Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

- Born on September 29?, 1547, Alcalá de Henares, Spain
- He was the fourth of seven children
- His father, Rodrigo de Cervantes, was a barber-surgeon
- His mother, Leonor de Cortinas, stayed at home taking care of the family
- died April 22nd, 1616, in Madrid
- novelist, playwright, and poet
- the most important and celebrated figure in Spanish literature
- His novel *Don Quixote* has been translated into every language in the world
- He was a notable short-story writer

- The family moved from town to town, and little is known of Cervantes’s early education
- What is certain is that at some stage he became an avid reader as a child
- In 1570 he had enlisted as a soldier in a Spanish infantry regiment stationed in Naples
- In mid-September 1571 Cervantes sailed to engaged the enemy on October 7 in the Battle of Lepanto
- He received two gunshot wounds in the chest, and a third rendered his left hand useless for the rest of his life
- Late in 1584 he married Catalina de Salazar y Palacios; Isabel de Saavedra, Cervantes’ only child
- Cervantes first published fiction, *La Galatea* (1585; *Galatea: A Pastoral Romance*)
- In 1605, Cervantes published *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quixote de la Mancha* (“The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote of La Mancha,”) a novel that tells the story of an elderly man, *Don Quixote*, who becomes so lost in his own fantasy world of being a brave knight-errant and seeks out his own adventures. The novel was an immediate success.
- *El ingenioso caballero don Quixote de la Mancha* (“Second Part of the Ingenious Knight Don Quixote of La Mancha”), published in 1615
- Cervantes’s masterpiece, *Don Quixote*, has been variously interpreted as a parody of chivalric romances, an epic of heroic idealism
- Don Quixote’s history began with his obsessive reading of chivalric romances
- Don Quixote is a middle-aged gentleman from the region of La Mancha in central Spain.
- He was obsessed with the chivalrous ideals touted in books he has read
- Sancho Panza, whom he has persuaded to accompany him as his faithful squire
- On his horse, Rocinante, Don Quixote rides the roads of Spain in search of glory all in the name of a peasant woman, Dulcinea del Toboso, whom he envisions as a princess
- Don Quixote meets a Duke and Duchess who conspire to play tricks on him
- Cervantes becomes a party to his own fiction, even allowing Sancho and Don Quixote to modify their own histories
- In the end, the beaten and battered Don Quixote dies from a fever. With his death, knights-errant become extinct
- Don Quixote’s main quest in life is to revive knight-errantry. He wants to save the world by righting all wrongs to impress his fair princess lady Dulcinea
- Sancho Panza - The peasant laborer—Don Quixote takes as his squire
- Rocinante - Don Quixote’s barn horse. Rocinante is slow but faithful, and he is as worn out as Don Quixote is
- Dulcinea del Toboso - a peasant woman whom Don Quixote envisions as his ladylove