Teaching One Hundred Years of Solitude in Wisconsin: A Guide for Educators

2007-2008 Great World Texts Program of the Center for the Humanities

CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES
University of Wisconsin - Madison
320 University Club, 432 East Campus Mall, Madison, WI 53706
http://humanities.wisc.edu/public-projects/gwt/about-gwt
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How to Use this Guide

A note on context: Reading Across Time and Space

Marquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude is a work of fiction. While its sociocultural and geopolitical contexts are integral to its impact, and to our critical reflections on the texts, it is important to remember that this is a work of literature and not a historical document. While literature can help us teach culture, history, psychology, current affairs, and so on, no one text can bear the burden of representing an entire nation, culture, or people.

How to Use this Guide

The material in this guide is intended to provide much of what you will need to teach the novel and its context. We believe that the historical and cultural background is necessary to understanding the novel, its characters, and their decisions, but we encourage you to teach the novel thematically, and tie it into other disciplinary issues and regular features of your core curriculum wherever possible.

Readings, reviews and handouts: The reviews and readings in the guide are intended for teachers, but some of them may also work well as student handouts. These include readings that provide further background information for instructors as well as a variety of materials (especially from the internet) that might aid instructors in creating handouts, for example. You are encouraged, where possible, to use the materials in this guide as handouts for your students.

Lesson plans and suggestions for discussion: The lesson plans and activities provided in this guide are designed to allow you the opportunity to tailor the way you teach the text to your own course, time constraints, interests, and goals. The individual units could be taught over one or several days or weeks, and you can mix and match ideas from the various sections to create your own syllabus.

Focused Reading: Although the guide assumes that one has read the entire novel, most units include specific passages for a focused reading—an area of the text from which the major ideas and themes of that unit are drawn and which can serve as an example of the major concepts discussed.

Close Reading Strategies

Most of the lesson plans include focused readings, which are passages from the novel that illustrate a certain theme or idea for that particular unit. During discussion and for assignments, students should be encouraged to support their interpretations with evidence from the text. Close reading lends itself well to group work and to small-group discussions, and is an excellent way for students to learn both critical thinking and analysis skills as they make connections, use evidence to support their views, and discuss the impact of various literary techniques. For close reading to work successfully, it’s important that the teacher always remind the students to point to the passage/line/occurrence that supports their position as they share their ideas. Close reading teaches students the difference between “opinion” or “personal reaction” and “analysis.” It also helps teach students to assess the texts of its own merits, and avoid essentializing the cultural components of the text or stereotyping based on generalizations.

Reading a portion of text out loud as a class or small group, followed by group analysis, can be an excellent way to develop close reading skills in the classroom.
The guide also includes a handout on close reading that we encourage you to use in your classes.

For Further Information
If you have any questions about this guide, or would like additional information on any of the materials here, please contact the Great World Texts coordinator at greattexts@humanities.wisc.edu.
The following materials are available for preparation of the units:

Unit 1
Handout # 1: “The Uncertain Old Man Whose Real Existence Was the Simplest of his Enigmas”:
Handout # 2: (Suggested) Janes, Regina. “A Myth of Origins for a Mythic Novel” (31-38)

Unit 2
Handout # 3: Mellen, Joan. “People of the One Hundred Years of Solitude” (14-25)
Handout # 4: Mellen, Joan. “Major Themes” (25-8)
Handout # 5: Johnston, Jan. “The Buendías: Men and Women”
http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/introser/marquez.HTM
Handout # 6: Janes, Regina. “Principles of Construction” (81-96)
http://www.themodernword.com/gabo/gabo_nobel.html

Unit 3
Handout # 8: Janes, Regina. “Magic Realism: Does He Or Doesn't He?” (97-106)

Unit 4
Handout # 10: Wood, Michael. Map 1 (fictional setting)
Handout # 11: Wood, Michael. Map 2 (Caribbean Lowlands of Colombia) Handout # 12:
(Suggested) Merrell, Floyd. “José Arcadio Buendía’s Scientific Paradigms: Man in Search of Himself” (21-32)

Unit 5
Handout # 13: Janes, Regina. “Liberals, Conservatives, and Bananas: Colombian Politics in the Fictions of Gabriel García Márquez” (125-146)
Handout # 14: Johnston, Jan. “Time as Linear History in the Novel” and “Time as Circular History”
http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/introser/marquez.HTM
Handout # 15: Wood, Michael. “Sleep and Forgetting” (excerpt in Mellen 87-9)

Unit 6
Handout # 16: González Echevarría, Roberto. “Cien años de soledad: The Novel as Myth and Archive” (358-380)

Unit Structures
Units 1-3 are intended to be taught in order. They provide students with basic knowledge about One Hundred Years of Solitude and its author, as well as with strategies to undertake close reading. They also give a basic foundation for more detailed and specific readings such as those suggested in Units 4-6.

• Units 4, 5, 6 are interrelated but can also be completed independently. However, it is advisable to teach Units 5 and 6 in this order.
• Since the different topics included in Units 1-6 are recurrent throughout the novel, it is also possible to combine aspects of different units in one class.

• A basic series of lessons consists of four Units (1-3 and 4 OR 5).

• An intermediate/advanced series of lessons consists of five to six units (1-3 and 4, 5 OR 1-3 and 5, 6 OR 1-6).

