

# The Iliad and the Odyssey

Starting time: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Background to *The Iliad*

It is the 8th Century B.C. Thetis, a minor goddess, will marry an elderly human king named Peleus. All of the gods are invited to the wedding except Eris, the goddess of Strife. She is angry at the deliberate **snub** and throws a golden apple among the guests with the inscription: "For the fairest." Three goddesses, Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite, each claim to be **the fairest** and want to take the apple, leading to a heated dispute.

There is considerable difficulty finding an **impartial** judge. Zeus, the king of the gods, does not want to participate. Therefore, a shepherd from Troy named Paris is selected. He is actually the son of Priam, the king of Troy. It had been **prophesied** that he would bring about the destruction of Troy when he was born, so his father abandoned him as an infant on a remote mountain. However, he was rescued by shepherds without his father's knowledge.

The god Hermes presents the three goddesses to Paris and asks him to choose the fairest. Hera attempts to bribe Paris with political power. Athena offers him glory in war. Aphrodite promises him the most beautiful woman on earth. Paris selects Aphrodite and thereby **incurs** the hostility of the other two goddesses.

After the contest, Paris sails to Troy and reveals his true identity, becoming a prince. He later travels to Greece where he meets Menelaus, the king of Sparta. Menelaus is married to Helen, considered the most beautiful woman on Earth. Paris **coerces** Helen to **elope** with him, and they secretly sail back to Troy together.

Menelaus is furious, and he calls upon his brother, Agamemnon, as well as other Greek chiefs to assist him. They assemble a powerful army and sail one thousand ships to Troy. Two important heroes also join them. One is Odysseus. He has been warned that he will be absent from his home in Ithaca for twenty years if he joins the war. The other is Achilles, the son of Thetis. He has also been warned that if he goes to war, he will achieve great glory but will also **perish** while still young. (355 words)

Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer these questions. Do not look back at the passage

1. T / F Eris is angry because she wants to marry King Peleus.
2. T / F Hera, Aphrodite and Athena each believe that they are the "fairest".
3. T / F Paris was abandoned by his father because he was a shepherd.
4. T / F Each of the three goddesses tries to bribe Paris.
5. T / F Paris chooses Aphrodite because he wants power and glory.
6. T / F Paris takes Menelaus's wife and sails back to Troy.
7. T / F Agamemnon refuses to help his brother Menelaus.
8. T / F Both Odysseus and Achilles join the Greek army's attack of Troy.

**Directions:** Look back at the text and match each word to the word or expression that has the closest meaning.

- |                |       |  |
|----------------|-------|--|
| 1. snub        | _____ | bring something negative upon oneself  |
| 2. the fairest | _____ | deliberately ignore or exclude someone |
| 3. impartial   | _____ | die                                    |
| 4. prophesied  | _____ | fair and not favoring one side         |
| 5. incur       | _____ | force someone to do something          |
| 6. coerce      | _____ | the most beautiful                     |
| 7. elope       | _____ | predicted by a god or prophet          |
| 8. perish      | _____ | run away secretly to get married       |

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## 2. The Iliad – Part 1

The Achaeans (Greeks), under King Agamemnon, have been fighting the Trojans off and on for nine years. They want to **retrieve** Helen, the wife of Menelaus and sister-in-law of Agamemnon. Paris, a son of the king of Troy, kidnapped Helen, which started the war between the Achaeans and Troy.

Yet, after nine years of war, Troy remains **intact**, and the Trojan army remains undefeated. Conversely, the Achaean army is struggling. At present, the Achaean troops are dying from a mysterious **plague**. Hundreds of funeral fires burn each night. Finally, Achilles, the Achaeans' best soldier, calls for an assembly to determine the cause of the plague.

A **soothsayer** reveals to the army that King Agamemnon's arrogance has caused the deadly plague, for he refused to return a woman who was captured and given to him as a war prize. Reluctantly, Agamemnon agrees to return the woman. The Greek hero Odysseus takes a ship and returns the woman to her father, whereupon the god Apollo ends the plague. However, soon after, Agamemnon demands to take another slave as **compensation**. He chooses to take a woman who was awarded to Achilles.

Achilles is furious, and he refuses to fight any longer for the Achaeans. He and his forces retreat to the beach beside their ships. Achilles asks his mother, the goddess Thetis, to ask Zeus, king of the gods, to help the Trojans defeat his former friends, the Achaeans. Zeus agrees.

The two armies prepare for battle, and Paris (the warrior who kidnapped Menelaus' wife, Helen) leaps out and challenges any of the Achaeans to a **duel**. Menelaus agrees to the duel and beats him, but before he can kill Paris, the goddess Aphrodite carries him away to safety.

