

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

PLOT SUMMARY

A Greek hero returns to his home and family after 20 years of imprisonment and wandering. .

BACKGROUND Odysseus, King of Ithaca, has been away from home for 20 years-10 years fighting in the Trojan War and 10 years wandering. For the last seven years, he has been held captive by the goddess Calypso on her island. In Ithaca, his wife, Penelope, remains faithful and clings to her belief that he is still alive, but she is being courted by a group of men-the suitors-who have forced their attentions on her and are living on Odysseus's wealth. Each of them wants to marry her, but she refuses to make a choice, confident that Odysseus will soon return. She and her son Telemachus are powerless to get rid of them.

Tell the Story – invocation (890)

1. Who are the muses?
2. Who is the “man skilled in all ways of contending” – the protagonist of the story we are about to read?
3. What happened to Odysseus’ men on the way home? (lines 10-15)
4. Which god does not pity Odysseus?
5. What is he/she the god of?
6. Why do you think this might be a problem for Odysseus?

BOOKS 1-4 Athena, goddess of wisdom, asks her father, Zeus, king of the gods, to allow Odysseus to return home, despite the sea god Poseidon's grudge against Odysseus for having blinded his son.

Important information not included in your Book 1 excerpt:

In the hall of **Zeus** on **Mount Olympus**, all the gods but Poseidon gather and listen as Zeus reflects upon the moral failings of mortal men. He brings up the example of **Aegisthus**, who killed **Agamemnon** and stole his wife **Clytemnestra**, though the gods warned him that **Agamemnon's son, Orestes**, would someday retaliate - which he justly did. *As you read, think about how Telemachus, Odysseus’s son, is placed in a position similar to that of Orestes. Will Telemachus react in the same manner as Orestes? Will Odysseus’s wife Penelope betray her husband?*

When Zeus agrees, Athena disguises herself as a mortal stranger and visits Telemachus. He receives her kindly despite the suitors' rudeness. On her advice, he protests the suitors' behavior, but the suitors refuse to leave Odysseus's house. Now disguised as Mentor, an old friend of Odysseus, Athena urges Telemachus to visit the neighboring kingdoms in search of news of Odysseus.

Important information not included in your Book 2 excerpt:

During the assembly, **Zeus** sends two **eagles—omens of death**—to fly over the suitors. **Halitherses**, a prophet, interprets the eagles that fly over the assembly by saying Odysseus is coming home and

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

“The Odyssey.” *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. “The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions.” *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey/>>.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

Odysseus will kill those who disrespect his house. The suitors say Halitherses' omen means nothing.

Telemachus says if he learns his father is alive and on his way home, he will put up with the suitors for another 12 months. If Telemachus learns his father is dead, he will honor his father with a funeral and force his mother to marry one of the suitors. *What power do sons have over their mothers ?*

On this journey he visits the aged Nestor in Pylos, and Menelaus in Sparta, both of whom were Odysseus's allies in the Trojan War. Menelaus has heard that Odysseus is being kept captive by Calypso. Telemachus, who exhibits a growing intelligence and maturity on his journey, must turn homeward with only vague information about his father. Meanwhile, the suitors plan to ambush and kill Telemachus, and Penelope has no way of warning him.

Another way to look at Book 3 excerpt: After they eat, **Telemachus** tells **Nestor**, who fought alongside and was a great friend to **Odysseus** during the **Trojan War**, that he is seeking information about his father. Nestor does not know what befell Odysseus. After Ilium (**Troy**) fell, **Athena** provoked a fight between the **brothers Menelaus and Agamemnon** and divided the **Achaean/Greeks** into two camps; those under command of Menelaus left, while the latter stayed. Odysseus left, but he and his crew soon returned to please Agamemnon. Nestor and his crew made it back home, as did a few other groups, but many did not. Telemachus asks Nestor how **Aegisthus** managed to **kill Agamemnon**. Nestor says that while **Agamemnon and Menelaus** were away fighting, **Aegisthus** eventually won over **Agamemnon's queen, Clytemnestra**. He ruled over Agamemnon's kingdom as a tyrant for seven years before **Orestes killed him and Clytemnestra**. Nestor warns **Telemachus** not to make the same mistake and stay away from home too long.

