

KEY STRATEGY TO SUMMARY A SECTION OF THE ODYSSEY pdf

1: "Sailing from Troy" - The Odyssey by Judith Sheehan on Prezi

A short summary of Homer's The Odyssey. This free synopsis covers all the crucial plot points of The Odyssey.

Summary Analysis Homer begins by asking the Muse, the goddess of poetry and music, to sing to him about Odysseus and his travels. Odysseus and his crew have seen many strange lands and have suffered many trials. Their careless behavior has sometimes angered the gods, who have prevented their safe return to Ithaca. The nymph Calypso has held Odysseus captive for seven years on the island Ogygia, and the goddess Athena has come before an assembly of the gods to plead for his release. We learn that Athena favors Odysseus, for some reason, and has made it her mission to ensure his safe return. Zeus decides to spare Odysseus and sends Hermes to order Calypso to release Odysseus from captivity: She finds Telemachus sitting idly in the midst of the festivities, dreaming of routing the insolent suitors from the estate. Athena usually takes human form in her interactions with Telemachus, perhaps in order to make her divine interventions less conspicuous. Active Themes After Telemachus has given Athena a proper welcome, she tells Telemachus that Odysseus is still alive, and that he is held captive on a faraway island. She prophesies that Odysseus will soon return to his home. Telemachus describes the shame the suitors have brought upon the estate. Athena advises that he gather a crew and sail to Pylos and then to Sparta in search of information about Odysseus. Telemachus thanks the stranger for the kind advice; his memory of Odysseus grows vivid and his strength increases, and he thinks that the stranger must have been a god. Telemachus carefully follows the customs of hospitality: His conversation with Athena invigorates him, but in what way? Or does Athena magically grant him increased strength and confidence? Penelope obeys him, surprised by his good sense and strong will. He tells her not to blame men for something that is the will of the gods, thus shows respect to the gods. Active Themes After Athena flies away, Telemachus addresses the suitors. He tells them to leave his household at once, or Zeus, the god of hospitality, will punish them for their wrongdoings. Antinous responds that only the gods could give Telemachus the power to speak so courageously. Eurymachus adds that the gods alone decide who will rule Ithaca, and inquires about the strange visitor. Telemachus replies that the visitor was Mentos, a friend of Laertes, but he knows in his heart that the visitor was the goddess Athena. Telemachus knows now that Athena shares his sense of right and wrong "of honor and dishonor" and so he addresses the suitors with great conviction. He threatens them with the vengeance of the gods: Retrieved November 11,

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2: Odyssey - Classic Literature - Questions for Tests and Worksheets - Ninth Grade (Grade 9)

A summary of Books in Homer's The Odyssey. Learn exactly what happened in this chapter, scene, or section of The Odyssey and what it means. Perfect for acing essays, tests, and quizzes, as well as for writing lesson plans.

