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**Literature**  
Teaching Unit  
*Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide*



## Candide

by Voltaire

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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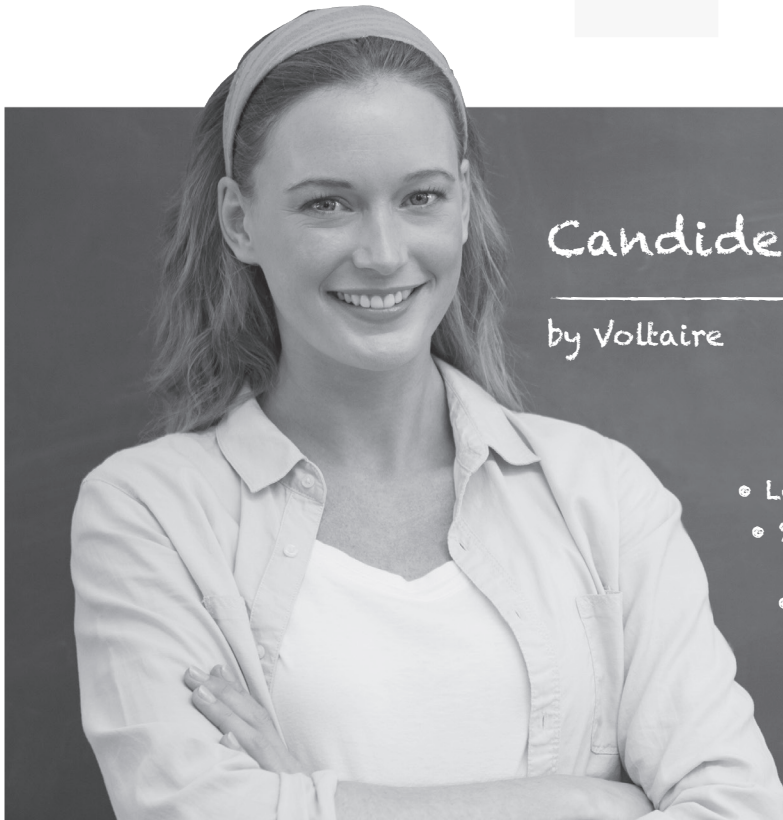
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ISBN: 978-1-58049-008-5

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Item No: 300153

# Candide

## Note to Teacher

Voltaire is the pen name of Francois-Marie Arouet (1694 – 1778), a French author and philosopher. His style, wit, intelligence, and strong sense of justice make him one of France's most famous writers.

*Candide* (1759), Voltaire's best-known work, is a brilliant philosophical tale. It describes the adventures of an inexperienced young man as he wanders around the world, but there is much beneath the surface. On one level, it is a satire that attacks the intolerance and abuse seen in the church, government, and society. On a deeper level, it is a complex look at the meaning of life and the nature of evil, as it exists in the world.

The time in which Voltaire lived is known as the Age of Reason, and Voltaire is one of the preeminent practitioners of reason. Because of his passion for justice and his attachment to reason, he also attacks superstition, intolerance, fanaticism, and injustice.

All references come from the *Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Classics™* edition of *Candide*, published 2006.

# Candide

## Objectives

By the end of this Unit, students will be able to:

1. state and define the problem of evil as it appears in the novel, and support their assertions by citing incidents or comments from the book.
2. write an essay discussing Voltaire's view on the importance of work in one's life.
3. debate the following point: Voltaire is not opposed to religion itself, but he is against the excesses and abuses in organized religion.
4. discuss the terms *divine providence* (also known as *determinism*) and *free will*, and indicate what role these two concepts play in the story.
5. understand how philosophical optimism applies to *Candide* and how Voltaire satirizes it in the novel.
6. identify and discuss three other major targets of Voltaire's satire, in addition to philosophical optimism.
7. write a character analysis for the following major characters, and indicate to what extent, if at all, these characters change over the course of the novel: Candide, Pangloss, Cunegonde, the old woman.
8. identify the role or function in the novel of the following characters: Cacambo, Martin, the young Baron, Paquette, Brother Giroflée, James, Pococurante.
9. discuss the ways in which *Candide* is both a coming-of-age novel and an adventure-romance novel.
10. define the term *satire*, and explain how Voltaire uses it to expose the social and political injustices he witnessed during his lifetime.

## Chapter II

### Vocabulary

**ascertained** – arrived at a conclusion; determined  
**clemency** – mercy; compassion  
**cudgel** – a club  
**emollients** – soothing lotions or medications  
**fettered** – shackled or chained by the ankles or wrists  
**prodigy** – someone who shows remarkable powers or talents (frequently a young person)  
**rammer** – a weapon used to crush or strike with force; a battering ram  
**reckoning** – a bill; an account

1. What happens to the innocent Candide in this chapter?

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2. How is Candide easily tricked?

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3. This chapter satirizes the philosophical question of free will. How does Voltaire present the question of free will in the lengthy paragraph near the end of the chapter? Summarize what happens to Candide here, and assess whether he really is able to make a free choice.

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4. What happens to Candide at the end of the chapter? Why does the King of the Bulgarians pardon him?

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## Chapter VII

### Vocabulary

**brocaded** – furnished with a heavy fabric with a raised design

**contrive** – to create, fabricate, concoct

**ingenuous** – honest, candid

**mortal** – subject to death

**pomatum** – an ointment; balm

**ravished** – taken by force sexually; raped

1. How does the old woman differ from most of the religious people Candide has encountered throughout his travels? Give examples to support your answer.

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2. Summarize Candide and Cunegonde's reunion. Why is he surprised to see her?

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3. In this chapter, Voltaire satirizes the conventions found in the adventure-romance novels of his time. What do you suppose some of those conventions are?

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