

## Dante's *Inferno*, Cantos 18, 20-22

### Asking Questions that Matter Close Reading and Critical Thinking

**Directions:** You will be divided into four groups. Each group will study ONE canto. For the canto assigned, identify Dante's purpose and overall message (theme), and then consider the ways in which his purpose and message are conveyed through content, structure, and literary devices.

In your groups, write questions that invite interpretation, inferencing, evaluation, synthesis, and multiple responses. Do not ask "reading quiz" questions! I will compile each class' questions and each group will lead seminar over YOUR canto's questions in seminar Monday.

You must write four (4) questions and their answers, as well as one (1) additional question for further study and/or a question about something you want to know or about which you are confused. You will only turn in a group copy, but everyone should have the questions and the answers written down. Group members do NOT need to staple their notes to the group copy.

Write your questions in the following three categories. *You may use the stems provided but you are not required to do so.* Be sure your questions are ones that engage critical analysis!

#### Content: 2 questions

These questions ask about the *action* in the text and seek to interpret those actions in relation to the theme.

1. What is the author's attitude toward \_\_\_\_?
2. What is the speaker's/character's purpose in \_\_\_\_?
3. In lines \_\_\_\_, what is the author/character asserting?
4. In lines \_\_\_\_, juxtaposing \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ serves the purpose of \_\_\_\_.
5. In lines \_\_\_\_, how is the speaker/character portrayed?
6. How does the \_\_\_\_ help develop the theme?

#### Structure: 1 question

These questions ask about the *syntax, style, and construction* of the passage and seek to illuminate the structure as a key component of theme development.

1. How would you characterize the style of the passage?
2. What is significant about the author's use of the word/phrase \_\_\_\_?
3. What is significant about the structure of line(s) \_\_\_\_?
4. How would you describe the diction and style of the passage?
5. The shift in point of view from...has the effect of...
6. In lines \_\_\_\_, what contrasts/comparisons/patterns are developed or implied?
7. How does the \_\_\_\_ help develop the theme?

#### Literary devices: 1 question

These questions ask about the various uses of *figurative language* to explore their contribution to the thematic elements of the text.

1. What is significant about the allusion \_\_\_\_?
2. Why is \_\_\_\_ described as \_\_\_\_?
3. In lines \_\_\_\_, what is the effect of using a \_\_\_\_ (metaphor, simile, personification, repetition, etc.)?
4. Why does the author represent \_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_ in lines \_\_\_\_?
5. How does the \_\_\_\_ help develop the theme?