A short **truce** is called, but it is broken when a Trojan soldier wounds Menelaus. During the battle that follows, Diomedes, an Achaean, kills many Trojans and wounds the goddess Aphrodite. Apollo, son of Zeus, quickly comes to confront Diomedes and warns him not to **wage war** with gods. However, Diomedes is also **emboldened** by Athena, and so he continues his attacks and eventually wounds another god, Ares. (354 words)

Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer these questions. Do not look back at the passage

1. **T / F** The Trojan War was caused by Paris kidnapping a woman named Helen.
2. **T / F** The story of the Iliad begins nine years after the start of the war.
3. **T / F** A plague has been affecting the armies of Troy.
4. **T / F** Achilles is angry because Agamemnon has taken one of his slaves.
5. **T / F** Odysseus returns the captive woman to her father.
6. **T / F** Achilles wants Zeus to help the Achaeans (Greeks).
7. **T / F** Aphrodite saves Paris from death.
8. **T / F** The Greek hero Diomedes kills many Trojans and wounds two gods.

**Directions:** Look back at the text and match each word to the word or expression that has the closest meaning.

- |                 |       |  |
|-----------------|-------|--|
| 1. intact       | _____ | a person who tells the future              |
| 2. a plague     | _____ | not broken or defeated                     |
| 3. a soothsayer | _____ | make someone feel more brave               |
| 4. compensation | _____ | participate in a battle or war             |
| 5. a duel       | _____ | a temporary end to fighting                |
| 6. embolden     | _____ | a widespread disease affecting many people |
| 7. a truce      | _____ | a battle between two people                |
| 8. wage war     | _____ | something given in exchange for some loss  |

# The Iliad and the Odyssey

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## 3. The Iliad – Part 2

The Trojans seem to be losing, so Hector, the greatest Trojan warrior, returns to Troy to ask his mother to offer **sacrifices** to the goddess Athena. She performs the **rituals**, but Athena refuses to accept them. Meanwhile, Hector discovers Paris safe in his bedroom with Helen and shames him into returning to battle. Then Hector visits his wife and their baby son. It is clear that Hector is deeply devoted to his family, yet he feels the terrible weight of his responsibility as commander-in-chief of the Trojan army.

During the fighting that continues, the Achaeans begin to lose. At one point, the goddess Athena fears that the entire Achaean army may be killed. Thus, she and Apollo, her brother, decide to have Hector challenge one of the Achaean warriors to a duel in order to **settle** the war. The Achaean warrior Ajax battles Hector bravely and the contest ends in **a draw**. A truce is called, and both sides bury their dead. During the truce, the Greeks are able to build a wall to defend their ships.

When the fighting resumes, so many Achaeans are killed that Agamemnon suggests that his armies sail for home, but finally he is convinced that he must return to the fighting. Messengers are sent to Achilles asking him to return to battle, but Achilles is still angry and refuses to fight.

Soon Agamemnon, Diomedes, Odysseus, and old Nestor are all seriously **wounded**, and Achilles realizes that the Achaeans are in danger of losing the war. Therefore, he sends his best friend Patroclus, to talk to the Achaeans.

Patroclus talks with old Nestor, one of the wisest of the Achaean soldiers. Nestor asks Patroclus to dress in Achilles' armor and return to battle. The Achaeans, he says, will **rejoice** and have new faith in their death struggle against the Trojans when they think that they see Achilles returning to the battle. In addition, the Trojans will fear the **wrath** of the mighty Achilles, so they will be easily defeated. Patroclus promises to ask Achilles for permission to use his armor and ride into battle **disguised** as the mighty warrior. (354 words)

Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer these questions. Do not look back at the passage

1. **T / F** Athena accepts the sacrifices from Hector's mother.
2. **T / F** Hector seems deeply devoted to his wife and child.
3. **T / F** Hector is happy to find Paris safe in his bedroom with Helen.
4. **T / F** Hector challenges one of the Greek heroes to a duel.
5. **T / F** Hector defeats the Greek hero Ajax in the duel.
6. **T / F** Agamemnon considers going home because he has lost so many men.
7. **T / F** Achilles is worried that the Achaeans may lose the war.
8. **T / F** Nestor asks his friend Patroclus to dress in Hector's armor and fight in order to inspire the Trojan army.