The Greeks who listened to recitations of The Iliad and The Odyssey were themselves of the belief that Homer was a single person and was the author of both poems. Many were convinced that he was a contemporary of the heroes whose story these epics tell, and even that he must have been an eyewitness to the events recounted in The Iliad. Modern scholarship is united in the view that this latter belief cannot be true. The language of Homer is a mixture of several dialects of Greek that were spoken only hundreds of years later than the culture described within the poems themselves. And the scheme of writing in which the earliest manuscripts appear on the scene is derived from a Middle Eastern writing system that was not invented until the 9th Century BCE at the earliest. To be sure, the excavations begun in the 19th Century by the wealthy German businessman Heinrich Schliemann, and continued by a host of successors, have convinced many archeologists and students of the poems that the conflict known to later times as the Trojan War may well have occurred the estimation is around BCE , so that the larger narrative framework within the action of the two epics takes place is not a product of pure poetic imagination. But though there was a writing system in existence in Greece during the era in which this coastal Asia Minor city was destroyed, it was suited only to keeping inventory records of palace wealth, and not to recording poetic narrative. In the period between the events of the poem and the writing down of the poems that have come down to us, this system of writing completely disappeared, to the extent that the Greeks who listened to recitations of Homer had no knowledge that it had ever existed. Hence scholars today agree that Homer whoever created the epics could not have been a contemporary, or even a near contemporary of the events the poems tell of. Nevertheless, they are still divided over whether the poems are the products of a single person, or, indeed, whether either is the work of "an author" in our modern sense of the term. This is the subject of the famous "Homeric Question" a term which really refers to a series of interconnected questions. At the same time, many students of the poems are unwilling to surrender the idea that each poem, in the form in which it came to be written down, shows the hand of a single organizing intelligence. This is not the time to immerse yourself in the details of this famous question. But here are a couple of relatively simple accounts you can return to later if you find your interest piqued in it. Here is a general question to keep in mind as you read the first four books of The Odyssey. In other words, this is a question that you will want to read before you turn to the epic itself. Everyone knows that The Odyssey is concerned with the adventures of the Greek hero Odysseus known in Latin as Ulysses in his return home after taking part in the Trojan War. Yet the epic does not begin with Odysseus, but with his son Telemachus, a little over 20 years old, who was an infant when Odysseus left for the war. In fact, the first 4 out of the total of 24 books that make up The Odyssey comprise what readers have come to dub The Telemacheia. An obvious question, then, is this: What contributions does this unit of The Odyssey make towards the overall effect and meaning of the whole? Is it merely "preliminary," or can we conceive the whole in such terms that this opening is an integral part of it? Clearly, this question cannot be answered fully until we have become acquainted with the whole. But it is good to keep this curiosity in mind as one is reading the opening 4 books themselves. What do we notice as the main subjects and issues that are given prominence here? Here are some questions that it will make best sense for you to ponder after you read the Book in question. Note that it would make the most sense for you to sketch your answers to these directly in the margins of the text of the epic itself, in the appropriate place. Questions over Book 1 Olympus What key god is absent from the assembly? What prophecy does Zeus make concerning Odysseus? How does this affect our reactions in the narrative that follows? This is a kind of question that requires being recalled to mind when the action concerning Odysseus resumes. Ithaca Telemachus receives Athena, who has arrived disguised as Mentos. What do you notice about the manner in which Telemachus treats Mentos? What prophecy does Mentos make, and on what supposed basis? What is noteworthy how so? What advice does she give? Note that it is of the following form: What is the role, in this counsel, of the example of Orestes? What is the theme of

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the song the bard Phemius is singing in the hall where the suitors are gathered? What is her reaction to the entertainment? What does he tell her to do? What is her reaction to this? How does the suitor Antinous respond? How does the suitor Eurymachus respond? How do we evaluate his deception? Eurycleia is merely a minor functionary at this point, but she will take on some importance later on as the epic draws toward its climax. Questions over Book 2 Who calls the assembly? What, presumably, is noteworthy about this? What does Telemachus say is his reason for speaking? What are the elements of the dilemma he describes himself as facing? How do you figure Homer expects his hearers to react to the way in which Telemachus concludes his speech? What history does he recount? How does he characterize Penelope? What demand does he make? What happens in response to his concluding prayer? Who is Halitherses, and how does he interpret this? How does he interpret the same occurrence? What is his prophecy? What is his advice for Telemachus? How do you figure we are expected to respond to this? Summarize the main points of his intervention. On reflection, are we to notice any progression in the interventions of Antinous, Eurymachus and Leocritus? In what form does Athena appear? Do you notice anything interesting in the nature of the names of the persons whose guise we have so far seen her take on? What does Athena do here? Note at least 2 things. What are we to notice about the manner in which Telemachus reacts to it? What does Telemachus proceed to do next? What is the reaction of Eurycleia? How does Telemachus secure her help? What oath does he get her to swear? What is the first thing the crew does after the ship is properly trimmed and set on course? Questions over Book 3 Pylos Who is Nestor? Here, you would want to think of what the original audience for recitations of The Odyssey would presumably already know about him already, from their acquaintance with what they understood to be history [or, for us, legend and mythology]. What is the household of Nestor doing when Telemachus and Mentor arrive in their ship? Does some detail here ring a bell with us, regarding the deity in question? Do we figure Homer expects his audience to find him clumsy and fearful? Or would his behavior here count as a sign of good sense and proper modesty? What seems to be the ritually prescribed order of events? What does Telemachus state as his business in coming here? Consider both the needs he communicates explicitly and those that you understand are implicit in his situation. Each of these is a possible model for what, so far as Telemachus can at the moment know, might turn out to be the fate of his father. How many can you identify? What are we to make of the exchange in lines ? What arrangement does Athena make with Nestor for getting Telemachus on his way to Sparta? The journey to Sparta raises an interesting point: Here is one detail, at least, that must have been supplied by the imagination of Homer or the improvisational tradition that a legendary individual named "Homer" has come to stand for. But if your curiosity moves you, make it a point to check it out later. What is remarkable for those present about the departure of Mentor? What does this cause Nestor to resolve? What is the nature of his prayer? Where else in the epic do we find a concern for this value? Regarding the procedure in the sacrifice Nestor ordains 3: As in the journey by ship to Pylos, the journey by chariot to Sparta takes place overnight. Questions over Book 4 In this book, we continue to learn more about the history and character of Odysseus. Sparta How does Menelaus know that the strangers who appear deserve to be treated with special respect? Note that this is all before the stage at which the guests are expected to identify themselves. What did he occupy himself with on his return? Here again we hear of the story of his brother Agamemnon What do we learn of Odysseus, before Helen enters the scene?

