

THE ODYSSEY (Penguin Edition)

LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

HOMER (E.V. Rieu, trans.)

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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SYNOPSIS

Chap. 1 Beginning with an invocation to the muse and opening *in medias res*, the traditional epic style of starting in the middle, Homer's story of Odysseus, King of Ithaca and clever general of the Trojan War, opens on Calypso's isle, where the Greek leader languishes in the powers of a radiant nymph who wants to marry him. At a council of Olympian gods, Athene, goddess of wisdom who favors Odysseus for his lively mind, claims that he is unfairly tormented. Zeus countermands the spite of Poseidon, god of the sea, who has waylaid the wandering sailor and detained him from home and family in Ithaca, his kingdom on Greece's northwestern shore. Zeus explains Poseidon's hatred: Odysseus blinded the sea god's son Polyphemus, the greatest of the Cyclopes.

Chap. 2 Disguised as Mentos, Athene travels to Ithaca and finds Odysseus's palace beset by greedy suitors, who waste Odysseus's stores while they court Penelope, his lonely wife who cannot rule Ithaca if she is widowed. She advises Odysseus's only son, Telemachus, who was an infant twenty years earlier when his father left for the Trojan War. Mentos urges him to sail to Pylos and Sparta to gain information about Odysseus from King Nestor and from King Menelaos. Eurycleia, Telemachus's nanny, keeps secret his departure until he can establish some distance between himself and his fretful mother.

Chap. 3 On his fact-finding journey, Telemachus receives courteous treatment at the home of Nestor, talkative king of Pylos.

Chap. 4 Nestor sends his visitor to Sparta on the Peloponnesus to learn more about Odysseus from Queen Helen and King Menelaus, brother of Agamemnon, commander-in-chief of Greek allied forces. Meanwhile, Penelope learns that her son has set out from home without her knowledge and fears that the conniving suitors will kill him before he can return to Ithaca.

Chap. 5 On a distant isle, Hermes delivers Zeus's command to Calypso: help Odysseus depart for home. Odysseus, freed from a beguiling lover, builds a boat, stocks it with supplies, and sets sail, but his boat sinks in a storm.

Chap. 6 Exhausted and naked, he struggles ashore at Phaeacia. At Athene's suggestion, Princess Nausicaa happens to be washing clothes. She locates the bedraggled stranger and welcomes him.

Chap. 7 Nausicaa leads him to the palace of her father, King Alcinous.

Chaps. 8-9 After proper amenities, Odysseus tells an enthralled audience of Phaeacians of his adventures with the Lotus-Eaters and Polyphemus, the Cyclops whom Odysseus blinds in order to make his escape from a sealed cave.

Chap. 10 Odysseus's wanderings take him to the island of Aeolus, King of the Winds, who gives Odysseus a bag

wrapped tightly around adverse gales. At last within sight of Ithaca, Odysseus's greedy sailors, believing the bag holds a secret treasure, untie the strings and free the winds, which blow their ship back to Aeolus's shores.

Because Aeolus rejects further pleas for aid, Odysseus and his men sail on to the island of the Laestrygonians, fierce cannibals who attack and sink all but one of his fleet of ships. The survivors press on to Aeaea, where an enchantress, Circe, changes a party of Odysseus's sailors into swine. With moly, a magic black-rooted plant, Odysseus overcomes Circe's magic and rescues his men. Circe and Odysseus live together as lovers for a year. Eventually, she agrees to help him return home. At her instruction, he descends into the Underworld to learn the future from Teiresias, the famed blind seer.

Chap. 11 The journey is fraught with danger and requires a blood offering to ghosts who press around for the life-giving fluid. Odysseus meets his mother, who died after he left for war, sees his fallen comrades, is snubbed by Aias, and confers with Agamemnon, who warns him of spiteful wives. Teiresias predicts Odysseus's future, including his peaceful death near the sea. With a tearful farewell, Odysseus returns to the world of the living.

Chap. 12 Forewarned of the dangers of the Sirens; the sea monsters, Scylla and Charybdis; and the cattle sacred to Hyperion, the sun god, Odysseus avoids trouble, but is capsize near Ogygia, home of Calypso. He ends his lengthy narrative at this point.

Chap. 13 The hospitable Phaiacians, completely taken with the brave, winsome hero, entertain him with athletic games and songs, heap him with gifts, and send him on his way aboard their ships the short distance to Ithaca. Back on home shore, Odysseus encounters Athene, who disguises him as an aged beggar.

Chaps. 14-15 The goddess sends him to the farm of Eumaeus, his faithful swineherd, and urges the wanderer's son to return home.

Chap. 16 Odysseus joins forces with Eumaeus and Telemachus, who shares a tender meeting with his father.

Chap. 17 Telemachus returns to the palace and keeps secret the arrival of Ithaca's rightful king. Without calling attention to himself unduly, Odysseus enters the palace, where rough, loud-mouthed suitors jostle him and dishonor his lowly status as a beggar.

Chap. 18 An obnoxious fellow beggar resents the intruder as unfair competition at the rowdy gathering.

Chap. 19 Odysseus tells a fictitious story to Penelope, who fails to recognize him as her husband, but weeps at the stranger's eye-witness account of Odysseus on the island of Crete.

Chaps. 20-21 He takes part in a challenge match against younger men, successfully stringing his own bow, and shoots an arrow through twelve aligned axe heads before turning his

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anger against Penelope's loutish, drunken suitors.

Chap. 22 With the help of Eumaeus, Telemachus, and Eurycleia, Odysseus's old nurse, he traps the suitors in the hall and slays them one by one, leaving alive the poet and Telemachus's companion Medon.

Chap. 23 Odysseus, revealed at last to the joyous household, commands his staff to cleanse the hall of blood and corpses. He rewards his good servants and executes those who conspired with the suitors. He identifies himself to a skeptical Penelope by describing their bed, which he carved out of a single olive tree. They spend a long night making love and relating their adventures during their twenty-year separation.

Chap. 24 The next day, Odysseus visits Laertes, his aged father, and counters a revolt led by the suitors' relatives. Zeus and Athene help Odysseus establish peace and just rule in Ithaca once more.

TIME LINE

B.C.

- c. 4000 Bronze Age begins in Crete.
- c. 3000 City of Troy in Asia Minor is first inhabited.
- c. 3000 Northern invasions of Greece begin.
- c. 3000 Site of Athens in Greece is first inhabited.
- c. 2000 Epic of Gilgamesh is composed.
- c. 2000-1700 Achaeans invade Greece.
- c. 2000-1400 Minoan civilization flourishes on Crete.
- c. 1600 City of Mycenae in Greece develops.
- c. 1600 Cretan palaces at Cnossos and Phaestus are destroyed and rebuilt; linear script develops.
- c. 1600 Greek foot soldiers begin wearing protective armor.
- c. 1600-1400 Strong Cretan/Minoan influence in Greece.
- c. 1400 Palaces at Cnossos and Phaestus on Crete destroyed again; Minoan civilization begins rapid decline.
- c. 1400-1200 Mycenaean civilization flourishes in Greece; much trade.
- c. 1184 Traditional date for sack of Troy, after ten-year war.
- c. 1100 Dorian invasion of Greece begins; city of Mycenae falls.
- c. 1000-800 Greek "Dark Ages."
- c. 800-600 Replacement of monarchies in Greece by aristocracies; major era of Greek colonization.
- 776 First Olympic Games held in Greece.
- 753 By tradition, Rome is founded by Romulus and Remus.
- c. 750-700 Homer is active, composes *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.
- c. 650-500 Tyrannies arise in Greece; lyric poetry flourishes.
- c. 500-400 Age of the classic Greek playwrights