More information about Book 4:

The next morning, **Telemachus** tells **Menelaus** about his problems with the suitors and asks if he has news of **Odysseus**. The king is disgusted at the behavior of the suitors and hopes **Odysseus** can mete out their punishment. He tells of how, on his return from **Troy**, his men were stranded on an island without any wind. They managed to capture **Proteus**, the Ancient of the Sea. **Proteus** told them that if they made a sacrifice to the gods, they could continue home. He also told him about **Agamemnon's murder**, and that **Odysseus is a prisoner on Calypso's island**.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

Calypso, The Sweet Nymph – from book 5 (891-892)

1. Which goddess has helped and supported Odysseus?
2. What does the goddess (answer from above) do as of her father Zeus?
3. What does Calypso promise Odysseus if he stays with her?
4. Who is Hermes?
5. Why does Calypso recognize Hermes?
6. Where is Odysseus when Hermes finds him? What is he doing?
7. What does Odysseus do at night? Why? (lines 80-85)
8. What does he do during the day? Why?
9. According to Odysseus, how does Calypso compare to his wife?
10. Who destroyed Odysseus' raft after he set sail from Calypso?
11. Where does Odysseus land?
12. What does he do once he lands?

BOOKS 5-8 Zeus orders Calypso to release Odysseus. When Odysseus has been at sea for 18 days, near Phaeacia, Poseidon sends a storm that nearly drowns him. But he swims ashore and the Phaeacian princess Nausicaa sends him to her parents. Odysseus arrives at the prosperous home of King Alcinous and Queen Arete, and asks them for transport home. They agree to help him, and the next day give a banquet in Odysseus's honor. He is moved to tears by the songs they sing of the Trojan War, and when Alcinous sees his tears, he asks Odysseus to tell his own story.

Book 7 Summary: (Book 7 was omitted from your reading. Read the summary below)

After he waits for **Nausicaa** to go to her father's palace, **Odysseus** makes his way alone and encounters **Athena in the form of a little girl**. He asks her for directions to the palace, and she leads him there while shrouding him in mist so no one can see him. She tells him **Alcinous** and his revered **queen Arete** are at supper. He enters the lush, ornate palace and finds the king and queen. He embraces Arête's knees and asks her for passage to his home. Alcinous leads Odysseus to the table, where he is fed. Alcinous says they will make a sacrifice in the morning, then think of how to send Odysseus home. He also wonders if Odysseus is a god; Odysseus assures him he is not, and that he has suffered great pains.

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

"The Odyssey." *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. "The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions." *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey/>>.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

Later at night, alone with Alcinous and Odysseus, Arete recognizes Odysseus' clothing as her own creation and asks him who he is and who gave him his clothing. He relates his story from **Calypso's island** until **Nausicaa's** help earlier that day. Alcinous says Nausicaa should have taken him home with her directly, but Odysseus says it was his idea to follow her separately as a sign of respect. Taken with Odysseus, Alcinous vows to help him get home.

Important information not included in your Book 8 Excerpt

Demodocus sings a few songs at the banquet—not just the one you read about. The various songs-within-the-poem cast light on identity and themes in this book, as interior texts frequently do throughout *The Odyssey*. The slow revelation of Odysseus' identity emerges through the first and last songs as he betrays his intimate familiarity with the fate of those who died at **Troy**. The middle song about **Ares and Aphrodite** is yet another tale of adultery and comeuppance (the one previously used was about Orestes), and should have great relevance for Odysseus, who has been unfaithful to his wife and whose wife is perilously close to being unfaithful to him. In this song, Demodocus sings about a love affair between **Ares and Aphrodite**, which ended when **Hephaestus**, **Aphrodite's** husband, figured out they were having an affair, and forged chains and snared them when they went to bed together. **Hephaestus** then invited the other gods to witness the adulterers caught in the act; however, the other gods made fun of **Hephaestus** for not being able to keep his wife. Ironically, Odysseus enjoys the story.

BOOKS 9-12 Odysseus relates what happened to him after the Trojan War. When he and his men had left Troy, they came upon many strange creatures and places; the Kikones, whose town they sacked; the Lotus-Eaters and the Cyclopes (the plural of *Cyclops*, a one-eyed, man-eating monster); Aiolos, king of the winds; the monstrous Laistrygones, who destroyed all but one of the Trojan ships; the enchantress Circe; the underworld; the deadly Sirens, who tried to lure them to destruction with their seductive music; the monster Scylla and the treacherous whirlpool Charybdis; and finally the island of the sun god Helios. The three most important adventures were the encounters with the Cyclopes and Circe, and the voyage to the underworld. Odysseus tells his listeners what happened on each occasion.