3: Study Guide to Books of The Odyssey

Free summary and analysis of Book 2 in Homer's The Odyssey that won't make you snore. We promise.

Table of Contents Plot Overview Ten years have passed since the fall of Troy, and the Greek hero Odysseus still has not returned to his kingdom in Ithaca. She has remained faithful to Odysseus. One of the suitors, Antinous, plans to assassinate the young prince, eliminating the only opposition to their dominion over the palace. Unknown to the suitors, Odysseus is still alive. The beautiful nymph Calypso, possessed by love for him, has imprisoned him on her island, Ogygia. He longs to return to his wife and son, but he has no ship or crew to help him escape. Telemachus makes plans to return home, while, back in Ithaca, Antinous and the other suitors prepare an ambush to kill him when he reaches port. Hermes persuades Calypso to let Odysseus build a ship and leave. Poseidon has harbored a bitter grudge against Odysseus since the hero blinded his son, the Cyclops Polyphemus, earlier in his travels. Nausicaa, the Phaeacian princess, shows him to the royal palace, and Odysseus receives a warm welcome from the king and queen. When he identifies himself as Odysseus, his hosts, who have heard of his exploits at Troy, are stunned. They promise to give him safe passage to Ithaca, but first they beg to hear the story of his adventures. He recounts his trip to the Land of the Lotus Eaters, his battle with Polyphemus the Cyclops, his love affair with the witch-goddess Circe, his temptation by the deadly Sirens, his journey into Hades to consult the prophet Tiresias, and his fight with the sea monster Scylla. When he finishes his story, the Phaeacians return Odysseus to Ithaca, where he seeks out the hut of his faithful swineherd, Eumaeus. Though Athena has disguised Odysseus as a beggar, Eumaeus warmly receives and nourishes him in the hut. Odysseus and Telemachus devise a plan to massacre the suitors and regain control of Ithaca. When Odysseus arrives at the palace the next day, still disguised as a beggar, he endures abuse and insults from the suitors. The only person who recognizes him is his old nurse, Eurycleia, but she swears not to disclose his secret. Penelope takes an interest in this strange beggar, suspecting that he might be her long-lost husband. At the contest, each suitor tries to string the bow and fails. Odysseus steps up to the bow and, with little effort, fires an arrow through all twelve axes. He then turns the bow on the suitors. He and Telemachus, assisted by a few faithful servants, kill every last suitor. Odysseus reveals himself to the entire palace and reunites with his loving Penelope. He travels to the outskirts of Ithaca to see his aging father, Laertes. Zeus dispatches Athena to restore peace.

4: The Odyssey Book 1 Summary & Analysis from LitCharts | The creators of SparkNotes

The Heroic Story of Odysseus The *Odyssey* deals with Odysseus' adventures as he makes his way home from Troy and with events that take place on Ithaca just before and after his return.

