

Advanced Placement in
English Literature and Composition

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Odyssey

by Homer

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The Odyssey

Objectives

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

1. discuss the epic in relation to historical and literary-historical contexts.
2. identify, examine, and discuss the use of imagery and figurative language (simile, metaphor, and symbolism).
3. discuss how the main male and female characters reflect the expectations of their society.
4. trace the development of the main character, noting his/her traits, emotions, motivations, and how and why he/she changes.
5. analyze the importance of literary elements like theme, dramatic irony, and foreshadowing on the development of the story.
6. analyze the author's use of language (diction and imagery) and its importance in setting mood and establishing character.
7. identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the characteristics, themes, structure, and elements of the epic.
8. identify and analyze how the author's diction appeals to the senses, creates imagery, suggests mood, and sets tone.
9. examine the rhetorical and organizational structures and use of arguments within the text.
10. identify and analyze the point(s) of view in a literary work and analyze how varying points of view affect the literary work.
11. analyze patterns of imagery or symbolism and connect them to themes and/or tone and mood.
12. examine how the themes presented in the text represent a view or comment on societal expectations from the author's society.
13. respond to multiple-choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Exam.
14. respond to writing prompts similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Exam.

Introductory Lecture

I. Genre Characteristics and Conventions of the Epic Poem

An epic poem is a lengthy narrative work that focuses on the deeds of a heroic figure. Epic poems are massive in scope; the action of an epic often takes place over a large geographical region, and the hero's exploits are extremely important in some way, often to his or her society. The ramifications of these exploits are important enough that, in many epics, gods and other supernatural beings also take part in the action, helping or hindering the hero and his or her enemies. Some epics, such as the *Iliad*, are primarily about a war and the particular heroes engaging in that war; others, such as the *Odyssey*, are about a particular hero's journey and the tribulations the hero endures during the course of that adventure.

Epic Conventions

Epic poems typically include the following conventions:

A. Invocation to the Muse

Epic poems typically include, at or near the beginning, an invocation to the Muse. The invocation is a short request in which the author asks one of the Muses to inspire him or her in the creation and development of a text. The invocation usually also informs the audience of the poem's subject matter.

In Greek mythology, the Muses are the goddesses of knowledge; they are the sources from which artistic and scientific knowledge and ability flow. There are nine Muses, each responsible for a particular artistic or scientific discipline. Calliope is the Muse of epic poetry.

B. Beginning In Medias Res

The beginning of an epic poem often does not correspond with the beginning of the story it tells; instead, an epic poem usually opens with its narrative already in progress. Beginning a story in the middle of its narrative arc is also called beginning *in medias res*: "in the middle of things." While many traditional narratives begin with exposition about the characters and setting, texts that begin *in medias res* eschew this preliminary exposition, deferring the presentation of background material until a later point in the text. Texts structured in this fashion begin at a point in the narrative arc where the primary conflict has already been developed, and the author later relates the backstory of this conflict to the audience in one or more expository segments.

Because texts that begin *in medias res* do not require an expository setup, the text may begin with a scene of intense action, a scene that may occur at a point of heightened tension. Skillful use of this technique can inspire in the reader an instant interest in the text's characters and conflicts.

C. The Epic Hero

The epic hero is usually better than others in some demonstrable way; whether he or she is smarter, stronger, craftier, etc., an epic hero tends to have very few peers in his or her area or areas of expertise. Many epic heroes have superhuman abilities, sometimes as a result of being superhuman themselves—some epic heroes are the descendants of gods or other supernatural beings.

Usually, epic heroes embody the ideal characteristics of their society. This is not to say that the epic hero always acts in exact accordance with these characteristics—an epic hero may stray from his or her society's rules from time to time—but the majority of the epic hero's actions will correspond with what his or her society would consider correct behavior.

Information about the specific aspects of the traditional Ancient Greek hero can be found in the fifth segment of this lecture, titled "Heroic Traits."

D. Epithets

An epithet is a word or short phrase used repeatedly throughout an epic as a description or metaphor for someone or something. For example, throughout the *Iliad*, Achilles is sometimes referred to as "son of Peleus," and other epithets used to describe him are based on his speed (e.g., "swift-footed Achilles"). The main function of these epithets in a poetic context is to allow the poet to describe various characters and objects in ways that fit the meter of the poem.

E. Long Catalogues of Objects/People/Places

Epics often contain extensive lists of objects, people, and/or places. Book I of *Paradise Lost* lists and describes the more powerful of the fallen angels aligned with Satan, while Book II of the *Iliad* contains a list of the various groups of soldiers comprising the Achaean force, the leaders of each group, and the number of ships they sailed to Troy.

II. THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Ancient Greek society was both patrilineal and patriarchal, which limited women's role in society to few other purposes outside of propagation and housekeeping. The mistress of a wealthy household was in charge of her domestic realm and the duties of the female servants. While she did not have a job outside of the home, a woman was expected to help provide for her family. Unlike wealthy women who rarely ventured out unaccompanied by servants or other women, poor women were often forced out of the home and into the workforce, thus complicating the image and expectations of true womanhood. A poor woman's options were usually limited to working alongside her husband, working the fields, serving as a wet nurse, becoming a weaver, or being a prostitute.