• Units 5 and 6 might be of special interest for use in history classes.

**Close Reading Strategies**

By “close reading” we mean the careful interpretation of a relatively brief passage of text. This reading technique emphasizes the particular over the general. It requires the reader to pay attention to single words or ideas. We suggest organizing the close reading with a limited set of questions, generally a selection of the ones provided. This selection also can be used to compose a handout for the students. These questions are organized in pre-reading questions, which emphasize the most basic understanding of the text; and post-reading questions, which are meant to enhance interpretation and to facilitate further discussion. In most cases, the teacher is given hints to help the students understand the meaning of the text.

One possible way to organize the close readings is to read the text aloud once for the students. Next, organize the students into groups of two or three for a second reading. They may wish to look over the close reading questions before reading a second time. After the second reading, the students should answer the questions and share them with the entire class. Since some passages might be longer than others, it is advisable to make a selection and let students choose another one to complete the reading at home or, if applicable, to use later in the writing of a final paper or in other activities.

**Student Materials**

The files labeled “Student Materials” are considered handouts. The texts for the close readings, the close reading questions and post-reading activities must be selected and compiled according to the class’s needs, level, and the time available.

**Homework Assignments**

Although homework is meant to be a preparation for the final paper/project, each assignment has also been designed to enrich the in-class activities and it can also be used as an individual activity with no need for a further completion.

**Other Activities**

These activities can be used both as homework or in order to design student project ideas according to the needs and interests of groups or individuals.

**Other comments**

Due to the numerous circular events, zigzags, and flashbacks in the novel, we strongly encourage students to read the whole book. The Buendías’ story is an organic one; each part relies on the others. However, teachers might want to make their own selection according to the level and time available in class. If this is the case, we suggest making a selection from page 1 to 79 and adapting the Units accordingly.
**A Note of caution**

With *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, as with other “great texts,” it is easy for students to pursue pre-fabricated term papers from Internet sites. Teachers may wish to raise academic honesty policies and to discuss the difference between paraphrase, citation, and undocumented borrowing.
Bibliography


Internet Resources

Answers.com
www.answers.com

Emory University. “Postcolonial Studies at Emory”
http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/MagicalRealism.html

Faris, Wendy B. “The Question of the Other: Cultural Critics of Magical Realism”
http://www.janushead.org/5-2/faris.pdf

Johnston, Jan
http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/introser/marquez.HTM

“Macondo”
www.themodernword.com/gabo/

National Public Radio
www.npr.org

Oprah’s Book Club
www.oprah.com

Queen’s University of Belfast. “The Imperial Archive Project”
http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEnglish/imperial/india/Magic.htm

Span. Journal of the South Pacific Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

The New Yorker
http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/05/23/050523ta_talk_mcgrath

Wikipedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel_Garcia_Marquez
List of Handouts

Handout # 1
http://www.themodernword.com/gabo/gabo_biography.html

Handout # 2
PDF file

Handout # 3
PDF file

Handout # 4
PDF file

Handout # 5
http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/introser/marquez.HTM

Handout # 6
PDF file

Handout # 7
http://www.themodernword.com/gabo/gabo_nobel.html

Handout # 8
PDF file

Handout # 9
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Handout # 10
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Handout # 11
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Handout # 12
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Handout # 13
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Handout # 14
http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/introser/marquez.HTM
Handout # 15
PDF file

Handout # 16
PDF File
Unit 1 – Aracataca & Macondo
Unit 1: Gabriel García Márquez – Aracataca & Macondo

Unit 1: Basic information about the author and his book

Goal
Familiarize the students with the historical context, biographical information about the author, and the significance of this book in the Latin American Literature.

Internet Resources for Preparing the Introductory Discussion

For information about the life of Gabriel García Márquez:
http://www.oprah.com/obc_classic/featbook/oyos/author/oyos_author_main.jhtml

For information about Colombia:
http://www.oprah.com/obc_classic/featbook/oyos/author/oyos_author_colombia.jhtml

I. Introductory Discussion
Suggested prompts

• Who is Gabriel García Márquez?

• From the title One Hundred Years of Solitude, what do you think the book is about?

• The novel is set in the town of Macondo. Do you think Macondo is a real place or just a creation of the author?

• García Márquez is from Colombia. What are your associations with the South American country of Colombia?

• García Márquez wrote this quote about Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. What elements of this quote are not literal or logical? What do you think he means metaphorically when he says these things that are not literal?
“At that time Bogotá was a remote, lugubrious city where an insomniac rain had been falling since the beginning of the sixteenth century. I noticed that there were too many hurrying men, dressed like me when I arrived, in black wool and bowler hats.”

—Gabriel García Márquez, Living to Tell the Tale

[If you have powerpoint capacity: Here is a powerpoint about Bogotá, Colombia. http://www.oprah.com/obc_classic/featbook/oyos/author/slide/oyos_author_slide_colomb ia_01.jhtml Is it similar to what you imagined? Who can tell us the name of the hero of independence movements in Colombia and other parts of South America?]

II. Lecture
You can find detailed information about the author and his work at “The Uncertain Old Man Whose Real Existence Was the Simplest of his Enigmas”: http://www.themodernword.com/gabo/gabo_biography.html (also available as Handout #1).
Give the students the following set of questions to read before the lecture and to use during the lecture to organize their notes. Your lecture should address the questions.