Sing to me of the man, Muse, the man of twists and turns driven time and again off course, once he had plundered the hallowed heights of Troy. See Important Quotations Explained The narrator of the *Odyssey* invokes the Muse, asking for inspiration as he prepares to tell the story of Odysseus. The story begins ten years after the end of the Trojan War, the subject of the *Iliad*. All of the Greek heroes except Odysseus have returned home. Odysseus languishes on the remote island Ogygia with the goddess Calypso, who has fallen in love with him and refuses to let him leave. Meanwhile, a mob of suitors is devouring his estate in Ithaca and courting his wife, Penelope, in hopes of taking over his kingdom. His son, Telemachus, an infant when Odysseus left but now a young man, is helpless to stop them. He has resigned himself to the likelihood that his father is dead. With the consent of Zeus, Athena travels to Ithaca to speak with Telemachus. She then tells him that he must make a journey to Pylos and Sparta to ask for any news of his father. Like Homer with the *Iliad*, the bard sings of the sufferings experienced by the Greeks on their return from Troy, and his song makes the bereaved Penelope more miserable than she already is. Antinous and Eurymachus, two particularly defiant suitors, rebuke Telemachus and ask the identity of the visitor with whom he has just been speaking. Although Telemachus suspects that his visitor was a goddess in disguise, he tells them only that the man was a friend of his father. Book 2 When the assembly meets the next day, Aegyptius, a wise Ithacan elder, speaks first. Antinous blames the impasse on Penelope, who, he says, seduces every suitor but will commit to none of them. He reminds the suitors of a ruse that she concocted to put off remarrying: Penelope maintained that she would choose a husband as soon as she finished weaving a burial shroud for her elderly father-in-law, Laertes. But each night, she carefully undid the knitting that she had completed during the day, so that the shroud would never be finished. If Penelope can make no decision, Antinous declares, then she should be sent back to Icarus so that he can choose a new husband for her. The dutiful Telemachus refuses to throw his mother out and calls upon the gods to punish the suitors. At that moment, a pair of eagles, locked in combat, appears overhead. The suitors balk at such foolishness, and the meeting ends in deadlock. As Telemachus is preparing for his trip to Pylos and Sparta, Athena visits him again, this time disguised as Mentor, another old friend of Odysseus. She encourages him and predicts that his journey will be fruitful. She then sets out to town and, assuming the disguise of Telemachus himself, collects a loyal crew to man his ship. Telemachus himself tells none of the household servants of his trip for fear that his departure will upset his mother. He tells only Eurycleia, his wise and aged nurse. She pleads with him not to take to the open sea as his father did, but he puts her fears to rest by saying that he knows that a god is at his side. Books 1–2 The *Odyssey* is an epic journey, but the word journey must be broadly understood.

5: Homer's Odyssey Lesson Plan for 9th Grade with Tips and Activities

The Odyssey Questions and Answers. The Question and Answer section for The Odyssey is a great resource to ask questions, find answers, and discuss the novel.

The Odyssey begins in Media Res, ten years after the fall of Troy. Odysseus has yet to return and is believed to have died on the voyage home. With a little persuasion from Zeus and Hermes, Calypso relents and sends Odysseus on his way. Poseidon, still angry at Odysseus, brings about a storm and Odysseus is washed up on the Island of the Phaeacians where he tells his tale to Alcinous, king of the island. The Land of the Cicones - Odysseus and his crew plunder the island and learn an important lesson: The Lotus-Eaters - Zeus sends a storm and after nine days the ship lands on the Island of the Lotus-eaters. Odysseus forces the Lotus-loving crew members back on to the ship, locks them up, and departs. The Island of the Cyclopes - Cyclopes are one-eyed giant freaks. Odysseus thinks it would be a good idea to steal food from the Cyclops Polyphemus and hang out in his cave. After Polyphemus returns, rolls a giant stone over the cave entrance, bashes a few skulls, and eats a couple crew members for breakfast, Odysseus realizes he has made a mistake. Odysseus uses cunning to escape: Odysseus learns another important lesson: The Cyclops from The Odyssey is Polyphemus. The Cyclopes from The Odyssey are the race of giants of which Polyphemus is a part. Aeolus - The god of the winds gives Odysseus a wind bag that his crew believes is full of gold. With Ithaca in sight, Odysseus falls asleep and his crew cuts open the bag and lets out the wind. The ship is blown far away. With help from Hermes, Odysseus forces Circe to turn them back, becomes her lover, and spends a year on the island. Circe tells Odysseus he must travel to the Land of the Dead and speak with the blind seer Teiresias in order to get home Note to guys reading this: Land of the Dead - Odysseus finds Teiresias who warns Odysseus about the dangers of his return home information that may have come in handy before having men eaten by Laestrygonians and the cyclops Polyphemus, not to mention that whole getting slaughtered by Cicones and drugged by Lotus-eaters. The Sirens - Teiresias warns Odysseus about the Sirens, creatures who entice sailors to their deaths with beautiful music and strategically placed rocks. Scylla and Charybdis - Scylla, in The Odyssey, is a six-headed monster. Charybdis is a giant whirlpool. To avoid one, you must confront the other. Although the six men the Scylla devours would disagree, the crew wisely avoids Charybdis and sails on. Odysseus warns his crew not to eat the Cattle of the sun. Odysseus survives and floats to the Island of Ogygia, home of Calypso. Odysseus reveals himself to Telemachus who has just returned from Sparta and they plot to destroy the suitors. Back in disguise, Odysseus heads to the palace where he is scorned. The lead suitor, Antinous, throws a chair at him. Penelope devises a contest: Odysseus in disguise strings the bow, shoots the arrow, reveals himself, and slaughters the suitors.

