



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1984 Volume IV: The Oral Tradition

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## **The Oral Tradition: Ancient, Modern, Recycled**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 84.04.02  
by Camilla Greene

This unit is designed to help students understand the oral tradition and how it is used in literature. The students will read a play written by Euripides in the fifth century B.C.; the epic poem "Song of Myself" written by the American poet, Walt Whitman, in 1855; and "Go Tell It On The Mountain" written in 1953 by James Baldwin. These three literary men incorporated the oral tradition in their writings. Even though the ages in which these men lived and published are separated by centuries, there are many elements for comparison. Students will be able to recognize and enlarge upon the similarities amongst these writers. This unit also is designed to help students recognize the role that the oral tradition plays in their lives. The oral tradition by nature of its transmission is a living, changing and creative force operating in our society today.

(Recommended for 11th grade English classes)

### **Key Words**

*History Oral Tradition Literature*

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