

The Perfect Heresy: Guided Reading

Generalities

- the Albigensian Crusade
 - the Perfect Heresy
- } X

I. Description of Languedoc + Catharism

● Languedoc:

- geographical boundaries
 - history of language
 - differences between North and South
- } X

● Catharism:

- rituals/sacraments, creed, organization
 - who were the 'fallen angels'?
 - reasons for conflict with Rome?
- Chapters 1, 3 and 9 (money issue)*
- } X

II. Pope Innocent III

- the man: his beliefs and ambitions
 - evolution of the papacy
 - role in the Crusade
- Chapters 2, 4, 9 and 11*
- } X

III. Medieval Warfare + Portraits of Crusaders

● Warfare:

- medieval army or 'host'
 - war technics
- } X

● Crusaders

- Simon de Montfort/Amaury de Montfort
 - regular types of crusaders
- Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 12 (siege of Toulouse and death of Simon de Montfort)*
- } X

IV. Temporal Characters

● Counts of Toulouse + Southeners

- Raymond VI and Raymond VII
 - Pedro II of Aragon
 - Trencavel and the Faidits
- } X

● Kings of France

- Philip II and Louis VIII
- Blanche of Castille and Louis IX

V. Attitudes and Roles of Clergy

- Peter of Castelnau/Arnold Amaury
 - Cistercian monks vs friars
 - females in religion, Catholics vs Cathars
 - Lateran council, role and importance
- Chapters 3, 4, 6, 7 (Rome's policies) and 11*
- } X

VI. Turning Points

- the Battle of Muret (1213)
- the Treaty of Paris (1229)
- the Avignonet Affair and Montségur (1243-44)

} X

VII. Aftermath and Consequences

- overall situation of Languedoc and Catharism
 - royal crusade: motives and outcome
 - Inquisition
 - Cathar Country today
- Chapters 13, 14, 15, 18 and Epilogue*

} X

The above list of topics are for the students to choose from to make their oral presentations. Once they have read the complete book they can choose the topic they'd like to study for the presentation. For some topics the chapters in italics indicate where the students are more likely to find the relevant information to properly address the issue.

Depending on the number of participants, some issue may be addressed as pair work (hence the X symbol)

USEFUL TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL READ

My 30-year experience of teaching various groups of young people (high-school or college students) has made me realize that some people have difficulties in reading books especially history books of college level which is why we have chosen *The Perfect Heresy* by Stephen O'Shea. This work has the feel of good fiction but is totally accurate with the historical background so I thought a few words of advice could come in handy for some of you.

- First of all, keep in mind that **you will be visiting most of the places mentioned in the book** so they'll appear less abstract to you and make your reading more enjoyable.
- Previous students have complained that there were too many characters so it was difficult to keep track of them and that they all seemed to be called Raymond : yes there are many characters but **there is a list of the "Principal Figures in the Cathar Story" at the very beginning of the book. Use it as a reference and check it out when in doubt on the identity of a character.** And yes, Raymond was a very popular name in those days but there are not that many and thanks to the list mentioned above you'll get to identify them.

1. Improve Reading Comprehension With Pre-Reading Tasks

Before reading the text, ask yourself what you already know about its topic. Try to recall as much information as you can. Think of related ideas you've learned in the past. Make brief notes about your thoughts or discuss what you remember with others.

2. Improve Your Reading Comprehension by Researching the Topic

Background information may appear on book covers and inner flaps of book jackets. Many books include an introductory section and a mini-biography about the author. Book publisher's websites may also include background information. Think about the information you read. Ask:

- What kind of text is this?
- What new information did I learn, and what do I expect to learn?
- Is this text informative or entertaining, fact or fiction?
- What interests me about this book?

3. Learn New Vocabulary Words to Improve Reading Comprehension

As you read, make a list of unfamiliar vocabulary words. Look up the meanings of the words in the dictionary, and jot definitions down by hand. Writing definitions by hand will help you remember the definition much more than by typing or by reading alone.

4. Improve Your Understanding by Reflecting on the Material and Asking Questions

As you read, what questions come to mind? Read on to find the answers. You can think about the questions and answers or jot them down on paper. Research indicates that writing notes by hand can increase comprehension and recall.

5. Test Yourself to Determine How Well You've Learned the Material

After your reading session, quiz yourself on the main points. What was the main idea? Who are the characters in the story? What information did you learn? Jot down your thoughts in your own words to help you remember them and give you deeper insight into the topic. If expressive writing is difficult for you, jot shorter notes and discuss the reading with a friend or parent. Also remember that the book will be yours so you can highlight the important passages.

- Finally, do not forget that I will be there to help you along so don't panic and have a good read!

Eric Créma, course instructor