

**Alternative Title:** “El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha”

**Don Quixote**, Spanish in full, Part 1 **El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha** (“**The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote of La Mancha**”) and Part 2 **Segunda parte del ingenioso caballero don Quijote de la Mancha** (“**Second Part of the Ingenious Knight Don Quixote of La Mancha**”), [novel](#) published in two parts (part 1, 1605, and part 2, 1615) by Spanish writer [Miguel de Cervantes](#), one of the most widely read classics of [Western literature](#). Originally conceived as a [parody](#) of the chivalric [romances](#) that had long been in literary vogue, it describes realistically what befalls an aging knight who, his head bemused by reading such romances, sets out on his old horse [Rocinante](#), with his [pragmatic](#) squire, [Sancho Panza](#), to seek adventure. Widely and immediately translated (first English translation 1612), the novel was a great and continuing success and is considered a [prototype](#) of the modern novel.





• Don Quixote and Sancho Panza Don Quixote (left) and Sancho Panza, bronze statues in Madrid. © iStockphoto/Thinkstock  
 Miguel de Cervantes: *Don Quixote* First edition of volume one of Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605). The Newberry Library, Louis H. Silver Collection, 1964 ([A Britannica Publishing Partner](#))



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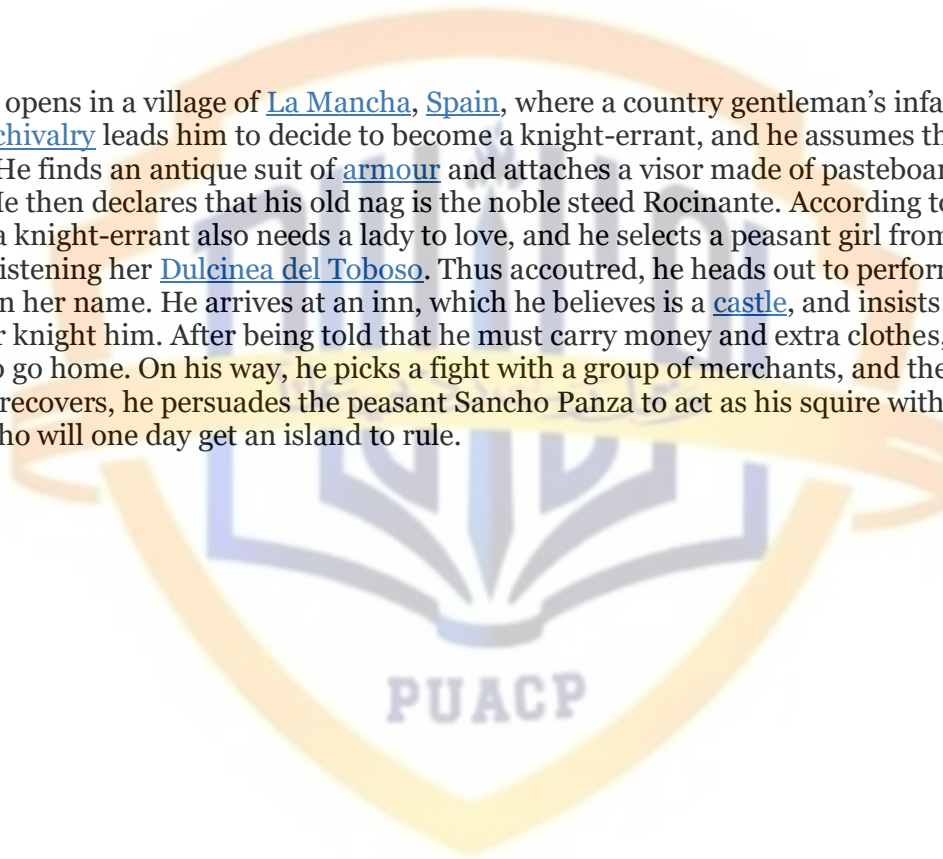
## Famous Documents

Which of these documents was the last to be ratified?

# Summary

## Part 1

The work opens in a village of [La Mancha](#), [Spain](#), where a country gentleman's infatuation with books of [chivalry](#) leads him to decide to become a knight-errant, and he assumes the name [Don Quixote](#). He finds an antique suit of [armour](#) and attaches a visor made of pasteboard to an old helmet. He then declares that his old nag is the noble steed Rocinante. According to Don Quixote, a knight-errant also needs a lady to love, and he selects a peasant girl from a nearby town, christening her [Dulcinea del Toboso](#). Thus accoutred, he heads out to perform deeds of heroism in her name. He arrives at an inn, which he believes is a [castle](#), and insists that the innkeeper knight him. After being told that he must carry money and extra clothes, Don Quixote decides to go home. On his way, he picks a fight with a group of merchants, and they beat him. When he recovers, he persuades the peasant Sancho Panza to act as his squire with the promise that Sancho will one day get an island to rule.







**Don Quixote and Sancho Panza** Don Quixote (right) and his squire, Sancho Panza; illustration from a 19th-century edition of *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes. *Public Domain*

Don Quixote and Sancho, mounted on a donkey, set out. In their first adventure, Don Quixote mistakes a field of [windmills](#) for giants and attempts to fight them but finally concludes that a magician must have turned the giants into windmills. He later attacks a group of monks, thinking that they have imprisoned a princess, and also does battle with a herd of sheep, among other adventures, almost all of which end with Don Quixote, Sancho, or both being beaten. Eventually, Don Quixote acquires a metal washbasin from a barber, which he believes is a helmet once worn by a famous knight, and he later frees a group of convicted criminals.