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Although few facts about Homer can be stated with certainty, the author of Greece's ancient epics was a real person whose language and subject matter can be identified by time and place. A study of his blended dialect—Ionic and Aeolic—proves that Homer, whose name translates as *hostage*, was born in the ninth century B. C. on the island of Chios or in Ionia, which is now the western coast of Turkey. Legend maintains that he was a blind *rhapsode* or bard who made

his living by traveling about singing the traditional lore of his homeland, collecting along the way local variations which communities made up to include the name of their town or favorite hero or royal family. A more recent query arises about the authorship of the *Odyssey*, which some critics believe may have been composed by a woman, perhaps Nausicaa herself, who reputedly fell in love with the handsome visitor and refused all other suitors after he left her homeland.

The style Homer uses in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* suggests that he was a learned poet who steeped himself in the oral tradition of the Mediterranean world and composed long poems based on well-known folk tales, legends, genealogies, and history. The event that forms the nucleus of the epics was probably a dispute over routes for the grain trade and took place between 1193 and 1184 B.C., as deduced by nineteenth- and twentieth-century archeologists. By infusing a mundane trade war with the trappings of epic poetry, Homer gave the world a glimpse of a civilization later unearthed at Hissarlik, Turkey, by the German archeologist Heinrich Schliemann.

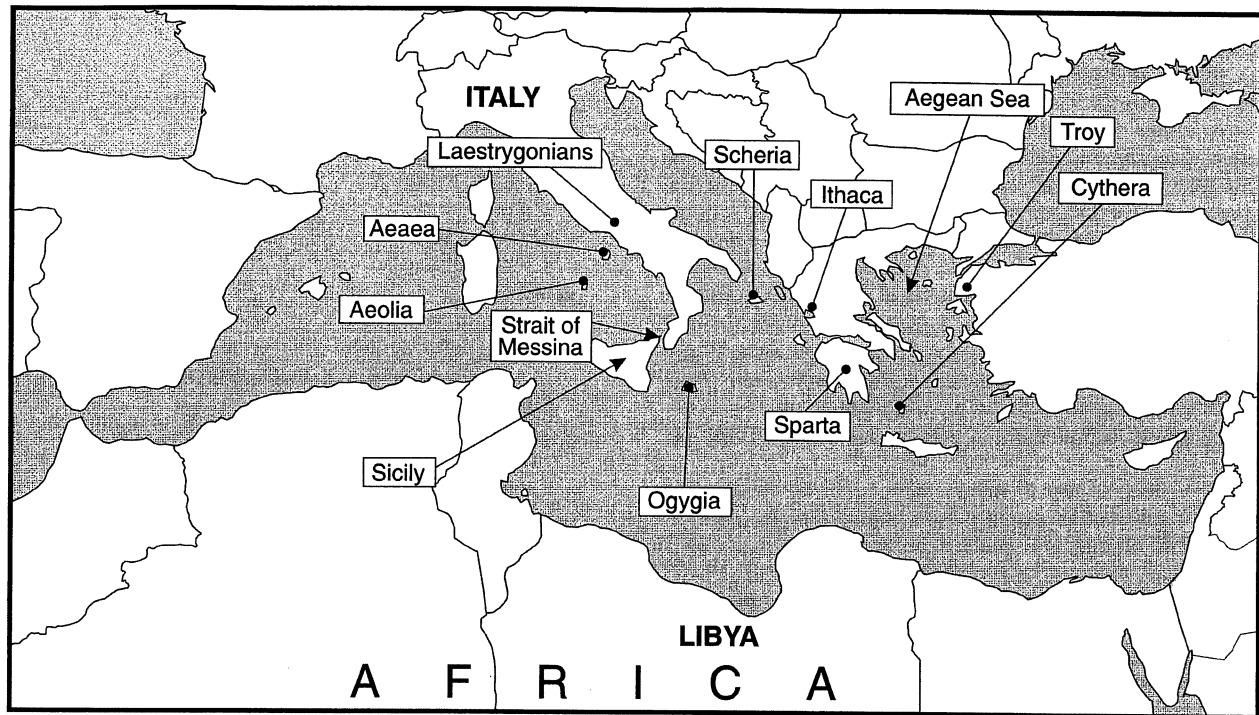
CRITIC'S CORNER

The *Odyssey*, one of the world's great adventure stories, has influenced a host of tellers of tales. The list of Homer's proteges rings with names of illustrious writers—Plato, Aeschylus, Virgil, Milton, Dante, Chaucer, Boccaccio, Tasso, Petrarch, Pope, Goethe, Tennyson, Joyce, Kafka, and Derek Walcott, Caribbean poet and 1992 Nobel Prize-winning author of *Omeros*, the Greek spelling of *Homer*. From the *Odyssey* have come characters, themes, motifs, and style that can truly be termed classic.

Odysseus, the consummate strategist and ideal hero, faces a challenge for wife and kingdom late in life. At his side stands Telemachus, who comes of age during the long wait for Odysseus's return. The cataclysmic scene in which the great doors of the palace are shut and the suitors meet their doom is the culmination of years of wandering and bloodshed and the preface to his reward, a reunion with patient, wily Penelope, the perfect mate for cunning, outspoken Odysseus. Additional stories of Odysseus's clever engineering skills occur in Aeschylus's *Philoctetes*, Dictys Cretensis's *Trojan War Diary*, Euripides's *Cyclopes*, *Hecuba*, and *Trojan Women*, Hyginus's *Fables*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Plato's *Poetry of Homer*, Sophocles's *Ajax*, *Odysseus*, and *Philoctetes*, and Virgil's *Aeneid*, which fills in the gaps of the Trojan saga.

A twentieth century adventurer, writer Ernle Bradford, served in the British navy during World War II and, while monitoring Nazi ship movements, filled restless nights by reading in ancient Greek of Odysseus's voyage. Bradford matched poetic details to Mediterranean landmarks and contends that Odysseus's itinerary is real: from Hissarlik, Turkey, north to Ismarus, southwest through the Cyclades, around Cape Malea, Greece, and west to Jerba, an island off Tunisia in northern Africa. Again seabound north, he touched the island of Favignana (Goat Island) and observed Mount Eryx in Sicily, made landfall at the island of Ustica north of Sicily, then sailed to southern Corsica or Sardinia. Traveling southeast to Terracina, Italy, he made a side venture to Gibraltar—the mythical voyage to hell—then passed through the Strait of Messina that divided Sicily and Italy. Arriving at Taormina on Sicily's eastern coast, he paused before journeying to

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Malta and to Corfu, Nausicaa's home, before ending his journey at Ithaca, now called Vathi, Greece.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To comprehend standard aspects of epic, particularly intervention of anthropomorphic gods in human activities
2. To isolate elements of magic and other supernatural influences
3. To enumerate incidents of dehumanization, menace, torment, and savagery
4. To compare types of danger and the degree of harm that comes to ships and sailors
5. To contrast details of light and dark, pain and comfort, sorrow and joy
6. To analyze the symbolism of the journey as the wandering of Everyman
7. To characterize the Mediterranean world of Homer's day
8. To isolate moral and psychological themes and motifs
9. To locate examples of compassion and hospitality
10. To connect the date of Homer's life with important events in world history, such as the use of iron for tools and weapons and the invention of harness and armor