Athenian women also had little to no political or legal rights; they would depend on a male relative to manage any legal or social matters. Penelope's inability to remove the suitors from her home reflects the limitations put upon women in Greek society. She has no political or legal rights to remove the suitors who had overstayed their welcome. Penelope's best interests were in the hands of her young and struggling son, Telemachus.

Women were never recognized as equals of men and most women had no direct influence on Greek society. Unfortunately, most Greek women could neither read nor write, so nearly all descriptions of the lives and behaviors of women come from a male perspective. Male authors often created female characters who were portrayed in a highly negative manner.

A few writers did portray heroic female characters though, and heroic traits can be found in many of the female characters in the *Odyssey*. In the relationship between Odysseus and Penelope, Homer shows that marriage should be considered an equal partnership. This portrayal of women as equal partners may be due to the fact that Homer composed the story at a time when Greek society, along with the expectations for women, was changing.

While women were often subject to patriarchal control, there is also evidence that men did not always have ultimate control, and this is especially apparent in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus finds himself at the mercy of queens, like Arete, and of goddesses, like Circe and Calypso. Female characters in the epic demonstrate their power in several ways, and Odysseus must learn how to interpret their intentions and manage the situations into which they place him. These female characters, whether mortal or immortal, possess emotional and often hidden powers that can assist or impede Odysseus on his journey.

In the *Odyssey*, most female characters are primarily either nurturing—in the same sense that a mother is nurturing—or seductive. Some characters, such as Penelope, display both traits in some mixture. Mothers in the narrative often cannot survive without the presence of their husbands and sons, as is the case with Odysseus' mother, Anticlea. During their meeting in the underworld, Anticlea tells Odysseus that she died not of an illness but due to her grief at her son's disappearance.

Interestingly, Penelope is also a wife and mother, but she does not adhere entirely to this role. While she does mourn the loss of her husband, she does not crumble in despair, but awaits his return even amid the increasing pressure from the suitors. Penelope is a complex character in that she does not just perform the role of sympathetic mother but also that of a seductress. While she may not be as dangerously seductive as Circe or the unfaithful and murderous Clytemnestra, Penelope does demonstrate some of the traits associated with a seductress. She is pursued by numerous men and even promises to marry one of them once she has finished weaving a shroud for Odysseus (which she unravels each night, hoping to delay the marriage). She may not intend to seduce the suitors, but she is forced into this role, just as she was forced into the role of a mourning wife.

III. HOSPITALITY AND THE GUEST/HOST RELATIONSHIP:

Hospitality was a serious, important, and necessary obligation in Greek culture. The guest-friend (or guest-host) relationship is known as *xenia*. *Xenia* is the positive relationship between two people from different regions. There are many possible reasons why *xenia* was prevalent in Greek society.

To begin, travel was much more difficult and time-consuming than it is today. Travelers would cover long distances to make connections with neighboring societies or even to participate in various conflicts. Travel took longer because of the less advanced modes of transportation, namely traveling on foot, on horseback, and by boat. Greece's natural harbors, inlets, and bays made sea travel the most economical and efficient means of travel, but water transportation was not always possible, so the Greeks had to depend on land travel as well. Travel by land was necessary during winter months, when sea travel was dangerous and the winds unfavorable. These extended travels over lengthy distances caused travelers to spend many nights away from the comforts of home. Individuals who traveled typically had to rely on strangers for hospitality and would repay their hosts with some form of gratuity, perhaps in the form of a gift, an exchange, or even storytelling. It is thought that these limitations and difficulties associated with travel may have formed the serious adherence to *xenia*.

Another possible reason why Greeks so strictly adhered to the obligation to show hospitality is that the Greeks believed that the gods wanted them to be hospitable. They believed that the gods wanted them to provide shelter, food, and protection to anyone who showed up at their home, regardless of status, race, or heritage. Greeks also believed that neglecting the guest-host relationship could result in some form of punishment from the gods. Many believed that the gods were always watching and often testing the hospitality of individuals by disguising themselves as beggars and showing up on mortals' doorsteps. Since hosts had no way of knowing who their visitors were, they were forced to treat every visitor as if he or she were a god. Making the neglect of *xenia* a punishable offense by the immortals was a strong deterrent to those who would be stingy with their fortunes and homes.

For some individuals, there was also the possibility that demonstrating hospitality could have been used to gain fame and respect or even to demonstrate wealth and power. Being hospitable meant that you had an opportunity to demonstrate your vast wealth and lavish home while holding feasts for strangers from other lands. Powerful men would use these strangers to spread their positive reputation to distant lands.

The guest-host relationship is very clearly seen throughout the *Odyssey* during the travels of both Odysseus and Telemachus. Each man is greeted as a stranger, but then treated as a special guest by his hosts. In return, each man simply tells tales of their adventures and their struggles.