Don Quixote subsequently encounters Cardenio, who lives like a wild man in the woods because he believes that Luscinda, the woman he loves, betrayed him. Don Quixote decides to emulate him to prove his great love for Dulcinea, and he sends Sancho to deliver a letter to her. When Sancho stops at an inn, he finds two of Don Quixote's old friends, a priest and a barber, looking for him. They decide that one of them should pose as a damsel in distress to try to lure Don Quixote home. En route, they come across a young woman, Dorotea, who was betrayed by Don Fernando, who married Luscinda. Dorotea agrees to pretend to be a princess whose kingdom has been seized by a giant, and Don Quixote is persuaded to help her. They stop at the inn, where Don Fernando and Luscinda soon arrive. Luscinda is reunited with Cardenio, and Don Fernando promises to marry Dorotea. Later, the priest and the barber put Don Quixote in a

wooden cage and persuade him that he is under an enchantment that will take him to Dulcinea. Eventually, they return him home.

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## Part 2

Part 2 begins a month after the end of part 1, but many of the characters have already read that book and so know about Don Quixote. He becomes convinced that Dulcinea is under an enchantment that has turned her into an ordinary peasant girl. Don Quixote and Sancho meet a duke and duchess who are prone to pranks. In one such ruse, they persuade the two men that Sancho must give himself 3,300 lashes to break the curse on Dulcinea. The duke later makes Sancho the governor of a town that he tells Sancho is the isle of Barataria. There Sancho is presented with various disputes, and he shows wisdom in his decisions. However, after a week in office and being subjected to other pranks, he decides to give up the governorship. In the meantime, the duke and duchess play other tricks on Don Quixote.

Eventually, Don Quixote and Sancho leave. After learning that a false sequel to the book about him says that he traveled to [Zaragoza](#), Don Quixote decides to avoid that city and go instead to [Barcelona](#). Following various adventures there, Don Quixote is challenged by the Knight of the White Moon (a student from La Mancha in disguise), and he is defeated. According to the terms of the battle, Don Quixote is required to return home. Along the way, Sancho pretends to administer the required lashings to himself, and they meet a character from the false sequel. After they arrive home, Don Quixote falls ill, renounces chivalry as foolish fiction, and dies.

## Legacy And Adaptations

Cervantes's strikingly modern narrative gives voice to a dazzling assortment of characters with diverse beliefs and perspectives, and it exhibits nuanced irony, a humanistic outlook, and a pronounced comic edge. The popularity of the first volume led to the publication in 1614 of a spurious sequel by someone calling himself [Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda](#), a circumstance that Cervantes addressed in his own second volume.



**Miguel de Cervantes** Miguel de Cervantes, engraving by E. Mackenzie after Gregorio Ferro and Fernando Selma; from *The Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography* (1863). Hulton Archive/Getty Images

In addition to spawning countless works of critical discussion, *Don Quixote* inspired artists in every medium. Notable adaptations included a classic 1869 ballet; the 1965 musical play *Man of La Mancha*, which first opened on Broadway in 1968; and a 1972 film version directed by [Arthur Hiller](#) and starring [Peter O'Toole](#), [Sophia Loren](#), and James Coco. Another notable film adaptation was *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* (2018), a loose retelling of Cervantes's novel by the director [Terry Gilliam](#), whose attempts to make the film over the course of nearly three decades were beset by various complications, delays, and cancellations, turning Gilliam into a quixotic figure himself, as detailed in the documentary *Lost in La Mancha* (2002).

*The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica* This article was most recently revised and updated by [Adam Augustyn](#), Managing Editor, Reference Content.

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## Golden Age

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**Alternative Title:** Siglo de Oro



**Golden Age**, Spanish **Siglo De Oro**, the period of [Spanish literature](#) extending from the early 16th century to the late 17th century, generally considered the high point in [Spain's](#) literary history. The [Golden Age](#) began with the partial political unification of Spain about 1500. Its literature is characterized by patriotic and religious fervour, heightened realism, and a new interest in earlier epics and ballads, together with the somewhat less-pronounced influences of humanism and Neoplatonism.



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During the Golden Age such late [medieval](#) and early [Renaissance](#) forms as the chivalric and pastoral novels underwent their final flowering. They were replaced by the [picaresque novel](#), which usually described the comic adventures of low-born rogues and which was exemplified by the anonymously written *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) and by the works of [Mateo Alemán](#) and [Francisco Gómez de Quevedo y Villegas](#). [Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's](#) monumental novel *Don Quixote* (Part I, 1605; Part II, 1615), a satirical treatment of anachronistic chivalric ideals, combined pastoral, picaresque, and [romantic](#) elements in its narrative and remains the single most important literary work produced during the Golden Age.

Spanish [poetry](#) during the period was initially marked by the adoption of Italian metres and verse forms such as those used by [Garcilaso de la Vega](#). Spanish poetry eventually became marked by the elaborate conceits and wordplay of the Baroque movements known as [culteranismo](#) and [conceptismo](#) (qq.v.), whose chief practitioners were [Luis de Góngora y Argote](#) and Quevedo, respectively. The Golden Age also witnessed the almost singlehanded creation of the Spanish national theatre by the extremely productive playwright [Lope de Vega](#). His establishment of a dramatic tradition using characteristically Spanish themes, values, and subject matter was further developed by [Tirso de Molina](#) and by [Pedro Calderón de la Barca](#). Among the highlights of the period's religious literature are the mystical glorifications of spirituality by [St. Teresa of Ávila](#), [Luis de León](#), and St. John of the Cross. The end of the Golden Age is marked by Calderón's death in 1681.

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