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6: SparkNotes: The Odyssey: Books 1-2

The poet invokes the Muse to help him tell the story of Odysseus. How original. We learn that Poseidon, god of the sea, holds a grudge (though we don't know exactly why) against Odysseus and is making the guy's voyage home a pretty difficult one. This tells us two very important things: (1) Greek.

When I heard I had to teach it to my 9th graders, I groaned. You need to know what is going on so you can explain it to your students. In my very first year of teaching, I was so overwhelmed by grading and paperwork that I would have the students read aloud in class, so I had a chance to refresh my own memory. A story like The Odyssey comes with a lot of questions from students, and you need to be prepared to answer them. Pre-reading the epic poem will help immensely. At the very least they need to know why the Greeks and Trojans had a war, and who the various gods and goddesses involved are. I accomplished this with a simple PowerPoint presentation of the important gods and goddesses and what their symbols were. I took the events of the Trojan War and presented them in a gossip style lecture that my students really enjoyed. Another teacher on my team used clips from the movie Troy to explain the events to his students. Point out to students important events, like when Odysseus is imprisoned by Calypso, or when the ship lands on the island of the Lotus Eaters. This will help the students keep up with what is going on, and help everyone keep things in order and remember who is who. If you have time, the students could make trading cards on index cards or smaller of the main characters and events. This could be an assignment, extra credit, or something they could eventually use on a test. Several sections are recreated from the poem and a few sections combine events from several sections. To break up some of the reading, I would show my students the section of the film we had just read about. It was great to hear them exclaim, "Oh, this is where Odysseus does Have the students write it into their own words or, have them act out a scene without speaking and let the other students guess what section of the poem they are acting out. I found with something like The Odyssey, which students may decide is the most boring thing they have ever read or so they will tell you , activities that get them up and moving around are always a big hit. A fun activity I used in my classroom was to make a travel brochure featuring some of the locations and characters Odysseus had encountered. In my class of 9th graders, the travel brochure was the most popular of all the activities we worked on. It was a pretty simple concept. I gave the students all a few sheets of plain, white printer paper and taught them how to fold it into thirds, brochure style. I created a handout with very specific brochure requirements, and a rubric. This way the students knew for sure what was required to achieve the grade they wanted. Some things I included were that the brochure needed to be in color, and feature artwork representing three of the characters Odysseus encountered. Each location and creature required a trivia or test question about it on the back of the brochure. The students were given the rubric up front so they could see that turning it in without color would be a deduction, and forgetting the trivia questions would drop them a letter grade. Because of the specific instructions and the rubric the majority of my students were able to turn in high level work without the normal problems. It was an enjoyable project for both the students and the teacher!

7: The Odyssey Worksheets, Project, and Test | Ereading Worksheets

The Odyssey is Homer's epic of Odysseus' year struggle to return home after the Trojan War. While Odysseus battles mystical creatures and faces the wrath of the gods, his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus stave off suitors vying for Penelope's hand and Ithaca's throne long enough for Odysseus to return.