While *xenia* is usually a positive concept, there are times in the narrative when characters must provide hospitality even when they do not want to. This is the case with Penelope and the suitors, because they arrived and expected proper hospitality to be offered to them. Penelope and Telemachus follow the rules of the guest-host relationship by providing hospitality to the suitors, but unfortunately the suitors do not adhere to the rules because they overstay their welcome. It is acceptable for the suitors to have expected some form of hospitality, but it is inappropriate for them to abuse the hosts and not respect the requests for them to leave. It should be noted that it is just as important for the host to offer hospitality as it is for the guest to appropriately receive and appreciate it. It is for this offense that the suitors are killed, with both the approval and assistance of the gods.

IV. THE ROLE OF THE GODS

The ancient Greek religion was polytheistic, with the pantheon including hundreds, if not thousands, of deities and supernatural beings. The numerous gods and goddesses both represented and influenced different concepts and elements; the gods concerned themselves with nature, physical abilities, emotional qualities, historical moments, and even everyday activities and concerns. Odysseus directs his supplication towards both Athena and Zeus, who have taken interest in his plight and wish to support both his physical and emotional journey.

While Greeks imagined the gods as supernatural beings involved in their own conflicts and emotional turmoil, they also believed that the gods were involved in the lives of humans. Gods were thought to be everywhere, always watching and interacting with humans. Therefore, religion became a part of everyday life and the gods were associated with activities such as fighting in a battle, farming, child rearing, and even celebrating. Greeks believed that the gods could see all that they did and protect them, so it was important to respect their power and influence.

Perhaps unfortunately, the gods were anthropomorphic and acted much like humans often do, but with the added benefits of immense power and immortality. Their superiority did not prevent them from struggling with emotions usually associated with humans, such as love, jealousy, pride, and anger. Often these emotional struggles created conflicts both in the supernatural realm and in the human world.

Regarding the *Odyssey*, the interactions amongst Athena, Zeus, and Poseidon are the most important. Zeus is considered the father figure among the gods, and he oversees both the relationships and conflicts among the immortals and also between the immortals and humans. He also oversees and rules the weather, which greatly affects Odysseus' journey. Thankfully, Zeus is also the overseer of friendship, the guest-host relationship, and suppliants, which benefits Odysseus greatly. The goddess Athena supports Odysseus because she values in him the qualities that she also represents, namely wisdom, courage, justice, and skill. She often appeals to Zeus for help on Odysseus' behalf. Poseidon, the god of the sea and earthquakes, is Odysseus' biggest foe throughout the story; he is angry with Odysseus for blinding Polyphemus, Poseidon's cyclops son. Poseidon's anger towards the boastful Odysseus cannot be assuaged for many years, and it takes the intervention of Athena and Zeus to ensure Odysseus' return home to Ithaca.

Though the Ancient Greeks believed that the gods watched over them and had the ability to help or punish them, they did not look to them for advice or guidance on how to live a virtuous life. Instead, the Greeks aimed to please the gods and avoid their wrath. Worshippers did make offerings to the gods, usually of the choicest slices of meat and of wine, but they did not pray to them for constant spiritual guidance. Sometimes, worshippers would make an offering to the gods to request a boon from them. A worshipper could be seeking something as simple as a favorable wind, or something as complex as assistance in completing a heroic task. Each deity was worshipped according to their function and the realm in which they ruled.

The Greeks believed in an afterlife, but they did not make a distinctive separation of where good and evil individuals would spend that afterlife. Instead, all Greeks resided in Hades, the underworld, after death. Death was inevitable, so the Greeks focused on the joys of life on earth and the adherence to societal mores. Odysseus' main conflicts revolve around his negligence of these societal expectations and his propensity to lapse into *hubris* (roughly, arrogance and excess—see the section titled **Hubris, Temptation, and Excess** for more). Of all of the offenses humans could commit, it was hubris that the gods punished most severely. Odysseus' biggest challenge throughout the narrative is his struggle with hubris and his inability to avoid excess and temptation.

V. HEROIC TRAITS

Heroes in Ancient Greek literature demonstrate some if not all of the following traits:

1. Royal birth/origins
2. Half mortal/half god
3. Performs extraordinary feats or has supernatural encounters
4. Noble character, representative of his society's ideal except for a fatal flaw
5. Suffers physically and mentally during his adventures
6. Fights for honor and in the support of expectations from his society
7. Favored by the gods, but also has complicated relationship with some of the gods
8. Subject of a prophecy that comes true
9. Goes on a quest either in search of someone or someplace, typically a homeland
10. Travels to the underworld
11. Typically must die in order to be immortalized

It is important for the hero to be an idealized figure that every common man can strive to emulate but can never fully embody. Therefore, most Ancient Greek heroes have either supernatural or royal origins that separate them from average men. By giving him divine or royal parentage, the author presents the hero and his actions in a wider scope; the decisions of gods and kings are typically more consequential than those of the public at large. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus does not have divine parentage, but he is king of Ithaca, which sets him apart from other characters and from readers.