On the Cyclopes' rich, primitive island, a curious Odysseus, seeking guest gifts, led his men to the cave of the Cyclops named Polyphemus and told him his name was Nobody. To Odysseus's horror, the Cyclops imprisoned them and ate several of Odysseus's men for dinner. In order to escape, Odysseus got the Cyclops drunk and blinded him. The Cyclops called for help and screamed out, "Nobody is killing me!" The men escaped, but in defiance Odysseus shouted out his real name as he sailed away. Polyphemus cursed him, and Poseidon, the Cyclops's father, prevented Odysseus from returning home for eight more years.

Odysseus's single remaining ship landed in Aea. He sent some men out to explore the island, but they were turned into pigs by the enchantress Circe. After winning the men's release, Odysseus became Circe's lover for a year. When the men insisted on leaving, Circe told Odysseus he must first visit the underworld, the home of the dead. With Circe's help, Odysseus reached the underworld, where he saw Agamemnon (leader of the Greeks in the Trojan War), and where the prophet Tiresias predicted Odysseus's homecoming and future trials. When they reached the island of Helios, Odysseus's men ate sacred cattle and Zeus punished them by destroying their ship. Odysseus, clinging to the mast, was almost sucked into the whirlpool Charybdis, but finally the pool reversed itself and Odysseus escaped.

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

"The Odyssey." *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. "The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions." *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey/>>.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

I am Laertes' Son – from book 9 (895-898)

1. Who is Odysseus' father?
2. Where is Odysseus home?
3. Aside from Calypso, what other female character detained Odysseus?
4. Who is Illion?

The Lotus Eaters – from book 9 (898)

1. Why did Odysseus and his men come to the land of the Lotus Eaters?
2. How many of Odysseus' men ate the Lotus Flower?
3. What effect did it have on them?
4. How did Odysseus get his men back on the ship?

The Cyclops – from book 9 (899-907)

1. Why is Odysseus the cleverest of the Greek heroes?
2. Why was Odysseus at the Cyclopes Cave?
3. Based on the Cyclops evening chores, what seems to be his occupation?
4. What request does Odysseus make of the Cyclopes?
5. How does the Cyclops respond?
6. How does Odysseus answer the question about his ship?
7. Why didn't Odysseus stab the Cyclops in the liver?
8. What caused the Cyclops to become fuddled and fluchsed?
9. Odysseus told the Cyclops his name was? _____
10. What gift did the Cyclops give Odysseus?

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

"The Odyssey." *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. "The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions." *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey/>>.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

11. What actions did Odysseus and his men now take to hurt the Cyclops?
12. Why did Polyphemus receive no help from the other Cyclopes that gathered outside of his cave?
13. How did Odysseus get his men out of the Cyclops' cave?
14. Once Odysseus was on his ship, what did he do?
15. How did the Cyclops respond?
16. What information did Odysseus want the Cyclops to know?
17. Who did Polyphemus pray to?
18. What was the Cyclops' curse?

The Witch Circe – from book 10 (911-913)

1. How does Odysseus' crew interfere with the help he receives from Aeolus?
2. Who are the Laestrygonians?
3. How many of Odysseus' men die at the hand of the Laestrygonians?
4. What lay outside Circe's hall?
5. After the men drank Circe's wine, they turned into _____
6. How does Odysseus resist Circe's power?
7. How does Odysseus get Circe to free his men?
8. Before Odysseus can travel further on his journey home, Circe says he must travel where?
9. Who will Odysseus meet when he travels there?

The Land of the Dead – from book 11 (914-915)

1. Odysseus consults Teiresias to find out his _____
2. Describe Teiresias:

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

"The Odyssey." *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. "The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions." *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey/>>.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers as you read. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

3. What rites did Odysseus perform so Teiresias would speak to him?
4. Why is Odysseus going to have a rough journey home?
5. What does Teiresias tell Odysseus about Trnakia and Helios' cattle?
6. What will happen when Odysseus comes home?
7. What will happen to Odysseus when he is "weariest out rich with old age"?

