

## Approved for use in English I

### Summary of the Work:

Fifth century Britain is a country divided and in chaos after the Roman withdrawal. Myrddin Emrys—or as he would become known, Merlin—is the bastard son of a Welsh princess and Aurelius Ambrosius, the future king of Britain. The novel traces Merlin’s perilous journey from childhood to his position as trusted advisor of Ambrosius. Merlin’s gift of “the sight” and his quest for knowledge give him the wisdom to help Ambrosius conquer Britain and vanquish innumerable foes. It is Merlin’s ultimate destiny to protect and advise the greatest king of Britain, King Arthur.

### Rationale:

Students who read *The Crystal Cave* will understand the historical and mythological background for the Arthurian legend. Merlin’s transformation from brash young teen to wise advisor to kings offers many lessons for teens. It is Merlin’s willingness to sacrifice his personal desires for the greater good of Britain and his constant quest for knowledge that allows for destiny to be realized through the birth of King Arthur. His life follows the classic hero’s journey pattern, a pattern that freshmen use as a lens to analyze literature.

### Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

- \* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.
- \* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

### Noted Distinction:

- Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature
- Frederick Niven Prize

### Readability:

- Lexile Score: 960
- Readability Level: 8.3

### Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

### Standard Alignment: ([link](#))

### Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption: 2007

### Notes on the Text:

*(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)*

The historical, religious, and mythological allusions make *The Crystal Cave* a worthwhile but challenging read. Students may need to refer to maps and other outside sources to fully understand the context of Merlin’s story and the Arthurian legend. *The Crystal Cave* may inspire students to read more about King Arthur and or mythology.

### Connection to the Curriculum:

*The Crystal Cave* fits right into the Honors English I curriculum. We research and read world mythology, including the Arthurian legends. We also analyze works of literature through the lens of the Hero Journey. This novel may be used for outside reading, literature circles, or summer reading.

### Additional Connections:

*(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)*