Along his journey, the Greek hero must perform extraordinary feats and have supernatural encounters with creatures and the immortals. This journey is often a quest in search of someone or someplace. In Odysseus' case, it is a quest in search of home. Often this journey is not just physical, but also spiritual and personal. Odysseus' adventures not only lead him home, but lead him to a better understanding of himself, of his place in the world, and with a better sense of self-control. Odysseus also adheres to the expectation that heroes must suffer physically and mentally during his adventures. His strength is tried in many episodes, along with his intelligence, cunning, self-control, and adherence to his society's rules and expectations.

During his journey, the hero should fight for honor and to uphold the expectations from his society. Odysseus fights for his honor and to protect his family, perhaps the most honorable cause. The suitors' punishment for disrespecting the guest-friend relationship also connects Odysseus with this heroic trait.

While the Greek hero should be a man who represents the ideals of his society, he often has a flaw that surprises us because it causes him to act in ways counter to what we expect from a hero. It is important for the hero to have a flaw, though, because it not only creates conflict but it allows us to identify more strongly with the hero and his actions. If the hero were to be flawless—and thus completely unlike humans—readers might not connect with the story or internalize the lessons the story presents.

Unlike modern-day heroic figures, the mythical hero is not necessarily good for goodness's sake. He does not always perform heroic feats for the sake of others; often, the hero performs good deeds in order to test his virtues, to advance his own cause, or to gain notoriety. The hero's greatness has less to do with his inherent morality than with his ability to adhere to his society's expectations and to transform into someone more than human.

Temptation is an essential element in demonstrating the flaws and testing the makeup of a hero. Odysseus often gives in to the temptations of excess and hubris, for which he is thoroughly punished by the gods. Typically, the mythical hero fails resisting temptation in the beginning of the narrative, is punished by the gods, and then is tested numerous times again. By the end of the narrative, the hero should be able to resist temptation and reject hubris so that he may finish his quest. Odysseus faces temptation at every turn and his failure to resist temptation and hubris results in the gods punishing him, killing his men, and extending his journey home. Odysseus' temptations typically involve abandoning his journey. However, while the luxuries offered Odysseus by Circe and Calypso tempt Odysseus, he learns that it is only through his deeds and his adherence to expectations that life is valuable and meaningful.

Another essential heroic trait that applies to Odysseus is the ability to travel to the underworld (nekyia). Odysseus travels into the underworld to speak with Tiresias, and while he is there he also encounters other spirits. By traveling to the underworld, heroes obtain valuable information from the spirits of the dead. Traveling to the underworld also gives the character immortality in a sense because they are able to cross the boundary between the natural and spiritual worlds.

VI. HUBRIS, TEMPTATION, AND EXCESS

In Ancient Greek society, each individual was required to resist the temptations presented by their personal desires. These desires could manifest in various ways, including the pursuit of wealth and power, the temptations of forbidden knowledge or experiences, excessive consumption or excessive physical pleasures, and excessive pride. Such desires had to be strictly regulated because the gods punished arrogance and excess. The Greek motto towards any earthly or personal desires was "meden agan" which means "nothing in excess." This does not mean that the Greeks rejected desires entirely, but that they simply required that each individual learn to manage them.

Hubris is an example of a *hamartia*, a major error that may or may not stem from a character's innate flaws or moral failings. Hubris translates to "excessive pride" or "insolence," and a character's hubris often leads to his or her destruction. The Ancient Greeks understood hubris in a slightly different way: the mistreatment of others for the sole purpose of making oneself appear superior. When hubris was addressed in Greek literature, it typically resulted in punishment from the gods or the fall of the protagonist from a position of power and grace.

Greek society did follow a code of conduct, but they tended to present rules for ethical behavior not as strict injunctions but as a set of semi-flexible guidelines. Judeo-Christian traditions typically prescribed clear commandments that prohibited what their society considered sinful and inappropriate behavior. These commandments clearly stated what behaviors to avoid and which actions to dutifully perform. Ancient Greeks, however, did not strive to completely eliminate their desires. Instead, they were expected to manage them so as not to indulge them to excess. The onus of navigating the somewhat nebulous Greek moral code was placed on the individual.

For the Greeks, it was important to experience pleasure and pursue desire, but it was equally important to demonstrate restraint and self-control. Without the temptations of indulging in our desires, there would be no test of our moral fiber and no ability for characters like Odysseus to show his personal growth, restraint, and self-control. While Odysseus is not a perfect man, the Greeks would consider it more impressive that Odysseus struggled and overcame his flaws than if he never struggled in the first place.

If it were not for Athena intervening on his behalf, Odysseus certainly would have received even greater punishment for his hubris; however, Athena's assistance does not protect him entirely from his punishments. Odysseus first insults the god of the sea, Poseidon, when he does not designate a sacrifice to him after Poseidon prevents the Trojans from discovering the Greeks inside the Trojan Horse. By neglecting to thank Poseidon properly, Odysseus fails to acknowledge Poseidon's role in his success. Odysseus further damages this relationship when he blinds and mocks Poseidon's son, Polyphemus. Odysseus excessively brags by telling Polyphemus his true name. This is a clear act of hubris because Odysseus simply wants to claim credit for his actions and taunt the Cyclops. Polyphemus prays for help, and Poseidon answers by eventually killing Odysseus' men and prolonging Odysseus' journey home.

