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**Literature**  
Teaching Unit  
*Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide*



## The Iliad

by Homer (Fitzgerald Trans.)

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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# Literature Teaching Unit

*Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide*



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## Objectives

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to

1. explain who Homer was, when he lived, and what language and meter he originally wrote in.
2. locate Greece and Troy on a map, and name some points of geographic interest in the poem.
3. summarize the events that led to the Trojan War.
4. describe the principal gods in the poem, and explain the powers of each.
5. identify some defining features of epic poetry, including epic similes, formulaic passages, epithets, “dressing” scenes, invocations to the Muses, catalogs, and dramatic speeches.
6. explain Homer’s use of similes, including similes involving animals, natural forces, and domestic workers.
7. understand the importance of reputation in the culture described by Homer, and relate honor, shame, and memory to one another within the context of the poem.
8. explain the importance of friendship in the poem, and describe some important friendships.
9. describe some of the familial bonds in the poem, and discuss lineage as a motivational factor in war.
10. define the “guest-host relationship,” and state its importance to the poem.
11. explain the significance of armor, including the armor of Greek and Trojan soldiers, Zeus’ “stormcloud shield,” Akhilleus’ original armor, and the shield Hêphaistos makes for Akhilleus.
12. follow the role of omens in the poem, and name a few significant ones.
13. describe the function of ritual and ceremony in the poem, making reference to sacrifices, libations, funeral games, and burial rites.
14. differentiate between Agamémnon and Zeus as leaders, and examine some of the poet’s views on government and power.
15. discuss the role of fate in *The Iliad*, and consider the relationship between fate and the gods.

### Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. What picture does the poet give the reader of mothers in this poem? Compare the parenting strategies of Hêra, Thetis, and Hêkabê.
2. Think of some instances in which men weep. Does crying seem to indicate weakness?
3. Do the Greeks seem to have a “religion,” in the modern sense, or would you classify their relationship to the gods as something else? Give some reasons for your answer.
4. What rewards does Akhilleus offer at the funeral games in Book Twenty-three? Why are they valuable?
5. Nestor often stresses the importance of having a plan. Find some passages in which he says this. Is there ever a time when he feels a plan is not appropriate?
6. Sleep and dreams play an important role in the poem. Find at least three instances in which the action of the poem is advanced through sleep or dreams.
7. Where does the reader see the Graces in this poem? What seems to be their function?
8. Sarpêdôn and the Lykians are always called the “allies” of Troy, not Trojans. The Greeks, who come from many different places, are all “Akhaians.” Why are the forces defending Troy shown as racially heterogeneous?
9. The poet gives the reader background information and genealogy for even minor characters. Give an example of one such genealogy, and think of a reason for it.
10. What is the symbolic function of Hêrâklês in this poem?
11. Find some passages in which the poet notes the time of day or traces the progress of the sun across the sky. Why does he do this?
12. What do the characters say about memory? Find mention of it in at least two speeches/conversations.
13. Young men seem to die in high numbers in this poem. Several times, the poet makes an aside on the tragedy of a dead youth. Find one such aside, and relate it to the poem as a whole.
14. Who was Tydeus? Why is he important to this poem?
15. In addition to the major gods, the poet mentions several personified forces, including Strife, Terror, and Rout. What are the roles of these forces?

# The Iliad

## BOOK ONE

### Quarrel, Oath, and Promise

#### VOCABULARY

**ambrosial** – heavenly; belonging to the gods  
**artificer** – a skilled craftworker  
**benign** – kind, gentle  
**bullock** – a young bull  
**centaurs** – mythical creatures having the head and torso of a man and the body of a horse  
**chines** – cuts of meat containing part of the animal's backbone  
**clamorous** – noisy, loud  
**emulous** – competitive, ambitious  
**execration** – hate, disgust  
**faggots** – bundles of sticks  
**gulled** – tricked, deceived; cheated  
**hekatombs** – large sacrifices performed to appease the gods  
**inexorable** – unstoppable; inescapable  
**infallible** – incapable of error; certain  
**insatiate** – impossible to satisfy  
**insolent** – rude, disrespectful  
**poltroon** – a despicable coward  
**pommel** – a knob on the hilt of a sword  
**portents** – signs, omens  
**propitiatory** – offered in conciliation or appeasement  
**pyres** – piles of wood upon which dead bodies are burned  
**recompense** – to make up for; to compensate  
**renounce** – to give up, to relinquish  
**reproof** – scolding, admonition  
**requital** – compensation, payback  
**ruinous** – very harmful or destructive; disastrous  
**scabbard** – a sheath for a sword  
**sortie** – a raid; a military attack  
**transfixing** – paralyzing

1. Why is the poet asking questions? Whom is he addressing?

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32. What does Zeus do to show Thetis that his promise is serious?

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33. Describe the relationship between Zeus and Hêra. Does Hêra's tone seem to change as she talks with Zeus?

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34. Who breaks the tension on Mount Olympos? What is his relation to Hêra? How does he feel toward her?

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4. How does Aléxandros respond to Hektor?

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5. What idea does Aléxandros have that brings the battle to a halt?

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6. What does Meneláos say in his address to the troops? Do the soldiers agree with Aléxandros' suggestion?

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7. What form does Iris take when she visits Helen? What feeling does she instill in Helen's heart for Meneláos?

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8. Describe the relationship between Helen and Priam.

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9. Whom does Helen first identify for Priam? What does Priam think of this man?

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**BOOK TEN**  
**Night in the Camp: A Foray**

VOCABULARY

adept – skillful  
beseeching – pleading, begging  
bivouac – a temporary camp  
doleful – miserable, unhappy  
fractious – bad-tempered, irritable  
myriad – a great number, a multitude  
patronymic – a name originating from one's father or paternal ancestor  
pilfer – to steal  
quietude – calmness, tranquility  
undeterred – not discouraged or frightened  
unwary – naïve; unaware of possible danger  
vexed – irritated, annoyed  
vigilant – watchful; on the alert  
yearling – a one-year-old animal

1. To what is Agamémnon compared? Why does the poet use this simile?

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2. Where is Agamémnon preparing to go when Meneláos comes upon him? How does Agamémnon greet Meneláos?

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3. Why does Agamémnon think that Zeus has changed his mind?

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