

THE ODYSSEY

PRE-READING NOTES



NAME _____

PERIOD _____





INTRODUCTION TO THE ODYSSEY



- 1) Homer credited with writing the two most famous epics of all time: _____ and _____.
 - a. Stories passed down _____ during the Homeric Age.
 - b. Used poetic form & _____ – easy for story-teller to remember.

- 2) Who was Homer?: True identity is _____
 - a. Likely a bard or rhapsode
 - b. A combination of many men (many authors?)
 - c. Lived around _____
 - d. _____: Many people believed romantically that performers were _____.
 - e. *homeros* = _____
 - f. Lived in _____

Did Homer “Write” *The Odyssey*?

- 3) Some believe he *Did* write it down.
 - a. The _____ originated in early 8th or late 9th century BC.
 - b. Homer could have been one of the first authors to use the Greek alphabet to write down _____.

Some believe he *Did Not* write it down.

- c. Because the _____ did not originate until early 8th or late 9th century BC, it is unlikely Homer would have written down oral epic poetry.
 - d. Homer likely had a _____ write down his oral epic poetry.

- 4) Homer passed along his stories via traveling story-tellers called _____.
 - a. Sometimes stories were turned into _____
 - b. Greek theater performed _____
 - c. No actresses, only _____
 - d. No _____
 - e. Actors wore _____ and high platform shoes– they moved very slowly



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5) _____ tells about a ___ year war fought on the plains beyond the walls of _____, Greece.

The war was fought between the people of _____ and an alliance of early _____ kings

6) The war began when _____, the wife of Greek king Menelaus and the most _____ woman in the world, ran off with _____, the prince of Troy.

7) The ___-year battle ended when _____, king of Ithaca (a Greek island), broke into the walls of Troy with the _____ "gift."

Troy was _____ to the ground & many were _____

8) Was there ever a Trojan War?

- a. There probably was a Trojan War but was much different from Homer's depiction of it in *The Iliad*
- b. Archaeological evidence shows the War may have taken place around _____ and that the city Homer calls Troy was likely destroyed by _____
- c. *The Odyssey* was likely composed _____ after the War

Before The Odyssey:

9) _____, King of Ithaca and married to _____, a great fighter in his youth, purchases a slave woman, _____

- a. Laertes and Anticlea have a _____.
- b. He is named _____ by his grandfather Autoclycis, and looked after by Eurycleia

10) _____ is raised with his younger sister Ctimene and another family slave Eumaeus.

- a. On a _____-hunt with Autoclycus' sons, he is badly wounded in the _____



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- b. Odysseus loves hunting, especially with his dog _____.
- c. When he is sent of a mission to Messene, he meets Iphitus, son of Eurytus, who gives him a special _____ as a gift. Odysseus uses this in _____ but takes in nowhere else.
- 11) _____ becomes the wise and gentle king of _____ and marries _____, daughter of Spartan King Icarius.
- a. He builds their bedroom and constructs a _____ around the base of an _____.
- b. Odysseus does not want to join the _____, but he does so just after his son Telemachus is _____.
- 12) Odysseus and his wife _____ had one son, _____, who was a toddler when Odysseus was summoned to join the kings
- a. Odysseus really didn't want to go to _____ so when the other kings came for him, he pretended to be _____ and not recognize his visitors. He continued to plow his fields.
- 13) Because Odysseus ignored the other kings, _____ and _____ threw _____ in front of the plow.
- a. Odysseus revealed his sanity when he turned the plow to avoid running over his _____.
- 14) As he leaves for War, _____ tells Penelope that if he does not _____, she is to _____ when Telemachus comes of age.
- a. He leaves _____ or _____ in charge of the palace in Ithaca.
- 15) Odysseus originated idea of the _____.
- a. His army built a large wooden _____ and hid Odysseus & members of his _____ inside.