**Directions:** Look back at the text and match each word to the word or expression that has the closest meaning.

- |                |       |  |
|----------------|-------|--|
| 1. a ritual    | _____ | reach an agreement or end                      |
| 2. a sacrifice | _____ | anger  |
| 3. settle      | _____ | kill an animal or person for a god             |
| 4. a draw      | _____ | a religious ceremony                           |
| 5. wounded     | _____ | a tie; no clear winner                         |
| 6. rejoice     | _____ | show great happiness                           |
| 7. wrath       | _____ | injured in battle                              |
| 8. disguised   | _____ | change one's appearance to hide one's identity |

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## 4. The Iliad – Part 3

Meanwhile, Hector leads a large Trojan attack against the Achaean wall between the Trojan army and the Achaean **fleet** of ships. The wall is successfully destroyed. Achilles is watching and realizes that the Achaeans are about to be defeated. Therefore, he sends Patroclus into the fighting, disguised as Achilles himself. The Achaean army is encouraged when they think that Achilles has returned to the fighting, and the Trojans are so terrified that they quickly retreat.

Patroclus' skill in battle is superhuman. He kills nine Trojans in a short time, but Hector, with the help of the god Apollo, is able to surprise him and kill him with a spear. Although the Achaeans rescue Patroclus' dead body, Hector captures Achilles' armor as a trophy to his victory. Then the Achaeans return to the beach, guarding their ships as best they can.

Achilles is filled with **grief** and anger when he learns that his best friend Patroclus has been killed. His mother, Thetis, comes to him and tells him that he will die if he tries to **avenge** Patroclus' death. However, she still gives him a new suit of armor made by one of the gods.

Despite the warning, Achilles chooses to help the Trojans in order to punish them for killing Patroclus. Thus, he returns to battle in his new armor and is so successful that he and the Achaeans defeat the Trojans. He violently kills Hector, the Trojans' mightiest warrior. Achilles' anger is not satisfied, however. He ties Hector's dead body to his **chariot** and circles Patroclus' **burial mound** every day for nine days.

**Dismayed** by Achilles' continued abuse of Hector's body, Zeus decides that it must be returned to Priam. Led by the god Hermes, Priam takes a wagon out of Troy, across the plains, and into the Greek camp unnoticed. He **kneels** before Achilles and begs for his son's body. Achilles is **moved to tears**, and the two discuss their losses in the war. After a meal, Priam carries Hector's body back into Troy. Hector is buried, and the city **mourns**. (346 words)

Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer these questions. Do not look back at the passage

1. **T / F** The Trojans break the wall that protects the Achaean fleet.
2. **T / F** When Achilles sees that the Achaeans may be defeated, he joins the battle and kills nine Trojan warriors.
3. **T / F** Hector kills Patroclus with the help of Apollo.
4. **T / F** Hector takes Patroclus' dead body into Troy as a trophy.
5. **T / F** Achilles mother warns Achilles that he will die if he tries to avenge Patroclus.
6. **T / F** Achilles's mother brings him a new suit of armor.
7. **T / F** Achilles kills Hector in battle and disrespects his dead body.
8. **T / F** Hector's father begs Achilles to return his son's dead body, but Achilles refuses.

**Directions:** Look back at the text and match each word to the word or expression that has the closest meaning.

- |                   |       |   |
|-------------------|-------|---|
| 1. fleet          | _____ | a vehicle with two wheels pulled by a horse |
| 2. grief          | _____ | a large group of ships or boats             |
| 3. avenge         | _____ | a place where a dead body is buried         |
| 4. a chariot      | _____ | discouraged or depressed                    |
| 5. a burial mound | _____ | in a position on one's knees (like praying) |
| 6. dismayed       | _____ | start to cry                                |
| 7. moved to tears | _____ | sadness                                     |
| 8. kneel          | _____ | show sadness for the death of someone       |
| 9. mourn          | _____ | take revenge for a wrong done to someone    |

# The Iliad and the Odyssey

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## 5. The Fall of Troy

The events after the Iliad that lead to the fall of Troy are not a part of the poem. After the burial of Hector, the Trojans call for help from various allies, and the Greeks begin to lose the war. In one battle, Paris kills Achilles with an arrow. It is guided by Apollo and strikes Achilles in the right heel, the only place where he is **vulnerable**. Ajax and Odysseus are able to rescue Achilles' body, but **quarrel** over who should receive Achilles' **splendid** armor. When it is awarded to Odysseus, Ajax becomes so furious that he threatens to kill some of the Greek leaders. When he realizes his lack of honor, he commits suicide.

With the death of their two greatest warriors, Ajax and Achilles, the Greeks become uneasy about ever capturing Troy. After consulting various **seers and oracles**, they are then given a series of unusual tasks that they must complete to win the war. Although each of these tasks is accomplished, they are still not able to **breach** the walls of Troy.

Then Odysseus **conceives** a plan to get into the city. A great horse of wood is constructed with a hollow belly that can hold many warriors. At night, the horse is brought before the city. Odysseus and some of his men hide inside the horse. The rest of the Achaians burn their camps and sail to a nearby island. The next morning, the Trojans find the Greeks gone and the huge, mysterious horse at the gates. Hearing that it is a gift to Athena, the Trojans pull the gigantic horse inside to honor the goddess.