About the Author and his Time

• Where is Gabriel García Márquez from?
• Are there any similarities between his hometown and Macondo?
• What are the main political parties that represent the political framework of García Márquez’s fiction? Why are they so important to his fiction? Are they regionally located?
• What was the 1928 Banana Strike Massacre?
• What aspects of García Márquez’s family most influenced his writing?
• What authors and/or books most influenced his writing?
• What was García Márquez’s first job?

About One Hundred Years of Solitude

• How did the process of writing the novel start?
• What did he mention about the tone of the book? Why do you think his words might be useful to
understand the uses of reality/fantasy in the novel?

- What is the importance of this book in Latin American literature? Why was it so successfully acclaimed?

Other suggested readings for the teacher:
Janes, Regina. “A Myth of Origins for a Mythic Novel” (31-38) [Handout #2]

III. In-Class Activities

Pre-Reading questions for Reading 1 (below)

- What do you think Mario Vargas Llosa means by “extraliterary reasons” when he discusses the enormous popularity of the book?
- What does a “total” novel mean?
- What does Vargas Llosa mean by “unlimited accessibility”?

Reading 1

In about the middle of 1967, the novel One Hundred Years of Solitude was published in Buenos Aires, provoking a literary earthquake throughout Latin America. The critics recognized the book as a masterpiece of the art fiction and the public endorsed this opinion, systematically exhausting new editions, which, at one point, appeared at the astounding rate of one a week. Onvernight, García Márquez became almost as famous as a great soccer player or an eminent singer of boleros. The first translations have received an equally enthusiastic response. But the reasons behind the popularity of a book are hard to detect and often extraliterary, and what is especially remarkable in the case of One Hundred Years of Solitude is that its thindering fame should be due to virtues which can only be defined as artistic.

What then are the virtues of this book whose existence contradicts the gloomy assertions that the novel is an exhausted genre in the process of extinction? I wish single out three. First, the fact that this is a ‘total’ novel, in the tradition of those insanely ambitious creations which aspire to compete with reality on an equal basis, confronting it with an image and qualitatively matching it in vitality, vastness and complexity. In the second place, something that we could call its ‘plural’ nature; that is, its capacity for being at one time things which were thought to be opposites: traditional and modern; regional and universal; imaginary and realistic. Yet perhaps the most mysterious of its virtues is the third: its unlimited accessibility; that is, its power to be within anyone’s reach, with distinct but abundant rewards for everyone...” (Vargas Llosa 5-6)

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<td>- Do you know of any other novel, which can be called “total”? If so, explain why.</td>
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• Do you agree with the statement that *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is “within anyone’s reach”? Explain if “yes” or if “no.”

• What part/passage of the novel that you have read so far would you pick as the most representative of Vargas Llosa’s words? Justify your choice.

IV. Homework Assignment

• Look for some covers of different editions of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (also in Spanish) on the Internet. Write a short report comparing these versions of the various interpretations the cover illustrations suggest in different years and countries. Are the English cover illustrations similar to those in Spanish? What does the original version (Editorial Sudamericana, 1967) show on the cover? What does this illustration have to do with the story?

(The idea behind this assignment is to encourage students to research on some of the cultural interpretations regarding the general meaning of the novel. Additionally, this assignment has been designed to help students in the process of writing a research paper).

V. Other Activities

• Listen to the NPR “Book Review: Gabriel García Márquez Memoir”
Unit 2: The Buendías’ Solitude

Goal
Introduce the students to the general structure of the book and its main characters. Help students understand the main topic of the novel. Help students develop a general interpretation of the book’s themes.

Internet Resources for Preparing the Introductory Discussion


For information about characters:
[http://www2.oprah.com/obc_classic/featbook/oyos/character/oyos_character_main.jhtml](http://www2.oprah.com/obc_classic/featbook/oyos/character/oyos_character_main.jhtml)

For information about the main themes of the novel:

I. Introductory Discussion

Suggested prompts

- At this point in your reading, what do you feel that *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is about?

- What are the main characters’ names?

- Can you describe these characters?

- Which characters so far best incarnate the idea of solitude, in your opinion? Why? (For the teacher: read “People of the One Hundred Years of Solitude” by Joan Mellen 14-25. [Handout # 3]

- What is the Buendía family like?

- What is the meaning of name repetitions throughout the different generations of the family? (For the Teacher: although students might have not yet read as far as page 181 it might be useful to give the narrator’s comment, from Úrsula’s perspective, on the male names of the family):
  “‘We’ll call him José Arcadio,’ [Aureliano Segundo] said.
  Fernanda del Carpio, the beautiful woman he had married the year before, agreed.Úrsula, on the other hand, could not conceal a vague feeling of doubt. Throughout the long history of the family the insistent repetition of names had made her draw some conclusions that seemed to be certain. While the Aurelianos were withdrawn, but with lucid minds, the Jose Arcadios were impulsive and enterprising, but they were marked with a tragic sign.” (181)
II. Lecture
You can find detailed information for the preparation of your lecture in “Major Themes” (25-8) [Handout # 4] by Joan Mellen, “The Buendías: Men and Women” by Jan Johnson
http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/introser/marquez.HTM
[also available as Handout # 5]; “Principles of Construction” (81-96) by Regina Janes [Handout # 6].
Give the students the following set of questions to read before the lecture and to use during the lecture to organize their notes. Your lecture should address the questions.