The Sirens; Scylla and Charybdis – from book 12 (916-922)

1. Who is warning Odysseus of the danger's ahead?
2. What is dangerous about the Sirens?
3. If Odysseus wants to hear the Sirens, what is he supposed to do?
4. What is Scylla and what danger does she present?
5. What is Charybdis and what danger does she present?
6. What advice of Odysseus given about Scylla and Charybdis?
7. How did Odysseus prepare himself to confront Scylla?
8. Why didn't they see Scylla strike?

The Cattle of the Sun god – from book 12 (922-924)

1. What orders did the crew disobey? Why did they disobey?
2. How were they punished?
3. What then happened to Odysseus?

Part Two: Coming Home – from book 13 (928)

1. Why does Athena advise Odysseus to come home disguised as a beggar?
2. Who is Eumaeus?

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

"The Odyssey." *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. "The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions." *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey/>>.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

3. How does Athena help Telemachus?

BOOKS 13-16 After hearing his story, the Phaeacians escort Odysseus to Ithaca and leave him there with many gifts. During the Phaeacians' trip home, their ships are turned to stone by Poseidon as their punishment for helping the man who had blinded his son (Cyclops). Athena reveals herself to Odysseus for the first time in nine years and tells him news of Ithaca. Odysseus, disguised by Athena as an old beggar, visits his loyal herdsman, Eumaios, at his farm in the hills and learns more about the situation at home. Meanwhile, Telemachus leaves Sparta, joined by the prophet Theoklymenos. Eluding the suitors' ambush, he visits Eumaios and, at Athena's prompting, Odysseus reveals himself to Telemachus. At first the son is suspicious, but is soon reassured. Together they plan to hide the suitors' weapons, then attack them. Meanwhile, the suitors discover Telemachus's safe return and reaffirm their plans to marry Penelope soon.

Book 14 Summary: (Book 14 was omitted from your reading. Read the summary below)

At his forest hut, **Odysseus, disguised as a beggar**, meets **his old swineherd, Eumaeus**. Eumaeus gives him dinner and tells him about the suitors and his dead lord, Odysseus. Odysseus promises him that his lord will return and seek vengeance against the suitors. Eumaeus, who hates the suitors and misses Odysseus dearly, tells him that the suitors are going to ambush **Telemachus** upon his return. When pressed for his background, Odysseus spins a yarn about growing up on Crete, fighting in the Trojan War, gaining his fortune in Egypt, and being enslaved and made the beggar he is now. During his adventures he heard that Odysseus was still alive, though Eumaeus is skeptical. Odysseus sleeps in the hut while Eumaeus faithfully tends to his lord's herd.

Odysseus displays his gifts for disguise (albeit aided by Athena) and improvisation (lying) in his encounter with Eumaeus. Just as he did in the famous Trojan horse story, Odysseus must secretly "invade" a city - this time his own - under wraps, and he must maintain this air of secrecy no matter

what. His ability to weave spontaneous stories is exceptional, and this story even has some parallels to his own. He speaks of the greed of his crew, and we have seen evidence of greed in his men when they opened the bag of winds and sacrificed the oxen of Helios, and the story of his enslavement is not far off from what the suitors are attempting to do.

Odysseus' lying to Eumaeus may seem somewhat unnecessary, but he must test the loyalty of his old swineherd if he is to execute the suitors as planned. He can trust few people, but Eumaeus' overwhelming loyalty - he forgoes sleep to take care of Odysseus' herd, and he even treats the "beggar" as if he were, indeed, his lord - proves that he will be a strong ally. **Homer** reminds us of **Telemachus'** return and the impending ambush by the suitors, creating suspense in this otherwise transitional episode.

Book 15 Summary: (Book 15 was omitted from your reading. Read the summary below)

Athena finds **Telemachus** in **Lacedaemon** and urges him to return home lest his mother marry one of the suitors, **Eurymachus**. She also warns him of the looming ambush, and tells him to find **Eumaeus** and have him deliver the message to **Penelope** that he has returned. Telemachus receives permission from Menelaus to leave and, his cart laden with gifts from his hosts, rides off with **Peisistratus**, **Nestor's son**, but not before an **eagle** flies off with a goose in its clutches. **Helen** interprets this as a sign that **Odysseus** will soon return to seek vengeance on the suitors. The symbolic depiction of Odysseus as

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

"The Odyssey." *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. "The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions." *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey/>>.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

a bird of prey fits with his persona: while not a cold-blooded killer, Odysseus acts swiftly and with keen foresight.