That night, the soldiers **creep** out of the horse, kill the guards, and open the gates to let the Achaian army in. The Achaians set fires throughout the city, **massacre** the inhabitants, and **loot** the city. King Priam is killed, and by morning all but a few Trojans are dead. Only Aeneas, with his father, son, and a small band of Trojans, escape. The women who are left are given to the Greek leaders as war prizes to be used as slaves. Troy is devastated. (356 words)

Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer these questions. Do not look back at the passage

1. **T / F** Paris is able to kill Achilles with the help of Apollo.
2. **T / F** The Trojans disrespect Achilles' body in the same way Achilles disrespected Hector's body.
3. **T / F** Odysseus kills Ajax in order to keep Achilles' armor.
4. **T / F** The Greeks are unable to complete the tasks given to them by the seers and oracles.
5. **T / F** Odysseus makes the plan to build a wooden horse full of Greek soldiers.
6. **T / F** The Trojans bring the horse into their city to honor the goddess Athena.
7. **T / F** The Greeks capture and destroy Troy.
8. **T / F** King Priam escapes Troy with a small group of Trojans.

**Directions:** Look back at the text and match each word to the word or expression that has the closest meaning.

- |                      |       |                               |
|----------------------|-------|-------------------------------|
| 1. vulnerable        | _____ | make a hole or gap in a wall  |
| 2. quarrel           | _____ | people who can see the future |
| 3. splendid          | _____ | weak to attack                |
| 4. seers and oracles | _____ | think of, imagine             |
| 5. breach            | _____ | move slowly and quietly       |
| 6. conceive          | _____ | steal (from a place)          |
| 7. creep             | _____ | argue                         |
| 8. massacre          | _____ | very impressive               |
| 9. loot              | _____ | kill many people violently    |

# The Iliad and the Odyssey

Starting time: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Background to *the Odyssey*

**Composed** around 700 BC, *The Odyssey* is one of the earliest **epics** still in existence. The hero is long-suffering Odysseus, king of Ithaca. He has been gone 20 years from his homeland, his wife, and his son. Odysseus represents many of the **virtues** of the ancient Greeks. However, he is not without his **flaws**, which sometimes get him into trouble.

Of the 20 years he has been away, he spent the first 10 fighting victoriously with the Greeks in the Trojan War and the last 10 trying to get home. Unfortunately, the goddess Athena arranged for storms to blow the Greeks off course as they attempted to sail home from the war. She was angered because a Greek warrior had attempted to rape Cassandra, the daughter of the king of Troy, in her temple. Worse, the Greeks had not punished the man. Although Athena helps Odysseus' repeatedly throughout the epic, it is her curse that originally causes his misfortune.

While Odysseus has been away, his kingdom, his wealth, and his wife and son have been at risk. His wife Penelope is surrounded by unwanted **suitors** because she is the key to **the throne** and to Odysseus' wealth. She lacks the power to remove the suitors who have invaded her home and want to marry her.

In his absence, Odysseus' son, Telemachus, is the **heir apparent**. He is therefore constantly in danger. He is unable to rid his home of the unwanted suitors who have abused the Greek custom of **hospitality**. Telemachus also lacks power to maintain control as there is no formal system of laws to support him. He realizes that he may only be legally the ruler of his own house, not all of the lands of Odysseus.

Telemachus understands that if he becomes king without sufficient resources to defend himself, he risks **being deposed** and most likely killed. If Penelope stalls much longer in selecting a suitor, Ithaca could fall into civil war. If she chooses a husband, her son's life is still in danger. As terrible as marriage seems, it may be necessary for Ithaca's and (possibly) her son's survival.

*(353 words)*

Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer these questions. Do not look back at the passage

1. **T / F** Odysseus is known as a virtuous Greek hero without any flaws.
2. **T / F** Athena originally prevented the Greeks from sailing home after the war.
3. **T / F** Athena was angry because Odysseus had tried to rape the daughter of the King of Troy.
4. **T / F** Athena continues to cause problems for Odysseus throughout the Odyssey.
5. **T / F** The Greek custom of hospitality prevents Telemachus from kicking out the suitors.
6. **T / F** Legally, Telemachus should become king of all of Odysseus's land and wealth if Odysseus dies.
7. **T / F** Telemachus worries that he might not have enough strength (an army) to defend himself as king.
8. **T / F** Penelope worries that if she marries another man, her son may be killed.

