A world literature class may be the first place that some students have encountered European works, let alone non-Western texts. The emphasis in this anthology, therefore, is on non-Western and European works, with only the British authors who were the most influential to European and non-Western authors (such as Shakespeare, whose works have influenced authors around the world to the present day). In a world literature class, there is no way that a student can be equally familiar with all of the societies, contexts, time periods, cultures, religions, and languages that they will encounter; even though the works presented here are translated, students will face issues such as unfamiliar names and parts of the story (such as puns) that may not translate well or at all. Since these stories are rooted in their cultures and time periods, it is necessary to know the basic context of each work to understand the expectations of the original audience.
1: Middle East, Near East, Greece

2: China

3: India

4: Rome