• What are the major themes of the novel, according to Joan Mellen? [For the Teacher: themes are listed below, under “In-class Activities”].

• What are the differences, if any, between the male and the female characters? How are they presented to the reader?

• Describe the narrator’s perspective in telling the story of the Buendía family.

• What does Regina Janes say about the process of reading One Hundred Years of Solitude? [For the Teacher: See especially Janes 83].

• What is the main structural pattern of the book? [For the Teacher: See especially Janes 88].

• What are some of the literary influences that appear in the book? What are the different literary genres that converge in the structure of the novel? [For the Teacher: See especially Janes 88].

• Why have critics argued that One Hundred Years of Solitude’s structure is “baroque”? [For the Teacher: See especially Janes 90-1]. Think of some examples of the book’s “baroque” quality.

• Some other critics have described the novel as “a speaking mirror.” What does that mean? [For the Teacher: See especially Suzanne Jill Levine’s quote in Janes 95].

III. In-class activities

• Identify some of the passages of the book in which the theme of solitude is particularly relevant.
• Can you think of different consequences of solitude in the book?
• What are the political connotations of solitude? Does solitude stand as a symbol for something else? Read the author’s Nobel Prize acceptance lecture: http://www.themodernword.com/gabo/gabo_nobel.html
[also available as Handout # 7]
• According to Joan Mellen, there are some major themes connected to solitude, in some cases, in the book. Try to identify at least one passage in the novel where those themes are present.
IV. Homework Assignments

- Some critics have argued that one of the major conflicts in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the permanent struggle between tradition and modernity. Do you agree with this statement? If so, explain why and write a paragraph that serves as an argument for this idea. If not, explain what you think is the major conflict of the novel, according to what you have read so far, and write a paragraph that justifies your statement. Later, when you have finished reading the book, come back to this assignment and check whether you agree with your first answer or not.

(The idea behind this assignment is to encourage students to come up with their own ideas and learn how to justify them in the process of reading literature).

- For fun: Take the “Quiz” for the section you have read on the Oprah Book Club website: [http://www2.oprah.com/obc_classic/featbook/oyos/character/oyos_character_quiz.jhtml](http://www2.oprah.com/obc_classic/featbook/oyos/character/oyos_character_quiz.jhtml)

V. Other activities

- In groups of three people, pick your favorite character from *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and write his/her fictitious biography.

- Read García Márquez’s Nobel Prize Lecture and analyze the theme of solitude in his works, making reference to quotations from the book. What are the dangers, in García Márquez’ terms, that a culture undergoes in being interpreted and/or stereotyped by other cultures? Mention the specific examples given in the lecture.
Unit 3: Is it All about Magic?

Goal
Provide the students with a basic understanding of the term “magic realism” (also known as “magical realism”) and its uses in literary criticism.

Internet Resources for Preparing the Introductory Discussion

For an overview of the term: http://www.themodernword.com/gabo/gabo_mr.html
http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/MagicalRealism.html
http://www2.oprah.com/obc_classic/featbook/oyos/magic/oyos_magic_features.jhtml

For an overview of problematic connotations of the term:
http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEnglish/imperial/india/Magic.htm
http://www.janushead.org/5-2/faris.pdf

I. Introductory Discussion
Suggested prompts

• What does “magic realism” mean?
• Can you give some examples of what you consider might fit in this category in literature, cinema, etc?

II. Lecture
Prepare your remarks by reading “Magic Realism: Does He or Doesn’t He?” by Regina Janes (97-106) [Handout #8].
Give the students the following set of questions to read before the lecture and to use during the lecture to organize their notes. Your lecture should address the questions.

• What does the term “magic realism” describe?
• When and where was this term first coined? [For the Teacher: See especially Janes 98]
• What is the nature of the debate about the concept of “magic realism”? What do anti-magic realists think about the term? [For the Teacher: See especially Janes 102]
III. In-Class activities

Pre-reading questions for Reading 1 (below)

• What does the term “transgression” mean?
• What is the difference between the individual and the collective? Can you give some examples?
• What are “magical instabilities” in magic realist representations? Compare a “stable” description in a realist text that you have read to a magic realist description in reading 2, 3, 4, or 5.

Reading 1
“Magical realist texts, in their most distinct departure from the conventions of literary realism, often seem to pulsate with proliferations and conflagrations of worlds, with appearances and disappearances and multiplications of selves and societies. These magical instabilities depend upon an array of narrative strategies that multiply/blur/superimpose/unify or otherwise transgress the solidity and singularity of realistic fictional events, characters, settings. In magical realist fiction, individuals, times, places, have a tendency to transform magically into other (or all) individuals, times, places. This slippage from the individual to the collective to the cosmic is often signaled by spectral presences. Consider, for example, Toni Morrison’s Beloved, where Sethe is haunted by her dead daughter, a symbolic and historical embodiment of both her past and her future…” (Parkinson Zamora 501)

Reading 2
Read from page 131 (from “Not all the news was good...”) to 133 (up to “...until the engineers from the banana company covered the grave over with a shell of concrete”)

Reading 3
Read the last paragraph of page 140

Reading 4
Read page 183 (from “No one had gone into the room again”... to the end of page)

Reading 5
Read page 236 (from “Don’t you feel well?” to “...highest-flying birds of memory could reach her”)

Post-reading questions/activities

• Why are the excerpts in Readings 2-5 considered to be good examples of magic realism? Did the
examples you gave at the beginning of the lecture have anything in common with the passages of the novel you just read?