**Directions:** Look back at the text and match each word to the word or expression that has the closest meaning.

- |                      |       |  |
|----------------------|-------|--|
| 1. compose           | _____ | someone competing to marry someone                           |
| 2. an epic           | _____ | high morals  |
| 3. virtues           | _____ | the next person to become king                               |
| 4. a flaw            | _____ | write or create poetry or music                              |
| 5. a suitor          | _____ | representing the king or the power to rule                   |
| 6. the throne        | _____ | a weakness in a person's character                           |
| 7. the heir apparent | _____ | welcoming to strangers or guests                             |
| 8. hospitality       | _____ | be removed as a king forcefully and suddenly                 |
| 9. depose            | _____ | a long poem about heroic figures or the history of a nation. |

# The Iliad and the Odyssey

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## 7. The Odyssey – Part 1

The Epic poem starts with a prayer to the **Muse** of poetry. It then begins the story in *medias res* ("in the middle of things"). Odysseus has been gone from Ithaca for about 20 years. He spent the first 10 years fighting the Trojan War, and the last 10 years trying to get home.

Meanwhile, Odysseus' wife, Penelope, is trying to **fend off** over 100 suitors who have invaded the royal palace, seeking her hand in marriage. If they marry her, they will become the ruler of Ithaca. The suitors are **indulging** in great amounts of food and wine at the hosts' expense.

Telemachus, son of Odysseus and Penelope, is just **coming of age** (he is approximately 21) and is **at a loss** as to what to do about the suitors. Mother and son **yearn** for Odysseus' return.

The first four books deal with Telemachus' struggle (in fact, Odysseus does not appear in the epic until Book 5). A secondary plot in *The Odyssey* is Telemachus' coming of age, his own quest, which scholars sometimes refer to as the "Telemacheia."

The goddess Athena appears to Telemachus in disguise and advises him to gather an assembly of the island's leaders to protest the invasion of the suitors. Soon after, she tells him to visit King Nestor of Pylos and King Menelaus of Sparta, old comrades of his father's, to gather from them any news of Odysseus.

At the assembly, the two leading suitors — the aggressive Antinous and the smooth-talking Eurymachus — confront the prince. They accuse Penelope of delaying too long in her choice of a new husband. Telemachus speaks well but accomplishes little at the assembly because the suitors are from some of the strongest families in the area and are impatient with Penelope's delays.

As Telemachus secretly sails to Pylos and Sparta, the suitors **plot** to assassinate him. At Pylos, Telemachus learns little about what has happened to his father, but he is encouraged to visit Sparta where King Menelaus reports that Odysseus is alive but held captive by the goddess **nymph** Calypso. (345 words)

Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer these questions. Do not look back at the passage

1. **T / F** Odysseus has been gone from Ithaca for 20 years.
2. **T / F** Odysseus has been fighting in the Trojan War for 20 years.
3. **T / F** 100 suitors want to marry Odysseus's wife in order to become the ruler of Ithaca.
4. **T / F** Odysseus's son Telemachus has just become an adult.
5. **T / F** Odysseus does not actually appear in the first four books of *the Odyssey*.
6. **T / F** The goddess Athena appears to Telemachus in disguise to tell him to kill the two strongest suitors - Antinous and Eurymachus.
7. **T / F** Antinous and Eurymachus are making a plan to murder Telemachus.
8. **T / F** In Sparta, King Menelaus tells Telemachus that his father has been killed by the nymph Calypso.

**Directions:** Look back at the text and match each word to the word or expression that has the closest meaning.

1. a Muse \_\_\_\_\_ not know
2. fend off \_\_\_\_\_ a goddess of science or art
3. indulge \_\_\_\_\_ resist/push back
4. come of age \_\_\_\_\_ make an evil plan
5. at a loss \_\_\_\_\_ want strongly/desire
6. yearn \_\_\_\_\_ a beautiful nature goddess
7. plot \_\_\_\_\_ enjoy with great pleasure
8. a nymph \_\_\_\_\_ become an adult

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## 8. The Odyssey – Part 2

The story then shifts to Odysseus. Athena urges the gods to free him from Calypso. Hermes, the messenger god, delivers the order to Calypso. Odysseus has spent seven years with the goddess. Calypso is a beautiful nymph who wants to marry Odysseus and **grant** him immortality, but he **longs** for Penelope and Ithaca. Reluctantly, Calypso sets Odysseus free and sends him on his way.

When Odysseus sets sail, Poseidon, the sea god, **spots** him. Poseidon is angry at Odysseus because Odysseus blinded Poseidon's son Cyclops, so he wants revenge. He shipwrecks Odysseus in the land of Phaeacia, which is ruled by King Alcinous. The Phaeacians, civilized and **hospitable** people, welcome the stranger and encourage him to tell his adventure. Through Odysseus' narration, the reader goes back 10 years and hears his tale.