Back at **Pylos**, **Telemachus** prepares to sail home with his crew. **Theoklymenos, the son of a prophet and a fugitive for a murder he committed in his homeland**, asks for and receives a place on Telemachus' ship. They sail through the night, wind-aided by Athena.

Back in **Ithaca**, **Odysseus** tries to get **Eumaeus** to invite him to stay longer by announcing he will leave in the morning and look for work with the suitors. Eumaeus refuses, insisting he stay until **Telemachus** returns. Odysseus asks about his parents, and Eumaeus tells him about the death of Odysseus' mother and the loneliness of his father, **Laertes**. **Eumaeus** then relates his life story: abducted by pirates, Laertes purchased him, and Odysseus' mother raised him as if he were her own son.

The men talk into the night; meanwhile, **Telemachus lands**, having safely avoided the ambush. Nearby, a hawk picks up a dove, and Theoklymenos sees this as a sign that Telemachus' family will stay in power forever. Telemachus sends his guest home with a shipmate and goes off on his own to meet Eumaeus. Telemachus has completed his mini-odyssey, growing up from a powerless boy at the beginning of the poem to an independent young man ready to fight alongside his father.

The Meeting of Father and Son – from book 16 (929-931)

1. Describe the scene when Odysseus and Telemachus meet for the first time. Do they know each other?
2. How does Telemachus treat the beggar?
3. After Athena removes the beggar's disguise, Telemachus assumes he must be a

BOOKS 17-19 Telemachus visits Penelope while Odysseus, dressed as a beggar, approaches the palace with Eumaios. On the way, the men are abused by the evil servant Melanthius. At the palace, Argos, Odysseus's ancient hunting dog, recognizes him, then dies. Saddened, yet hiding his feelings, Odysseus enters the hall. Telemachus presides over the evening's feast and honors the disguised Odysseus despite the suitors' rudeness to him. Odysseus begs from the suitors, testing their character. Penelope, who has heard from Eumaios that a stranger is visiting, dresses beautifully and appears in the hall, winning compliments and gifts from the suitors. Odysseus is pleased with her beauty and cleverness in winning gifts. It is his first sight of her in 20 years.

Later, Penelope and Odysseus talk while Telemachus removes the suitors' weapons from the hall. She tells this "beggar" how she has delayed the suitors for three years. She has told them that she would marry one of them when she finished making a funeral shroud for her father-in-law, Laertes. She "rove it by day and unraveled it at night. The beggar gives her hopeful news of Odysseus, and a grateful Penelope, not daring to believe him, sends his old nurse, Eurykleia, to bathe him. Eurykleia recognizes Odysseus by a scar on his leg, but Odysseus swears her to secrecy. Later, Penelope tells him about a dream she has had: an eagle killed her 20 geese, and the stranger says this is an omen of Odysseus's return and the suitors' deaths. She proposes a contest: she will marry the suitor who can string Odysseus's bow and shoot an arrow through 12 axheads. Odysseus approves her plan.

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

"The Odyssey." *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. "The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions." *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey/>>.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

The Beggar and the Faithful Dog – from book 17 (932-933)

1. Who is Eurycleia?
2. Where is Argos when he recognizes his master? Why is he there?
3. How is the beggar treated by the suitors?
4. What does the beggar describe for Penelope?
5. How does Eurycleia recognize Odysseus?
6. Why is Penelope unaware that Eurycleia has recognized Odysseus?

Book 18 Summary: (Book 18 was omitted from your reading. Read the summary below)

An actual beggar, Iros, enters the palace and violently orders **Odysseus** to leave. Odysseus tries to calm him down, but Iros challenges him to a fight. **Antinous** overhears the squabble and gathers the suitors to watch, promising a goat stomach and unlimited access to meals at the palace from now on to the victor. After ensuring that none of the suitors will strike him when he is not looking, Odysseus' strong body, with aid from **Athena**, intimidates Iros. Odysseus makes short work of him and takes him outside. The suitors congratulate Odysseus “the beggar” and reward him with food. Odysseus warns them that the lord of the house will return soon and win his revenge through blood. The suitor Amphinomos, knowing he will die, tries to leave, but Athena makes sure he stays.

