

Unit 2: LITERATURE

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About the Cultural Skills Program

Sons of Norway's Cultural Skills Program provides a framework for learning about traditional and contemporary Norwegian culture. Each unit consists of three levels of skill-specific activities to guide you as you learn. You can complete the units on your own, through your lodge or through a special class or group. For each level, you'll complete a few activities, email (or mail) them to a lodge or district officer, and earn a pin in recognition of your accomplishments. As a benefit of membership, the Cultural Skills Program is available only to members of Sons of Norway.

When you complete part 1 of your first unit you'll receive a Cultural Skills pin, a skill bar, and a level 1 bar. You'll receive additional level bars when you complete parts 2 and 3 of that skill, and new skill bars when you complete part 1 of a new skill.

Going Further with Cultural Skills

Want to take your skills to a new level? Members who have completed multiple units or mentored others in the program can earn special recognition.

- A Master of Cultural Skills is someone who has completed multiple units. Finish all three parts of any three units for the bronze level, all parts of six units for the silver level and all parts of nine units for the gold level.
- A Cultural Skills Mentor instructs or guides others to learn about Norwegian cultural skills. If your instruction has helped other members earn Cultural Skills awards, you can earn a mentor pin.

For more information about the Sons of Norway Cultural Skills Program, call (800) 945-8851 or email culturalskills@sofn.com.

INTRODUCTION

Norway's literary tradition spans centuries, from the poems and sagas of the Viking Age, to the explosion of the romantic era, to 20th century Nobel Prize winners to the hugely popular crime literature of today and beyond. The vast corpus of Norwegian literature documents the country's complex progression through time. Along with the works of native-born Norwegian writers we can also include those of Norwegians who left Norway for the New World and their descendants in the US and Canada. As times have changed in Norway literature has borne witness to – and at times influenced – this unique, dynamic people.

In this unit of the Cultural Skills Program we invite you to read and reflect on the wide array of Norwegian and Norwegian-North American literature. In Part 1, you'll sample your choice of books from any genre, while in Part 2 you'll focus on fiction, and in Part 3 you'll focus on nonfiction. Parts 1, 2 and 3 may be completed in any order.



OVERVIEW:

- For Part 1, you will read three works of your choice from any genre of literature; fiction, nonfiction, drama, or poetry.
- For Part 2, you will read five books, focusing on fiction, poetry and/or drama.
- For Part 3, you will focus on nonfiction, reading five works of history, biography, essays, current events or more.
- For each part, you will complete one Reader Response Form and one elective activity (page 11). When you're done, complete the Pin Application Form and Evaluation Form.
- If you have a question regarding any part of this unit, please send an email to culturalskills@sofn.com or call (800) 945-8851.

PART 1: A SURVEY OF NORWEGIAN LITERATURE

In Part 1 you will have the opportunity to sample works from many genres and time periods. To start, select and read three books by Norwegian or Norwegian-North American authors or on Norwegian subjects. The books can be in any genre – poetry, fiction, nonfiction or drama. Each of the three books should be from a different genre and at least one of the books must be written by a native Norwegian author. Next, you'll complete a simple Reader Response Form (included on pages 13-15) for just one of the three books you read. Then you'll choose and complete one of the elective activities listed on page 11-12. Finally, you will fill in the Pin Application and Evaluation forms and send everything in to Sons of Norway Headquarters to be evaluated.

Part 1 Activities

Activity 1: Read three books by Norwegian or Norwegian-North American authors.

Each of the three books should be from a different genre and at least one of the books must be written by a native Norwegian author. The books may be poetry, fiction, nonfiction or drama. List the books in the space provided on the Pin Application Form (page 3).

Activity 2: Complete one Reader Response Form (pages 13-15).

Follow the form's instructions to answer some basic questions about one of the books you read for Activity 1. You can find the forms on pages 13-15.

Activity 3: Complete one elective activity.

Choose from any of the Elective Activities listed on pages 11-12. Many of the electives ask you to write a short report or summary of the activity. Feel free to use the space provided on the Pin Application Form for this or if you prefer, attach a separate document.

Submitting your work

Complete the Pin Application Form included in this section, and submit all of the following items:

- Reader response form
- Elective activity requirements
- Unit evaluation form

Send materials by email or mail to your lodge or district cultural officer, who will order your pin from the Lodge Leader Supply Store.

- Send materials by email or mail to your lodge or district cultural officer, who will order your pin from the Lodge Leader Supply Store.
- Keep a copy of your report for your records.

PIN APPLICATION FORM - LITERATURE PART 1

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____ E-mail address: _____

Phone: (____) _____

LODGE AFFILIATION INFORMATION:

(Required) Membership #: _____ District #: _____ Lodge #: _____

1. List of books you read for Part 1:

Title	Author	Genre (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama, etc)

2. Complete one Reader Response Form.

- Use the reader response form (pages 13-15) to answer some basic questions about one of the books you read for Activity 1. You can find the forms on pages 13-15.