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To place Odysseus's adventures in time order
2. To explain why Telemachus leaves home without his mother's permission
3. To note the importance of Eumaeus's loyalty
4. To account for Athene's preference for Odysseus over other heroes
5. To recapitulate Odysseus's role in the Greek victory over Troy
6. To illuminate the role of Alcinous in Odysseus's return to Ithaca

7. To enumerate calamities that keep Odysseus at sea for nine years
8. To describe elements of suspense that highlight the final meeting between Penelope and her husband
9. To predict the future of Odysseus's reign in Ithaca
10. To justify the cruel deaths of Odysseus's mockers and the desecration of Melanthias's corpse

LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of Homer's style, present the following terms and applications to his novel:

epic a long formal poem narrating a serious story about a race or nation facing a war or other threats to its existence or value system, such as Ithaca's loss of its king and the suitors' wooing of the queen. The epic focuses on the interplay between gods or divinities, such as Zeus and Athene, and human agents, such as Odysseus and his wife and son. Derived from scraps of folk stories, visions, tales, hymns, myths, legends, rituals, sagas, song lyrics, genealogies, or poems, the segments of action in an epic form a unified history or chronicle.

hubris excessive pride, arrogance, or conceit, which is the major sin in ancient Greek philosophy and the cause of the downfall of a tragic hero like Odysseus. Because the hero fails to curb his pride, he continues to suffer at the hands of the gods. Central to the *Odyssey* is one example of foolishness: Odysseus's taunting of Polyphemus, to whom he introduces himself as Nobody. After Odysseus's men flee the one-eyed giant's cave, Odysseus cannot resist calling out his real name. Polyphemus, whom Odysseus has blinded, calls on his father Poseidon to exact a penalty against the Ithacan. Thus, the sea god holds Odysseus at his mercy, battering him so severely that he arrives in Phaeacia without ship or crew and washes ashore naked and dazed for Nausicaa to find.

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HOMER'S USE OF SETTING

Odysseus's route in *The Odyssey* is a long debated subject, much clouded by educated surmise and outright guesswork. Assailed by Poseidon's virulent hatred, the famed Greek sailor set out from Troy on the Asian side of Turkey on his way home to Ithaca, a coastal kingdom in western Greece. Odysseus rejoined his commanding officer at the harbor island of Tenedos before setting out on a god-cursed itinerary that took him southwest across the Aegean Sea to the island of Cythera at the southern end of the Peloponnese. From there he sailed around Greece in the direction of Ithaca until he was forced southeast across the Mediterranean to Libya in north Africa, where he encountered the Lotus-eaters. He fled northwest to Sicily, where he and his men fought the Cyclopes. Escaping a grisly death in the jaws of the one-eyed giant Polyphemus, Odysseus and his surviving crew sailed to the island of Aeolia somewhere north of Sicily.

Content with a bag of winds safely stowed, Odysseus moved on and landed among the Laestrygonians on the western shore of Italy. He escaped west to Aeaea, the island home of Circe. Moving beyond geographical locales to the Underworld, Odysseus learned from the seer Teiresias how to complete the journey. He returned to Aeaea and weathered the clashing rocks, Scylla, and Charybdis, the fearful hindrances of the Strait of Messina, which separates Sicily from the toe of Italy's boot. Beyond the Sirens, his ship held steady to Helios's meadows in Thrinacia, Sicily, where his men committed a sacrilege by killing the god's cattle. Bereft of men, supplies, and ship, the captain alone navigated the Strait of Messina a second time and was washed up on Ogygia, where he lingered under Calypso's spell.

The conclusion to Odysseus's voyage took him from Ogygia back into Poseidon's milieu, where a storm once more tossed him off course. He arrived at the island of Scheria, northwest of Ithaca. The Phaeacians directed him home, where his sea trials gave place to threats to his wife and kingdom. Fortunately, he encountered his son Telemachus, recently returned from his own journey to Sparta. The two teamed up with a devoted herdsman and reclaimed Ithaca and his faithful wife Penelope.

CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

For more information about the epic, Greek culture, and Mediterranean travel, consult these sources:

Michael J. Bennett, *Belted Heroes and Bound Women*

John Boardman, *The Greeks Overseas: Their Early Colonies and Trade*

Beth Cohen, ed., *The Distaff Side—Representing the Female in Homer's Odyssey*

Also, consult these websites for additional background data on Homer and Odysseus's travel:

"The Ancient World of Greece and Rome," <http://www.valley.net/~MrDz/ancient.htm>.

"Dark Age Greece," <http://plato.acadiau.ca/courses/class/provncal/1113/wwwdark.html>.

"Homer and the Odyssey," <http://www.li.suu.edu/library/courses/HUM101/homer.htm>.

"Homer's Odyssey," <http://redtape.uchicago.edu/users/spboykew/odyssey.html>.

"Landscapes in Homer's Odyssey," <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/cornl100/lecture.9.27.html>.

THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in Homer's *Odyssey* should include these aspects:

Themes

- skill
- intelligence
- piety
- perseverance
- luck
- revenge
- recompense

Motifs

- separated families
- casualties of war
- the sin of pride and its punishment
- fearful dangers in unknown lands
- the sailor's hardihood on a long voyage
- the obligations of host to guest
- the interference of the gods in human affairs
- mortals fighting nature and supernatural beings

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have a particular meaning. Explain each. Chapter and page numbers pinpoint the context in which each item appears.

1. Alcinous, it is unseemly and unlike your royal ways to let a stranger sit in the ashes at the hearth, while the guests around you must patiently await your lead. Sir, tell him to get up and sit on one of the silver chairs, and tell your squires to mix some more wine so that we can make a fresh libation, to Zeus the Thunderer, patron of supplicants, who deserve respect. (Chap. 7, p. 99-100)
(Chapter 7 is a tribute to the status of civilization in Homer's day. Echeneus puts into words the duties of the host and hostess in the ancient world, where guests were accorded honor and given welcome, shelter, and lodging without requirement that they identify themselves by name or nationality. As Echeneus indicates, wine is drunk mixed rather than full strength. Also, he calls for propitiation of Zeus, whose power is symbolized by thunder and who watches over seekers of aid and mercy.)
2. Now you have dined, disperse to your homes for the night; and in the morning we will summon a fuller gathering of the elders to entertain our visitor here and to sacrifice to the gods. We will then take up the matter of his passage so as to ensure him without trouble or anxiety the happiness of a speedy return to his country under our escort, however far away it is. We will safeguard him on the way from any further hardship or accident till he sets foot on his own land. After which he must suffer whatever Destiny and the relentless Fate spun for him with the first thread of life when he came from his mother's womb. (Chap. 7, p. 100)
(The conclusion of the guest welcome requires that local people protect the visitor from harm. Alcinous intends that Odysseus meet with the destiny that the Fates or Parcae intended. Also known as Moirae or "allotted portions," the Fates are metaphorically pictured as spinners of thread. Clotho, the spinner, is the principal fate, who winds out the will of the gods. Her sister, Lachesis, determines the length of the thread, i. e., the length of an individual life. Atropos, the arbitrary bringer of death, cuts the thread without warning and with no opposition.)

