Objectives

1. Engage students in the plot, characters, themes, setting, and language of Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* so that they are prepared to discuss and write about the excerpt and/or the entire novel.

2. Practice and reinforce the following Grades 11-12 ELA Common Core Standards for reading, writing, and speaking and listening:

   **READING: LITERATURE** – RL.11-12.1-6, 10
   **WRITING** – W.11-12.1-10
   **SPEAKING AND LISTENING** – SL.11-12.1-6

Time

140 minutes (with up to an additional 250 minutes of extension possibilities)

Materials

SyncTV Premium Lesson on Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*. The full text of the novel is also freely available on StudySync.

Overview

This excerpt presents Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*. In this excerpt, we are introduced to the titular character as he is lost in romanticism and the concepts of chivalry—and ultimately loses touch with reality, re-names himself, and takes up the “mantle” of knighthood. Close examination of this excerpt will prepare students to read the entire collection if desired, and to write thoughtful, informed, and textually-rooted responses, consistent with the ELA Common Core Standards for the grades eleven and twelve.

Background (10 minutes)

1. **Watch the Preview** *(SL.11-12.1-2)*. As a group, watch the video preview of the premium lesson. After viewing, use the following questions to spur a discussion:

   a. What do you know about Spain in 1614, the setting in which this story takes place? What do you know about the Middle Ages in general? What words and images come to mind when you think about this time period?
b. What do you think of when you hear the terms chivalry, hero, and honor? Do these old-fashioned concepts still have relevance in the modern day?

c. Based on the preview, does Don Quixote sound brave or foolish? Speculate what might cause someone like him to become disconnected from reality.

Extension (additional 60 minutes)

d. Describe (ELL). Using iPads (or similar tools) have English Language Learners do a Google search of images that comes to mind when they think of knights, heroic acts, and the Middle Ages. If possible, use a projector to display selected images to the entire class. Use these images as a basis for vocabulary acquisition and knowledge-building.

e. Discuss (SL.11-12.1-3). As a class, lead a discussion on the following topic: What kinds of stories or adventures were you interested in when you were younger? What kinds of heroes—both real and fictional—did you idolize as a child? What kinds of heroes do you idolize now? Did anyone want to grow up to be a hero?

f. Write Creatively (W.11-12.3-4). Following this discussion, have students write their own, modern Don Quixote, in a brief story following the story model discussed in the preview. Instead of wanting to be a knight and obsessing over chivalry, have students imagine someone obsessed with something from modern and/or popular culture whom then chooses to become what they dream about.

g. Using Technology (SL.9-10.5-6). For a fun, creative project, have students film their stories in small groups using iMovie (or similar multimedia program). Screen the completed short films for the class.

Engaging the Text (130 minutes)

2. Read the Text (40 minutes)

a. Read and Annotate (RL.11-12.1-6). Have students read and annotate the excerpt from Don Quixote. You may wish to direct them first to the prompt to guide their notes. If students are completing this as a homework assignment, ask them to write any questions they have into the annotation tool—these questions are visible to you after the students submit their writing assignments or beforehand if you use the “mimic” function to access the students’ accounts.

Extension (additional 30 minutes)

b. Listen and Discuss (SL.11-12.1-2). As a class, listen to the audio reading of the text. Ask students to share how their understanding of the text changed after listening. What additional images came to mind? What words did the author use to develop the setting? Was there anything that stood out more when listening than if they had read silently? Why or why not? Encourage students to write down unfamiliar words or questions they have as they follow along.

c. Comprehend (RL.11-12.1-4, 6, 10). Have students complete the multiple-choice questions (in the lesson extension) individually. Collect papers or discuss answers as a class.
d. Explain *(ELL)*. Use sentence frames to clarify the character of Don Quixote, e.g.:

An older gentleman living in the town of _____________ enjoys spending time ___________. He often talks about his favorite _____________ with everyone _____________. He decides to _____________ and gathers ____________ to do it.