3. Elective activity # _____

- If your elective activity requires you to write a short summary, include it below. If you need more space, simply attach your summary as a separate document.

4. Evaluation Form

Have you received Cultural Skills Program pin awards previously? Yes No

If yes, please list: _____



UNIT EVALUATION FORM - LITERATURE PART 1

For each of the four questions below, please check the box that fits your opinion most accurately.

	Agree	Disagree
1 Instructions for this part were easy to follow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Requirements for this part were reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Elective activities provided a lot of choices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Required activities were interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This part has (check all that apply):

- Helped me gain a better appreciation of Norwegian heritage & culture.
- Increased my involvement with other lodge members (such as participation in formal & informal discussions, presentations, formal group activities, etc.).
- Increased the interest of my lodge in the Cultural Skills Program because of my participation through special interest groups, presentations, or cultural fairs.
- Offered me an opportunity to involve or pass on this skill/interest to family members or other interested individuals.
- Helped prepare me to participate in the district and/or International Folk Art Exhibition & Competition.

FEEDBACK: To improve the unit, please add comments and suggestions. Your comments are confidential and in no way affect the awarding of your earned pin or bar.

Scan and email this form to culturalskills@sofn.com (preferred) or send it by mail to:

Cultural Skills Program
Sons of Norway
1455 West Lake Street
Minneapolis, MN 55408



PART 2: FICTION, POETRY AND DRAMA

In Part 2, you will focus specifically on works of fiction, poetry and drama – that is, just about everything except nonfiction, which we'll focus on in Part 3. This time you'll be reading five books. Try to select from a few different categories; for example, read some of Bjørnson's short stories, a novel by Undset and a play by Ibsen.

Part 2 Activities

Activity 1: Read five works of fiction, poetry or drama by Norwegian or Norwegian-North American authors.

List the books in the space provided on the Pin Application Form (page 6).

Activity 2: Complete one Reader Response Form (pages 13-15).

Follow the form's instructions to answer some basic questions about one of the books you read for Activity 1. Note that there are different Reader Response forms for each genre; use the one most appropriate for the book you chose to respond to. You can find the forms on pages 13-15.

Activity 3: Complete one elective activity.

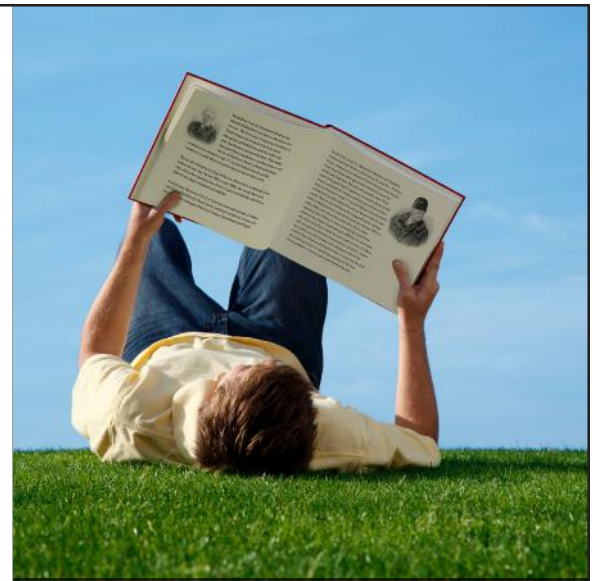
Choose from any of the Elective Activities listed on pages 11-12. Many of the electives ask you to write a short report or summary of the activity. Feel free to use the space provided on the Pin Application Form for this or if you prefer, attach a separate document.

Submitting your work

Complete the Pin Application Form included in this section, and submit all of the following items:

- Reader response form
- Elective activity requirements
- Unit evaluation form

Send materials by email or mail to your lodge or district cultural officer, who will order your pin from the Lodge Leader Supply Store.



DE FIRE STORE – THE FOUR GREATS

Henrik Ibsen, Jonas Lie, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and Alexander Kielland have been known collectively as *De store fire* – The Four Greats. Generations of students of Nordic literature have learned of the Four Greats, although Lie and Kielland are much less widely read today than Bjørnson and especially Ibsen. What makes them great? Ibsen's significance to modern drama is well known, and Bjørnson's literary, political and cultural contributions are discussed on page 17. Lie and Kielland were also prolific contributors to public debate, but are best known today for their novels. They are also well known for being well known. All four lived, worked and wrote at about the same time (the late 1800s to early 1900s), they mostly knew each other, all four drew inspiration from Norway's nature and daily life, and all four achieved some degree of international credibility. In recent years, this notion of the Four Greats has come under scrutiny. It reflects only one period in Norway's literary history, and doesn't include any women, nor even Norway's two subsequent Nobel Prize winners, Knut Hamsun and Sigrid Undset. It seems that the term was cooked up as part of a marketing campaign by the Four Great's publisher. A recent comic book parodied the idea, featuring the authors as zombie-fighting super heroes.