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3. Then after making a libation and satisfying their thirst, they retired for the night to their several homes, leaving good Odysseus sitting in the hall beside Arete and the godlike Alcinous, while the maids cleared the dinner things away. (Chap. 7, p. 101)

(The Greeks are careful to appease their gods by leaving token drops of wine on the hearth or altar or at tombs of deceased family members. The major reason for Odysseus's ten years of wandering as well as the sufferings of the other members of the Greek high command is the dreaded delusion of self-importance that lures human beings to think of themselves as godlike. Swelled with the fatal sin of pride after tricking the Trojans with Odysseus's ingenious wooden horse, the victorious Greeks departed from Troy without showing proper respect to the gods.)

4. "Sir," she said, with words on wings, "I myself will question you and ask you this first. Who are you? Where do you come from? And who gave you those clothes? Didn't you say you came here from wandering over the seas?" (Chap. 7, p. 102)

(According to the guest code that governed relationships between hosts and strangers, a guest was entitled to courtesy, food, shelter, and other amenities before hosts could question identity or destination. Clothing, the job of the female, was an important item because each garment was formed of fibers gathered from sheep or thistle or flax seed, then spun into thread, woven into cloth, shaped, and dyed or decorated with embroidery, beading, or metallic thread. The storage place was called a "guard-robe" because clothing was of great worth in terms of hours of labor and was thus a target of thieves. Nausicaa made a noble gesture of trust and welcome by awarding Odysseus garments from the royal chest.)

5. Too soon, poor man, for I was destined to meet further troubles, which Poseidon the Earthshaker was yet to send me. Rousing the winds against me, he stopped me from making headway; and as I sat groaning there he stirred the sea to such unspeakable fury that the waves made it impossible for me to stay on my raft—a squall smashed it to pieces. (Chap. 7, pp. 102-103)

(Odysseus angers Poseidon, one of the almighty triad of Olympian gods, by blinding his one-eyed son, the Cyclops Polyphemus, with a sharpened stake. Because Odysseus boldly brags of his deed and reveals his name, Polyphemus places a curse on the hapless sailor which follows Odysseus about the Mediterranean—that he come home late and wretched, in another man's ship, without his companions, and filled with troubles at home. Eventually, the other gods counter Polyphemus's enmity and enable Odysseus to return to Ithaca, but not before he loses his ships and sailors and treasure in a series of harrowing misadventures. Just as Polyphemus had described, arrival home does not free Odysseus from the daunting task of ridding his palace of a pack of suitors.)

6. While they were conversing, white-armed Arete gave her maids instructions to put a bed in the portico and to furnish it with the finest purple rugs, spread coverlets over these, and add warm blankets on top. The servants, torch in hand, went out of the hall and busied themselves at this task. When they had spread the bedclothes on the bed, they came up to Odysseus and invit-

ed him to retire. Come along, sir," they said, "your bed is made." The prospect of sleep seemed very sweet to him. (Chap. 7, p. 104)

(In the ancient world, most clothing was either natural color or bleached white from soaking in seawater and drying in the sun. Purple dye, made from shellfish, was a rare and costly commodity and a valuable trade item. For this reason, purple was the color of royalty and the rich and privileged. Arete's choice of purple rugs to adorn Odysseus's bed is a special touch, denoting honor and perhaps suggesting that she recognizes kingly behavior and royal courtesy.)

7. And summon our divine bard, Demodocus; a god has given him the special gift of delighting our ears with his song, at whatever point he chooses to begin. (Chap. 8, p. 107)

(Homer pays tribute to the singer of songs, who was more than an entertainer or musician in the ancient world. Because of contact with wandering poets, isolated communities learned the legends, myths, hymns, and tales that formed their common Greek heritage. After communal meals, the audience listened to the singer's song, which was chanted to the strum of a lyre or harp. The listeners memorized verses so that they might acquaint themselves with the glories of the past in the form of extensive genealogies of heroes and tales of noble courtships, battles, adventures, and deeds.)

The tradition of blindness and poets occurs in the Odyssey with Demodocus: "The squire now came, leading their favorite bard, whom the Muse loved above all others, though she had mingled good and evil in her gifts, robbing him of his eyes but granting him the gift of sweet song." Some critics interpret this line as a thumbnail self-portrait of Homer himself. It is more likely that blindness is a metaphor for a different kind of sight—one that looks inward at the soul. Whatever its meaning, Homer does not dwell on the subject of blindness. Note that the Muse favors Demodocus and is responsible for offsetting his blindness with his talent for music.)

8. When they had satisfied their appetite and thirst, the Muse set the bard to sing the famous deeds of heroes, that part of a lay well known by then throughout the world, the Quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles son of Peleus. It told how these two had clashed in a violent altercation at the festival of the gods, though Agamemnon King of men was secretly delighted to see the Achaean leaders at loggerheads, because their quarrel fulfilled the prophecy that Phoebus Apollo had made to him in sacred Pytho when he crossed the marble threshold to consult the oracle. (Chap. 8, p. 108)

(One of the conventions of ancient lore is the misinterpretation of prophecy. Phoebus Apollo, the chief source of future knowledge in ancient Greece, resided in Delphi, where supplicants came to learn of the future and to beg for Apollo's healing intercession against pain and disease. Apollo's spokeswoman, Pythia, was one of a series of priestesses who stood over a fissure in the earth and, overwhelmed by the natural vapors that arose, babbled equivocal messages that foretold the future.)

Agamemnon, eager to capture Troy, naively thinks the undertaking will be brief because Odysseus and

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Achilles had satisfied one condition of Apollo—that there be a quarrel between warriors. The real quarrel that portends the end of the war occurs in the tenth year of the conflict and becomes the focus of the Iliad. The first line of Homer's masterpiece begins: "Sing goddess the wrath of Achilles." Ironically, the pivotal argument focuses on the taking of a woman, Briseis, just as the Trojan War itself had begun over the theft of Queen Helen, wife of Menelaus and sister-in-law to Agamemnon.)

9. Illustrious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, King of men, what mortal stroke of fate laid you low? Did Poseidon rouse fearful squalls and tempestuous winds and overwhelm your ships? Or did you fall to some hostile tribe on land as you were driving off their cattle and their flocks or fighting with them for their town and women? Chap. 11, p. 171)

(Upon his arrival in the Underworld, Odysseus learns of events that have occurred since his departure from home and his separation from his comrades on their way from Troy. Agamemnon, who had sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia to obtain favorable winds for the Greek fleet, returned to an angry wife. Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus murdered the returning king and his Trojan concubine, Cassandra, a royal princess and prophet of Apollo. In his grief over the double murder, Agamemnon warns Odysseus, "Never be too trustful even of your wife, nor show her all that is in your mind. Reveal a little of your plans to her, but keep the rest to yourself." Agamemnon compares Clytemnestra to Penelope and admits that Odysseus is blessed with a better spouse, "far too loyal in her thoughts and feelings. The wise Penelope!")