There are many other examples of temptation and excess in the narrative, typically addressing women and alcohol. Odysseus' men often drink and eat excessively, and this excessive behavior causes them to be ineffectual on the battlefield or even leads to their deaths. One of Odysseus' men, Elpenor, falls off a roof and breaks his neck because he is intoxicated. For his part, Odysseus does not resist the loving embrace of the goddess Circe. It takes him a full year and the prodding of his men to restart his journey home.

Lastly, the behavior of the suitors is also considered hubris because they do not heed the will of the gods, they do not follow the guest-friend relationship, and they excessively partake in the food and drink of Odysseus' house.

All of the characters who display arrogance and hubris end up learning the penalty of their excessive egos and their lack of self-control.

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Practice Free-Response Prompts

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE PROMPT #1

In the following passage from the *Odyssey*, Odysseus reveals his true identity to the suitors and battles against them. Carefully read the passage. Then, in a well-developed essay, explain how Homer uses elements such as tone, point of view, selection of detail, and characterization to establish Odysseus' justification for revenge.

Then Odysseus tore off his rags, and sprang on to the broad pavement with his bow and his quiver full of arrows. He shed the arrows on to the ground at his feet and said, "The mighty contest is at an end. I will now see whether Apollo will vouchsafe it to me to hit another mark which no man has yet hit."

5 On this he aimed a deadly arrow at Antinous, who was about to take up a two-handled gold cup to drink his wine and already had it in his hands. He had no thought of death—who amongst all the revellers would think that one man, however brave, would stand alone among so many and kill him? The arrow struck Antinous in the throat, and the point went clean through his neck, so that he fell over and the cup
10 dropped from his hand, while a thick stream of blood gushed from his nostrils. He kicked the table from him and upset the things on it, so that the bread and roasted meats were all soiled as they fell over on to the ground. The suitors were in an uproar when they saw that a man had been hit; they sprang in dismay one and all of them from their seats and looked everywhere towards the walls, but there was neither shield nor spear, and they rebuked Odysseus very angrily. "Stranger," said they, "you shall pay for shooting people in this way: you shall see no other contest; you are a doomed man; he
15 whom you have slain was the foremost youth in Ithaca, and the vultures shall devour you for having killed him."

20 Thus they spoke, for they thought that he had killed Antinous by mistake, and did not perceive that death was hanging over the head of everyone of them. But Odysseus glared at them and said:

"Dogs, did you think that I should not come back from Troy? You have wasted my substance, have forced my women servants to lie with you, and have wooed my wife while I was still living. You have feared neither God nor man, and now you shall die."

25 They turned pale with fear as he spoke, and every man looked round about to see whither he might fly for safety, but Eurymachus alone spoke.

"If you are Odysseus," said he, "then what you have said is just. We have done much wrong on your lands and in your house. But Antinous who was the head and front of the offending lies low already. It was all his doing. It was not that he wanted to marry
30 Penelope; he did not so much care about that; what he wanted was something quite different, and Zeus has not vouchsafed it to him; he wanted to kill your son and to be chief man in Ithaca. Now, therefore, that he has met the death which was his due, spare the lives of your people. We will make everything good among ourselves, and pay you in full for all that we have eaten and drunk. Each one of us shall pay you a fine worth twenty oxen, and we will keep on giving you gold and bronze till your heart is softened.
35 Until we have done this no one can complain of your being enraged against us."

Odysseus again glared at him and said, "Though you should give me all that you have in the world both now and all that you ever shall have, I will not stay my hand till

40 I have paid all of you in full. You must fight, or fly for your lives; and fly, not a man of you shall."

 Their hearts sank as they heard him, but Eurymachus again spoke saying:

45 "My friends, this man will give us no quarter. He will stand where he is and shoot us down till he has killed every man among us. Let us then show fight; draw your swords, and hold up the tables to shield you from his arrows. Let us have at him with a rush, to drive him from the pavement and doorway: we can then get through into the town, and raise such an alarm as shall soon stay his shooting."

50 As he spoke he drew his keen blade of bronze, sharpened on both sides, and with a loud cry sprang towards Odysseus, but Odysseus instantly shot an arrow into his breast that caught him by the nipple and fixed itself in his liver. He dropped his sword and fell doubled up over his table. The cup and all the meats went over on to the ground as he smote the earth with his forehead in the agonies of death, and he kicked the stool with his feet until his eyes were closed in darkness.

55 Then Amphinomus drew his sword and made straight at Odysseus to try and get him away from the door; but Telemachus was too quick for him, and struck him from behind; the spear caught him between the shoulders and went right through his chest, so that he fell heavily to the ground and struck the earth with his forehead. Then Telemachus sprang away from him, leaving his spear still in the body, for he feared that if he stayed to draw it out, some one of the Achaeans might come up and hack at him with his sword, or knock him down, so he set off at a run, and immediately was at his father's side. Then he said:

60 "Father, let me bring you a shield, two spears, and a brass helmet for your temples. I will arm myself as well, and will bring other armor for the swineherd and the stockman, for we had better be armed."

