

Virgil *Aeneid* X

Student Activities

Activity 1 – Themes

This is best done with a piece of A3 paper (or the ability to print out on one).

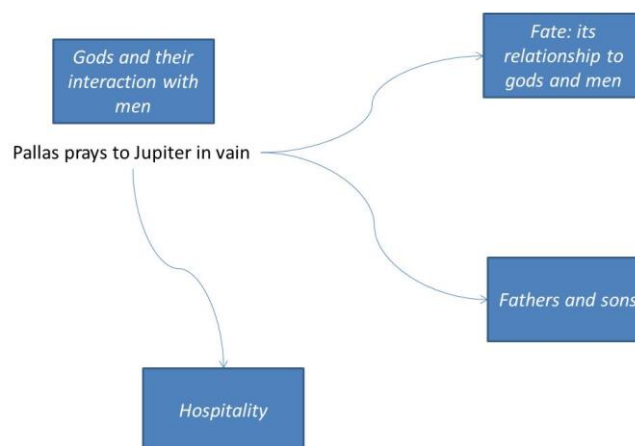
Here are what could be considered themes of Book X:

<i>Gods and their interaction with men</i>	<i>Heroism</i>
<i>Fate: its relationship to gods and men</i>	<i>War, its grandeur and horror</i>
<i>Fathers and sons</i>	<i>Domesticity and a world not at war</i>
<i>'pietas', respect for gods, family, friends</i>	<i>Hospitality</i>
<i>Anger, and pity as opposed to it</i>	<i>Beauty and vulnerability of youth</i>

If you think this list is incomplete, add to it as you go.

On your piece of A3 or equivalent, write each theme in a box, locating these boxes in an even spread across the paper. Then, from the start to the finish of Book X, write a headline description for each scene nearest to the theme to which it has the closest affinity – and then draw connecting lines to any other themes which are relevant.

Thus, for lines 433 – 473 you might create the following:



You will create a forest of lines, but should still be able to follow them – and see by their density how certain themes are of central importance.

Activity 2 – Setting



On the map, mark the following:

Adriatic Sea

Tyrrhenian Sea

River Tiber

Apennine Mountains

Etruria

Latium

Etruscans

Rutulians

Latini

Aeneas' landing point

Caere

Alba Longa

Pallanteum

Lavinium

Ardea

Then draw the route of Aeneas' arrival in Italy, visit to Evander and then Tarchon, and finally his return to the beleaguered camp.



Activity 3 – Group discussions

Use these titles as a basis for group discussions, using evidence from all of Book X:

- To what extent are the gods in control of events in Aeneid Book X?
- Compare Aeneas, Turnus and Mezentius. What characteristics do we admire and what in them do we judge adversely?
- How does Virgil make the description of combat varied and involving?
- Compare Pallas and Lausus. Are they mirror images of each other?
- ‘Aeneid Book X is marred by the admixture of fairy story.’ Do you agree?
- Is there any humour in Book X?
- Does Book X dissolve into a series of episodes or does it make a satisfactory whole?
- What is the significance of Book X’s preoccupation with fathers and sons?