Athena influences **Penelope** to make an appearance before the suitors, first beautifying her through her powers. Penelope comes downstairs and privately rebukes **Telemachus** for allowing such abuse of the stranger. He tells her he had no option with the suitors and informs her of the beggar's one-sided fight with Iros. She laments Odysseus' absence and recalls his directions when he departed for Troy to remarry once Telemachus has grown up, but she finds the suitors despicable. **Odysseus** happily hears this, as does **Antinous**, who insists that they will not leave until she marries one of them. The suitors bring her gifts, and she returns upstairs with them.

The suitors revel the rest of the night, and **Odysseus** tells the housemaids to attend to **Penelope**; he will look after the **suitors**. One of them, **Melantho**, who was raised by Penelope but does little to return her affection, **insults Odysseus**. He threatens retribution from **Telemachus** for her remarks, and she and the others leave. **Eurymachus** hurls a number of jokes at Odysseus' expense. Odysseus again foretells the lord of the manor's vengeful return. **Eurymachus** throws his stool, but Odysseus ducks. The suitors believe they are wasting their efforts on this beggar, and Telemachus gently encourages them to retire for the evening. This irritates them, but Amphinomos directs them to have one more drink before bed.

Book 19 Note:

In her heart **Penelope** believes **Odysseus** to be dead and that the “beggar” is a beggar. Penelope asks Odysseus to interpret a dream she has had about an eagle who preys on geese near her house; then the eagle talks to her and says the geese were the suitors and he is Odysseus. **What do you think the dream foreshadows?**

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

“The Odyssey.” *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. “The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions.” *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey/>>.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

BOOKS 20-21 Odysseus and Penelope sleep fitfully. He awakens in the night and receives an omen of his success. The next day, Telemachus keeps Odysseus in a place of honor and snubs the suitors. When Penelope orders the bow contest, the suitors struggle futilely to string the bow. Odysseus reveals his identity to Eumaios and tells of his plans. Penelope insists that the beggar be allowed to try the bow. Telemachus agrees but sends Penelope from the hall and orders Eurykleia to bar the doors. Effortlessly, Odysseus strings the bow and shoots the arrow through the axheads.

Book 20 Summary: (Book 20 was omitted from your reading. Read the summary below) As **Odysseus** lies awake on the ground, he restrains himself from killing the suitors, who cavort with women in their own beds. He asks **Athena**, who appears near him, how he alone can defeat them; she assures him that he will be fine with her protection, and sends him to sleep. Upstairs, **Penelope** is also sleepless and prays to Artemis to make her die. Her cries wake Odysseus, who prays to **Zeus** to give him a sign that he helped bring him home. Zeus sends down a peal of thunder, and one of Odysseus' maids takes it as a sign from Zeus and asks that this be the suitors' last day. Odysseus is encouraged.

Telemachus awakens and the house springs to life. Outside, **Melanthios** again belittles **Odysseus**, who resists fighting back. The cattle foreman, **Philotios**, extends a warm welcome to the beggar and says his appearance reminds him of his lord Odysseus. The suitors make excessive demands on his cattle and he is agonizing over whether to relocate, but Odysseus promises that his lord will return and vanquish the suitors. Meanwhile, **the suitors plot to kill Telemachus**, but the passing of an **eagle** with a rockdove in its grip causes Amphinomos to abort the plan. A feast ensues, and **Telemachus** seats his father and demands that the suitors leave him alone. Yet **Athena** allows the abuse of Odysseus to resume, and one, Ktesippos, throws a cow's foot at him and misses. Telemachus threatens him and the rest of the suitors with strong words. They agree not to touch the beggar anymore, but insist that Odysseus is dead and it is time for **Penelope** to choose a husband. Telemachus says he cannot force his mother to marry when she does not want to; the suitors laugh uproariously. The **prophet Theoklymenos** sees the animal blood streaming from their mouths as signs of death for them, but they laugh it off.