65 "Run and fetch them," answered Odysseus, "while my arrows hold out, or when I am alone they may get me away from the door."

70 Telemachus did as his father said, and went off to the store room where the armor was kept. He chose four shields, eight spears, and four brass helmets with horse-hair plumes. He brought them with all speed to his father, and armed himself first, while the stockman and the swineherd also put on their armor, and took their places near Odysseus. Meanwhile Odysseus, as long as his arrows lasted, had been shooting the suitors one by one, and they fell thick on one another: when his arrows gave out, he set the bow to stand against the end wall of the house by the door post, and hung a shield four hides thick about his shoulders; on his comely head he set his helmet, well wrought with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it, and he grasped two redoubtable bronze-shod spears.

75 Now there was a trap door on the wall, while at one end of the pavement there was an exit leading to a narrow passage, and this exit was closed by a well-made door. Odysseus told Philoetius to stand by this door and guard it, for only one person could attack it at a time. But Agelaus shouted out, "Cannot someone go up to the trap door and tell the people what is going on? Help would come at once, and we should soon make an end of this man and his shooting."

85 "This may not be, Agelaus," answered Melanthius, "the mouth of the narrow passage is dangerously near the entrance to the outer court. One brave man could prevent any number from getting in. But I know what I will do, I will bring you arms from the store-room, for I am sure it is there that Odysseus and his son have put them."

On this the goatherd Melanthius went by back passages to the store-room of Odysseus' house. There he chose twelve shields, with as many helmets and spears, and

brought them back as fast as he could to give them to the suitors. Odysseus' heart began to fail him when he saw the suitors putting on their armor and brandishing their spears. 90 He saw the greatness of the danger, and said to Telemachus, "Some one of the women inside is helping the suitors against us, or it may be Melanthius."

Telemachus answered, "The fault, father, is mine, and mine only; I left the store room door open, and they have kept a sharper look out than I have. Go, Eumaeus, put the door to, and see whether it is one of the women who is doing this, or whether, as I 95 suspect, it is Melanthius the son of Dolius."

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile Melanthius was again going to the store room to fetch more armor, but the swineherd saw him and said to Odysseus who was beside him, "Odysseus, noble son of Laertes, it is that scoundrel Melanthius, just as we suspected, who is going to the store room. Say, shall I kill him, if I can get the better of him, or shall 100 I bring him here that you may take your own revenge for all the many wrongs that he has done in your house?"

Odysseus answered, "Telemachus and I will hold these suitors in check, no matter what they do; go back both of you and bind Melanthius' hands and feet behind him. Throw him into the store room and make the door fast behind you; then fasten a noose 105 about his body, and string him close up to the rafters from a high bearing-post, that he may linger on in an agony."

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said; they went to the store room, which they entered before Melanthius saw them, for he was busy searching for arms in the innermost part of the room, so the two took their stand on either side of the door 110 and waited. By and by Melanthius came out with a helmet in one hand, and an old dry-rotted shield in the other, which had been borne by Laertes when he was young, but which had been long since thrown aside, and the straps had become unsewn; on this the two seized him, dragged him back by the hair, and threw him struggling to the ground. They bent his hands and feet well behind his back, and bound them tight with a painful 115 bond as Odysseus had told them; then they fastened a noose about his body and strung him up from a high pillar till he was close up to the rafters, and over him did you then vaunt, O swineherd Eumaeus saying, "Melanthius, you will pass the night on a soft bed as you deserve. You will know very well when morning comes from the streams of Oceanus, and it is time for you to be driving in your goats for the suitors to feast on."

There, then, they left him in very cruel bondage, and having put on their armor they closed the door behind them and went back to take their places by the side of Odysseus; whereon the four men stood in the cloister, fierce and full of fury; nevertheless, those who were in the body of the court were still both brave and many. Then Zeus' daughter 120 Athena came up to them, having assumed the voice and form of Mentor. Odysseus was glad when he saw her and said, "Mentor, lend me your help, and forget not your old comrade, nor the many good turns he has done you. Besides, you are my age-mate." But all the time he felt sure it was Athena, and the suitors from the other side raised an uproar when they saw her. Agelaus was the first to reproach her. "Mentor," he cried, 125 "do not let Odysseus beguile you into siding with him and fighting the suitors. This is what we will do: when we have killed these people, father and son, we will kill you too. You shall pay for it with your head, and when we have killed you, we will take all you have, indoors or out, and bring it into hotch-pot with Odysseus' property; we will not let your sons live in your house, nor your daughters, nor shall your widow continue to live in the city of Ithaca." 130

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE PROMPT #2

In this passage from the *Odyssey*, Odysseus encounters Polyphemus, a Cyclops. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, explain how this passage illuminates the expectations of Greek society.

5 “‘Look here, Cyclops,’ said I, ‘you have been eating a great deal of man’s flesh, so take this and drink some wine, that you may see what kind of liquor we had on board my ship. I was bringing it to you as a drink-offering, in the hope that you would take compassion upon me and further me on my way home, whereas all you do is to go on ramping and raving most intolerably. You ought to be ashamed of yourself; how can you expect people to come see you any more if you treat them in this way?’”