10. He says he is an old family friend of Odysseus and lives in Crete, the home of the descendants of King Minos. Starting from there, like a rolling stone, and after many painful adventures, he has now arrived here; and he is positive that he has heard of Odysseus, that he's near at hand and alive, in the rich Thesprotian country, and bringing home a fortune. (Chap. 17, pp. 269-270)

(One of Odysseus's special talents is lying, which the Greeks valued as a survival method. In the touching scene with Penelope in Chapter 19, Odysseus tells of meeting the wanderer twenty years earlier, when he wore "a thick, double, purple cloak, displaying a golden brooch with a pair of sheaths into which the pins fitted. There was a device on the face of it: a hound holding down a dappled fawn in his forepaws and ripping it as it scabbled." For good measure, Odysseus describes his squire Eurybates as additional proof that the stranger has seen Penelope's husband. As she weeps with the truth of the description, Odysseus comforts her by weaving in the truth—that the king approaches Ithaca after leaving Thrinacia, washing up on Phaeacian soil, and finding favor with the Thesprotian king. To seal the telling of this subterfuge, Odysseus calls on Zeus and swears an oath on Odysseus' hearth that the king will return with the month.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the epic.

Questions 1-5 Literal Level

1. Describe Odysseus's labors as he prepares to leave Calypso's island.

(Homer reduces suspense by indicating that Odysseus will eventually return to his kingdom. After the gods take pity on the voyager, Zeus determines that he has suffered enough. Hermes carries to Calypso a stern message: "you have with you here a man who has been dogged by misfortune, more so indeed than any of those with whom he shared the nine years of fighting round the walls of Troy and left for home when they had sacked it in the tenth. In setting out they gave offense to Athene, who raised a violent gale and heavy seas against them. His noble companions were lost to a man, but he himself was swept here by the wind and waves. and now Zeus bids you send him off without delay. He is not doomed to end his days on the island, away from all his friends. He is destined to see his friends and come to his high-roofed house and his native land once more."

Calypso urges her guest to stop lamenting, cut trees, shape them into planks, and stock the hull with bread, water, red wine, and clothing. The nymph provides a bronze axe, boring tools, and sail cloth, which he uses on alders, poplars, and fir trees to make ribs for the hull, decking, half-deck, and rudder. He fences the sides with osier twigs and brushwood to protect against heavy seas. After lashing the braces, halyards and sheets in place, he drags the ship over rollers to the sea.)

2. How does Alcinoos entertain Odysseus during his visit to Phaiacia?

(Alcinoos provides a banquet and wine and furnishes Odysseus and guests polished marble seats. Pontonous places a silver-studded chair in the center of the room for Demodocus, the blind minstrel, to occupy while he entertains the group with a song accompanied on the lyre. Demodocus chooses a popular lay about Odysseus's quarrel with Achilles. Odysseus weeps and conceals his sorrow in his cloak. Alcinoos, realizing the pain that Demodocus's song gives his guest, calls for a change of pace—outdoor games, including boxing, wrestling, jumping, and running. Odysseus declines to participate because he is "sick at heart."

The group's courteous reception ends after Euryalus insults Odysseus's prowess. He calls the valiant sailor a "skipper of a merchant crew, who spends his life on a hulking tramp, worrying about his outward freight, or keeping a sharp eye on the cargo when he comes home with his extortionate profits." Leaping to his feet, Odysseus calls him "short on brains" and hurls a discus farther than any man in the group can outdistance. Alcinoos, who is nettled by Euryalus's poor manners, sends for Demodocus's instrument and calls for dancers. To the delight of his audience, the blind bard sings about Aphrodite's adultery with Ares and Hephaestus's capture of the couple in an invisible net.

At the king's order, two men—Halios and Laodamas—dance solo and demonstrate their skill with a purple ball in a kind of gymnastic virtuoso performance. Alcinoos demands parting gifts for Odysseus from the chiefs and princes in the audience. Euryalus apologizes for his rudeness and presents his gift—a bronze sword with silver hilt and carved ivory sheath. Returning to the palace, Alcinoos calls for a coffer, cloak, tunic, a golden chalice,

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and warm bath and massage for Odysseus, followed by dinner and more of Demodocos's music, which includes details about the wooden horse. The servants pack more treasures; Nausicaa says, "Good luck be with you, my friend . . . so that when you are in your own country you will remember me sometimes, since it is chiefly to me that you owe your life.")

3. Describe Odysseus's first meeting with Penelope upon his return to Ithaca.

(Seated by the fire at the end of the evening meal, the radiant Penelope overhears an argument between the beggar and Antinous, who commands, "Sit quietly and eat, stranger, . . . or take yourself somewhere else. Otherwise talk like that will end in our young men dragging you through the house by the leg or arm and tearing your skin to ribbons." The continual undercurrent of discourtesy and jealousy gnaws at Odysseus, but he bides his time.

Hearing of the outrage, Penelope sends for the swineherd to invite the stranger to her room. She presses the beggar for news of Odysseus. She asks him to sit by her and tell his story of a meeting in Crete. The details cause her to weep tears like snow melting from a mountain top. Odysseus gives details of his dress and his herald. She recognizes from the data that the stranger does know the facts and proclaims him a friend and honored guest. She summons Eurycleia to tend the stranger. Encouraged to confide in the stranger, Penelope asks his opinion of the suitors, of her maturing son, and of a troublesome dream in which twenty geese died from the attack of one great eagle. Odysseus predicts that Penelope's husband will return and kill the wooers down to the last man.)

4. Explain the advice that Teiresias gives Odysseus about returning to Ithaca.

(After drinking from the pit of blood, Teiresias, the Theban seer, warns that the return home will be difficult: "You will reach home late, in a wretched state, upon a foreign ship, having lost all your comrades. You will find trouble too in your house—insolent men eating up your livelihood, courting your royal wife and offering wedding gifts. It is true that you will take revenge on these men for their misdeeds when you reach home." Teiresias predicts that Odysseus must take an oar and journey to a land where people know neither sea nor use salt on their food. On return from this pilgrimage, Odysseus is to "make ceremonial offerings to the immortal gods who live in the broad heavens, to all of them this time, in due precedence." His final prophecy is soothing: Odysseus will meet his end from the sea and will die peacefully in old age with a "prosperous people" surrounding him.)

5. How does Zeus account for Poseidon's hatred of Odysseus?

(To Athene's charge that Zeus bears an untenable grudge against Odysseus, Zeus retorts that he admires the wise sailor and adds, "he is the most generous in his offerings to the immortals who live in the wide heaven." The god explains that Poseidon hates Zeus for blinding Polyphemus, Poseidon's son, the strongest of the one-eyed Cyclopes. In place of Athene's faulty reasoning, Zeus calls the gods to discuss how to persuade Poseidon to relent and let Odysseus return to Ithaca. Zeus

concludes, "For he will not be able to struggle on alone against the united will of the immortal gods.")

Questions 6-8 Interpretive Level

6. Explain why Odysseus is Athene's favorite.
(Athene, Zeus's daughter and the goddess of war and wisdom, holds Odysseus in great esteem because he is a strong warrior and because he is cleverer than the other Greeks. Odysseus saves himself from difficult situations by his glib tongue, quick deceptions, and ingenious strategies. A chief example, his escape from the cave of Polyphemus, illustrates how he fools the Cyclops, blinds him, and exits the cave under the very nose of the raging giant.)