- Send materials by email or mail to your lodge or district cultural officer, who will order your pin from the Lodge Leader Supply Store.
- Keep a copy of your report for your records.

PIN APPLICATION FORM - LITERATURE PART 2

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____ E-mail address: _____

Phone: (____) _____

LODGE AFFILIATION INFORMATION:

(Required) Membership #: _____ District #: _____ Lodge #: _____

1. List of books you read for Part 2:

Title	Author	Genre (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama, etc)

2. Complete one Reader Response Form.

- Use the reader response form (pages 13-15) to answer some basic questions about one of the books you read for Activity 1. You can find the forms on pages 13-15.

3. Elective activity # _____

- If your elective activity requires you to write a short summary, include it below. If you need more space, simply attach your summary as a separate document.

4. Evaluation Form

Have you received Cultural Skills Program pin awards previously? Yes No

If yes, please list: _____



UNIT EVALUATION FORM - LITERATURE PART 2

For each of the four questions below, please check the box that fits your opinion most accurately.

	Agree	Disagree
1 Instructions for this part were easy to follow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Requirements for this part were reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Elective activities provided a lot of choices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Required activities were interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This part has (check all that apply):

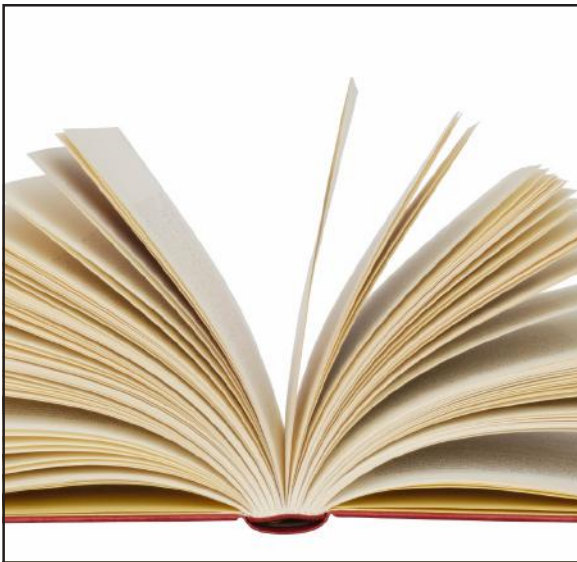
- Helped me gain a better appreciation of Norwegian heritage & culture.
- Increased my involvement with other lodge members (such as participation in formal & informal discussions, presentations, formal group activities, etc.).
- Increased the interest of my lodge in the Cultural Skills Program because of my participation through special interest groups, presentations, or cultural fairs.
- Offered me an opportunity to involve or pass on this skill/interest to family members or other interested individuals.
- Helped prepare me to participate in the district and/or International Folk Art Exhibition & Competition.

FEEDBACK: To improve the unit, please add comments and suggestions. Your comments are confidential and in no way affect the awarding of your earned pin or bar.

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Sons of Norway
1455 West Lake Street
Minneapolis, MN 55408





PÅSKEKRIM

One of modern Norway's most popular – and most bizarre – literary traditions is *påskekrim*, literally “Easter crime.” Every year at Easter, the shelves of Norwegian bookstores swell to bursting with lurid novels promising ghastly tales of murder and kidnapping; Norwegian TV is flooded with mystery series from home and abroad; and newspapers and the internet scramble to review it all, proudly proclaiming the year's *påskekrim* hits and misses. For outsiders, this springtime obsession with crime and punishment is bewildering – it's Easter after all, a celebration of life, new beginnings – and made all the more so by the fact that there's no parallel in the other Scandinavian countries. Evidently the whole thing started back in the 1920s. A young writer named Nordahl Grieg and his friend Nils Lie hatched a dastardly plan to rob the Bergen-Oslo train by ski. Rather than commit the crime they decided to write a book about some students who do. Nordahl's brother Harald, the head of a major Norwegian publisher, saw to it that the book, *Bergenstoget plyndrett i natt* (“Bergen Train Robbed Tonight”), came out that Easter. Before the book was even published, Harald Grieg had started an ingenious marketing campaign to promote it. He bought ads on the front pages of some of Norway's biggest papers that read, in huge letters, “BERGEN TRAIN ROBBED TONIGHT!” and below, in very small letters, “By Jonathan Jerv” the pseudonym that Nordahl and Nils had chosen for themselves. The ads created a sensation and the book was sold out as soon as it hit the shelves. Publishers had traditionally only put out new books in the fall, but now they'd created a new tradition and a new way to market at another time of year – crime for Easter.

PART 3: NONFICTION

In Part 3 you will focus on nonfiction. Try to select books from at least three sub-categories, such as biography, history and modern society.

Part 3 Activities

Activity 1: Read five works of nonfiction by Norwegian or Norwegian-North American authors.

List the books in the space provided on the Pin Application Form (page 9).

Activity 2: Complete one Reader Response Form (pages 13-15).

Follow the form's instructions to answer some basic questions about one of the books you read for Activity 1. You can find the form on pages 13-15.

