizes Satan's enormity.

## 26 Vocabulary Builder

### Words Related to Awe

• Call students' attention to the word *awe* in line 36 and its definition.

• Point out that *awe* can be positive, as in “feelings of reverence,” or negative, as in “feelings of fear.”

• Ask student pairs to list things that create feelings of awe. Invite them to explain their choices and connect each to the definition.

## 27 Reading Check

**Answer:** The souls of the damned are trapped in ice.

## Enrichment

### The Role of Satan

Throughout the *Divine Comedy*, Dante uses mythological figures to represent the various sins. Each gets its own perfectly designed appropriate punishment, which focuses readers' attention on the nature of the sin. For example, in Canto V, Francesca and Paolo are swept around the circle of hell just as they were swept away by their passions in life. In Canto XXXIV, readers come face to face with Satan, the symbol of evil for Dante. In the Bible, Satan is represented as a slithering serpent, hissing his treachery to Eve.

Dante depicts Satan as a hideous three-faced monster, the “Emperor of Universal Pain.” However, he is frozen at the very bottom of Hell, isolated as far as possible from God and humanity, a suitable punishment for the cold-hearted betrayal of the ultimate good.

Satan also becomes one of the bridges that Dante uses to move his character from one stage of the journey to the next. Virgil carries Dante as he literally climbs up Satan's body into the next world.

## Differentiated

### Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

#### Support for Special Needs Students

Play this section of the selection on **Listening to Literature Audio CDs**. Direct students' attention to line 39, in which Dante uses alliteration, or repeated consonants, to create poetic effects. Here, the effect emphasizes both descriptions—*weirdly* and *wonderful*. To give students practice in recognizing alliteration, have them find another example (line 47).

#### Support for English Learners

Explain that Dante uses alliteration, the technique of using repeated consonants to achieve poetic effects. Read line 47 aloud to students; then, have them read the line aloud. Urge students to try to “hear” the effect of the sounds. Discuss what the poet might have wanted to accomplish with these lines. Point out that the repetition of the *s* sound mimics the sound of wind blowing through the sails of a ship on the sea.



## 28 Humanities

**Judecca — Lucifer, Inferno XXXIV,**  
by Gustave Doré

This is a fine example of the illustrations Doré produced for his deluxe edition of Dante. The artist's use of strong contrasts between light and dark allows the rendering of fine details without sacrificing the overall darkness of the composition. Doré's Lucifer (Satan) is a nightmarish figure who blends into the dark background and appears to the viewer almost as a surprise. His lurking presence dwarfs the human souls before him.

Use the following questions for discussion:

• How does Doré's Devil compare with others you have seen?

**Possible response:** This Devil has wings; others are more serpentlike.

• How does this drawing make you feel? Explain.

**Possible response:** The drawing may make students feel like backing up. Satan is so intense and so immediate that viewers instinctively cringe.

## 29 Critical Viewing

**Answer:** Both Dante and Doré depict Satan with giant wings, frozen in ice. Dante, however, describes Satan as having three crying faces, and as having a broken sinner in each of his three mouths. Doré's depiction has only one head, no tears, and just one sinner in his mouth. The tears of Dante's Satan suggest regret or at least grief, whereas Doré's Satan seems ominous and threatening.