• Identify three other examples of magic realism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. How do they contribute to the overall development of the novel?

• What is the aesthetic impact created by magic realism?

• Compare the use of magic realism in García Márquez’s book with the use of this technique in other books or movies with which you are familiar.

IV. Homework Assignment

• Research articles, encyclopaedias, etc., on the possible contribution of the problematic term “magic realism” to a discussion of political aspects of society. Write a short paragraph about the political consequences of the term.

(The idea behind this assignment is to encourage students to think of the implications of certain literary tools beyond the limits of the text).

V. Other Activities

• Listen to NPR “Commentary: Meeting Gabriel García Márquez”

What does the journalist Katie Davis say about her “magical experience” while interviewing García Márquez?

• On page 388 the narrator of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* says:

“For a man like him, holed up in written reality, those stormy sessions that began in the bookstore and ended at dawn in the brothels were a revelation. It had never occurred to him [Aureliano] until then to think that literature was the best plaything that had ever been invented to make fun of people, as Álvaro demonstrated during one night of revels.”

What do you think about this passage? Do you think García Márquez might just be making fun of you? What does “written reality mean”? 
Unit 4: Charting Macondo

Goal
Provide the students with a detailed understanding of the imaginary “geography” of Macondo: its meanings and structures.

Internet Resources for Preparing the Introductory Discussion

For information on Macondo or Aracataca:
http://www2.oprah.com/obc_classic/featbook/oyos/novel/oyos_novel_macondo.jhtml

I. Introductory Discussion
Prepare this introduction by reading “The History of Paradise” (excerpt in Mellen, 75-83) by Michael Wood [Handout # 9]

Suggested prompts

• What is Macondo like? [For the teacher: See pages 1-9 of the novel]

• Where is Macondo located? What does the location of Macondo have to do with the title of the novel?

• Why was Macondo established? Why did Úrsula Iguarán and José Arcadio Buendía abandon their original town?

• What is the importance of the Buendías’ home in the town?

• What kind of changes does Macondo undergo with the passage of time? [For the teacher: See especially pages 223-9]

II. In-class Activities

Pre-reading questions for Reading 1 (below)

• Why does José Arcadio Buendía want to move out after settling down in Macondo?
• What did they find in their trip? What was the meaning of that discovery?
• Why is there more than one version of Macondo’s map?

Reading 1

• Read from page 9 (from “That spirit of social initiative dissapeared...”) to 13 (up to “If I
have to die for the rest of you to stay here, I will die”)

Pre-reading assignment

- Before reading the following paragraphs draw a map of Macondo’s location based on the information given in the novel

Reading 2

“Where is this Eden? If we draw a map based on the information given to us in the first two chapters of the novel, we get something like Map 1 [For the Teacher: show Map 1 to students. Handout # 10]. We have no way of knowing the shape of the coastline, but we know that the sea is to the north of Macondo; that a range of mountains separates Macondo from Riohacha; that Drake is supposed to have attacked Riohacha in the sixteenth century and hunted crocodiles there; that there are swamps to the south and west to Macondo; and that roads, towns and a sort of modernity can be found two day’s travel to the west, ‘on the other side of the swamp’ [39:43]. We hear of ‘colonial coins’ [10:12]; of ‘authorities,’ ‘a government,” and a distant ‘capital’ [11:13].

Northern Colombia, in which there is an ‘ancient city’ called Riohacha, looks something like Map 2 [For the Teacher: show Map 2 to students. Handout # 11]. Macondo is the name of a banana plantation near Aracataca, García Márquez’ birthplace, but this scarcely signifies, since it is now internationally famous as the name of a mythical community [For the Teacher: see also Unit 6], the Latin America equivalent of Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha County. The point about the maps is not to say that the setting of One Hundred Years of Solitude is Colombia –if García Márquez had wanted to name his country he would have done so —only that its geography and history are not different; that the imagined world has a real situation in time and space. The analogy with Faulkner is exact in this respect, I think. We are not going to find the town of Jefferson on any map of Mississippi. But there isn’t anywhere else on earth it could be” (Wood in Mellen 78).

Post-reading questions/activities

- Try to re-create the map José Arcadio Buendía had drawn after he had come to believe Macondo was surrounded by water [see page 12].
- Does the map you drew before Reading 2 look similar to the other students’ maps, the map provided by your teacher, and José Arcadio Buendía’s map?
- What does “Eden” mean? Can you give some examples of the cultural uses of that word? Why does critic Michael Wood call Macondo an “Eden”?
- What is the cause that, according to the narrator, would explain the following lines:

  “From a clean and active man, José Arcadio Buendía changed into a man lazy in appearance, careless in his dress, with a wild beard that Ursula managed to trim with great effort and a kitchen knife” (9-10)

Are these changes related to modernization and science?
Other suggested readings:
Merrell, Floyd. “José Arcadio Buendía’s Scientific Paradigms: Man in Search of Himself” (21-32) [Handout # 12]

III. Homework Assignment

- Research articles, history books, encyclopaedias, etc. about Sir Francis Drake and the Colombian city of Riohacha. Think about the role that both Sir Francis Drake and the city of Riohacha play in One Hundred Years of Solitude. Write a paragraph describing the way García Marquez incorporates history and geography in his book.

