**“The Song of Roland” Guided Notes**

**To help you better understand the story, answer the questions as you read “The Song of Roland.”**

**The two major devices that we will be looking at in this story are climax – (the point in the plot that creates the greatest emotional intensity and suspense), and drawing inferences about a character. Remember the example we used in class – If I show up wearing a rain coat, rain boots, and carrying an umbrella, you can make an inference that it is raining outside. We have done this with characters like Achilles and Agamemnon from the Iliad. Use clues in the text and your own knowledge to help you make inferences. “The Song of Roland” is an epic – (a long narrative or story) that relates the great deeds of a larger-than-life figure (epic hero).**

***Review topics: Inferencing, epic, epic hero, tragic flaw, metaphor, compare and contrast, and climax.***

1. *(Drawing Inferences about character page 608):* **Why does Roland refuse to call for help in the battle?**

2. **What can you infer about Roland’s character based on his decision and his reasoning?** *(Hint: What does he value more than his life? Page 608.)*

3. **What might be Roland’s tragic flaw or downfall?** *Page 608. (Hint: Tragic flaw is an error in character or judgment that leads to a hero’s downfall. It was the same flaw as Achilles and Gilgamesh.)*

4. *Interpreting page 610 –* **In line 32, to whom is Oliver referring in the phrase “Those men down there”?**

5. *Lines 73 and 74 explain that Ganelon doesn’t want the king to believe that Roland is in battle and needs help. Therefore, Ganelon tries to mislead the king by saying that since he respects the king he will not contradict what Charlemagne (the king) thinks about Roland’s situation, but if anyone else had spoken the same words, Ganelon would have told that person that he was a liar.* **Do you think that Ganelon likes or dislikes Roland?**

6. **What happens to Roland when he has to continue to blow his horn?** *(Page 611)*

7. *Making an inference page 612 –* **Why does Ganelon exaggerate Roland’s behavior?** *(Hint: remember how Ganelon feels about Roland).*

8. **What does the metaphor “Land of Fathers” refer to?** *(Hint: line 98, Roland is French)*

9. **What does Roland do as he prepares for death?** *(page 612)*

10. **Why might the Saracen (the enemy) want to “carry this sword home to Arabia”?** *(Page 613)*

11. *Character inference -* **What do Roland’s words to the Saracen reveal about Roland’s character?** *(Page 613)*

12. **Why does Roland strike 10 blows on a rock?** *(Hint page 613: Why does he want to destroy his sword?)*

13*. Climax –* **Why might this passage be considered the climax of this story?** *(Hint: What happens in stanzas 174 and 176, page 615?)*

14. *Comparing and Contrasting –* **How does the death of Roland differ from the death of the heroes of the classical epics, such as Hector and Achilles from the Iliad?** *(Hint: What did he ask for before he died? Page 615)*