10 “‘He then took the cup and drank. He was so delighted with the taste of the wine that he begged me for another bowl full. ‘Be so kind,’ he said, ‘as to give me some more, and tell me your name at once. I want to make you a present that you will be glad to have. We have wine even in this country, for our soil grows grapes and the sun ripens them, but this drinks like Nectar and Ambrosia all in one.’”

15 “‘I then gave him some more; three times did I fill the bowl for him, and three times did he drain it without thought or heed; then, when I saw that the wine had got into his head, I said to him as plausibly as I could: ‘Cyclops, you ask my name and I will tell it you; give me, therefore, the present you promised me; my name is Noman; this is what my father and mother and my friends have always called me.’”

“‘But the cruel wretch said, ‘Then I will eat all Noman’s comrades before Noman himself, and will keep Noman for the last. This is the present that I will make him.’”

20 “‘As he spoke he reeled, and fell sprawling face upwards on the ground. His great neck hung heavily backwards and a deep sleep took hold upon him. Presently he turned sick, and threw up both wine and the gobbets of human flesh on which he had been gorging, for he was very drunk. Then I thrust the beam of wood far into the embers to heat it, and encouraged my men lest any of them should turn faint-hearted. When the wood, green though it was, was about to blaze, I drew it out of the fire glowing with heat, and my men gathered round me, for heaven had filled their hearts with courage. We drove the sharp end of the beam into the monster’s eye, and bearing upon it with all my weight I kept turning it round and round as though I were boring a hole in a ship’s plank with an auger, which two men with a wheel and strap can keep on turning as long as they choose. Even thus did we bore the red hot beam into his eye, till the boiling blood bubbled all over it as we worked it round and round, so that the steam from the burning eyeball scalded his eyelids and eyebrows, and the roots of the eye sputtered in the fire. As a blacksmith plunges an axe or hatchet into cold water to temper it—for it is this that gives strength to the iron—and it makes a great hiss as he does so, even thus did the Cyclops’ eye hiss round the beam of olive wood, and his hideous yells made the cave ring again. We ran away in a fright, but he plucked the beam all besmirched with gore from his eye, and hurled it from him in a frenzy of rage and pain, shouting as he did so to the other Cyclopes who lived on the bleak headlands near him; so they gathered from all quarters round his cave when they heard him crying, and asked what was the matter with him.

40 “‘What ails you, Polyphemus,’ said they, ‘that you make such a noise, breaking the stillness of the night, and preventing us from being able to sleep? Surely no man is carrying off your sheep? Surely no man is trying to kill you either by fraud or by force?’”

“But Polyphemos shouted to them from inside the cave, ‘Noman is killing me by fraud; no man is killing me by force.’

45 “‘Then,’ said they, ‘if no man is attacking you, you must be ill; when Zeus makes people ill, there is no help for it, and you had better pray to your father Poseidon.’

“Then they went away, and I laughed inwardly at the success of my clever stratagem, but the Cyclops, groaning and in an agony of pain, felt about with his hands till he found the stone and took it from the door; then he sat in the doorway and stretched his
50 hands in front of it to catch anyone going out with the sheep, for he thought I might be foolish enough to attempt this.

“As for myself I kept on puzzling to think how I could best save my own life and those of my companions; I schemed and schemed, as one who knows that his life depends upon it, for the danger was very great. In the end I deemed that this plan
55 would be the best; the male sheep were well grown, and carried a heavy black fleece, so I bound them noiselessly in threes together, with some of the withies on which the wicked monster used to sleep. There was to be a man under the middle sheep, and the two on either side were to cover him, so that there were three sheep to each man. As for myself there was a ram finer than any of the others, so I caught hold of him by the back, ensconced myself in the thick wool under his belly, and hung on patiently to his fleece,
60 face upwards, keeping a firm hold on it all the time.

“Thus, then, did we wait in great fear of mind till morning came, but when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, the male sheep hurried out to feed, while the ewes remained bleating about the pens waiting to be milked, for their udders
65 were full to bursting; but their master in spite of all his pain felt the backs of all the sheep as they stood upright, without being sharp enough to find out that the men were underneath their bellies. As the ram was going out, last of all, heavy with its fleece and with the weight of my crafty self, Polyphemos laid hold of it and said:

“My good ram, what is it that makes you the last to leave my cave this morning?
70 You are not wont to let the ewes go before you, but lead the mob with a run whether to flowery meadow or bubbling fountain, and are the first to come home again at night; but now you lag last of all. Is it because you know your master has lost his eye, and are sorry because that wicked Noman and his horrid crew has got him down in his drink and blinded him? But I will have his life yet. If you could understand and talk, you
75 would tell me where the wretch is hiding, and I would dash his brains upon the ground till they flew all over the cave. I should thus have some satisfaction for the harm this no-good Noman has done me.’

