Research Question

We plan to conduct a linguistic analysis of the language of pain in *Dante’s Inferno* to look at how pain, suffering, and torture are represented at the different levels of hell. Our analysis will be heavily semantic, however we will also focus on variables such as frequency and probability of word-occurrence. Each of the nine levels of hell and purgatory is associated with a different torture suffered by the damned. Level 1, for example, is a place of sorrow without torment, while in Level 9 sinners are frozen in ice. Each level gets progressively more terrible. Thus, we hypothesize that the language surrounding pain and suffering will represent that accordingly and get progressively more grim.