Activity 3: Complete one elective activity.

Choose from any of the Elective Activities listed on pages 11-12. Many of the electives ask you to write a short report or summary of the activity. Feel free to use the space provided on the Pin Application Form for this or if you prefer, attach a separate document.

Submitting your work

Complete Pin Application Form included in this section, and submit all of the following items:

- Reader response form
- Elective activity requirements
- Unit evaluation form

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- Send materials by email or mail to your lodge or district cultural officer, who will order your pin from the Lodge Leader Supply Store.
- Keep a copy of your report for your records.

PIN APPLICATION FORM - LITERATURE PART 3

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____ E-mail address: _____

Phone: (____) _____

LODGE AFFILIATION INFORMATION:

(Required) Membership #: _____ District #: _____ Lodge #: _____

1. List of books you read for Part 3:

Title	Author	Genre (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama, etc)

2. Complete one Reader Response Form.

- Use the reader response form (pages 13-15) to answer some basic questions about one of the books you read for Activity 1. You can find the forms on pages 13-15.

3. Elective activity # _____

- If your elective activity requires you to write a short summary, include it below. If you need more space, simply attach your summary as a separate document.

4. Evaluation Form

Have you received Cultural Skills Program pin awards previously? Yes No

If yes, please list: _____



UNIT EVALUATION FORM - LITERATURE PART 3

For each of the four questions below, please check the box that fits your opinion most accurately.

	Agree	Disagree
1 Instructions for this part were easy to follow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Requirements for this part were reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Elective activities provided a lot of choices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Required activities were interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This part has (check all that apply):

- Helped me gain a better appreciation of Norwegian heritage & culture.
- Increased my involvement with other lodge members (such as participation in formal & informal discussions, presentations, formal group activities, etc.).
- Increased the interest of my lodge in the Cultural Skills Program because of my participation through special interest groups, presentations, or cultural fairs.
- Offered me an opportunity to involve or pass on this skill/interest to family members or other interested individuals.
- Helped prepare me to participate in the district and/or International Folk Art Exhibition & Competition.

FEEDBACK: To improve the unit, please add comments and suggestions. Your comments are confidential and in no way affect the awarding of your earned pin or bar.

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Unit 2: ELECTIVE ACTIVITIES

WHAT'S A SUMMARY OR A REPORT?

The writing required by an elective activity is used to explain what you've experienced or learned. Focus on what you learned and not on spelling or grammar; your report is not graded. And, if it makes writing easier, just imagine writing a letter to a friend! Please write a minimum of 2 or 3 paragraphs unless otherwise stated in the elective. However, if you wish to write more and would like to enclose additional photos, articles, etc. please feel free to do so.

This section describes the elective activities you may select for each part of the literature unit. All the activities are appropriate for all three levels of this unit. Only one elective activity needs to be completed per part. If the elective you choose directs you to write a short summary or report, use the space provided on the Pin Application Form.

1 Establish a Book Club

Establish a book club in your lodge or community. Read books by Norwegian, Norwegian-North American or Nordic authors. Conduct a minimum of four meetings (generally monthly) to discuss the books. Make an announcement about the meetings in the lodge newsletter. You may welcome non-members as well and invite them to join Sons of Norway. Books chosen are not limited to just one category in the reading unit. Include a short report or a printed announcement with your pin application.

2 Participate in a Book Club

Participate in a book club in your lodge or community where Norwegian-related books are the focus of discussion. Attend at least four meetings. Write a short report about the club or include a picture of a meeting with your pin application.

3 Start or Participate in a Book Exchange

Establish a book exchange in your lodge or community. In a nutshell, the exchange works by having each member buy a book, read it, then share it with the other members in an agreed-upon rotation. To get started, make an announcement in the lodge newsletter and host an initial gathering of the club to make the first exchange and agree on the length of loan time. This may be done at a lodge meeting or in a home. Choose books written by Norwegian, Norwegian-North American or Nordic authors, but the books need not be limited to just one genre. There should be a minimum of six participants in the exchange. There is no need for ongoing formal meetings once procedures are established. Write a short report about the exchange or include a picture of a meeting with your pin application.

4 Write a Book Review for Your Lodge Newsletter or Website

Write a short book review on the book you chose as a reading requirement for this unit. Submit it to your lodge newsletter for publication or offer to give a short talk about the book in your lodge or community. Include a copy of the review as it appeared in your lodge newsletter. If you give the report orally at a meeting, ask an officer to verify delivery of the report.

5 Organize a Read-Aloud Program

Organize a read-aloud gathering in your lodge or community and invite the public. Use excerpts from the books you chose to read. Attach a copy of an announcement in the lodge newsletter and/or the local paper with your report, a copy of the actual program or write a short summary of the event. Check out <http://www.readaloudamerica.org/> for more information on hosting a read-aloud event.