3. Watch SyncTV (30 minutes)

   a. Watch. Either watch the SyncTV discussion as a class or ask students to watch it on their individual computers.

   b. Focus *(SL.11-12.1-3 and RL.11-12.1, 3-4, 6)*. From 0:45-1:40, the SyncTV students discuss how the narrator’s view of Don Quixote differs from Quixote’s view of himself. Pay attention to the examples the model students cite from the text, and think of any additional examples not mentioned in the SyncTV episode.

   c. Focus *(SL.11-12.1-3 and RL.11-12.1, 6)*. Use the portion of the SyncTV discussion from 1:59-3:30 to highlight the possible uses of irony in the excerpt. Additionally, this portion highlights the possible interplay between irony, mocking, and sympathy—or is the sympathy ironic, too?

   d. Focus *(SL.11-12.1-3 and RL.11-12.1, 6)*. Use the segment of the SyncTV episode from 4:34-5:10 to start a discussion regarding the possible motivations of Don Quixote.

   e. Discuss *(SL.9-10.1-4 and RL.11-12.1-6, 10)*. After watching the model discussion, have a conversation with the class about the ideas discussed in the SyncTV episode. What new thoughts do they have after hearing the students’ discussion? Next, divide students into small groups (3-4 students). Move around the room monitoring groups as students follow the SyncTV episode as a model to discuss some of the following questions:

   i. Fundamentally, is there something wrong with pretending to be someone you’re not—even if it leads to desirable qualities? Consider the opposing viewpoints, using Don Quixote as a basis for this discussion.

   ii. Consider the quote from Don Quixote’s favorite stories in paragraph 2: “The reason of the unreason with which my reason is afflicted so weakens my reason that with reason I murmur at your beauty.” How do these quotes from Quixote’s favorite stories mirror his character and inform us of his personality?

   iii. Much of this excerpt can be called satirical. What is satire? What ideals do you think Cervantes is satirizing here? How does his kind of satire compare to modern examples?

   iv. How is the narrator a character in this excerpt? Point to passages and quotes from the excerpt in which the narrator’s viewpoint is sharply apparent.

   v. How do you think Don Quixote would define the concept of “chivalry”? Having now read and discussed the excerpt, why is this concept important to the thematic meaning of the story?

   vi. Revisit the question from the pre-reading discussion: is Don Quixote brave or foolish? How are these two themes inexorably linked to each other?
Extension (additional 60 minutes)

- **f. Podcast** (*W.11-12.3, 9 and SL.11-12.4-6*). Put students in pairs or small groups have them conduct a mock interview with Don Quixote at the end of this excerpt, as he prepares to set off on his adventures. Have them write a script for the interview including five or six questions; then, have them record the interview on an iPad (or similar multimedia), using the podcast tool to broadcast the interview online.

- **g. Research** (*W.11-12.2, 4, 7-8, 10*). Have students work individually or in pairs to complete the following assignment:
  
  Research some of the stories that Don Quixote might have read (medieval romances that predate this story). Write an essay that discusses at least three of them, citing sources, and take a stand on their merit as literature. What is Cervantes trying to say about these? How do you know?

4. **Think (10 minutes)**

- **a. Respond** (*W.11-12.1, 4*). Ask students to read the “Think” questions, watch the corresponding video clips, and respond to the questions, either in class or for homework.

5. **Write (50 minutes)**

- **a. Discuss** (*SL.11-12.1*). Read the prompt you have chosen for students, and then solicit questions regarding the prompt or the assignment expectations. Whichever prompt you have chosen, make sure you are clear about the assignment expectations and the rubric by which you and the other students will be evaluating them.

- **b. Organize** (*RL.11-12.1-5, 10 and W.11-12.1-2, 5*). Ask students to go back and annotate the text with the prompt in mind. They should be organizing their thoughts and the points they’ll address in their writing as they make annotations. If you’ve worked on outlining or other organizational tools for writing, this is a good place to apply them.

- **c. Write** (*W.11-12.1-2, 4-6, 8-10*). Have students go through the writing process of planning, revising, editing, and publishing their writing responses.

- **d. Review** (*W.11-12.4-6*). Use the StudySync “Review” feature to have students complete one to two evaluations of their peers’ work based on your chosen review rubric. Have the students look at and reflect upon the peer evaluations of their own writing. What might you do differently in a revision? How might you strengthen the writing and the ideas?

Extension (additional 100 minutes)

- **e. Write** (*W.11-12.1-2, 4-6, 9-10*). For homework, have students write an essay using one of the prompts you did not choose to do in class. Students should publish their responses online.

