

Essay Topics

Choose one or two primary sources (the mandatory, not the recommended, readings) and write a paper based on one of the following topics. Your paper must have a specific, narrow thesis, so you will need to narrow down these topics. Your paper must be between 1800-2000 words, plus or minus 10%.

- Choose two primary sources that each has a considerably different interpretation of the character King Arthur. How does each primary source's interpretation serve its wider interests, compared to the other primary text?
- In many of the primary texts, various characters—or Arthur's kingdom itself—experiences a departure from its loftiest ideals. They "fall" or become "corrupt." What are the primary sources trying to show with these plotlines? Is earthly perfection impossible? And if so, why?
- Women are often the driving force of the plot in Arthurian texts, precipitating the crises that challenge the male characters. But do the primary sources really show the women to be at fault? Or are the women acting justifiably under the circumstances?
- How do physical descriptions of characters foreshadow their eventual fates? Do these descriptions represent the characters as stable or unstable in their identities?