## 30 Critical Thinking

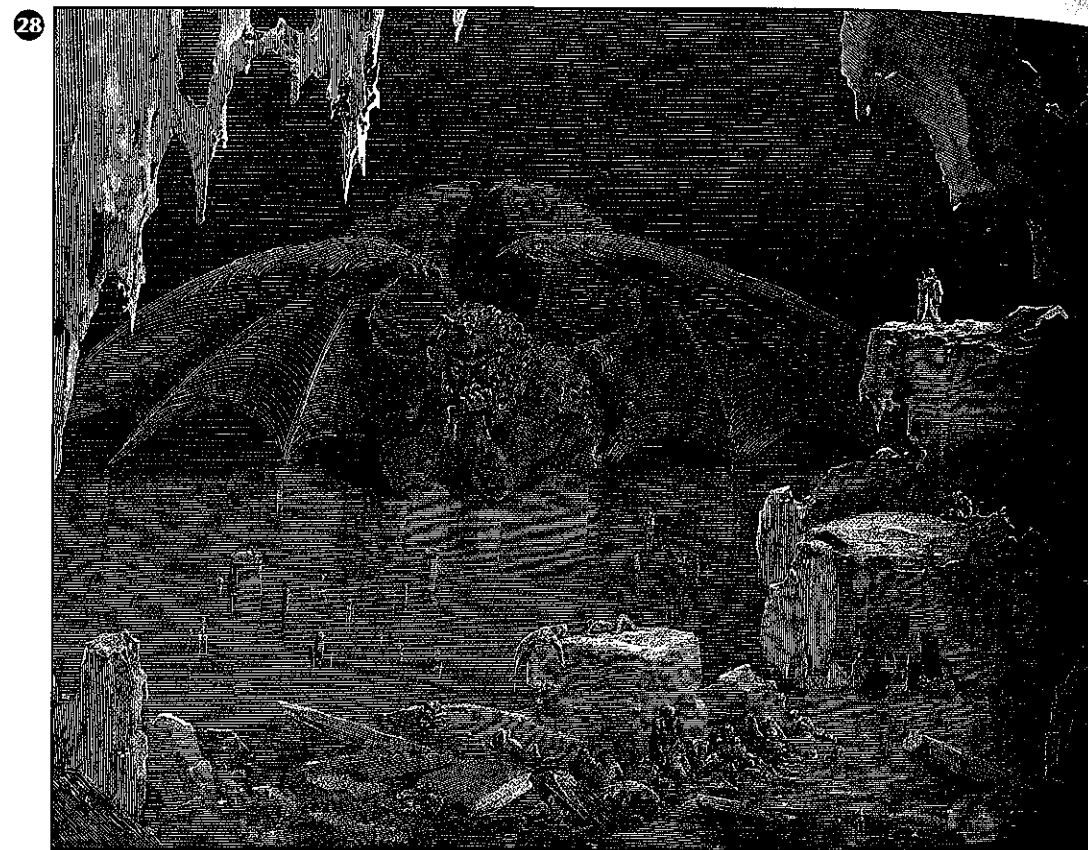
### Relate

• Read aloud the bracketed text.

• Point out that the guiding principle of Dante's Hell is that a sinner's punishment matches the sin.

• Ask students how punishment of sinners in the lowest part of Hell is appropriate for their wrongdoing.

**Possible response:** They betrayed their legitimate masters; now they are tortured by their "master," Satan.



Judecca — Lucifer, Inferno XXXIV, 1862, Gustave Doré

55 In every mouth he worked a broken sinner  
between his rake-like teeth. Thus he kept three  
in eternal pain at his eternal dinner.

For the one in front the biting seemed to play  
no part at all compared to the ripping; at times  
the whole skin of his back was flayed away.

80 "That soul that suffers most," explained my Guide,  
"is Judas Iscariot, he who kicks his legs  
on the fiery chin and has his head inside.

30  
65 Of the other two, who have their heads thrust forward,  
the one who dangles down from the black face  
is Brutus: note how he writhes without a word.

## 29 Critical Viewing

How does the artist's depiction of Lucifer in this engraving compare and contrast with Dante's description? Explain.  
**[Compare and Contrast]**

**Vocabulary Builder**  
**writhes** (*rithez*) v. twists and turns the body, as in agony

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## Enrichment

### Dante's Cosmology

The description of how Dante and Virgil leave Hell (lines 69–119) can be confusing. The difficulty is caused partly by Dante's medieval cosmology, or conception of the universe. This view dates back to the second-century astronomer Ptolemy and persisted well into Dante's time. In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas adapted Ptolemy's ideas to Christianity. Ptolemy's concept of the universe rested on a stationary Earth at the center of the universe, with the sun, moon, stars, and planets traveling

around the Earth. As a result, the "point to which all gravities are drawn" is the center of the Earth. When Dante and Virgil pass this point, they are on the other side of the Earth, looking at Satan's legs sticking out of the ice on the other side. Ask interested students to research Ptolemy's ideas further to learn how Dante's view of the structure of the universe compares with that understood by modern science. Have students give brief visual presentations to show and explain their findings.