7. Explain why the guest code is so important in the ancient world.

(Because wanderers and hosts were mutually bound to honor each other, people were able to find safe lodging for the night, food and water, medical care, sanctuary from brigands, and a degree of companionship during long journeys. The guest code bound both host and guest: the host had to provide sleeping quarters and food for travelers; the guest, receiving the courtesy of a stranger, was expected to do no harm to his host or to the host's home or family during the stay.

The guest code is a boon to both Odysseus and Telemachus during their sojourns from Ithaca. As Telemachus comes in contact with the courtesies of Nestor's and Menelaus's courts, he learns important examples of deportment, generosity, and trust. Odysseus, too, learns that strength alone is not enough to get him through the ordeal of his wanderings. Without courtesy and mutual respect, he would never have charmed Calypso or Alcinous and Arete, their subjects, and their daughter, who rescued him from the lowest point on his journey.)

8. How does divine interference in human life both aid and hinder the Greeks?

(Odysseus is a prime example of a mortal whose life is altered by divine intervention. Because he kills the one-eyed giant Polyphemus, Odysseus is hounded by storms and sea monsters at the will of Poseidon, Polyphemus's father, who hears his son's prayer and answers with the weapons of the second most powerful Olympian god. Odysseus's savior is Athene, the goddess of wisdom and Zeus's daughter. She transforms him into a beggar when he returns to Ithaca; she intervenes in a minor incident to lead him home safely and to rescue Telemachus from harm.)

Questions 9 and 10 Critical Level

9. Explain how Odysseus's journey represents the wanderings of all seekers.

(According to some anthropologists, historians, and critics, Odysseus's wanderings symbolize all people's search for fulfillment. He accepts the challenge of society by accompanying the Greek fleet to Troy and fighting a common enemy. When divine opposition separates him from his family, he uses his intelligence and strength to combat dangers, both natural and supernatural. Upon his return, he reestablishes his relationship with son and wife before regaining control of his kingdom.

Like Odysseus, all human beings face challenges to

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life, family, livelihood, and personal achievement. Much of Odysseus's struggle involves self-control, particularly over an excess of pride. So too do ordinary people learn that without mastery of self, life becomes more complicated, more unpleasant and onerous. Also, like Odysseus, most people discover their most challenging enemies close to home, whether in the form of external dangers or the more common threats—boredom, unrest, dissatisfaction, or domestic strife.)

10. Explain why this epic is a world classic. *(For human beings in general, the challenges of war, religion, love, and maturity form life's struggles. Because Homer deals with these universal themes—the longing for home, coming to maturity, confronting temptations, search for a personal relationship with the gods, stresses on the family, concern over death and the afterlife, and aftermath of political upheaval—he creates a world classic that is applicable to all people in all times and places. The influence of Homer upon later classic authors, particularly Dante, Virgil, Horace, and Tennyson, illustrates the universality of his ageless epic.)*

Questions 11 and 12 Creative Level

11. Write a summary of Alfred Tennyson's poem "Ulysses." Contrast information you find in the poem with facts given by Homer. Quote lines to support your analysis.
12. Compose a song honoring Demodocus. Add lines that compare his skill and taste with Homer's. Comment on earthly honors that the minstrel deserves.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Art

1. Sketch a frieze depicting a Greek sailor's life aboard an ancient vessel.
2. Sketch a series of coins, seals, or good luck charms featuring contrasting females in Odysseus's life: Circe, Calypso, Penelope, Nausicaa, Helen of Troy, Queen Arete, Athene, Anticleia, and Eurycleia.

Geography

1. Indicate on a wall map the Mediterranean world featured in Greek mythology. Include the major cities of Athens, Alexandria, Corinth, Sparta, Thebes, Troy, and Delphi. Add important islands: Crete, Cyprus, the Cyclades, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Mytilene, and Gibraltar. Using an atlas of the ancient world, label areas that now have modern names: the Peloponnesus, Macedon, Thrace, Troy, Pontus, and Magna Graecia.
2. Draw a map depicting Ernie Bradford's proposed route for Odysseus. Note the number of times the route crosses and recrosses the same points.
3. Discuss the role of Heinrich Schliemann in turning the study of mythology into a useful discipline.

Social Studies

1. Discuss the position of a widowed queen in the ancient world. Determine why Penelope cannot eject the suitors. Explain why the guest code requires her patience with their bad manners, arguments, drunkenness, plotting, and freeloading until Odysseus returns.
2. Make a wall chart of social status in Odysseus's time. Add a separate list that orders major and minor gods, goddesses, sea nymphs, and such monsters as the Cyclopes, Scylla, Charybdis, and the Laestrygonians

according to their power and importance.

3. Explain in a paragraph the moral debt that Odysseus owes Elpenor, the dead sailor.

Mathematics and Logic

1. Explain why the size and type of ship and the number of passengers determines how often the captain must land to take on water and stores. Discuss why seaside communities prospered from the size and depth of their harbors, the availability of pitch and wood, and the number of dock workers who could expedite the process of loading and unloading.
2. Search the text for clues to the amount of time Odysseus spends at each spot. Chart his adventures in time order, filling in lengths of stays and time spent at sea. Explain why his journey is given as twenty years away from Ithaca.
3. Sketch maps of constellations. Explain where they got their names—Ursa Major, Ursa Minor, Sagittarius, Cassiopeia, Cancer—and how ancient mariners like Odysseus used the sky as a chart to steer by. Discuss why this style of navigation is no longer adequate for precise measurement of land, sea, and space objectives.

Science and Health

1. Explain why Odysseus arrives at Phaeacia with salt crusting his body.
2. Research the development of sailing vessels from Homer's time to the present.
3. Explain how an understanding of plate tectonics aids the researcher who seeks information about the sunken city of Atlantis, Odysseus's Ithaca, Troy, and other ancient Mediterranean sites.
4. Discuss why the Pythia and Delphi were vital to healers and to the sick, who often slept in the temple in hopes of gaining a message from Apollo during a dream.

Language Arts

1. Contrast several translations of Polyphemus's prayer to Poseidon in the last four paragraphs of Chapter 9. Discuss why this prayer is a pivotal part of the story.
2. Compile a database of nicknames, patronyms, and designations for characters in the *Odyssey*. For example, show Dawn as the "fresh and rosy-fingered" and "gold-throned," Athene as "Pallas," Hermes as "Cyllenian," and Zeus "the Cloud-gatherer" and "the Thunder-lover."

History

1. Make a time line of the most famous works in early literature. Add other works that flesh out a variety of poems, description, laws, speeches, adventures, prophecy, and scripture.
2. Give an oral presentation explaining why history in the time of Thucydides and Herodotus was filled with exaggeration, myth, legend, and outrageous tales.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Compare the heroic image of Odysseus with that of other figures from Greek mythology as well as American legendary and historical figures.
2. Read aloud from stories of Cuchulainn, Brendan, the Queen of Sheba, Roland, El Cid, Queen Boudicca, Beowulf, Parsifal, Launcelot, Elaine, Galahad, Tristan,

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Isolde, King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, Merlin, Alexander the Great, Morgan le Fay, and Joan of Arc. Compare leadership qualities of these characters and of Odysseus.