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- b. The _____ offered it to the _____ as a sign of their surrender and the _____ accepted the gift and brought it inside the walls of their city.
- c. In the night, Odysseus and his men crept out _____ the gates of the city, and the battle _____.
- 16) The Greek kings parted ways and went _____ after their victory.
- a. _____ is the story of Odysseus' ____-year journey to return home to his family.
- b. He must use his heroic strength and _____ to outsmart _____, gods, women, and goddesses who try to seduce him.
- 17) On Odysseus's way home from war, _____ arranged for storms to blow the _____ (Achaean or Argive) off course as they attempted to sail home from the war.
- a. _____ was outraged because a Greek warrior Ajax had desecrated her temple by attempting to rape _____ (daughter of last king of Troy) at her temple.
- b. The Greeks did not punish the man who tried to rape _____ at _____ shrine.
- 18) _____ anger led to the Greeks' wanderings off course
- a. However, _____ was _____ favorite Greek warrior, so she does help him on his way home.
- 19) After conquering _____, the _____ depart for home from _____ and various adventures befall them.
- a. In particular, _____, King of Pylos, arrives home safely and soon.



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- b. The lesser _____ is drowned, presumably for his rape of _____ at _____ temple.
 - c. _____, husband of Helen, has adventures at sea for _____ especially in Egypt.
- 20) _____, leader of the expedition, arrives home in Argos to be killed by _____, lover of his wife Clymenstra;
- a. his death is avenged by his son _____ eight years later;
 - b. *(Before the war Agamemnon had _____ his _____ Iphigenia for a favorable _____ to help his sailors arrive in Troy.)*
 - c. Odysseus has one false start leaving _____ before he eventually sets off

The Odyssey Background:

- 21) Because _____ is gone, his home is over-run with over 100 _____ (men who want to marry his wife).
- a. Penelope, his _____, and Telemachus, his 21-year-old _____, do not have the power to eject the suitors from their home
 - b. Telemachus, the heir to _____, is constantly in _____.
 - c. Due to his _____ and lack of _____, he cannot seek help from other Greeks; he cannot eject the _____ from his home.
- 22) Odysseus, the king of the island _____ maintains control over Ithaca—even though he is away for _____ years—because of his skills which lead to his control.
- a. The city of Ithaca was based on _____
 - b. _____ is a great warrior, an excellent sailor, the best carpenter, the best hunter, the finest marksman, and the leading expert on caring for farm animals. He is also extremely intelligent.
- 23) Ithaca has no _____; wealth is measured by livestock, household furnishings, servants, slaves, and treasure.



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- a. _____ is encouraged in Ithaca; having _____ is a symbol of power and wealth
 - b. Piracy, war, raids on foreign cities, and the capture of women are all accepted means of increasing _____
 - c. The first thing Odysseus does after leaving _____ is to sack Ismarus, take their _____ and steal their _____.
- 24) If _____ tried to assume his father's throne, he would likely be overthrown and _____
- a. If _____ does not soon choose a suitor, a civil war may begin on Ithaca.
- 25) If _____ does choose a suitor, Telemachus's life is in danger unless he is willing to give up his claim to the _____
- a. Penelope may have to choose a suitor to save her _____ and Ithaca.

Odysseus' Journey Home:

- 26) (will be revealed in detail in *The Odyssey* in flash-back)
- a. For _____ Odysseus is blown around the Mediterranean, experiencing adventures with the Cicones, the Lotus Eaters, the Cyclops Polyphemus; Aeolus, the wind-god, giant cannibals; the witch Circe; the underworld; the Sirens; more monsters;
 - b. Eventually he is swept ashore to the island of _____ where he spends _____. (It is at this point where we first meet Odysseus.)

The Gods in The Odyssey:

- 27) To the ancient Greeks, the gods were _____, controlled everything, and interacted with human affairs.



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28) Athena: Goddess of _____

- Known as “ _____ ”
- Zeus’s first wife was _____, meaning Wisdom.
- Zeus _____ Metis before she was to give birth to _____.
- He knew his second child would _____ him.
- Athena was born from _____
- Always at _____ side, offering help and advice.
- She also helps _____ on his journey.

29) Poseidon: God of the _____

- Odysseus’s _____
- Known for his _____ and brutishness
- Often seen with a _____
- The _____ of the _____

30) Homer used both _____ and _____ as alter-egos for Odysseus: good vs. evil

- Odysseus is known for his _____ but can also be stubborn and arrogant.

Ancient Greece Domestic Life

31) Real men _____. _____ is a natural expression of emotion.

- Even royalty are expected to do _____.
- Parents are involved in arranging _____.
- Embracing someone’s _____ shows respect, humility, and petition.