31

And there, with the huge and sinewy arms, is the soul,  
of Cassius.—But the night is coming on<sup>10</sup>  
and we must go, for we have seen the whole."

70

Then, as he bade, I clasped his neck, and he,  
watching for a moment when the wings  
were opened wide, reached over dexterously<sup>11</sup>

and seized the shaggy coat of the king demon;  
then grappling matted hair and frozen crusts  
from one tuft to another, clambered down.

75

When we had reached the joint where the great thigh  
merges into the swelling of the haunch,  
my Guide and Master, straining terribly,

32

turned his head to where his feet had been  
and began to grip the hair as if he were climbing;<sup>12</sup>  
80 so that I thought we moved toward Hell again.

"Hold fast!" my Guide said, and his breath came shrill  
with labor and exhaustion. "There is no way  
but by such stairs to rise above such evil."

85

At last he climbed out through an opening  
in the central rock, and he seated me on the rim;  
then joined me with a nimble backward spring.

I looked up, thinking to see Lucifer  
as I had left him, and I saw instead  
his legs projecting high into the air.

90

Now let all those whose dull minds are still vexed  
by failure to understand what point it was  
I had passed through, judge if I was perplexed.

"Get up. Up on your feet," my Master said.  
"The sun already mounts to middle tierce,<sup>13</sup>  
95 and a long road and hard climbing lie ahead."

10. **the night is coming on** It is now Saturday evening.

11. **dexterously** *adv.* skillfully.

12. **as if he were climbing** They have passed the center of gravity and so must turn around and start climbing.

13. **middle tierce** According to the church's division of the day for prayer, tierce is the period from about six to nine A.M. Middle tierce, therefore, is seven-thirty. In going through the center point, Dante and Virgil have gone from night to day. They have moved ahead twelve hours.

**Reading Strategy**  
**Distinguishing Between the Speaker and the Poet**  
What spiritual and emotional change does the poet express through a physical description? Explain.

**Vocabulary Builder**  
**nimble** (*nim' bel*) *adj.* able to move quickly and lightly; agile

## 33 Reading Check

What torture do Judas Iscariot, Brutus, and Cassius suffer?

from the *Inferno*: Canto XXXIV ■ 687

## Differentiated

### Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

#### Support for Special Needs Students

Work with students to help them understand the scene in which Dante and Virgil climb out of Hell. Explain that Dante, the poet, uses sensory imagery to help readers envision and experience the scene. Read lines 69–119 aloud as students list details that help them experience the physical sensation of the climb.

#### Strategy for Gifted/Talented Students

Discuss the physical challenge that Dante and Virgil undertake to literally climb their way out of Hell. Review with students the information about Dante's conception of the universe in Enrichment on the previous page. Then, have students review lines 69–119 to identify words that signal movement or spatial relationship. Finally, have each student write a journal entry expressing Virgil's reactions to the climb. Invite students to share their work with classmates.

## 31 Background

### History

The Cassius who betrayed Caesar was more generally described as having a "lean and hungry look." Another Cassius is described by Cicero (Catiline II) as huge and sinewy.

## 32 Reading Strategy

### Distinguishing Between the Speaker and the Poet

• Review with students where Dante and Virgil are in Hell, noting that they face a mountainous Satan in Hell's innermost region.

• Remind students that Dante's journey will take him through Hell, through Purgatory, and finally to Heaven. Thus, having reached the bottom of Hell, he is ready to travel to Purgatory.

• Then, ask the Reading Strategy question: What spiritual and emotional change does the poet express through a physical description? Explain.