The supernatural controls nearly everything in the world of *The Odyssey*. Not only does Athena vow to protect Odysseus against the suitors, she even determines the suitors' taunting of Odysseus and their laughter at the end of the episode. It is becoming clear that she creates these extra problems for Odysseus both to test his patience and to portray the suitors as extremely despicable. ***Why do you think it is important that the audience despise the suitors?***

The Test of the Great Bow – from book 21 (936-940)

1. Describe the contest Penelope devised to decide who she will marry (2 parts):
2. How did Odysseus test the swineherd and the cowherd?
3. Why did Odysseus reveal himself to them?
4. Who was the only one who could pass the test of the bow?
5. Where were the women during this scene?

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

"The Odyssey." *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. "The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions." *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey/>>.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

6. Where were the suitor's weapons?

Death at the Palace – from book 22 (941-943)

1. Which suitor is slain first?
2. How did the other suitors respond to this act?
3. What did Eurymachus offer to Odysseus?
4. Why were the suitors unable to defend themselves?

Odysseus and Penelope – from book 23 (944-947)

1. Why did Penelope test Odysseus?
2. What did Athena lavish on Odysseus?
3. What did Penelope tell Eurycleia to do in order to test Odysseus?
4. Why, according to Odysseus was this impossible?
5. So what was Penelope and Odysseus' secret sign?
6. The journey ends with an embrace. What simile helps you understand the joy Odysseus feels in the arms of his wife?

BOOKS 22-23 With Athena's help, Odysseus, Telemachus, and the two herdsmen kill all of the suitors, capture and kill Melanthius, force the 10 treacherous serving women to move the bodies and clean the hall-then they hang them while a singer plays wedding music to fool passers-by. Meanwhile, Eurycleia tells Penelope that Odysseus is home. When he appears, bathed, dressed, and made more handsome by Athena, Penelope refuses to believe he is truly her husband. Instead, she orders servants to bring outside the bed that Odysseus himself made. Odysseus, deeply hurt, asks if someone has harmed the bed since it has a living olive tree as a bedpost and is impossible to move. This convinces her that he is Odysseus, and she joyfully takes him to bed, where they make love all night.

BOOK 24 Odysseus goes to the farm where his father lives in poverty and the two have a happy reunion. Meanwhile, the suitors' families prepare to take revenge on Odysseus. Fighting breaks out, but Athena appears and makes peace between Odysseus and the Ithacan nobles.

Important information from Book 24 excerpt:

Hermes leads the suitors - who squeal like bats - into **Hades**, where they encounter the **ghosts of Achilles and Agamemnon**. The **suitor Amphimedon** explains their fate/deaths to **Agamemnon**, who compares his deceitful, murderous wife **Clytemnestra** to the faithful steadfastness of **Penelope**.

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

"The Odyssey." *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. "The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions." *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey/>>.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

Back in town, the **goddess Rumor** shares word of the suitors' defeat. The townspeople take away the bodies and bury them, then meet together. Half of the townspeople, led by **Eupeithes, father of Antinous**, want vengeance for the deaths of their sons, while others realize that a god was on Odysseus' side and argue that their sons deserved their fates. Eupeithes leads the former camp to **Laertes' house**, but **Athena, disguised as Mentor**, incites Laertes to hurl his spear at Eupeithes. Odysseus and his comrades begin killing the others, but Athena stops them and declares a truce between the warring parties.

The audience learns of **Odysseus'** failure to carry out **Teiresias'** instructions to make a sacrifice to Poseidon. *Why do you think Odysseus does not sacrifice to Poseidon?*

The tidy resolution underscores a **final theme: the power of the gods. It is the gods who decide the fate of the humans, the gods who can declare war, and the gods who can make peace.** The closest the Greeks came to the gods, one could argue, was through their writers - for they, too, had complete control over their characters, and none had it more so than Homer

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers *as you read*. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

"The Odyssey." *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. "The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions." *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey>>.

The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name _____

Block: _____

Note: You must fill in the answers as you read. Some answers may only be a few words in length.