- Act out episodes from the story that demonstrate a blend of character traits of the hero, including courtesy and courage.
- Make a computer-generated genealogy of the Titan and Olympian gods and goddesses. Show the connecting link between the two charts. Include data about the powers of each deity. For example, Apollo was god of the sun, light, healing, prophecy, and creativity.
- Write a few unrhymed lines about a hero or heroine in which you demonstrate dactylic hexameter, the metric style used by Homer and his imitators. Place stresses to show where emphasis falls in each line.
- Explain how Homer's works influenced Virgil when he composed the *Aeneid*, the Latin literary epic commissioned by Augustus Caesar, Rome's first emperor. Note the difference between a folk epic and a literary epic. Discuss how Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Hiawatha* fits the definition of epic.
- Give an oral presentation on the courtship of Helen of Troy. Explain the roles of Leda, the swan, Castor, Pollux, Clytemnestra, Odysseus, Menelaus, Ajax, Agamemnon, and Achilles.
- Draw a map of the Mediterranean Sea and mark the places where archeologists have uncovered evidence of ancient settlements, temples, battlegrounds, sunken cities and fleets, and seaports. Locate Ithaca and suggest routes by which Odysseus might have returned home safely after the Trojan War without venturing to Tunisia, Corsica, Sicily, the Strait of Messina, or Gibraltar.
- Compose a news story for the local newspaper in which you describe Odysseus's homecoming, Telemachus's journey to Sparta, and the battle with the suitors. Explain how peace comes to Ithaca.
- Sketch costumes for the major characters—warriors, queens, servants, kings, islanders, and sailors. Show each figure engaged in a normal activity.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

- List examples of Odysseus's love, competitiveness, courage, skill, grace, athletic ability, composure under pressure, anger, and courtesy.
- Compile lines that express Homer's ability to flesh out an ordinary scene with specific details.
- Compose a scene in which Laertes or Euryclia dies. Carry the ritual into the Underworld.
- Make a character list and explain the relationship of each to Odysseus. Include Ajax, Circe, Hermes, Athene, Eumaius, Anticleia, Elpenor, Calypso, Hyperion, Telemachus, Argus, Agamemnon, Zeus, Nausicaa, Nestor, Alcinous, Arete, Menelaus, Irus, the Ismarians, Melanthius, Demodocus, and Poseidon.

HOMER'S OTHER WORKS

Iliad
Hymn to Aphrodite
Hymn to Apollo
Hymn to Dionysus

The Battle of the Frogs and Mice
Margites
Kerkopes (?)

RELATED READING

Ernie Bradford's *Ulysses Found*
Euripides's *Trojan Women* and *Hecuba*
Bernard Evslin's *The Adventures of Ulysses*
John Gardner's *Grendel*
Robert Graves's *The Greek Myths*
Moses Hadas's *Jason and the Argonauts*
Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*
Mary Renault's *The Bull from the Sea*, *The Nature of Alexander*, and *The King Must Die*
Sophocles's *Philoctetes*
Mary Stewart's *The Crystal Cave* and *The Hollow Hills*
Virgil's *Aeneid*
Derek Walcott's *Omeros*

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VOCABULARY TEST

Underline the correct term in the parentheses to complete each sentence.

1. Also it has a safe harbour, in which there is no need of moorings—no need to cast anchor or make fast with (hawsers, quays, harrows, centaurs, barrows); all your crew need do is beach their ship and wait till the spirit moves them and the right wind blows.
2. The fertile soil of Egypt is very rich in herbs, many of which are beneficial in (lore, solution, distaff, cudgel, banishment), though many are poisonous.
3. There I poured (cubits, tholes, braziers, gaffers, libations) to all the dead, first with a mixture of honey and milk, then with sweet wine, and last of all with water.
4. There, full of (barrens, thwarts, quoits, vermin, sagacity) lay Argus the hound.
5. Arete sent with him a party of serving-women, one with a clean cloak and tunic, another in charge of his (whey, pall, ewer, supplication, strong-box), and a third carried bread and red wine.
6. On first thought I planned to summon my courage, draw my sharp sword from the scabbard at my side, creep up to him, feel for the right place with my hand and stab him in the breast where the liver is supported by the (scabbard, tusker, midriff, lance, aegis).
7. When he had roasted it all, he served it up piping hot on the (fripperies, spits, shrift, scruff, convoy), set it in front of Odysseus, and sprinkled it with white barley-meal.
8. But in the course of the eighth, I fell in with a rascally Phoenician, a thieving (gorgon, brawn, rogue, flayer, gallant) who had already done a deal of mischief in the world.
9. But the boar was too quick and caught him above the knee, where he gave him a long flesh-wound with a cross lunge of his (tusk, vintage, flay, guerdon, eddy), but failed to reach the bone.
10. Directly I got back to Ithaca I would sacrifice a barren (heifer, ichor, halyard, shoal, Danaan) in my palace, the best I had, and heap the pyre with treasures, and make Teiresias a separate offering of the finest jet-black sheep in my flocks.
11. And now there came the soul of Peleus' son Achilles, of Patroclus, of the handsome Antilochus, and of Ajax, who in (mooring, ministrations, tribulation, minstrelsy, stature) and in manly grace was second to none of the Danaans except the handsome son of Peleus.
12. When supper-time arrived and the sheep returned from the fields round about in the charge of the usual (diadems, diviners, ruffians, drovers, prows), Medon, who was their favourite herald and always attended their meals, came to summon them.
13. The song men will sing of her will be one of (divination, wrangle, sanctuary, detestation, ordinance). She has destroyed the reputation of her whole sex, virtuous women and all.
14. "Father," the prudent Telemachus replied, "I have always heard of your great reputation as a fighter in combat and (minstrel, tactician, waylayer, harbinger, atoner) in counsel.
15. It was this (maw, constellation, strait, stronghold, tempest), the only one which never sinks below the horizon to bathe in Ocean's Stream, that the wise goddess Calypso had told him to keep on his left hand as he sailed across the sea.

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Match the following statements with a place name.

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| _____ 1. place Odysseus falsely claims to have met the great Ithacan warrior | A. Troy |
| _____ 2. home of Helen and Menelaus | B. Aeaea |
| _____ 3. court where Odysseus tells of his wanderings | C. Crete |
| _____ 4. location of Mount Neriton | D. Ithaca |
| _____ 5. city Odysseus leaves before killing the men of Ismarus | E. Olympus |
| _____ 6. island where Odysseus acquires the winds in an oxhide bag | F. Phaeacia |
| _____ 7. island where wolves and lions surround the home of a sorceress | G. Pylos |
| _____ 8. the stream that forms the world's boundary | H. Lacedaimon |
| _____ 9. home of the gods | I. Ocean |
| _____ 10. court of Nestor | J. Aiolia |

Part II: Character Identification (30 points)

Name the characters described below:

- _____ 1. queen who gives guests a soothing drug
- _____ 2. goddess who changes Odysseus into a beggar
- _____ 3. falls dead at Odysseus's approach
- _____ 4. spies a scar on Odysseus's leg
- _____ 5. helps Odysseus from the shore to the Phaeacian palace
- _____ 6. changes men into swine
- _____ 7. answers the blinded Cyclops's prayer
- _____ 8. blind poet who sings of the adultery of Ares and Aphrodite
- _____ 9. deceives suitors by pulling out woven strands from handwork
- _____ 10. tells Telemachus a long story about Troy
- _____ 11. is the blind seer living in the Underworld
- _____ 12. arrives from Olympus with a command to Calypso to let Odysseus go
- _____ 13. lures sailors to their death on rocks
- _____ 14. tells Odysseus the status of his parents
- _____ 15. is mutilated and his feet and hands fed to the dogs

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Part III: Fact/Opinion (30 points)

Mark each of the following statements either **F** for fact if the text justifies it or **O** for opinion.