**Answer:** The poet describes Dante's spiritual and emotional change from despair to hope through the physical description of climbing over Satan and out of Hell.

## 33 Reading Check

**Answer:** Judas Iscariot, Brutus, and Cassius are forever being chewed by the mouths of the three-headed Satan.

## 34 Themes in World Literature

### Literary Views of the Underworld

Not only are there many literary excursions into the underworld, there are many different versions of Dante's excursion. This text uses a translation by John Ciardi, but modern writers such as Dorothy L. Sayers and poet Allen Mandelbaum have created their own versions. One recent translation is by American poet laureate Robert Pinsky. Begun in 1993 for a collaborative reading of the *Inferno*, Pinsky's translation gives the poem a natural feeling in English. In order to do this, the translator adopted a "more flexible definition of rhyme," which allowed him to follow Dante's rhyming pattern without straining. Pinsky drew heavily on previous translations, such as those by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1865) and Charles S. Singleton (1970). Then, he added idiomatic English—as Dante had once added idiomatic Italian—to create a work accessible to modern readers.

**Connect to the Literature** Have students reread the canto. Encourage them to focus on the most vivid details in Dante's description of Hell. After students write their sentences, suggest that they exchange papers with a partner and evaluate each other's work. Then ask volunteers to read their sentences to the class.

**Possible response:** Hell is a whirling anguish of icy wind, with sinners trapped below the ice and hideous views of Satan chewing his victims.

## 35 Critical Thinking

### Analyze

• Explain that Dante's rhyme scheme is known as terza rima—or *aba, bcb, cdc*—and so on through each canto. The middle line of each tercet determines the rhyme of the next, thus linking the entire canto in this manner.

• Have students look at the bracketed passage while a volunteer reads it aloud.

• **Ask** students what rhyme scheme John Ciardi, the translator, has used. How is it similar to and different from terza rima?

**Answer:** Ciardi uses what he calls "dummy terza rima." The pattern is *aba, cdc, efe*, and so on. Unlike terza rima, the middle line of a tercet does not determine the rhyme scheme of the next.

It was no hall of state we had found there,  
but a natural animal pit hollowed from rock  
with a broken floor and a close and sunless air.

100 "Before I tear myself from the Abyss,"  
I said when I had risen, "O my Master,  
explain to me my error in all this:

where is the ice? and Lucifer—how has he  
been turned from top to bottom: and how can the sun  
have gone from night to day so suddenly?"

105 And he to me: "You imagine you are still  
on the other side of the center where I grasped  
the shaggy flank of the Great Worm of Evil

which bores through the world—you were while  
I climbed down,  
but when I turned myself about, you passed  
the point to which all gravities are drawn.

You are under the other hemisphere where you stand;  
the sky above us is the half opposed  
to that which canopies the great dry land.

115 Under the midpoint of that other sky  
the Man<sup>14</sup> who was born sinless and who lived  
beyond all blemish, came to suffer and die.

35 You have your feet upon a little sphere  
which forms the other face of the Judecca.  
There it is evening when it is morning here.

120 And this gross Fiend and Image of all Evil  
who made a stairway for us with his hide  
is pinched and prisoned in the ice-pack still.

On this side he plunged down from heaven's height,  
and the land that spread here once hid in the sea  
and fled North to our hemisphere for fright;<sup>15</sup>

14. **the Man** Jesus, who suffered and died in Jerusalem, which was thought to be the middle of the Earth.  
15. **fled North . . . for fright** Dante believed that the Northern Hemisphere was mostly land and the Southern Hemisphere, mostly water. Here, he explains the reason for this state of affairs.

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## Themes in World Masterpieces

### 34 Literary Views of the Underworld

Although the *Divine Comedy* is probably the most famous literary excursion into the afterlife, there are many others. The Sumerian-Babylonian epic of *Gilgamesh* contains a vivid description of an underworld in which people sit in darkness and eat dust and clay. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus visits the Greek underworld, where he converses with the shades of mortals. In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates is optimistic about the afterlife, saying that death may be a state of nothingness, a kind of sleep, or a journey to a place where he will meet all who have gone before him. John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Goethe's *Faust* present images of Heaven and Hell in which goodness on earth is rewarded and excessive pride and egoism are punished. However, Dante's version of Hell, with its clear structure, sharp physical descriptions, and fully realized characters, remains perhaps the most detailed and vividly imagined of all the literary underworlds.

