

Reading Questions Section I of *Le Morte D'Arthur* (pg. 1 - 162)

Directions: Read these questions carefully BEFORE you read the section For each of the questions, mark and label in your book passages that pertain. Finally, list the passage page numbers on this answer sheet, along with any thoughts you have that might answer the question.

1. How is Arthur portrayed thus far in *Morte d'Arthur*? Is Arthur a great leader? Does his reign realize his ideal? Explain.

2. In *Morte d'Arthur* love vs. duty is an important theme. What is Malory's idea of the importance of these two? Which does he value more? Explain.

3. Discuss the disparity between illusion and reality in the book.

4. **First** read the following descriptions of of style of Malory’s prose epic. Then answer the questions that follow.

The prose in which is unfolded this scarcely Christianized fairy tale—for the Grail was to Arthurian legend something as the Crusades to feudalism—is, apparently, of a very simple, almost childlike, type, with its incessant “so—and—then,” but, unlike mere simplicity, it never becomes tedious. There is a kind of cadence, at times almost musical, which bears the narrative on with a gradual swell and fall proportioned to the importance of the episodes, while brevity, especially at the close of a long incident, sometimes approaches to epigram. But the style fits the subject so perfectly as never to claim attention for itself. A transparent clarity is of its essence. Too straightforward to be archaic, idiomatic with a suavity denied to Caxton, Malory, who reaches one hand to Chaucer and one to Spenser, escaped the stamp of a particular epoch and bequeathed a prose epic to literature.
(*The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*)

The basis of all Malory's story-telling is the simple declarative sentence or collocation of co-ordinate main clauses, and the expression by this of a sequence of actions, perceptions, or facts. Its predominance in Malory establishes a characteristic tone of flat truth which the more accomplished, fluent, and varied subordination of clauses in his French sources cannot convey. His is the chronicle style. (Field, *Romance and Chronicle* 38)

Next) Find illustrations of this chronicle style within the historians handout you received in class. Now find examples from *Le Morte D’Arthur*.