6 Make a Reading Log

Keep a reading log as you go through one of the books for your reading requirements. At the end of each chapter, act or major section, write your reactions to that portion of the literature. This resembles diary writing, where you comment on whatever comes to mind following completion of the pages. Date each entry and note the chapter or section. When you finish the book, read over all your entries and write a conclusion about what you gained from keeping this log. Turn in a copy of your log with your pin application.

7 Research Ethnic Literature

Visit the local public library or a university library in your vicinity, research their selection of ethnic literature and write up a short report of your findings. Report on the availability of such books at this facility. First, discuss the various ethnic groups represented at this library, noting whether materials are available in the ethnic group's native language. Second, determine whether Norwegian literature is available. Indicate whether there are materials pertaining to all of the categories in the reading unit. Also look up "Norway" and "Norwegian authors" in the card catalogue or online directory to see what you find. Talk to your librarian about what areas are expanding in the ethnic literature category. Prepare a short summary of your findings and include it with your pin application.

8 Take a Course in Norwegian Literature

Take a course in any type of Norwegian literature at any school. Write a brief report on the course content and your own evaluation of the course.

9 Interview a Scandinavian Studies Professor

Interview a university professor specializing in Scandinavian studies. Inquire about this individual's opinion of Norwegian novels, plays or poetry today as compared to early 20th century literature and their knowledge of modern day or emerging Norwegian/North American authors. Find out what courses are offered by this person and/or department. Consider inviting this person to a lodge meeting for a short talk on these subjects. Another possibility would be asking him or her to be a guest at a reading circle. Take notes and present the interview as part of your report.

10 Read a Play and Attend a Performance

Attend a performance of one of the plays you completed for the reading unit requirement (for example, Ibsen's *A Doll House*). Write a short report on or review of the play. Describe the insight you gained from seeing the production versus reading it.

11 Review a Film

Watch a Norwegian or Nordic film and write a review of it. It could be based on a play or book you have read for this unit or not – any movie of feature length will work great. Write a 1-page review of the film and include it with your pin application. Approach writing about the film just as you would writing about a book; who are the main characters? What are the main events and conflicts? Consider submitting your review to your lodge newsletter for publication. Many items in Sons of Norway's media lending library would work well for this elective. For a complete list, check out the "Members Login" section of www.sonsofnorway.com.

12 Create a Poetry Anthology

Create your own anthology of poetry. Include at least three poets and a minimum of 12 poems. These works should come from more than one source. Copy the various works and create a booklet. Be sure to list the source for each poem along with its title and author. Include a table of contents. Write an introduction describing how you found these various poems, whether they have an overall theme (such as Norway's nature, adapting to America, etc.) and which one you like the best. Poems may be in Norwegian or English. Describe your anthology and include a table of contents, introduction and a list of sources with the pin application form.

13 Write Your Own Original Work

Write a short story, play or poem about Norway, your Norwegian heritage, etc. Include the finished document with your pin application.

14 Record an Oral History

Interview an interesting person in your family, lodge or community and record their personal history. If you're especially interested in history, focus on what this person can tell you about important historical events or periods. If you're more interested in biography focus on questions about this person's life, such as his or her early Norwegian heritage (Were they born in Norway? Did they speak Norwegian at home?). Consider submitting your interview to the Norwegian American Historical Association (www.naha.stolaf.edu). Think about some of the topics covered in biographies you have read and ask questions of that nature. Include a summary of your interview findings with your pin application.

15 Write a Lodge History

Research a topic or theme related to the history of your lodge. Find out all that you can about the lodge's entire history or a particular era. Write up a report and submit it to your lodge newsletter or give an oral presentation at a lodge meeting. Include a copy of the newsletter article, or if an oral report, include a short summary of your findings with your Pin Application Form.

16 Read and Respond to a Book from or About Another Nordic Culture

Sons of Norway's mission reaches beyond just Norway. The other Nordic countries have their own rich, fascinating literary traditions. Read a book written in or about another Nordic country and write up a short report or fill out an additional Reader Response Form.

17 Create Your Own Elective Activity

Don't see the elective activity that you wish to do? Make a suggestion by emailing culturalskills@sofn.com, or call 1-800-945-8851 and ask for Cultural Skills.

INSTRUCTIONS

- For each part of the literature unit, fill out just one Reader Response Form for one of the books you read
- Try to answer each question thoroughly, writing whatever comes to mind
- If you would like to write more, feel free to use a separate document

READER RESPONSE FORM FOR FICTION OR DRAMA

Title: _____

Author: _____

Genre: (fiction or drama) _____

1. Briefly tell about the main character or characters in this book. What is he/she like? Did he/she change over the course of the story and if so, how?

2. Describe the major conflicts or key events in the story.

3. Describe what you learned about Norwegian character or culture from this text.

4. Did you like this book? Would you recommend it to others? Why, or why not?

5. Is there anything else you would like to add about this book or play?



INSTRUCTIONS

- For each part of the literature unit, fill out just one Reader Response Form for one of the books you read
- Try to answer each question thoroughly, writing whatever comes to mind
- If you would like to write more, feel free to use a separate document

READER RESPONSE FORM FOR POETRY

Title of poetry collection: _____

Author: _____

Although you are expected to read an entire collection or anthology of poetry, for this reader response you will discuss three poems of your choice, and focus on one poem in particular to analyze closely.