(The idea behind this assignment is to encourage students to do research on some of the geographical/historical facts that give shape to the novel and that help us to understand the conditions of production of the text. This assignment has been also designed to help students in the process of writing a research paper).

IV. Other activities

- How to design “Eden”? Imagine you are a member of the Buendía family who is participating in the foundation of Macondo. In groups of four people try to design both the plan of the town and the plan of the Buendías’ house following the descriptions given in the novel.


- In “Writers at Work”, Ben McGrath says: “A room of one’s own, in which to write: it’s an old and chronically romanticized idea—the solitary space, with an ashtray, an Olivetti, the morning light just so”. Read the whole article from the New Yorker http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/05/23/050523ta_talk_mcgrath With your class, imagine we are in 1966 and you have been commissioned to design García Márquez’s “habitat” in which he will write One Hundred Years of Solitude. Think of what objects you would include there, what colors, etc. and justify your choices. Write a report or... just do it in your classroom!
Unit 5: (Hi)Stories of Macondo

Goal
To help students understand the patterns of history in Macondo in a broader context.

Internet Resources for Preparing the Introductory Discussion

For information on the themes of time and history:
http://www2.oprah.com/obc_classic/featbook/oyos/novel/oyos_novel_time.jhtml
http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/introser/marquez.HTM

I. Introductory Discussion
Suggested prompts

• What is the importance of the Buendías’ genealogical tree or the personal/familiar history in the book?

• Is the Buendías’ personal history related to the history of Macondo? If so, why?

• Is that personal history related to the history of Latin America? If so, why?

II. Lecture
Prepare your remarks by reading “Liberals, Conservatives, and Bananas: Colombian Politics in the Fictions of Gabriel García Márquez” (125-46) by Regina James [Handout # 13], “Time as Linear History in the Novel”, and “Time as Circular History” by Jan Johnston
http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/introser/marquez.HTM
[also available as Handout # 14]
Give the students the following set of questions to read before the lecture and to use during the lecture to organize their notes. Your lecture should address the questions.

• What are some examples of historical facts that García Márquez incorporates into fiction?

• What is the relationship between history and fiction in this novel?

• What is the relationship between history and time? [For the teacher: See especially pages 302-311 of the novel]

III. In-class activities Pre-reading questions

Pre-reading questions
• What does the term “apocalypse” mean? Look up the word in the dictionary and find examples in the novel.
• What does the term “chronicle” mean? How would you apply this term to the succession of events in the novel?
• What is the difference between rectilinear and cyclical time?

Reading 1
“The history of Macondo, presented whole by García Márquez in Cien años de soledad (1967), is a monumental fiction of succession and ending, a fiction of temporal fulfillment. Origin and ending are harmonized, temporal coherence is imposed by the comprehensive apocalyptic perspective of Melquiades’s narrative [...] Cien años de soledad is a novel about the finite duration of man’s individual and collective existence. In one hundred years, the history of the Buendía family and of their town is chronicled from beginning to end. Like Revelation, Cien años de soledad sums up the Bible, projecting its patterns of creation, empire, decadence, renovation, catastrophe onto history. Like St. John of Patmos, García Márquez’s narrator, Melquiades, stands outside time, recounting the past, present and future of Macondo from an atemporal point beyond the future [...] The temporal structure of Cien años de soledad, like apocalypse, is basically rectilinear rather than cyclical. Of course, human temporal reality is never merely flat or linear: García Márquez manages to convey in words the vagaries of our temporal condition, the unpredictable whimsy of time which makes moments seem endless and ages like moments, which makes Macondo’s history seem to double back upon itself and describe circles in time.” (Lois Parkinson Zamora 49-51).

Post-reading questions/activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>questions</th>
<th>hints for the teacher</th>
<th>your answers...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify passages in the book that are descriptive/illustrative of the biblical structure Louis Parkinson Zamora mentions in the paragraphs above</td>
<td>see pages 9, 46, 49, 59, 88, 180, 223, 293, 309, 315, 330, 333, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• According to Parkinson</td>
<td>see pages 1, 124,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Zamora the novel contains both linear and cyclical times. Can you identify them by giving some examples? Are there different ideas or types of

181, 247, 258, 298, 335, 344-5, 396, 347-8, 351, 355, 362-3, etc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>history in the novel?</strong></th>
<th><strong>See page 415 to the end</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What does apocalypse mean in the novel? Can you offer some examples of Melquiades’s apocalyptic perspective/writings?</strong></td>
<td><strong>See page 415 to the end</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the relationship between the insomnia plague and the idea of history in the book?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Read “Sleep and Forgetting” by Wood in Mellen, 87-9 [Handout #15]. See also pages 43-50 of the novel</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What passages of the novel might represent a questioning of the Colombian history?</strong></td>
<td><strong>See passages of the wars (94-140, etc.)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In what way does the novel criticize the historical events of the North American intervention in Colombia?</strong></td>
<td><strong>See pages 237-8, 302-311, 347-8 (from “It happened once” to “and told him to be quiet”).</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. Homework Assignment

- Research articles about the political situation in Colombia and Latin America. Consider how it might be related to some historical events depicted in the novel and write a short report on the most important ones.

