

## TRISTAN UND ISOLDE IDEAS FOR LESSON PLANS

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**Tristan und Isolde is a tale that was shared orally before being written down.**

-Most families share their own stories orally. What are these oral traditions in your family? When and where do you tell family stories? What “characters” are popular subjects?

-Focus on how fairytales and tales are made & collected (ex. Brothers Grimm, etc.)

-Tristan is a hero in this tale. Examine the role of heroes in our society and how they are portrayed in tales, fairytales and legends. Who is your hero? What qualities make him/her a hero? Could you think of any heroes of our time and their accomplishments? Is there a comparison between Tristan and your hero? (Martin Luther King, Muhammad Ali)

-The story of “Tristan und Isolde” moves through different cultures. How is your ethnic background similar to/different from the cultures of the story? Do you see any elements in your culture that remind you of elements of cultures presented in the story of “Tristan und Isolde?” (ex. Cornwall/Irish vs. English) Often we define our heritage with elements of different cultures. How are some ways in which other cultures might define our culture?

-“Tristan und Isolde” is performed in German. English language has many roots in Germanic language. Compare and contrast the sounds of vowels. Contrast some of the words that are similar/different, contrast sentence structure. Contrast the sounds to your native tongue. What is similar/different?

-The story of “Tristan und Isolde” takes place in history during the time of swords, magic and warriors. Focus on what was going on in the world during the time of “Tristan und Isolde.” Contrast the architecture of different cultures at that time in history (ex. castles, poor man’s hut) and the structures we know of today that were being built at that time.

-One subtext of “Tristan und Isolde” is the way roles were defined in a particular historical context. How are gender roles established in the story? Is our society different/similar? In this story, princess Isolde is a prize for the strength of a warrior. Do we have anything similar in our culture? At the time the story takes place, arranged marriage was a custom. How are the arranged marriages different from our relations of today? How does arranged marriage effect the gender roles of the society?

-“Tristan und Isolde” is a story about a princess who uses magical herbs to heal Tristan. Discuss the role of potions vs. natural medicine. How are they similar/different? What is our societal view on this topic? Are there any stories about the different medical findings? Do you think that the medicine we have today could have healed Tristan?

- The story of “Tristan und Isolde” takes place in history when the way people dressed reflected their status. Talk about different costumes of the period. Do our fashion statements give an image of who we are? Discuss how the way people dress defines who they are.

-Wagner is known for many inventions. Discuss Wagner and some of his inventions. (ex. theater) How did his inventions change the way we see theater/opera today? Some of these inventions were musical. How did his inventions influence film and television music of today?

- The story of “Tristan und Isolde” has many elements of well known and performed stories. The story has a beginning, middle and end, as well as a climax. Define the climax, and discuss the characters. What are some of the similarities/differences of “Tristan und Isolde” as it is compared to “Romeo & Juliet” or “Otello?”

-Is “Tristan und Isolde” a successful story? If so, what makes it a success? If not, explain why?

-In the story of “Tristan und Isolde,” Tristan wants to win freedom for his people. What are some of the other stories we can think of where a protagonist is seeking freedom for his people? Can we draw parallels from the story to our society?

-In the story of “Tristan und Isolde,” Cornwall has been forced to pay to the Irish king an annual tribute: copper the first year; silver the second year; gold the third; and young lads and maidens the fourth. Discuss the worth of money. How is our social structure different/similar in terms of monetary value and use? How did we get the dollar? How is dollar different from the European money? What are some of the other currency that is used by other countries?