1. The three poems from this collection that you have chosen to respond to are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. Of these three poems, choose one that you liked the most or found the most interesting. Briefly describe it. How long is it? Does it rhyme or follow a clear rhythmic pattern?

3. What do you think the author meant to convey in the poem? Is it “about” something in particular? Does it communicate a particular feeling or idea?

4. Choose a line or phrase that especially appeals to you. Then, write about that phrase or line only, telling why it has meaning for you, or why it strikes you as powerful. Write whatever comes to mind about this phrase or line.

Selected phrase or line: _____

Discussion:

5. Now, compare this one poem to the other two you listed above. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?

6. Do you feel that these poems reflect in any way on Norwegian culture? Do they exemplify typical Norwegian values or norms? Or do they conflict, confront or critique them in some way?



INSTRUCTIONS

- For each part of the literature unit, fill out just one Reader Response Form for one of the books you read
- Try to answer each question thoroughly, writing whatever comes to mind
- If you would like to write more, feel free to use a separate document

READER RESPONSE FORM FOR NONFICTION

Title: _____

Author: _____

Sub-genre: (biography, history, ect) _____

1. Briefly summarize the subject of the book.

2. How familiar were you with the subject before reading this book? Or was the topic completely new to you?

3. Describe what you have learned about Norwegian character and culture from this text.

4. What did you learn from reading this book? Did it change or affect your views on the subject in some way?

5. Overall, did you like this book? Would you recommend it to others? Why, or why not?



SUGGESTED WORKS

Here is a short list of a few suggested works available in English. References to particular editions and recommended translations are included in some cases. Many of these books can be found at your local library, through specialty retailers like www.ingebretsens.com and <http://store.vesterheim.org/> or through mainstream booksellers. This list is meant only as a helpful reference so feel free to read any other books by Norwegian, Norwegian-North American and Nordic authors even if you don't see them listed here.

General Fiction & Drama

- Waldemar Ager, *Sons of the Old Country*
- Ingvar Ambjørnsen, *Beyond the Great Indoors*
- Johan Bojer, *The Emigrants*
- Lars Saabye Christensen, *The Half Brother*. Trans. Kenneth Steven.
- Margaret Chrislock Gilseth, *Julia's Children: A Norwegian Immigrant Family in Minnesota*
- Knut Faldbakken, *Sweetwater*. Trans. Joan Tate.
- Knut Hamsun, *Hunger*. Trans. Sverre Lyngstad.
 - *Growth of the Soil*
 - *Mysteries*
- Knut Haukelid, *Skis Against the Atom*
- Sigurd Hoel, *Meeting at the Milestone*. Trans. Sverre Lyngstad.
- Edvard Hoem, *Ave Eva: A Norwegian Tragedy*. Trans. Frankie Shackelford.
- Henrik Ibsen
 - *Four Major Plays*. Trans. James McFarlane and Jens Arup
 - *The Complete Major Prose Plays*. Trans. Rolf Fjelde
- Margaret Jensen, *First We Have Coffee*
- Jan Kjærstad, *The Seducer*. Trans. Barbara J. Haveland.
- Elisabeth Koren, *The Diary of Elisabeth Koren*
 - *The Conquerer*
 - *The Discoverer: A Novel*
- Karl Ove Knausgård, *A Death in the Family*
 - *My Struggle*
- Erlend Loe, *Naive. Super*. Trans. Tor Ketil Solberg.
- Oystein Lønn, *According to Sofia*. Trans. Barbara J. Haveland.
- Per Petterson, *Out Stealing Horses: A Novel*. Trans. Anne Born.
 - *I Curse the River of Time*. Trans. Charlotte Barslund with Per Petterson.
- Anne. B. Ragde, *Berlin Poplars*. Trans. James Anderson.
- Ole. E. Rolvaag, *Giants in the Earth*
 - *Their Father's God*
 - *The Boat of Longing*
 - *Peder Victorious*
- Cora Sandel, *Alberta and Freedom*. Trans. Elizabeth Rokkan.
- Amalie Skram, *Constance Ring* Trans. Ed Evanston.
 - *Under Observation*
- Jane Smiley, *The Greenlanders*
- Lauraine Snelling, *The Red River Series*
 - *Return to Red River*
 - *Dakota Stories*
 - *Several other series*
- Dag Solstad, *Shyness and Dignity*
- Linn Ullmann, *A Blessed Child*. Trans. Sarah Death.
 - *Before You Sleep*. Trans. Tiina Nunnally.
 - *Grace: A Novel*. Trans. Barbara Haveland.