Summary Analysis As Odysseus walks toward the city, Athena surrounds him with a protective mist. Disguised as a little girl, she guides him to the castle. He blesses her family and begs her for safe passage home. Athena hides herself and Odysseus from the Phaeacians; she uses cunning to avoid confrontation, though open battle is considered glorious. In his behavior with the king and queen, Odysseus chooses cunning and humility over glory. Rather than announce his famous name and flaunt his strength and nobility, Odysseus abases himself in front of the queen. Active Themes Alcinous sits Odysseus down next to him, Odysseus eats and drinks, and they all raise their wine glasses to Zeus. He wonders whether the stranger might be a god; the behavior of the gods has changed “they used to come to mortals undisguised. Odysseus responds that he is only mortal, weighed down with mortal suffering, and regrets that he must eat despite his grief: He begs to be conveyed home “all he wants is to see his home and family again, and to die happily. Odysseus emphasizes the distinction between different kinds of desire when he complains that the ignoble desire for food replaces the noble desire for home. Note also how once again a mortal is almost mistaken for a god: Alcinous implies the world is changing, and the distinction between gods and mortals seems to be eroding. Why have the gods become more secretive, more circumspect? Active Themes Related Quotes with Explanations As the servants clear away the plates, Arete notices that Odysseus is wearing clothes from her household, and asks about them suspiciously. Odysseus tells her a fuller version of his story, then: He claims that it was his idea not to accompany the princess into the city. Alcinous wishes that such a man as Odysseus could stay in Phaeacia and wed Nausicaa. He tells Odysseus that he will arrange that a ship will carry him home the following morning. Odysseus is not averse to a white lie, here and there: But he also knows when to loosen his disguise and reveal a bit more about himself. When the queen becomes suspicious, Odysseus appeases her with honesty and openness. To be cunning, one must sometimes be honest. Retrieved November 11,

8: The Odyssey Book 7 Summary & Analysis from LitCharts | The creators of SparkNotes

The Odyssey Chapters Worksheet: comprehension and review questions that will help you assess how well your students understand chapters one and two of the text. The Odyssey Chapters Worksheet RTF.

He angrily notices the maidservants as they sneak out to meet their lovers among the suitors. Suddenly Athena appears and assures him of vengeful victory. Odysseus prays to Zeus for a sign of support and is answered by a thunderclap. This day is a special holiday on Ithaca, a festal celebration in honor of Apollo, god of archery. Melanthius, the goatherd, is in town for the celebration and again bullies Odysseus. The suitors, talking again of assassinating Telemachus, continue their boorish behavior. Telemachus berates the suitors and lists some of their many offenses. The seer Theoclymenus speaks ominously to them, offering one of their last warnings, but in their arrogance, the suitors respond with derisive laughter. Analysis As the hour of the battle approaches, the tone is ominous. Evidence mounts against the suitors. Odysseus is, wisely, uneasy while the suitors go blithely about their usual proceedings, failing to notice the gathering storm. Homer devotes much of this section to a collection of evidence against the maidservants and suitors. Odysseus hears the maids as they sneak out of the house, giggling in anticipation of another night with their lovers. Their trysts with the suitors especially bother him because these are blatant acts of disloyalty toward Penelope. The goatherd Melanthius is another disloyal servant. Melanthius again bullies the guest. The suitors behave in their usual haughty manner. Ctesippus takes his turn insulting the disguised king and casts an oxhoof at him. Further building the case against the suitors, Telemachus boldly scolds them and catalogues their offenses. He is ready for his first real battle. Preparation for battle must include intervention by the gods. Athena comes to Odysseus in the night and guarantees success even if he were to face "fifty bands of mortal fighters" Penelope, too, hopes for help from the gods and asks that she die if she cannot be with her husband. The suitors have been repeatedly warned, individually and as a group. Their standard response is to mock the speaker. Evidence has been gathered. In effect, they have testified against themselves. The gods have condemned the intruders. Justice, like a terrible storm, is about to break upon them. Glossary Pandareus father of the nightingale. See Fagles and Knox pp.

