

Gilgamesh: Study Guide

Gilgamesh

- * What are his origins? Strengths? Weaknesses? Desires? Fears?
- * What does he lose and gain by story's end?
- * How does he change during his journeys? How familiar are you with the entire plot?
- * What do you take away from this epic?

Supporting Characters and Figures

What role does each play? Where do we see them? How do they relate to Gilgamesh himself (if at all)?

★ Enkidu	★ Ninsun	★ Shamash
★ Shamhat	★ Siduri	★ Anu
★ The Hunter's Son	★ Urshanabi	★ Enlil
★ Humbaba	★ Utnapishtim + Wife	★ Ea
★ Ishtar	★ Scorpion Man + Wife	★ The Bull of Heaven

Major Places, Symbols, and Realms

Why are each of the following items significant from both a plot and symbolic standpoint?

◎ The Cedar Forest	◎ The Sea of Death	◎ The Boat & Sail
◎ The Forest Gate	◎ The Steppe	◎ The Axe & Star
◎ The Plant	◎ The Tigris and Euphrates	◎ Mashu & the Passage
◎ The Loaves of Bread	◎ The Walls of Uruk	◎ Shurruapak
◎ The Sacred Stones	◎ Gilgamesh's Dreams	◎ Uruk

Themes

Where do the following ideas appear in *Gilgamesh*, and what is the poet's commentary on each?

- ▲ Storytelling and Traditions
- ▲ Grief and Recovery
- ▲ Love and Loyalty
- ▲ Obligation and Obsession
- ▲ Compassion and Selfishness
- ▲ Relationships and Social Systems
- ▲ Heroism and Courage
- ▲ Wisdom and Foolishness
- ▲ Consequences and Justice
- ▲ Emotion, Rationality, and Conviction
- ▲ Independence, Limits, and Possibilities
- ▲ Authority, Influence, and Control
- ▲ Death, Hope, and Legacies
- ▲ Human Nature, Meaning, and the Divine
- ▲ Civilization and the Natural World
- ▲ Five Star Points:
 - Enlightenment
 - Independence
 - Identity
 - Security
 - Love

Heroism, Archetypes, and Supplements

- What's an archetype? Where can you find them, and how do they relate to our reading of *Gilgamesh*?
- What are each of the Seven Stories? What are some characteristics of each?
- Why was Joseph Campbell's and Carl Jung's work important?
- List the twelve heroic archetypes, as well as the characteristics of each. Can you find other "common heroic factors" and relate them to *Gilgamesh*?
- List some types of archetypal journeys/myths. Can you identify characteristics/examples for each type?
- Identify traits for each stage of the Hero's Journey, as well as how each relates to *Gilgamesh*.
- What are some types of situational archetypes, and how does each relate to *Gilgamesh*?
- ☼ What information appears in the Autobiographical Postscript and Afterwords following the Mason translation that isn't covered in our PowerPoint lectures?
- ☼ What information appears in the Introduction to the Mitchell translation that isn't covered in our PowerPoint lectures? How does Mitchell's writing/translation style differ from Mason's?
- ☼ How do each of the following supplements enhance our understanding of *Gilgamesh*?
 - ✧ *Like Water*, Elizabeth Spires
 - ✧ *The Silent Season of a Hero*, Gay Talese
 - ✧ *The Murder of Tayshana Murphy*, Jonathan Abrams
 - ✧ *A (Seemingly) Impossible Fall*, Brian Phillips
 - ✧ *\$50, Under 11.5 Rounds, Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Victor Ortiz*, David Hill