

WHAT NORTHSIDE TEACHES STUDENTS ABOUT LITERATURE

1. God is a God of communication, and we must understand clearly what He says in His Word. The Old Deluder Satan Act established public schools for the specific purpose of teaching children to read the Bible so that Satan could not deceive them in their innocence.
2. God's Word consists of sublime examples of many different genres to be interpreted differently. There is narrative, biography, epic poetry, lyric poetry, prophecy, figurative speech (simile, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole), epistolary correspondence, fiction (allegory, parables, fables), and more. Many grievous errors and some heresies are the direct result of not applying properly the rules of interpretation appropriate to the genre under consideration.
3. Secular literature, and the liberal arts in general, are legitimate objects of the Christian's study. Moses, Daniel, and Paul were broadly educated in the secular academics of their day, and this is one reason they were so mightily used of God. We are instructed to think on things which are beautiful and lovely and of good report, and beautiful music, art, and literature represent such areas, since God gives the gifts prerequisite to the works.
4. Knowing secular writers not only assists the believer in achieving a better understanding of himself and others, but it builds a platform of commonality for befriending the unsaved and witnessing to them. The guided teaching of erroneous world views common to movements and authors greatly assists the student in offense (witness) as well as defense (guarding his own mind from seductive errors). Disdaining good literature is not an indication of superior spirituality.
5. Students should be warned that literature is more powerful than they can possibly imagine. Good stories **disarm, engage, and persuade**, which is why Nathan used a story rather than a sermon to get to David's heart, and why Jesus told a story about a Good Samaritan rather than preach a sermon on the theology of the neighbor. However, fiction is just as powerful in evil hands: Rousseau caused infinitely more damage with *Emile* than with his philosophical writing, and eternity alone will tell the harm J.K Rowling has inflicted with the *Harry Potter* books, much more insidious than all the books ever written on witchcraft combined.
6. Therefore, the student must have a carefully designed program of instruction in order to progress in his ability to understand, evaluate, and reject false world views. Just as in mathematics, the faculty must create a scope and sequence of age-appropriate works through which they will guide him, during class discussion or for outside reading. Good literature, even works by unbelievers, is true to life, and therefore will demonstrate God's spiritual laws in action, rewarding good and punishing evil. Literature through grade 12 should be ennobling, not mirroring the seamy side of society.
7. Since all works produced by unbelievers will contain objectionable elements, Northside has developed a written policy dealing with these issues. Briefly, works may contain some references to the occult, to graphic violence, to eschatological realism, to erotic realism, or to immorality, but these must be controlled, negative examples. Since there is no instance of profanity in the Bible, works read for credit at NCS do not contain profanity.

Northside Christian School, with much prayer and deliberate care, employs faculty and selects curricular materials with the specific purpose of teaching literature from this Biblical perspective.