### Connect to the Literature

Write one or two sentences summarizing Dante's version of the ninth circle of Hell in this Canto.



37 Critical Viewing  
Which details in this illustration suggest that the poets are no longer in hell? [Interpret]

And it may be that moved by that same fear,  
the one peak<sup>16</sup> that still rises on this side  
fled upward leaving this great cavern<sup>17</sup> here."

130 Down there, beginning at the further bound  
of Beelzebub's<sup>18</sup> dim tomb, there is a space  
not known by sight, but only by the sound

16. **the one peak** the Mount of Purgatory.  
17. **this great cavern** the natural animal pit of line 98. It is also "Beelzebub's dim tomb," line 130.  
18. **Beelzebub's** (bē el' ze bubz) Beelzebub, which in Hebrew means "god of flies," was another name for Satan.

38 Reading Check  
What "stairway" did Virgil take to climb out of Hell?

from the *Inferno*: Canto XXXIV ■ 689

## Enrichment

### Jerusalem

The city of Jerusalem, which Dante references with his mention of Jesus in line 115, is of central importance to three of the world's great religions. It is revered by Christians because it is where Jesus was crucified; by Jews because it is the site of Solomon's temple, of which only a portion at the Western Wall remains; and by Muslims because it is the site from which the prophet Muhammad ascended into heaven. The eastern part of the city is known as the Old City. To the east of the Old City lie the Garden of Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives.

These mutual claims on the city have led to much historical tension and conflict, which continue today. In 1922, the League of Nations gave control of Jerusalem to Great Britain. After World War II, the UN suggested transforming the city into an international city shared by Palestinian Arabs (Christian and Muslim) and Israeli Jews. Palestinians rejected this idea and continue to contest it today as both Israel and the Palestinian Authority claim Jerusalem as their capital.

## Differentiated Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

### Support for Special Needs Students

Review the definition of characterization on page 674. Have students identify and list the four names for Satan that appear on these facing pages: Lucifer, Great Worm of Evil, Fiend and Image of all Evil, Beelzebub. Then have students complete a Satan character web based on Dante's observations of the evil monster.

### Support for English Learners

Point out that Lucifer and the Great Worm of Evil refer to the same being. On these pages alone, Satan is given four names: Lucifer, Great Worm of Evil, Fiend and Image of all Evil, and Beelzebub. Ask students what names they know for Satan, and have volunteers list these on the board.

### Strategy for Advanced Readers

Point out that Virgil describes Satan as "the Great Worm of Evil," and Dante compares Satan to a bat. Discuss the feelings that students associate with worms and bats. Then, discuss why Dante portrays Satan through these negative animal images and how doing so transfers readers' feelings of disgust to Satan.

## 36 Humanities

**Poets Emerge From Hell, *Inferno* XXXIV, 139**, by Gustave Doré

Drawing in perfect scale and proportion seems to have come naturally to Gustave Doré (1832–1883). Rock climbing was a favorite pastime of Doré's, and his familiarity with rock formations and aerial views is evident in this scene.

Use the following questions for discussion.

• What does this picture suggest about the relationship between Virgil (on the far left) and Dante? Explain.

**Possible response:** Virgil stands higher than Dante and, with his arm raised, appears to be instructing or advising him in some way. Also, Dante is looking upward at Virgil with a demeanor of awe or respect.

• In your opinion, would this engraving be more or less effective if it were in color? Explain.

**Possible response:** The muted black and white tones of the engraving seem effective in communicating the imagery of the poem.

## 37 Critical Viewing

**Answer:** The poets' exit from Hell is suggested by the stars, the moonlight shining on the water, and Virgil pointing upward toward Heaven rather than downward toward Hell.