Odysseus begins his story at the end of the Trojan War. Odysseus and his men sailed first to the land of the Cicones. The Greeks succeeded in raiding the city but **lingered** too long and were beaten by another army. Hoping to sail directly home, the group of ships instead encountered a severe storm that blew them far off course to the land of the Lotus-eaters. These were not hostile people, but eating the lotus plant removes memory and **ambition**. Odysseus' men became addicted, and he was barely able to pull his men away and resume the journey.

Next, because of curiosity, Odysseus explored the land of the Cyclops, a race of uncivilized, **cannibalistic**, one-eyed giants. One of them, Polyphemus, trapped Odysseus' **scouting party** in a cave. To escape, Odysseus blinded the one-eyed monster. This made Poseidon, the Cyclops's father, very angry.

Odysseus was then aided by the wind god, Aeolus. He captured all opposing winds and put them in a bag for Odysseus, who was thus able to sail within sight of Ithaca. Unfortunately, his men suspected that the bag was full of treasure and opened it while Odysseus was sleeping. The troublesome winds blew the party back to Aeolus. He suspected that Odysseus and his men had been cursed by the gods and decided to help them no more. (353 words)

Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer these questions. Do not look back at the passage

1. **T / F** Odysseus spent seven years living with Calypso.
2. **T / F** Odysseus is in love Calypso.
3. **T / F** Poseidon wants to help Odysseus.
4. **T / F** King Alcinous welcomes Odysseus and wants to hear his story.
5. **T / F** Eating the lotus plant makes Odysseus's men forgetful and lose ambition.
6. **T / F** The Cyclops traps Odysseus' men in a cave and blinds Odysseus.
7. **T / F** The wind god helps Odysseus by putting opposing wind in a bag so that Odysseus can sail home.
8. **T / F** Odysseus open the bag because he thinks there is treasure in it.

**Directions:** Look back at the text and match each word to the word or expression that has the closest meaning.

1. grant                    \_\_\_\_\_ see, notice
2. long                    \_\_\_\_\_ give
3. spot                    \_\_\_\_\_ want, desire
4. hospitable            \_\_\_\_\_ determination to achieve success
5. linger                   \_\_\_\_\_ stay somewhere with no purpose
6. ambition              \_\_\_\_\_ welcoming to strangers or guests
7. scouting party        \_\_\_\_\_ eating your own species
8. cannibalistic         \_\_\_\_\_ a group of soldiers who go ahead of an army to observe

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## 9. The Odyssey – Part 3

Next, the **cannibalistic** Laestrygonians sank all the ships except Odysseus' in a surprise attack. The remaining Greeks reached Aeaëa, home of the beautiful **enchantress** Circe. She turned several of them into pigs. Odysseus agreed to become Circe's lover, and she lifted the spell from his men and helped them continue their journey after a year on the island. She also advised Odysseus to sail to the Land of the Dead. There, he met various Greek heroes, talked to his own mother, and received an important **prophecy** from a **seer**. Then Odysseus resumed his journey.

Barely surviving the temptations of the Sirens' songs and an attack by a six-headed monster named Scylla, Odysseus and his crew arrived at the island of the Sun-god Helios. Despite warnings, the men feasted on the cattle of the Sun-god during Odysseus' brief absence. Zeus was outraged and destroyed the ship as the Greeks departed, killing all but Odysseus. He instead managed to come ashore at Calypso's island, where he stayed until she released him seven years later.

The story of his adventures finishes, and Odysseus receives the admiration and gifts of the Phaeacians, who then sail him home to Ithaca. Meanwhile, Athena helps Telemachus avoid the suitors' **ambush** and arranges for him to meet his father at their pig farm not far from the palace.

Reunited with his son, Odysseus returns to his palace disguised as a beggar. For a time, he resists striking back at the suitors who insult and assault him. Penelope seems suspicious that he is her husband, However, Eurycleia, a loyal nurse who cared for Odysseus when he was a child, has no doubt of his identity after she discovers an old scar on his leg.

Penelope arranges a contest, promising to wed any man who can **string** the great bow of Odysseus and shoot an arrow through a dozen axes as he used to do. The suitors all fail. Only Odysseus himself can perform the **feat**. With skilful planning and more help from Athena, he and Telemachus and two faithful herdsmen **slaughter** all of the suitors. Odysseus and Penelope are reunited. Odysseus is home at last. *(358 words)*

Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer these questions. Do not look back at the passage

1. **T / F** The Laestrygonians sink Odysseus' ship.
2. **T / F** Circe turns some of Odysseus's men into pigs.
3. **T / F** Odysseus talks to his mother in the Land of the Dead.
4. **T / F** Odysseus and his men eat many of the cattle on the Island of the Sungod Helios.
5. **T / F** The Phaeacians help Odysseus return home to Ithaca.
6. **T / F** No one recognizes Odysseus when he returns to his palace dressed as a beggar.
7. **T / F** Penelope agrees to marry whichever man can string the bow of Odysseus and shoot an arrow through twelve axes.
8. **T / F** Odysseus, his son and two herdsmen kill all of the suitors.