SIGRID UNDSET (1882-1949)

Sigrid Undset was born in Denmark and raised in Oslo. After her father died when she was eleven, Sigrid quickly finished school and worked for ten years to support her mother and sisters, forgoing the chance for higher education. She published her first novel at age 25, which caused a minor stir and earned her a reputation as an up-and-coming writer. In 1911 she published the novel *Jenny* which proved to be her most important breakthrough. A long and productive authorship followed, and Undset earned her place as a leading intellectual in Norway, and a literary star abroad. She won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1928. Later, she butted heads with Knut Hamsun for his Nazi sympathies and became an outspoken critic of Hitler and his racial theories. Her books were banned in Germany during the 1930s and she was forced to flee Norway after the Germans invaded. While in exile she devoted herself to the war effort; for her contributions to the Norwegian cause she was awarded the Order of St. Olav in 1945.

Today Undset is best known for her novels set in the Middle Ages, particularly the trilogy *Kristin Lavransdatter*, which tells the story of a young girl who marries for love and lives to regret it. Her books are known for their realistic treatment of human emotion and sexuality. Her later work often explores strong religious themes. Though raised by agnostic members of the Norwegian state church, Undset eventually discovered religious feelings of her own and converted to Catholicism. She died in 1949. Her house near Lillehammer is now part of the Maihaugen museum.

- Sigrid Undset, *Kristin Lavransdatter*. Trans. Tiina Nunnally.
- Tarjei Vesaas, *The Birds*. Trans. Torbjørn Støverud and Michael Barnes.
- Herbjørg Wassmo, *The House with the Blind Glass Windows*. Trans. Roseann Lloyd and Allen Simpson.
 - *Dina's Book*. Trans. Nadia M. Christensen.

Fiction Anthologies

- *An Everyday Story: Norwegian Women's Fiction*. Katherine Hanson, ed.
- *Echo: Scandinavian Stories about Girls*. Katherine Hanson, ed.
- *In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun: Contemporary Sámi Prose and Poetry*. Harald Gaski, ed.

Crime Fiction

- Kjell Ola Dahl (K. O. Dahl): Detectives Frank Frølich and Inspector Gunnarstranda
 - *The Fourth Man*. Trans. Don Bartlett.
 - *The Man in the Window*. Trans. Don Bartlett.
 - *The Last Fix*. Trans. Don Bartlett.
- Karin Fossum: Inspector Sejer Series
 - *Don't Look Back*. Trans. Felicity David.
 - *He Who Fears the Wolf*. Trans. Felicity David.
 - *When the Devil Holds the Candle*. Trans. Felicity David
 - *The Indian Bride*. Trans. Charlotte Barslund.
 - *Black Seconds*. Trans. Charlotte Barslund.
 - *The Water's Edge*. Trans. Charlotte Barslund.
 - *The Caller*. Trans. K.E. Semmel.
- Anne Holt: Vik/Stubø Series
 - *What Is Mine*. Trans. Kari Dickson.
 - *What Never Happens*. Trans. Kari Dickson.
- Jo Nesbø: Harry Hole Series
 - *The Redbreast: A Novel*. Trans. Don Bartlett.
 - *Nemesis: A Novel (Harry Hole Mystery)*. Trans. Don Bartlett.
 - *The Devil's Star: A Novel*. Trans. Don Bartlett.
 - *The Redeemer (A Harry Hole Mystery)*. Trans. Don Bartlett.
 - *The Snowman*. Trans. Don Bartlett.
- Kjersti Scheen
 - *Final Curtain*. Trans. Louis Muinzer.
- Gunnar Staalesen: Varg Veum Series
 - *Yours until death*. Trans. Margaret Amassian.
 - *At Night All Wolves Are Grey*. Trans. David McDuff.
 - *The Writing on the Wall*. Trans. Hal Sutcliff.
 - *The Consorts of Death*. Trans. Don Bartlett.

Fairy Tales, Folklore and Mythology

- *Folktales of Norway*. Reidar Christiansen, ed. Trans. Pat Shaw Iversen.
- *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*. HR Ellis Davidson.
- *Norwegian Folk Tales*. Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe. Trans. Pat Iversen Shaw.
 - *Norwegian Folk Tales 2*.
- *The Troll With No Heart in His Body*. Lisa Lunge-Larsen.
- *Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend*. Reimund Kvideland, and Hennig K Sehmsdorf, eds.



BJØRNSTJERNE BJØRNSON (1832 -1910)

Perhaps Norway's best-loved writer of the 19th century, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson was a pastor's son who grew up in rural Norway. Later in life he would study, work and write in Oslo, Bergen and abroad, but his knowledge of and connection to Norway's country culture never left him. After starting his career in and around the theater, Bjørnson's first novel, *Synnøve Solbakken*, came out in 1857. It would be the first in a series of so-called *bondefortellinger* ("peasant stories") that established his reputation not only as a major literary voice, but as an advocate for common Norwegian people. Through a long and prolific career, Bjørnson wrote plays, poems, novels and short stories, and participated eagerly in the many social and political controversies of the time, from women's rights to linguistic reform. Bjørnson was so admired by common Norwegian people the world over that the founders of Sons of Norway actually considered naming the organization after him (the idea was rejected only on the grounds that Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson would be hard for Americans to pronounce). Bjørnson also wrote the lyrics to "Ja, vi elsker dette landet," Norway's national anthem. Bjørnson was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1903. He died in Paris in 1910 and was buried in Oslo in an enormous public ceremony.