- _____ 1. Odysseus's son must make his own way in the world if he is to succeed his father on the throne of Ithaca.
- _____ 2. False slave women are executed because they consorted with the fortune-hunting suitors.
- _____ 3. Escape from the Cyclops's cave is possible because Athene gives Odysseus the idea of hiding under sheep.
- _____ 4. Zeus takes pity on Odysseus because he has suffered enough and allows him to return home.
- _____ 5. Penelope is courteous to the beggar because she fears the gods' punishment if she is unkind.
- _____ 6. Nausicaa chooses to help Odysseus because he suits her better than the young men who court her.
- _____ 7. Argus tries to remain alive so he can welcome his master home one more time.
- _____ 8. Elpenor has reason to petition Odysseus to bury his remains.
- _____ 9. Odysseus deliberately seeks a turn at the bow to prepare for the slaughter of the suitors.
- _____ 10. Penelope takes her time before accepting the stranger as Odysseus because she wants to be sure of his identity.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- 1. Explain how and why Odysseus makes peace with angry relatives in the final chapter.
- 2. Enumerate Penelope's qualities as queen, hostess, wife, and mother.
- 3. Describe the destructive power of Scylla and Charybdis.
- 4. Discuss how Odysseus's foolish boasting costs him more years of loss and loneliness.
- 5. Account for the suitors' many years in Penelope's home.

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COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Select the letter of an answer for each question below.

- _____ 1. Telemachus conceals his departure from A. Eurycleia. B. Odysseus. C. Penelope. D. Nestor.
- _____ 2. Odysseus requires advice from A. Teiresias. B. the spirit of his dead mother. C. Agamemnon. D. Ajax.
- _____ 3. Arete makes Odysseus welcome by offering him A. cloth of purple. B. a discus to hurl. C. a cauldron and tripod. D. a chest of healing drugs from Egypt.
- _____ 4. Odysseus claims to have seen the great Ithacan in A. the Underworld. B. Ismarus. C. Crete. D. Scheria.
- _____ 5. The greatest insult to a corpse goes to that of A. Alcinous. B. Elpenor. C. Argus. D. Melanthius.
- _____ 6. Penelope's hesitance to welcome her husband causes A. Telemachus to command her to stop stalling. B. Eurycleia to chuckle. C. Laertes to mourn. D. Odysseus to smile.
- _____ 7. Telemachus insists on sparing the life of A. Melanthius. B. Medon. C. Demodocus D. the swineherd.
- _____ 8. The "Earthshaker" is the special name of A. the king of winds. B. Poseidon. C. Hermes. D. Heracles.
- _____ 9. Irus is unwilling to share the hall with A. another beggar. B. a blind minstrel. C. Antilochus. D. women who consort with the suitors.
- _____ 10. Alcinous himself packs A. Odysseus's ship. B. purple robes in the chest. C. Calypso's woodworking tools. D. the altar with meat for Zeus and Poseidon.

Part II: Identification (30 points)

Identify the objects that fit the following descriptions. Choose from the list below:

| | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| Achilles's armor | crooch | gorgon | Odysseus's bow | scar |
| anvil | cattle | invisible net | pit | tripod |
| armory | distaff | laundry | roof | twelve axes |
| bag | footstool | lyre | rudder | weaving |

- _____ 1. equipment that Odysseus carves for his boat
- _____ 2. object hurled at an aged beggar
- _____ 3. object that a helper hangs near Demodocos's fingertips
- _____ 4. load that Nausicaa takes by mule-cart to the shore
- _____ 5. three-legged object given as an award
- _____ 6. excavation that Odysseus makes in the Underworld
- _____ 7. prize for which Ajax challenges Odysseus
- _____ 8. place from which Elpenor falls
- _____ 9. object the king of the winds makes out of oxhide
- _____ 10. mark that helps Eurycleia identify Odysseus
- _____ 11. Penelope's craft
- _____ 12. target for Odysseus's bow
- _____ 13. symbol of Hephaestus's power
- _____ 14. Hyperion's prized possessions
- _____ 15. object that Eurymachus fails to bend

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Part III: Fill-in (20 points)

Fill in the following lines with names, places, or objects.

1. _____ Odysseus proves his identity by explaining how he made his _____ from a living tree.
2. _____ warns Odysseus that some wives are not to be trusted.
3. _____ sucks up the ocean all the way to the sandy bottom.
4. From _____, Zeus rules the world with his loud thunder.
5. By burning _____, servants cleanse the hall of bodies and gore.
6. _____ meets Odysseus on the shore of Ithaca and changes him into an old man.
7. Odysseus greets with great formality his aged father _____.
8. An _____ marks Elpenor's grave.
9. _____ lives with the gods rather than with the mortal dead.
10. _____ gives her company a potion that relieves sadness.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Discuss how Penelope suits Odysseus as the appropriate wife for a wily, clever sailor.
2. Project the type of king Telemachus will make.
3. Summarize the types of loss that Odysseus must suffer before returning home.
4. Contrast the Sirens, Laestrygonians, and Lotus-Eaters as hindrances to Odysseus's return.
5. Describe a day in Ithaca while Odysseus and Telemachus are away from the court.

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. hawsers | 9. tusk |
| 2. solution | 10. heifer |
| 3. libations | 11. stature |
| 4. vermin | 12. drovers |
| 5. strong-box | 13. detestation |
| 6. midriff | 14. tactician |
| 7. spits | 15. constellation |
| 8. rogue | |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. J |
| 2. H | 7. B |
| 3. F | 8. I |
| 4. D | 9. E |
| 5. A | 10. G |

Part II: Character Identification (30 points)

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Helen | 9. Penelope |
| 2. Athene | 10. Nestor |
| 3. Argus | 11. Teiresias |
| 4. Eurycleia | 12. Hermes |
| 5. Nausicaa | 13. Sirens |
| 6. Circe | 14. Eumaius |
| 7. Poseidon | 15. Melanthius |
| 8. Demodocus | |

Part III: Fact/Opinion (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. O | 6. O |
| 2. F | 7. O |
| 3. O | 8. F |
| 4. F | 9. F |
| 5. O | 10. F |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. D |
| 2. A | 7. B |
| 3. A | 8. B |
| 4. C | 9. A |
| 5. D | 10. A |

Part II: Identification (30 points)

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. rudder | 9. bag |
| 2. footstool | 10. scar |
| 3. lyre | 11. weaving |
| 4. laundry | 12. 12 axes |
| 5. tripod | 13. anvil |
| 6. pit | 14. cattle |
| 7. Achilles's armor | 15. Odysseus's bow |
| 8. roof | |

Part III: Fill-in (20 points)

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. bed | 6. Athene |
| 2. Agamemnon | 7. Laertes |
| 3. Charybdis | 8. oar |
| 4. Olympos | 9. Heracles |
| 5. sulphur | 10. Helen |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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