(The idea behind this assignment is to encourage students to research on some of the historical facts at the foundation of the novel and to help them to understand the conditions of the text's production. This assignment has been also designed to help students in the process of writing a research paper).

### V. Other Activities

- Imagine there is an insomnia plague in Wisconsin. What kind of device/system would you create in
order to identify objects and to remember their use?

• For fun: Take the “Quiz” for the section you have read on the Oprah Book Club website: http://www2.oprah.com/obc_classic/featbook/ooyos/character/ooyos_character_b_quiz.jhtml
Unit 6: Is Macondo a Myth?

Goal
To help students understand one of the basic elements of the novel’s structure and its relationship with history.

Internet Resources for Preparing the Introductory Discussion
For information on the theme of archetypes:
http://www2.oprah.com/obc_classic/featbook/oyos/novel/partthree/oyos_novel_partthree_summaries_a.jhtml
http://www.answers.com/topic/one-hundred-years-of-solitude-novel-7

I. Introductory Discussion
Suggested prompts

• What is a myth?
• Do you know any mythological characters?
• Can you describe him/her?

II. Lecture
Prepare your remarks by reading “Cien años de soledad: The Novel as Myth and Archive” (358-380) by Roberto González Echevarría [Handout # 16]. The students should read the following set of questions before the lecture and then organize their notes accordingly. Your lecture should address the following questions:

• What different forms do myths take in the novel? [For the teacher: See especially González Echevarría 368].

• Does the novel portray a Latin American myth? [For the teacher: See especially González Echevarría 370].

• What is the archival aspect of the novel? Why does González Echevarría call Melquíades’s room the Archive? [For the teacher: See especially González Echevarría 370-6].

III. In-Class activities Pre-reading activities
In groups of three people answer the following questions:

• Can you identify a mythical figure in One Hundred Years of Solitude? If so, what archetype does the character represent?
• What is the relationship between history and mythology, according to the following quote?

“...the critical, myth-seeking tendency to find the value that holds the novel together—love, solidarity, community, historical consciousness—is doomed. There simply is no such value to be found in the text. When García Márquez has been forced outside the novel, in interviews, to provide such a myth, he calls on two twentieth-century favorites, love and solidarity, and an eighteenth-century standby, happiness. In effect, he provides an inside-out reading of his novel to placate those readers uncomfortable with the novel’s lack of a positive promise or premise.” (Janes 109)

Reading 1
Read page 10 (from “To the south lay the swamps...” to “...the northern route”)

Reading 2
Read pages 416-7 (From “Only then did he discover...” to the end of the novel)

Post-reading activities

After reading the two passages above answer the following questions:

• What do you think these two excerpts of the novel symbolize, according to the definition of a myth?

• The excerpt from Reading 1 reminds us of what other famous text by Homer?
  You can find some other hints that also refer to that famous text on pages 252 and 276.
  What are the names of the fabled marine creatures with the head and upper body of a woman and the tail of a fish? What role have they played in classical literature?

• Read the following quote by García Márquez: “I merely wanted to tell the story of a family who for a hundred years did everything they could to prevent having a son with a pig’s tail, and just because of their very efforts to avoid having one they ended by doing so” (Guivert 314). Can you explain in your own words the paragraph from Reading 2 in the light of this quote?

IV. Homework Assignment

• Take the quiz in http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/solitude/quiz.html and submit it. Compare your answers with the correct results.

• Write a paragraph about the importance of Melquíades’s last words in his writings: “The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants” 415). Think about the use of mythical elements and the end of the Buendía family.
## Additional Resources

### Teaching Materials

**Teaching One Hundred Years with Faulkner’s Sound and the Fury**
http://www6.semo.edu/cfs/tfn_online/sound_frisch.htm
Mark Frisch, Duquesne University, writes that combining these novels in the classroom environment is fruitful.

**Gabriel García Márquez/ Colombia**
http://retanet.unm.edu/article.pl?sid=03/05/18/2110111
Lesson plan about Gabriel García Márquez, Colombia and two of his works, short story "The Saint" and film *Miracle in Rome*.

**“On Marquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude”**
http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/introser/marquez.htm
Ian Johnston’s lecture explores many elements of the novel. He looks at the use of linear and circular time, and magical realism. He also celebrates the comic elements of the book in addition to the tragic ones.

**Advanced Placement English 12: Literature and Composition**
http://www.briarcliffschools.org/upload/upload_1079_AP%2012%202006.htm

**Spanish Language Resources**
http://www.uwosh.edu/faculty_staff/cortes/classes/Spring2004/301/undia.html

### Other Information about Marquez

**Macondo**
http://www.themodernword.com/gabo/
Pictures, essays, reviews, biographies about Gabriel García Márquez. Pretty cool site.

**The Nobel Prize in Literature 1982**
http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1982/
This website has a short biography of Marquez, his Nobel lecture in English and Spanish, and a bibliography. There is even an 18 minute recording of Marquez in Spanish.