9: The Odyssey at a Glance

Before reading Homer's The Odyssey, students should be introduced to the concepts of epic poetry and epic heroes, as well as to the author and his preceding work, The Iliad. An epic poem is a long narrative poem.

The first ten were spent fighting in the Trojan War, and the next ten were spent in continual wanderings en route home from the war. His wife Penelope, meanwhile, has been harassed by dozens of suitors who have come to win her hand in marriage. Penelope, desperately clinging to the hope that her husband is still alive, tries to stall the suitors by making them an idle promise: However, when alone at night, Penelope secretly undoes the work of the shroud so that the fabrication of the garment will go on indefinitely. Unfortunately, the ruse has been discovered by the suitors, who now demand she choose one of them immediately. In so doing, they are devouring his livestock and abusing his servants. The direct victim of their voracious behavior is Telemachus, the son of Odysseus who is now approaching manhood. Athene, goddess of wisdom and daughter of Zeus, begs her father to allow Odysseus to return home at last, for he has languished for seven years on the isle of the nymph Calypso, who holds him captive. Obtaining permission and aid from her father, Athene comes down from Mount Olympus to visit Telemachus in disguise. She convinces him that he should sail abroad and seek information concerning his father. Athene manages to get together a crew and ship for Telemachus, and he departs without informing his mother or the suitors. Telemachus arrives at Pylus with Athene, who is disguised as the elder friend of Odysseus, Mentor. There Telemachus is warmly received and entertained by the aged Nestor, the famous counselor of the Trojan War. Nestor informs Telemachus of the various ill-fated homecomings of the Greeks, especially the fate of Agamemnon, commander of the Greeks at Troy, who was slain by his wife, Clytemnestra, and her lover, Aegisthus. Menelaus and his queen, Helen, whose retreat with Paris instigated the Trojan War, entertain Telemachus with splendor. Menelaus tells his guests of his own wanderings which resulted in his encounter with the Old Man of the Sea, Proteus. The nymph reluctantly agrees, and sends Odysseus on his way in a raft of his own making. With the help of Athene and the sea goddess, Leukothea, Odysseus is able to swim for several days and land exhausted on the isle of the Phaeaceans: After having secured shelter for himself beneath a bush, Odysseus is awakened the next morning by the playful dancing of Nausikaa, Princess of the Phaeaceans, and the handmaids who accompany her to do the palace laundry. There are also great games played in which Odysseus reluctantly takes part with great success. When they learn he is the famous adventurer, Odysseus, they demand he tell them of his many adventures. Odysseus begins his tale with the departure of his twelve ships from Troy and his early encounters with the Ciconians and Lotus-Eaters. He then recounts his adventure with Polyphemus the Cyclops. He chose twelve men from his ship to join him in exploring the cavernous home of Polyphemus. This is how Odysseus incurred the enmity of this powerful deity. The fleet of ships was swept back to the island of Aeolus, who angrily banished the miserable Odysseus from his island. Caught by surprise, all his moored ships but his own personal vessel were speared by the giants and carried off. Once inside, the men feasted with Circe, who transformed them into swine. Eurylochus escaped to inform Odysseus, who returned alone to face Circe. Once there, Odysseus encountered the soul of the prophet Teiresias, who told him how to reach his home and informed him of the final journey he would make in years to come. Odysseus also saw the spirit of his mother, Anticlea, and the spirits of queens from many ages and lands. He also interviewed the souls of his deceased Greek comrades from the Trojan War, Agamemnon and Achilles. He finally witnessed the spirits of many dead spirits in torment, including Heracles, Tantalus, and Sisyphus. She also warned him to spare the cattle of Helios that reside on the island Thrinacea. His men then navigated the ship through the perilous cliffs inhabited by Scylla, a monstrous beast with six heads that reach down from towering heights, and Charybdis, a disastrous whirlpool. Avoiding Charybdis, the men were victimized by Scylla, who carried off six of their number before the ship was clear of the dangerous passage. When the winds finally died down and the ship set sail, Helios coerced Zeus into punishing the ship. Zeus sent down a lightning bolt which destroyed the ship and all its crew except Odysseus, who floated off on a makeshift raft. He was carried all the way back to Charybdis, where he narrowly avoided death in the whirlpool. The Phaeaceans are pleased with his tale. After