Nonfiction

- Christopher Abram, *Myths of the Pagan North*
- Eric Dregni, *In Cod We Trust*
 - *Vikings in the Attic*
- William Fitzhugh, and Elizabeth Ward, eds. *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga*
- Thomas Gallagher, *Assault in Norway: Sabotaging the Nazi Nuclear Program*
- Gwyn Jones, *A History of the Vikings*
- Art Lee, *Lutefisk Ghetto*
- Odd Lovoll, *Promise of America*
 - *The Promise Fulfilled*
 - *Norwegian Newspapers in America*
- Garrison Keillor, *Life Among Lutherans*
- Gary Legwold, *Last Word on Lefse*
 - *Last Word on Lutefisk*
 - *The Last Toast to Lutefisk*
- Janet Letnes Martin and Susan Johnson Nelson, *Growing up Lutheran*
- Aagot Raaen, *Grass of the Earth: Immigrant Life in the Dakota Country*
- Robert A Robinson, *Captured by the Norwegians*
- Peter Sawyer, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings*
- Astrid Karlsen Scott, *Defiant Courage*
 - *Silent Patriot*
 - *In the Shadow of the Gestapo*
- Ingrid Semmingsen, *Norway to America*
- Kathleen Stokker, *Keeping Christmas. Yuletide Traditions in Norway and the New Land*
- Lloyd Svendsbye, *I Paid All My Debts: A Norwegian-American Immigrant Saga of Life on the Prairie of North Dakota*
- Solveig Zempel, *In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants*
- Orm Øverland, *The Western Home*

Poetry

- Olav Hauge, *The Dream We Carry: Selected and Last Poems of Olav Hauge*. Trans. Robert Bly and Robert Hedin.
- Henrik Ibsen, *Terje Vigen*.
- Rolf Jacobsen, *The Roads Have Come to an End Now: Selected and Last Poems of Rolf Jacobsen*. Trans. Roger Greenwald.
- Tarej Vesaas, *Through Naked Branches*. Trans. Roger Greenwald.
- Henrik Wergeland, *Jan van Huysum's Flower Piece*. Trans. John Irons.

Sagas

- *Egil's Saga*, Trans. Bernard Scudder
- *Heimskringla*, Trans. Lee Hollander
- *Hrafnel's Saga*, Trans. Harmann Palsson
- *Njal's Saga*
 - Trans. Magnus Magnusson
 - Trans. Robert Cook
- *The Sagas of the Icelanders*. Robert Kellogg, ed. Penguin Classics, 2001 (Anthology)
- *The Saga of the People of Laxardal*, Trans. Keneva Kunz
- *The Saga of the Volsungs*
 - Trans. Jesse Byock
 - Trans. Kaaren Grimstad
- *The Vinland Sagas*, Trans. Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Palsson



Norway was the last of the Scandinavian countries to be united under a single king. This was accomplished by Harald Hårfagre, a 9th century Viking warrior who subjugated Norway's regional rulers in a long military campaign that ended sometime around the year 880 AD. Those chieftains who had not yet died by Harald's hand faced an unsavory choice between bowing to their sworn enemy, standing against him and facing certain destruction, or taking their chances elsewhere. Many chose to vote with their feet and headed west.

Some of those who did ended up in Iceland, a large island then inhabited only by sheep, glaciers and perhaps a few Celtic hermits who were quickly exterminated by the invading Norsemen. Land was taken, farms were established, and a brand new society was founded on Viking principles. In this early period Iceland had no king and no centralized, national authority – instead, disputes were settled person to person or at a yearly court called the Althing. Eventually however politics in mainland Scandinavia ended both Icelandic independence and the Viking era.

The Vikings had been keen storytellers and poets, but their literature was never written down – they passed their work on orally instead. As the Viking world began to slip away some Icelandic writers, beginning in the 12th century, took it upon themselves to preserve their native literature by committing it to the page. Thanks to their efforts hundreds of Viking era and early Medieval Icelandic works have survived into our time.

The prose stories of this period are called sagas. There are many different types, from semi-mythological stories of pagan gods and heroes (like *the Saga of the Volsungs*) to historical epics (like *Heimskringla*, the sagas of the kings of Norway) to accounts of the early Icelandic settlers (like *the Saga of the People of Laxardal*, and many others). Two sagas – *the Saga of the Greenlanders* and the *Saga of Erik the Red*, known collectively as *the Vinland Sagas* – even document Norse explorations in North America.

To the left you'll find a short list of a few sagas and some suggested translations. Feel free to use any of them for parts 1 or 2 of this unit; for the purposes of the Cultural Skills Program, we will consider Norse sagas to be fiction, even though a great many of them have historical subjects and themes.