## 38 Reading Check

**Answer:** Virgil climbs the "stairway" of Satan's body to get out of Hell.

## 39 Critical Thinking

### Speculate

- Have students read the bracketed text.
- Point out that the canto and the entire poem end with a couplet, thus betraying the repetition of the tercet throughout.
- Ask what reason Dante may have had to end the canto with a different line form.

**Answer:** It signals closure.

## ASSESS

### Answers

1. **Possible response:** The sinners trapped in ice may be the most horrible because the punishment suggests complete paralysis within a horrible nightmare.
2. (a) Dante cannot write or describe the horror of Satan. (b) Dante describes Satan.
3. (a) The three figures in Satan's mouth are Judas Iscariot, Brutus, and Cassius. (b) All share the sin of betraying a legitimate master. (c) Dante situates the three sinners in a frozen lake to symbolize the cold, frozen heart of each traitor.
4. (a) In line 65, Virgil emphasizes that Brutus suffers without the ability to speak. (b) **Possible response:** Language might be denied to inhabitants of Hell's ninth circle because they must suffer complete paralysis in their punishment. Their sins were unspeakable, so now they cannot speak.
5. (a) At the beginning of his journey through Hell, Dante the character has sympathy for the sinners in Hell. By the end of his journey, he has no sympathy and feels nothing but disgust. (b) **Possible response:** Dante the poet may be saying that although sin should not be tolerated because it has awesome and terrible consequences, some sins are worse than others.
6. **Possible response:** Students may name an admired family member or mentor, or they may cite a literary character who inspires confidence.

of a little stream<sup>19</sup> descending through the hollow  
it has eroded from the massive stone  
in its endlessly entwining lazy flow."

135 My Guide and I crossed over and began  
to mount that little known and lightless road  
to ascend into the shining world again.

He first, I second, without thought of rest  
we climbed the dark until we reached the point  
140 where a round opening brought in sight the blest

39 and beauteous shining of the Heavenly cars.  
And we walked out once more beneath the Stars.<sup>20</sup>

19. **a little stream** Lethe (lē' thē); in classical mythology, the river of forgetfulness, from which souls drank before being born. In Dante's symbolism, it flows down from Purgatory, where it has washed away the memory of sin from the souls who are undergoing purification. That memory it delivers to Hell, which draws all sin to itself.

20. **Stars** As part of his total symbolism, Dante ends each of the three divisions of the *Divine Comedy* with this word. Every conclusion of the upward soul is toward the stars, symbols of hope and virtue. It is just before dawn of Easter Sunday that the Poets emerge—a further symbolism.

## Critical Reading

1. **Respond:** Which aspect of the ninth circle of Hell do you find most horrible? Why?
2. (a) **Recall:** In lines 22–23, what does Dante say he cannot write or describe? (b) **Interpret:** How does he succeed nevertheless in communicating his experience?
3. (a) **Recall:** Who are the three figures in Satan's mouth? (b) **Infer:** What sin do all three have in common? (c) **Analyze:** Why do you think Dante chooses to situate the punishment for such sin in a frozen lake?
4. (a) **Recall:** In line 65, which aspect of Brutus' suffering does Virgil emphasize? (b) **Generalize:** Why might language be denied to the inhabitants of the ninth circle of Hell?
5. (a) **Evaluate:** In what ways do you think Dante the character's feelings about the lost inhabitants of Hell have changed since the beginning of the *Inferno*? (b) **Analyze:** What message about tolerance for sin might Dante the poet be expressing through his character's emotional evolution?
6. **Hypothesize:** If you were to undertake a journey such as Dante's, whom would you choose as your guide? Explain your answer.

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**Go Online** For additional information about Dante  
**Author Link** Alighieri, have students type in the Web  
Code, then select A from the alphabet, and then select  
Dante Alighieri.

