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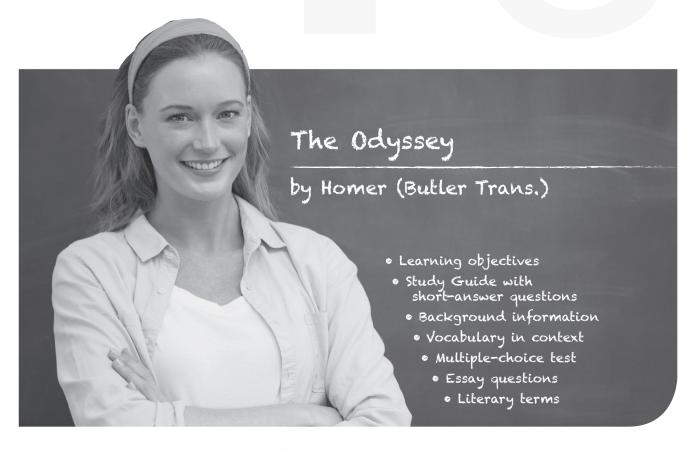
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Literature Teaching Unit Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



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The Odyssey TEACHING UNIT

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

- 1. show how the *Odyssey* fits the defined characteristics of the epic poem and discuss how elements of the *Odyssey* are remnants of its oral tradition, such as:
 - the use of epithets
 - recitation of lineage
 - the use of in medias res
- 2. define and cite instances of the following literary terms:
 - allusion
 - anthropomorphism
 - black humor
 - conflict
 - deus ex machina
 - digression
 - epic simile
 - epithet
 - flat or static character
 - foreshadowing
 - in medias res
 - irony
 - omen
 - parable
 - paradox
 - round or dynamic character
 - symbol
- 3. discuss the omniscient narrator and how it works in the *Odyssey*.
- 4. recognize and point out instances of dramatic irony in the *Odyssey*.
- 5. discuss the ancient Greek notions of fate and omens.
- 6. identify the following gods, and discuss their roles in the *Odyssey*:
 - Zeus
 - Athena
 - Poseidon
 - Hermes
 - Apollo

3 OBJECTIVES

The Odyssey TEACHING UNIT

Questions for Discussion and Essay

1. Discuss the literary techniques of *in medias res* and *digression* as they apply to the *Odyssey*. Why are these methods of narration effective in the *Odyssey*? What is added to the story by the use of these techniques?

- 2. What characteristics define epic and modern heroes? How are they different? How does Odysseus display the characteristics of an epic hero?
- 3. There are repeated references to the fate of Agamemnon in the story. What significance does the prevalence of Agamemnon's tale have to the story of Odysseus?
- 4. Discuss the character of Penelope. Is she always loyal to Odysseus? What circumstances of ancient Greek society make it difficult for her to be completely loyal?
- 5. Discuss the ethics of the *Odyssey* and how they differ from ethics typically accepted in modern society. How are cunning and deception looked at in the *Odyssey*? How are stealing and using one's power to take advantage of others looked upon in the *Odyssey*?
- 6. Discuss both the positive and negative attributes of the Greek gods. How does the ancient Greek concept of godliness differ from the modern one? What differences exist between the powers of male and female gods?
- 7. Discuss Odysseus' values. How do they differ from modern values? Is Odysseus a loyal husband to Penelope? Is Odysseus a faithful commander to his crew? What choices does Odysseus make that seem to inhibit or contradict his stated priority of making it home?
- 8. Characters are described as static (flat) or dynamic (round). Identify the major characters in the *Odyssey* according to these characterizations and justify your distinctions.
- 9. Present a brief biography of Homer, and discuss his treatment of minstrels in *The Odyssey*.
- 10. Discuss the roles of women in ancient Greek society. How are women portrayed in the story?
- 11. Using the Phaeacians and the Cyclopes as examples, discuss the ancient Greek notion of hospitality. Discuss some possible reasons for this elevated notion of hospitality as it applied to ancient Greek society at large.
- 12. Define oral tradition. Why were stories repeated in ancient societies? What are the practical values of this tradition? How do epithets, recitation of lineage, and repetition become important within the oral tradition? What is the importance of dramatic irony and humor?

The Odyssey STUDENT COPY

Whe	ere is Odysseus at the beginning of the story? What has become of his men?
Whe	en the gods adjourn for council, what is preoccupying Zeus?
Why	y does Poseidon hold a grudge against Odysseus even though the other gods favor him?
Whe	ere is Poseidon when the gods at council decide to help Odysseus to return home?
	y does Zeus reason that Poseidon will be pacified that the gods have decided to help esseus reach his home?
Wha	at two actions does Athena deem should be taken on Odysseus' behalf?
Why	y does Athena want Telemachus to go out in search of news of his father?

The Odyssey STUDENT COPY

	called since before Odysseus left for Troy, which was almost twenty years ago reasons does Telemachus justify his calling for an assembly of the councilors
	Telemachus is making his pleas to the council for help in ridding him of the s, to what social customs does he appeal?
that T	ous, speaking on behalf of the suitors, makes a case for their innocence and selemachus' mother, Penelope, is to blame for her son's misfortunes. How does ous make his case against Penelope?
moth	ous offers Telemachus a solution to his problem by suggesting that he send her away to her father's house, and let her father choose the man she will maridoes Telemachus say he cannot do this?
How o	does the prophet Halitherses interpret the omen of the eagles that fly over the bly?

The Odyssey STUDENT COPY

Book V

VOCABULARY

adze - a tool used to cut wood astride – sitting atop augers - drills bliss – joy bounteous – generous, fruitful **calamities** – disasters cormorant - a predatory bird found near the sea deemed - thought dismay – sorrow harbinger – an omen, sign keel - the bottom of a boat raiment - clothing reek – odor reeled – turned violently **squally** – stormy, rainy transgress – to disobey trident – a long, three-pronged fork (symbol of Poseidon)

In making her case for the gods to help Odysseus return home to avenge his house, what literary device does Athena make use of? Cite the example from the text and explain the literal meaning.
What human emotion does Calypso accuse the gods of for making her free Odysseu What ancient Greek notion about the gods does this accusation illustrate? Is this an example of anthropomorphism? Why or why not?
Why does Calypso agree to free Odysseus, despite her objections?

13 STUDY GUIDE