**Directions:** Look back at the text and match each word to the word or expression that has the closest meaning.

- |                   |       |  |
|-------------------|-------|--|
| 1. cannibalistic  | _____ | a prediction                                   |
| 2. an enchantress | _____ | a person who can see the future                |
| 3. a prophecy     | _____ | attach a string (to a bow or instrument)       |
| 4. a seer         | _____ | a female wizard                                |
| 5. an ambush      | _____ | eating your own species                        |
| 6. string         | _____ | an achievement of courage, skill, or strength. |
| 7. a feat         | _____ | kill violently (usually a large number)        |
| 8. slaughter      | _____ | a surprise attack                              |

# The Iliad and the Odyssey

Starting time: \_\_\_\_\_

## 10. The Odyssey – Themes

There are a number of important themes presented in the Odyssey. The first is hospitality. In Homer's world, hospitality is essential. Although arriving strangers may be dangerous, they are also travelers, probably in need of help. Civilized people, therefore, demonstrate hospitality to show their quality as human beings. Furthermore, strangers bring and receive news. It was through visitors that the Homeric Greeks learned about what was happening in the world beyond their local areas.

Hospitality affects Odysseus throughout the epic. Odysseus' own home has been taken over by **a horde** of suitors who crudely take advantage of Ithaca's tradition of hospitality. In his wanderings, Odysseus receives impressive help from the Phaeacians. Circe is of great assistance after Odysseus conquers her. On the other hand, the Cyclops makes no **pretense** toward hospitality. In fact, he scoffs at the concept.

Loyalty is another major theme. The clearest example of loyalty is, of course, Penelope, who waits faithfully for 20 years for her husband's return. Another example is Telemachus, who supports his father against the suitors. Odysseus' old nurse, Eurycleia, remains loyal to Penelope and her absent master. However, there is a clear **double-standard** when it comes to sexual **fidelity**. Penelope is expected to be absolutely faithful to her husband. Odysseus, conversely, is not **bound** by the same expectation.

Odysseus also **embodies** the theme of perseverance. Odysseus' perseverance in his wanderings is legendary. Through the use of **guile**, courage, and determination, he endures. Perhaps the most difficult test of his perseverance is the seven years he spends as Calypso's captive, a situation he can neither **trick** nor fight his way out. Even when the beautiful goddess-nymph **tempts** him with immortality, Odysseus wants to return home.

The final theme is revenge. In order to escape from the cave of the Cyclops, Odysseus blinds the one-eyed giant. His father Poseidon is not allowed to kill Odysseus, but the sea god manipulates the situation so that Odysseus arrives in Ithaca late, broken, and alone. In addition, Odysseus' vengeance is formidable when it is directed toward the suitors, most of whom die violent deaths when Odysseus finally returns home. (352 words)

Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer these questions. Do not look back at the passage

1. **T / F** Hospitality was very important in ancient Greece.
2. **T / F** Greeks often depended on travellers to bring them news.
3. **T / F** Odysseus rarely received hospitality in his wanderings.
4. **T / F** Hospitality was very important to the Cyclops.
5. **T / F** Penelope seemed to show great loyalty to Odysseus while he is away from Ithaca.
6. **T / F** Odysseus was equally loyal to Penelope while he is away from Ithaca.
7. **T / F** The enchantress Calypso offered Odysseus immortality, but he refused.
8. **T / F** Poseidon tried to kill Odysseus, but failed.

**Directions:** Look back at the text and match each word to the word or expression that has the closest meaning.

- |                      |       |   |
|----------------------|-------|---|
| 1. a horde           | _____ | faithfulness  |
| 2. pretense          | _____ | tied, be expected   |
| 3. a double-standard | _____ | a large (violent) group                                       |
| 4. fidelity          | _____ | fool, pretend   |
| 5. bound             | _____ | a false claim   |
| 6. embody            | _____ | cleverness  |
| 7. guile             | _____ | represent   |
| 8. trick             | _____ | attract, lure   |
| 9. tempt             | _____ | a rule which is applied in different ways to different people |

## 1. Background to The Iliad

### Part 1

1. F 2. T 3. F 4. T 5. F 6. T 7. F 8. T

### Part 2

snub → deliberately ignore or exclude someone  
the fairest → the most beautiful  
impartial → fair and not favoring one side  
prophesied → predicted by a god or prophet  
incur → bring something negative upon oneself  
coerce → force someone to do something  
elope → run away secretly to get married  
perish → die