32) Poets and poetry were an important part of ancient Greek life for

_____ and _____.

- They gave _____ to guests upon arrival and departure.
- _____ were always welcome.



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Themes in *The Odyssey*

1. _____ **as a serious and important obligation in Greek culture:** always be polite to your _____; however, this expectation prevents Telemachus and Penelope from removing the suitors from their home.
2. **The danger of** _____: hubris is excessive _____ that leads to _____. Odysseus is often guilty of hubris and Athena must rescue him
3. **The importance of** _____: Giving in to excess or temptation, whether food, drink, or other pleasures, will cause a person _____. The Sirens' song leads to destruction and the suitors' desires lead to their destruction.
4. **The expected roles for** _____ **and** _____ **in** _____ **society:** Men are always _____ to women.
5. **The role of** _____: Characters receive hints as to their fate; however, some choose to _____ the foreshadowing. Guess what happens?
6. **The similarities between Greek** _____ **and** _____: The gods have many of the same negative _____ as _____ and often cause destruction. They may choose to save one person and many others will die as a result. The gods are given credit for all that is good; they are sometimes _____ for bringing destruction to _____.
7. **Loyalty:** Penelope is expected to _____ for Odysseus, gone for more than _____ years. Telemachus must stand for his father, who he does not even remember, against the suitors. However, there are characters who do not remain _____ to Odysseus and their fate is not good.



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8. **Perseverance:** _____ to survive in any situation

9. **Vengeance:** It is acceptable to _____ or _____ those who are _____. The end of the epic shows what happens to those who defy Odysseus.

10. **Appearance vs. _____:** _____ takes on many different characters' _____ and even animals' when helping Telemachus or Odysseus. She can even change others' appearances for reasons such as checking on someone's loyalty or making a good impression on a king

11. _____ **Growth:** Telemachus and Odysseus both experience struggles which cause them to _____ spiritually by the end of the epic.

Greek Monster & God Q&A

- 33) What is the name of the mortal woman who could turn into a dragon-like monster with snakes for hair?
- 34) What is the name of the giant who only has one eye in the middle of his forehead?
- 35) What is the name of the sea monster who has 6 necks and 12 feet?
- 36) What is the name of the giant whirlpool who sucked in and burped out the waters of the sea and anything in his path?
- 37) Who were the sea goddesses and seductresses who had the heads of women and the bodies of birds?
- 38) Who was the sorceress who turned people into hideous beasts with human brains?



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Elements of the Traditional Epic

- ★ The _____ is superhuman-braver and stronger than ordinary _____.
- ★ There is some all-knowing or wise person who helps the _____
- ★ The story starts in the _____ of the action _____ and earlier events are introduced _____.
- ★ The _____ is vast in scope- sometimes worldwide and even beyond
- ★ The _____ is on a quest for something of great _____ to him or his people
- ★ The _____ of the epic involves _____ deeds and battle, often including a long _____ or _____.
- ★ The _____ that try to keep the hero from his _____ are uglier, more evil, and more cunning than anything in ordinary life
- ★ The _____ or other supernatural beings take an active role in the story

Elements of the Epic Hero

- ⊙ Great _____ - Larger than Life (referring to importance)
- ⊙ Possesses the character traits most valued by _____ (ie. determination, _____, wit, _____)
- ⊙ Pursues his _____ in the face of many _____
- ⊙ Has _____ traits and _____ that make him seem like a real person (i.e. _____, foolish, tricky)



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Epithets

- brief _____
- characterize a _____ or _____
- sometimes set off by _____
- used to help the rhapsode & listener better _____ details
- Examples of Epithets:
 - _____, master mariner
 - Grey-eyed _____
 - Muse, daughter of _____
 - the _____, the _____ sea
 - _____ dawn
- **TASK:** Create an epithet for your own name. Consider what you like to do, who your parents are, and what you are best known for: _____



Epic Simile

- also known as the _____ Simile
- uses _____ or _____
- comparison between two _____
- an _____ version of a _____ simile
- Homer uses these similes for _____
- **Example:** "And Odysseus



let the bright molten tears run down his cheeks, weeping the way a wife mourns for her lord on the lost field where he has gone down fighting" - Book 8

- What is being compared? _____