- **f. Write Creatively** (*RL.11-12.3, 6 and W.11-12.3-4, 9*). In a short creative writing assignment, have students re-imagine this particular excerpt from *Don Quixote* if it were written by either a) Don Quixote himself, in first-person perspective or b) Sancho Panza, Quixote’s trusty sidekick whom he meets in the following chapters, or c) Aldonza Lorenzo, the Lady of His Thoughts.
g. **Discuss (SL.11-12.1-4).** Following this short creative writing assignment, discuss as a class how the shift in perspective changes the tone and meaning and of the story.
SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Key Vocabulary

1. hack (n.) – horse
2. olla (n.) – a ceramic jar
3. doublet (n.) – buttoned jacket
4. breeches (n.) – pants
5. lucidity (adj.) – clarity
6. conceits (n.) – fanciful notions
7. interminable (adj.) – endless
8. curate (n.) – member of the clergy engaged as assistant to a vicar, rector, or parish priest
9. knight-errant (n.) – a wandering knight travelling in search of adventure
10. extol (v.) – praise enthusiastically

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. About how old is Don Quixote?
   a. 20
   b. 30
   c. 40
   d. 50

2. Why has he sold some of his land?
   a. To pay off debts
   b. Gambling
   c. For books
   d. To support his mother

3. What does he spend most of his time doing?
   a. Adventure!
   b. Leisure
   c. Farming
   d. Blacksmithing

4. What are his favorite books about?
   a. Chivalry
   b. Magic
   c. Economics
   d. He hates to read

5. What does he love about the stories?
   a. He loves the “lucidity of style”
   b. He thinks they’re totally unrealistic
   c. They are all he has to do
   d. He is related to all the knights
6. What does he discuss with the curate of the village?
   a. His soul
   b. The best of the knights
   c. The women of the town
   d. The state of his farm

7. Where does Quixote receive his training?
   a. An old master in the town
   b. From his family
   c. From the curate
   d. ...what training?

8. How does Quixote change his helmet?
   a. He takes it to the blacksmith to repair
   b. He adds a feather to the top
   c. He simply cleans and polishes it
   d. He reinforces it. With pasteboard.

9. How do his reinforcements work?
   a. Splendidly. They save him from an ogre.
   b. Terrible. It shatters when he taps it with his sword.
   c. Okay. It breaks but saves his life.
   d. The smith starts asking him for help.

10. What does Quixote want to do?
    a. Raise awareness of the lack of heroes
    b. Help with a very real bandit problem
    c. Be a larger than life hero
    d. Ride his horse in a play

Answer Key

1. D  
2. C  
3. B  
4. A  
5. A  
6. B  
7. D  
8. D  
9. B  
10. C
Further Assignments

1. Assign students to read the remainder of *Don Quixote* or a selection of passages at your option. Have them write an essay that compares the themes/morals of *Don Quixote* to typical romance literature. How different is it really? What was likely to author’s purpose? Cite specific examples. (*RL.11-12.1-6 and W.11-12.1-6*)

2. After reading the complete novel, have students look back at the excerpt and discuss the role it plays in the story. How does the beginning of the novel function? Is it for the best that the novel starts mostly with background rather than an immediate adventure? Why or why not? Ask students to write an essay on this topic. (*RL.11-12.5*)

3. What is the role of a narrator in a story? In a short written response and/or class discussion, consider the many roles and styles of narration in the telling of a story. Use *Don Quixote* as an example, and contrast this with other styles and perspectives you have encountered in other works of literature you have read. (*W.11-12.2,4-5, 9 and SL.9-10.1-4*)

4. Assign students a StudySync “Writing” assignment which asks students to research the impact of *Don Quixote* on the world of Western Literature, especially as it is considered the most influential novel of all time by many. (*W.11-12.2, 4-8*)

5. After reading *Don Quixote*, have students write an interview between the narrator and the titular character. How would they describe this relationship? What sort of things might they ask one another? How would Don Quixote respond to the fourth wall being broken? Could he deal with knowing he, too, is a character in a book? Have students act this out. (*W.11-12.3–5, 9 and SL.11-12.5-6*)

6. Ask students to write the conversation that the Don Quixote might have had with his lady love if he had actually met her. After students have written their dialogues, pair them up and have them read their dialogues together, focusing on the ways in which punctuation and verbiage outside the quotation marks inform speech. (*ELL*)