## 2. The Iliad – Part 1

### Part 1

1. T 2. T 3. F 4. T 5. T 6. F 7. T 8. T

### Part 2

intact → not broken or defeated  
a plague → a widespread disease affecting many people  
a soothsayer → a person who tells the future  
compensation → something given in exchange for some loss  
a duel → a battle between two people  
embolden → make someone feel more brave  
a truce → a temporary end to fighting  
wage war → participate in a battle or war

## 3. The Iliad – Part 2

### Part 1

1. F 2. T 3. F 4. T 5. F 6. T 7. T 8. F

### Part 2

a ritual → a religious ceremony  
a sacrifice → kill an animal or person for a god  
settle → reach an agreement or end  
a draw → a tie; no clear winner  
wounded → injured in battle  
rejoice → show great happiness  
wrath → anger  
disguised → change one's appearance...

## 4. The Iliad – Part 3

### Part 1

1. T 2. F 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. T 7. T 8. F

### Part 2

fleet → a large group of ships or boats  
grief → sadness  
avenge → take revenge for a wrong done to...  
a chariot → a vehicle with two wheels pulled by...  
a burial mound → a place where a dead body...  
dismayed → discouraged or depressed  
moved to tears → start to cry  
kneel → in a position on one's knees (like praying)  
mourn → show sadness for the death of someone

## 5. The Fall of Troy

### Part 1

1. T 2. F 3. F 4. F 5. T 6. T 7. T 8. F

### Part 2

vulnerable → weak to attack  
quarrel → argue  
splendid → very impressive  
seers and oracles → people who can see the future  
breach → make a hole or gap in a wall  
conceive → think of, imagine  
creep → move slowly and quietly  
massacre → kill many people violently  
loot → steal (from a place)

## 6. Background to The Odyssey

### Part 1

1. F 2. T 3. F 4. F 5. T 6. F 7. T 8. T

### Part 2

compose → write or create poetry or music  
an epic → a long poem about heroic figures or...  
virtues → high morals  
a flaw → a weakness in a person's character  
a suitor → someone competing to marry someone  
the throne → representing the king or the...  
the heir apparent → the next person to become king  
hospitality → welcoming to strangers or guests  
depose → be removed as a king forcefully...

## 7. The Odyssey – Part 1

### Part 1

1. T 2. F 3. T 4. T 5. T 6. F 7. T 8. F

### Part 2

a Muse → a goddess of science or art  
fend off → resist/push back  
indulge → enjoy with great pleasure  
come of age → become an adult  
at a loss → not know  
yearn → want strongly/desire  
plot → make an evil plan  
a nymph → a beautiful nature goddess

## 8. The Odyssey – Part 2

### Part 1

1. T 2. F 3. F 4. T 5. T 6. F 7. T 8. F

### Part 2

grant → give  
long → want, desire  
spot → see, notice  
hospitable → welcoming to strangers or guests  
linger → stay somewhere with no purpose  
ambition → determination to achieve success  
scouting party → a group of soldiers who go ahead of an army to observe  
cannibalistic → eating your own species

## 9. The Odyssey – Part 3

### Part 1

1. F 2. T 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. F 7. T 8. T

### Part 2

cannibalistic → eating your own species  
an enchantress → a female wizard  
a prophecy → a prediction  
a seer → a person who can see the future  
an ambush → a surprise attack  
string → attach a string (to a bow or instrument)  
a feat → an achievement of courage, skill, or...  
slaughter → kill violently (usually a large number)

## 10. The Odyssey – Themes

### Part 1

1. T 2. T 3. F 4. F 5. T 6. F 7. T 8. F

### Part 2

a horde → a large (violent) group  
pretense → a false claim  
a double-standard → a rule which is applied in different ways to different people  
fidelity → faithfulness  
bound → tied, be expected  
embody → represent  
guile → cleverness  
trick → fool, pretend  
tempt → attract, lure

## Timed Reading Score Card | 350-word passages

time	words per minute	passage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1:30	233	# correct										
1:35	221	233										
1:40	210	221										
1:45	200	210										
1:50	191	200										
1:55	183	191										
2:00	175	183										
2:05	168	175										
2:10	162	168										
2:15	156	162										
2:20	150	156										
2:25	145	150										
2:30	140	145										
2:35	135	140										
2:40	131	135										
2:45	127	131										
2:50	124	127										
2:55	120	124										
3:00	117	120										
3:05	114	117										
3:10	111	114										
3:15	108	111										
3:20	105	108										
3:25	102	105										
3:30	100	102										
3:35	98	100										
3:40	95	98										
3:45	93	95										
3:50	91	93										
3:55	89	91										
4:00	88	89										
4:05	86	88										
4:10	84	86										
4:15	82	84										
4:20	81	82										
4:25	79	81										
4:30	78	79										
		78										