UNIT EXAM: *The Odyssey*- Review sheet

Character Identification:

Odysseus

Penelope

Telemachus

Eurykleia

Polyphemus

Eumaios

Zeus

Poseidon

Suitors

Circe

Calypso

Sirens

Scylla and Charybdis

Helios

Athena

Ailos

I. Multiple Choice. Choose the best answer. (2 points each; 50% of total)

16. Odysseus wants to get home to_____.

17. Calypso tells Odysseus that he is free to leave her island because:

18. After Odysseus' men eat the lotus plant, they:

19. Why does Odysseus blind Polyphemus rather than kill him?

20. Odysseus saves his crew from the Sirens' song by:

21. Odysseus does not warn his crew about Scylla because he thinks they would:

22. What prophecy of Teiresias and Circe does Odysseus withhold from his men?

23. When Odysseus returns home, he is disguised as a

24. When Telemachus does not recognize his father is an example of what?

25. What difficult task does Penelope propose for her suitors?

26. Who joins Odysseus in his fight against the suitors?

27. Telemachus executes the maids because they have:

28. How does Odysseus prove his identity to Penelope?

II. Vocabulary

Odyssey vocab

a. very unpleasantly - abominably

b. passion - ardor

c. destroy violently - ravage

d. repayment - restitution

e. trembling - tremulous

f. glared - glowered

g. flexible - pliant

h. awe-inspiring - formidable

i. bitter hate - rancor

j. wise - sage

k. tumult - commotion

l. Abundance - profusion

m. secret action - stealth

n. decorate - adorn

o. scornful - disdainful

p. gave generously - lavished

q. Hardships - adversities

r. merrymaking - revelry

s. adversary - enemy

t. aloof - unfriendly

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: MetroBooks, 2000. Print.

"The Odyssey." *Shmoop - We Speak Student*. Shmoop University, Inc., n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Salona, Erin. "The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions." *Odyssey*. Carmel Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/teachers/esalona1/Odyssey/>>.

III. Literary Element: Epic (*extra credit – 1 point each*) Choose the best answer.

According to The Elements of Literature

“**Epics** are long narrative poems that tell of the adventures of heroes who in some way embody the values of their civilizations....The Odyssey is the primary model for the epic of the long journey. “ Modern epics include The Hobbit, Harry Potter, Star Wars and even Forrest Gump. ((878-879). In epic poetry, the poet often begins by asking for assistance in telling the story. This epic convention is known as the invocation.

Epic. An extended narrative poem recounting actions, travels, adventures, and heroic episodes and written in a high style (with ennobled diction, for example). It may be written in hexameter verse, especially dactylic hexameter, and it may have twelve books or twenty four books. Characteristics of the classical epic include these:

- The main character or protagonist is heroically larger than life, often the source and subject of legend or a national hero
- The deeds of the hero are presented without favoritism, revealing his failings as well as his virtues
- The action, often in battle, reveals the more-than-human strength of the heroes as they engage in acts of heroism and courage
- The setting covers several nations, the whole world, or even the universe
- The episodes, even though they may be fictional, provide an explanation for some of the circumstances or events in the history of a nation or people
- The gods and lesser divinities play an active role in the outcome of actions
- All of the various adventures form an organic whole, where each event relates in some way to the central theme

“**Myths** are stories that use fantasy to express ideas about life that cannot be expressed easily in realistic terms. Myths are essentially religious because they are concerned with the relationship between human beings and the unknown or spiritual realm” (882).

“In a **figure of speech**, a writer compares one thing to something else, something quite different from it in all but a few important ways. For example, Homer compares the army of the Cicones to the ‘leaves and the blades of spring’ (lines 163-164). He is saying that the enemy soldiers suddenly appeared every everywhere” (927)Characteristic of an epic hero, Odysseus tells Polyphemus that his name is "Nohbdy."

In Part Two of *The Odyssey*, Odysseus exhibits the traits of an epic hero by stringing the bow.All of the following are themes of *The Odyssey*: loyalty to family and friends, overcoming obstacles, the relationship between humans and god.

An example of dramatic irony (where the audience has knowledge that gives additional meaning to a character's words) would be when King Oedipus, who has unknowingly killed his father, says that he will banish his father's killer when he finds himLiterary terms courtesy of:

Harris, Robert. A Glossary of Literary Terms, Literary Salt, <http://www.virtualsalt.com/litterms.htm>. version 11 October 2008. accessed 1 January 2009.

Sime, Richard, ed. *Elements of Literature - Third Course*. Austin: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2000. Print.