**Internet Book List: Author Information: Gabriel García Márquez**
http://www.iblist.com/author559.htm
This has a longer biography of Marquez and a complete list of his works with synopses.
This Spanish site has some of his speeches, interviews and articles about him.
General Latin American Literature

**Putting the Puzzle Together: Art, Literature and History of Latin America**

[http://www.chatham.edu/pti/Contemp_Latin/Swashuk_01.htm](http://www.chatham.edu/pti/Contemp_Latin/Swashuk_01.htm)

Mary Eileen Swazuk, a teacher at Taylor Allderdice High School, writes that combining art and literature provides students with a better understanding of history, culture and the Spanish Language. Notably, she suggests teaching One Hundred Years in conjunction with Botero’s artwork so that students can learn more about Colombia.

**Survey of Latin-American Culture Through Literature**

[http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1997/1/97.01.08.x.html#c](http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1997/1/97.01.08.x.html#c)

This is a lesson plan about Latin American literature with general discussion questions. Movies and novels are listed.

**Exploring Genre Through Latin American Poetry and Literature**


The literature is available in English and Spanish. This syllabus is for primary grades but it can be changed for intermediate grades and even adult instruction. Some suggested works are included.

**Retanet: American Literature: an Oblique Introduction**

[http://retnet.unm.edu/article.pl?sid=03/05/18/1942111&mode=flat&tid=40](http://retnet.unm.edu/article.pl?sid=03/05/18/1942111&mode=flat&tid=40)

Since alternate discussions of American history have only begun to emerge, this curriculum tries to engage students in exploring Latin American and Caribbean authors. This course has students learn about the impact of Columbus’ encounter in the Americas.

**Latin American Literature: Revelation and Revolution**

[http://www.chatham.edu/pti/Contemp_Latin/Weiss_01.htm](http://www.chatham.edu/pti/Contemp_Latin/Weiss_01.htm)

Constance Weiss, a teacher at Schenley High School, writes about her reasons for choosing to study Latin American literature. She lists the authors and their works by country. There are some links and a bibliography. It’s pretty informal but it has some thoughts about what is age appropriate and what to discuss.

**Books and Films about Gabriel Garcia Marquez and his Works**

Book: Mario Vargas Llosa. *García Márquez, Historia de un Deicidio*

Spanish only. This is a work about Marquez by another famous Latin American writer. Incidentally, after the book was written, the two had a falling out after Llosa punched Marquez at a movie theatre.

Book: Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Special Edition of One Hundred Years of Solitude for 40 year anniversary. It will include contributions from Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Víctor García de la Concha, Real Academia de la Lengua.


This short book explores themes in Marquez’s fiction. In Spanish.

Book: Harold Bloom. *Gabriel Garcia Márquez’s One hundred years of solitude.*
This book contains many essays about *One Hundred Years*.

Book: George R McMurray. *Critical essays on Gabriel García Márquez*. Essays cover many topics and works of Marquez.

Documentary: *Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a witch writing*. http://www.documen.tv/asset/Gabriel_Gracia_Marquez_Film.html
This website has information about this documentary about Marquez and magical realism. There is a short free version of the film and links to obtain full access for a charge.

Documentary: *García Márquez in 90 minutes*. This film explores Marquez’s life and works.
What is a Close Reading?

Close reading is a specific method of literary analysis, which uses the interpretation of a small piece of a text as a way to think about the whole. This kind of analysis invites readers to pay close attention to the effects of the specific words on the page. We ask ourselves why each word was chosen, how it contributes to the broader themes and ideas of the text, and how it interacts with the other words/images of the text.

There is no “right” way to analyze a text, but there are more and less convincing ways of interpreting different passages. The steps below will help you to persuasively close read a passage in a literary text:

1. **Summary**
   Read the passage once without making any annotations. Start by asking yourself: what’s going on here? What is the speaker/character/narrator saying? Who is speaking? In what context? If you are unable to write a 1-2 sentence summary of the passage, read through again until you have a clearer idea. Don’t panic if you’re unsure, many texts are deliberately ambiguous or confusing; it is not always possible to say for definite what is happening.

2. **Mood & Tone**
   The second time you read through, think about the overall mood created by the writing. Is it comic, tragic, sinister, serious? What is the tone of the writing: formal, playful, ironic? Does the writer use understatement or exaggeration?

3. **Literary Devices**
   Circle/underline the specific words, images and literary devices which contribute to the mood and tone you have identified. These might include any of the following:
   - Unusual vocabulary/word choice (archaic words, neologisms, foreign imports, slang/colloquialisms). Use an online dictionary such as www.askoxford.com if you need to look up words you don’t recognize.
   - Symbols: does the writer use images which seem to represent something else?
   - Metaphors and/or similes
   - Striking comparisons or contrasts
   - Personification
   - Alliteration and/or onomatopoeia

4. **Structure**
   Consider the overall “shape” of the passage you are analyzing. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, does Marquez use regular punctuation and sentence structures? What poetic forms does he employ? Is there dialogue in the piece? What is its effect?

5. **Bigger Picture**
   Having considered these details, you can start to develop your overall interpretation of the passage. Consider the ways that your passage fits into the text as a whole. What do you think is the text’s main message? How does it contribute to the broader themes of the work? How do the particular literary devices you have identified help to emphasize, intensify or undercut the other questions and issues that the text raises?