



## DRIVING QUESTION

How do themes, archetypes, and motifs connect works of literature across time and culture?

## PROJECT SUMMARY

In this project, students will investigate how a chosen theme, archetype, or motif (such as “the tragic hero,” “the green world,” “fate vs. free will,” “monsters and humanity,” etc.) appears in multiple works of literature. Working in pairs or small groups, students will research texts, authors, and historical context to create a visual influence map that traces connections between the works. Alongside the visual, they will compose analytical commentary explaining how the theme/archetype evolves across time, how authors adapt it, and why it continues to resonate. The project culminates in a gallery walk presentation, where students showcase their maps and reflect on how literary traditions inform one another.

## REAL-WORLD CONTEXT

This project mirrors the work of literary scholars, critics, and even pop culture writers who trace how ideas, characters, and motifs travel across time. Just as critics explore how Shakespeare influences modern writers or how myths resurface in film and television, students will map those same connections in literature. The project also reflects real-world skills used in museum curation, media analysis, and cultural criticism where identifying patterns and influences helps people understand the evolution of ideas across history.

## PRODUCTS & AUDIENCE

Students created maps and presentations and shared them with other classes.

## STUDENT REFLECTIONS

- “Having clear roles made it easier to divide tasks and stay organized. The attendance rule also helped make sure everyone was involved. I do wish we had a better system for handling last-minute changes or when someone couldn’t finish their part on time.”
- “I learned a lot from this project, particularly about different types of literature and the development of archetypes throughout the ages. I specifically researched the ‘Fallen Angel’ archetype, but learned a lot about others through the presentations.”

## NC PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE SKILLS GAINED

 COLLABORATION    COMMUNICATION    PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY    CRITICAL THINKING  
 ADAPTABILITY    LEARNER’S MINDSET    EMPATHY

## TEACHER REFLECTION

“This PBL went really well overall. Students were deeply engaged in drawing connections between authors, time periods, and recurring archetypes or themes. I was especially impressed by how creative their visual maps turned out and how confidently they discussed literary influence across genres. If I do it again, I would not allow them to use google slides as some of them turned more into a standard presentation rather than a map.”