## Apply the Skills

from the *Divine Comedy: Inferno*

### Literary Analysis

#### Characterization

1. Which words and phrases in Francesca's first statements to Dante provide **direct characterization** of Dante the character?
2. Use a chart like the one shown to analyze the **indirect characterization** of Dante in the *Inferno*.

Method of Characterization	Example	Trait Revealed
Dante's Actions	He questions Francesca.	curiosity; sympathy
Dante's Words	"I cowered for shelter."	
Other Characters' Behavior Toward Dante	Virgil carries him.	

3. (a) Cite two statements another character makes about Virgil.  
(b) In what ways do each of these statements add to your understanding of Virgil's character?

#### Connecting Literary Elements

4. In Canto V, Francesca mentions "him who took our lives." (a) To whom is she referring with this **allusion**? (b) How does this allusion increase the realism of the *Inferno*?
5. At the beginning of Canto XXXIV, Virgil cites a line from a hymn. (a) How does Virgil change the line? (b) How does this allusion add to the reader's understanding of Hell as a world of distortions?

### Reading Strategy

#### Distinguishing Between the Speaker and the Poet

6. At key transitional points in the story, Dante, the **speaker** of the poem, loses consciousness. In what ways does this solve literary problems for Dante the **poet**?
7. In lines 105–135 of Canto XXXIV, Dante the poet has Virgil explain where the two travelers are standing. (a) Why does Dante the character need this explanation? (b) Why does the reader need it?

### Extend Understanding

8. **Psychology Connection:** At the banks of the river Acheron, Charon tells the souls to "Bury / here and forever all hope of Paradise." Is hope necessary for happiness? Explain your answer.

### Go Online Author Link

For: More about Dante Alighieri  
Visit: [www.PHSchool.com](http://www.PHSchool.com)  
Web Code: ete-9503

### QuickReview

**Characterization** is the art of revealing character. Writers use both **direct** and **indirect** characterization to reveal the personalities of their characters.

An **allusion** is a reference within a literary work to a well-known person, place, event, story, work of literature, or work of art.

To **distinguish between the speaker and the poet** as you read, make a distinction between the speaker's feelings and reactions and the overall meaning and purpose of a poem.

### Go Online Assessment

For: Self-test  
Visit: [www.PHSchool.com](http://www.PHSchool.com)  
Web Code: eta-6504

from the *Divine Comedy: Inferno* ■ 691

**Go Online** Students may use the **Self-test** to prepare for **Selection Test A** or **Selection Test B**.

## Answers

1. Francesca provides direct characterization of Dante with the words "gracious, kind, and good."
2. **Trait Revealed:** timidity; emotional weakness and dependence. Another sample answer can be found on **Literary Analysis Graphic Organizer B**, p. 124 in *Graphic Organizer Transparencies*.
3. (a) **Possible responses:** Minos, speaking about Virgil, warns Dante to "watch to whom you turn." Francesca says that Virgil knows that "the double grief of a lost bliss is to recall its happy hour in pain." Dante says that Virgil "reached over dexterously." (b) **Possible response:** The statements show that Virgil may know of sin himself, that he has experienced pain, and that he is skilled.
4. (a) Francesca alludes to Giovanni Malatesta, her husband, who killed her and Paolo for their betrayal. (b) Francesca's allusion increases the *Inferno's* realism by referring to a real, historical figure.
5. (a) Virgil adds the words "of Hell" to the hymn. (b) The allusion to the hymn emphasizes that Hell is a distortion of Heaven and that evil is a distortion of good.
6. When Dante the speaker loses consciousness, Dante the poet can skip over details of how his character gets from one stage of the journey to another. The poet can also change themes as he shows his character's evolution from pity to hardness in reaction to sinners.
7. (a) Dante the character is confused because he believes himself to be still at the bottom of Hell. (b) The reader needs the explanation because readers in Dante's time believed Earth to be stationary and at the center of the universe.
8. **Possible response:** Students may say that hope is necessary for happiness, because without hope people might see no reason to live. Without this reason, happiness is elusive. Others may say that those who are content in their lives do not think about hope.