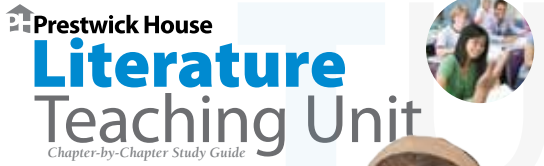




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Sample



Cyrano de Bergerac

by Edmond Rostand

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

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Cyrano de Bergerac

Objectives

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

1. define vocabulary words used in this play.
2. point out incidents in the play that serve as comic relief.
3. discuss life in the seventeenth century as portrayed in this play; consider the morality of the time, the role of women in society, the poet's need for a patron, and the political climate; point out incidents in which Rostand seems to poke fun at licentious behavior.
4. cite incidents from the story to demonstrate that the conflict between appearance and reality is a major theme of *Cyrano de Bergerac*.
5. discuss the reasons this play has stood the test of time and is considered a classic.
6. comment on the ways Rostand builds Cyrano's reputation before his first entrance on stage so that the audience can accept him as the romantic hero.
7. discuss whether or not Christian is an honorable man.
8. discuss the ways the Comte de Guiche evolves by the end of the play; comment on whether or not he is an honorable man.
9. define the term "willing suspension of disbelief"; in light of the definition, discuss whether or not the following incidents in the play are believable:
 - Cyrano single-handedly fights and defeats one hundred men;
 - Roxane safely travels through enemy lines;
 - Roxane fails to recognize Cyrano as the man under the balcony and as the author of the letters.
10. write a character sketch of Ragueneau; point out the ways he is similar to Cyrano.
11. discuss whether or not Roxane is a vain, frivolous woman and how she changes by the end of the play; consider the position of women in seventeenth century society.
12. point out incidents in the play to support the following overall theme: The freedom to be an individual is more important than wealth or physical comforts.

Cyrano de Bergerac

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Review the biography of the historical Cyrano de Bergerac. Which incidents from the play are taken directly from his real life history?
2. What power does Count de Guiche have to harm Roxane? How does she fight him? How would a woman in a similar situation today handle the problem?
3. A popular theme in literature is the conflict between appearance and reality. Cite incidents from this play to support the idea that this theme is a major one in *Cyrano de Bergerac*.
4. List three reasons that this classic play remains popular today.
5. What measures does Rostand take so that the audience is fully prepared for Cyrano's appearance and to accept him as the romantic hero in this play?
6. Write a brief character sketch of Christian. Consider whether or not he is an honorable man and if he is worthy of Roxane's love. What evidence is there that Cyrano likes and respects Christian?
7. Characters frequently evolve or grow by the end of the play. Discuss whether or not each of the following characters changes in the end and cite incidents from the play to support your answer: Cyrano, Count de Guiche, Roxane, and Ragueneau.
8. Define "willing suspension of disbelief." Briefly summarize one incident in this play that seems to be impossible or unbelievable. Discuss the ways that Rostand prepares the audience for this incident so that they are able to suspend their disbelief for the duration of the play.
9. Discuss Cyrano's white plume as a symbol in this play.
10. State a theme for this play based on Cyrano's refusal to accept De Guiche as his patron.
11. What is ironic about Cyrano's death?
12. Write an alternative ending to this play; assume that Cyrano reveals his true identity as the author of the letters to Roxane right after Christian's death. Include whether or not you believe they could have actually had a good life as husband and wife.
13. Critics refer to Cyrano as an idealistic romantic hero. List the qualities that Cyrano possesses which qualify him to be an idealist.
14. Define the following vocabulary words from the play: swashbuckler, muscatel, scabbard, obsequious, stentorian, intrepid, madrigals, truckle, salubrious, ripostes, panache, and rakehell.
15. List three incidents in the play that provide the audience with comic relief.

Cyrano de Bergerac

A Performance at the Hotel de Bourgogne

Act I, Scene I

Vocabulary

burghers – middle-class citizens (bourgeois); merchants
falsetto – a high-pitched male voice
foils – fencing swords
lackeys – low-level servants
marquises – noblemen who rank one below the ranking of a duke
oblong – rectangular
pages – messenger servants
proscenium – an area of a theater between the orchestra and the curtain
troopers – soldiers on horseback; cavalrymen

1. List two ways that Rostand lets the audience know that the play is set in 1640.

2. What do the two Musketeers, the First Lackey, and the Guardsman all have in common? What do you think Rostand is saying about life in France at this point in history?

Act I, Scene V

Vocabulary

protuberance – something that projects outward; a lump or bulge
sublime – inspiring; of the highest moral worth

1. How does Cyrano explain to Le Bret his reasons for making so many enemies?

2. What is Cyrano's secret reason for banishing Montfleury from the stage? What simile does Cyrano use?

3. How does Le Bret argue that woman may find Cyrano attractive despite his large nose?

4. What is the one thing in life that Cyrano fears?

Act I, Scene VI

1. What does Cyrano's reaction to the Duenna reveal about his thoughts?

Act II, Scene VIII

Vocabulary

madrigals – vocal arrangements meant to be sung by three voices in harmony with one another

1. Cite some of Cyrano's reasons for why he rejects patronage.

2. Cyrano discusses his reasons for remaining free of patronage:

“To be content with every flower, fruit or even leaf—but pluck them from my own garden and no one else's! And then, if glory ever does by chance come my way, I'll pay no tribute to Caesar, because the merit will be my own.”

State a theme for *Cyrano de Bergerac* based on the above quotation.

3. What evidence is there that Le Bret knows Cyrano is deeply hurt after his visit with Roxane?

Act II, Scene IX

1. Why does Christian risk a battle with Cyrano by making comments about Cyrano's nose?

The Cadets of Gascony

Act IV, Scene I

Vocabulary

besiegers – those who surround and blockade an area hoping to capture it from an enemy

embankment – a protective wall

entrenchments – ditches cut into the ground

sentinels – guards, watchmen

1. Why does Cyrano return to camp without any food or supplies for the troops? What is the reason that he risks his life each day?

Act IV, Scene II

Vocabulary

mutiny – an open rebellion against those in charge

reveille – a signal played on the bugle or the drum in order to awaken soldiers in the morning

wadding – stuffing or padding

1. Why does Carbon ask Cyrano for assistance with the men?