they shower him with gifts that exceed the value of his lost treasure, Odysseus sets out in the magical ships of the Phaeaceans. While Odysseus himself sleeps peacefully on board, the Phaeaceans reach Ithaca in a matter of hours. Without waking him, the Phaeaceans disembark Odysseus and his goods. They return to Scheria, but are turned to stone by Poseidon when they are within sight of their harbor. Odysseus awakens on Ithaca at last, but is unsure of his locale until he meets with Athene, who advises him concerning the situation in his kingdom and transforms him into the shape of an old beggar. Odysseus sets out and meets with Eumaeus the swineherd, who accepts Odysseus as a guest in his shelter and unwittingly reveals his loyalty to his master. Telemachus begs his leave of Menelaus, and returns with Peisistratus to Pylus. Before setting sail to Ithaca, Telemachus is joined by the fugitive prophet, Theoclymenus. After Eumaeus has returned, Telemachus returns to his household and the suitors, who have since abandoned their hope for ambushing their host. Shortly thereafter, Eumaeus and Odysseus head toward the main city. Along the way, they meet with the scurrilous Melanthius the goatherd, who rudely accosts Odysseus. While many of the suitors pity his appearance, some of them abuse him severely. After the suitors return to their homes for the evening, Odysseus and Telemachus hide the armor and weapons that are normally kept in the main hall. The suitors arrive the next day, as do Eumaeus and Philoitiu, an oxherd who has remained loyal to Odysseus. The suitors are soon gripped by a divinely sent, though temporary, hysteria. Theoclymenus, who has returned to the household, interprets this as a foreboding of doom. The fugitive prophet is ignored, however, so he leaves in despair. Telemachus sets up the axe handles, and attempts to string the bow himself, but eventually fails. One by one the suitors attempt to string the bow but with no success. It is at this point that Odysseus pulls Eumaeus and Philoitiu into another room and reveals himself to them. Now part of his conspiracy, the two loyal thralls agree to bar the doors and prepare to arm themselves at the critical moment. Penelope is sent away, and Eumaeus brings Odysseus the bow, much to the disapproval of the suitors. Odysseus quickly strings the bow and shoots through the axe handles. He finally reveals himself to them fully, and begins picking them off one by one with his bow and arrows. Meanwhile, Telemachus, Eumaeus, and Philoitiu arm themselves, and when Odysseus runs out of arrows, he does likewise. However, Melanthius the goatherd sneaks out of the room and starts bringing equipment to the remaining suitors. He is eventually stopped and bound by Eumaeus and Philoitiu, who then rejoin Odysseus and Telemachus in the final battle against the suitors. Odysseus and his allies overcome and slay all the suitors, then execute Melanthius and the bondswomen who were loyal to the suitors. However, she refuses to believe that it is her husband until she craftily tricks him into revealing himself. She then embraces and accepts him, and they are reunited at last. Meanwhile, the souls of the suitors arrive in the Underworld, and there Agamemnon asks them to relate the nature of their deaths. In the morning, Odysseus leaves the palace and visits his father, Laertes. After some delay, Odysseus reveals his identity to his rejoicing father, who brings him and his followers into his house. Odysseus and his companions ready themselves for battle, but the skirmish has only begun when Athene intervenes and stifles any bloodshed. Odysseus then reconciles himself with his enemies and reestablishes himself in the land. By no means are dactyls used exclusively. In fact, the last foot of every line usually ends in either a spondee two stressed syllables or a trochee one stressed syllable followed by one unstressed syllable. Spondees frequently replace dactyls in other parts of certain lines as well. It is easy to follow and meant to be read briskly, unlike much modern poetry which is designed to be read carefully one line at a time. There are a wealth of details in descriptions, unlike other contemporary writings such as the Bible, which are reticent on all details but the most essential. On the other hand, character development over the course of the narrative is minimal; characters are what they are and changes in personality are usually insignificant. Estimated Reading Time There are several excellent translations of the Odyssey in both poetry and prose; two of the most noted modern translations are those by Richmond Lattimore and Robert Fitzgerald. Each Book or chapter of the Odyssey can probably be read in an hour or two, so that a range of 25 to 50 hours span the average reading time of the poem as a whole.

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