“As he spoke he drove the ram outside, but when we were a little way out from the cave and yards, I first got from under the ram’s belly, and then freed my comrades; as
80 for the sheep, which were very fat, by constantly heading them in the right direction we managed to drive them down to the ship. The crew rejoiced greatly at seeing those of us who had escaped death, but wept for the others whom the Cyclops had killed. However, I made signs to them by nodding and frowning that they were to hush their crying, and told them to get all the sheep on board at once and put out to sea; so they went aboard,
85 took their places, and smote the grey sea with their oars. Then, when I had got as far out as my voice would reach, I began to jeer at the Cyclops.

“‘Cyclops,’ said I, ‘you should have taken better measure of your man before eating up his comrades in your cave. You wretch, eat up your visitors in your own house? You might have known that your sin would find you out, and now Zeus and the other gods
90 have punished you.’

“He got more and more furious as he heard me, so he tore the top from off a high mountain, and flung it just in front of my ship so that it was within a little of hitting the end of the rudder. The sea quaked as the rock fell into it, and the wash of the wave it raised carried us back towards the mainland, and forced us towards the shore. But I
95 snatched up a long pole and kept the ship off, making signs to my men by nodding my head, that they must row for their lives, whereon they laid out with a will. When we had got twice as far as we were before, I was for jeering at the Cyclops again, but the men begged and prayed of me to hold my tongue.

“Do not,’ they exclaimed, ‘be mad enough to provoke this savage creature further;
100 he has thrown one rock at us already which drove us back again to the mainland, and we thought it would have been the death of us; if he had then heard any further sound of voices he would have pounded our heads and our ship’s timbers into a jelly with the rugged rocks he would have heaved at us, for he can throw them a long way.’

“But I would not listen to them, and shouted out to him in my rage, ‘Cyclops, if
105 anyone asks you who it was that put your eye out and spoiled your beauty, say it was the valiant warrior Odysseus, son of Laertes, who lives in Ithaca.’

“On this he groaned, and cried out, ‘Alas, alas, then the old prophecy about me is coming true. There was a prophet here, at one time, a man both brave and of great stature, Telemus son of Eurymus, who was an excellent seer, and did all the prophesying
110 for the Cyclopes till he grew old; he told me that all this would happen to me some day, and said I should lose my sight by the hand of Odysseus. I have been all along expecting someone of imposing presence and superhuman strength, whereas he turns out to be a little insignificant weakling, who has managed to blind my eye by taking advantage of me in my drink; come here, then, Odysseus, that I may make you presents to show my
115 hospitality, and urge Poseidon to help you forward on your journey—for Poseidon and I are father and son. He, if he so will, shall heal me, which no one else neither god nor man can do.’

“Then I said, ‘I wish I could be as sure of killing you outright and sending you down to the house of Hades, as I am that it will take more than Poseidon to cure that eye of yours.’

120 “On this he lifted up his hands to the firmament of heaven and prayed, saying, ‘Hear me, great Poseidon; if I am indeed your own true begotten son, grant that Odysseus may never reach his home alive; or if he must get back to his friends at last, let him do so late and in sore plight after losing all his men let him reach his home in another man’s ship and find trouble in his house.’

125 “Thus did he pray, and Poseidon heard his prayer. Then he picked up a rock much larger than the first, swung it aloft and hurled it with prodigious force. It fell just short of the ship, but was within a little of hitting the end of the rudder. The sea quaked as the rock fell into it, and the wash of the wave it raised drove us onwards on our way towards the shore of the island.”

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE PROMPT #3

The following passage, from Homer's *Odyssey*, details a confrontation between the disguised Odysseus and Antinous, leader of the suitors. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, explain how the author creates sympathy for Odysseus. Avoid plot summary.

“Sir, give me something; you are not, surely, the poorest man here; you seem to be a chief, foremost among them all; therefore you should be the better giver, and I will tell far and wide of your bounty. I too was a rich man once, and had a fine house of my own; in those days I gave to many a tramp such as I now am, no matter who he might be nor
5 what he wanted. I had any number of servants, and all the other things which people have who live well and are accounted wealthy, but it pleased Zeus to take all away from me. He sent me with a band of roving robbers to Egypt; it was a long voyage and I was undone by it. I stationed my ships in the river Aegyptus, and bade my men stay by them and keep guard over them, while I sent out scouts to reconnoiter from every point of
10 vantage.

“But the men disobeyed my orders, took to their own devices, and ravaged the land of the Egyptians, killing the men, and taking their wives and children captives. The alarm was soon carried to the city, and when they heard the war-cry, the people came out at daybreak till the plain was filled with soldiers horse and foot, and with the gleam
15 of armor. Then Zeus spread panic among my men, and they would no longer face the enemy, for they found themselves surrounded. The Egyptians killed many of us, and took the rest alive to do forced labor for them; as for myself, they gave me to a friend who met them, to take to Cyprus, Dmetor by name, son of Iasus, who was a great man in Cyprus. Thence I am come hither in a state of great misery.”

20 Then Antinous said, “What god can have sent such a pestilence to plague us during our dinner? Get out, into the open part of the court, or I will give you Egypt and Cyprus over again for your insolence and importunity; you have begged of all the others, and they have given you lavishly, for they have abundance round them, and it is easy to be free with other people's property when there is plenty of it.”

25 On this Odysseus began to move off, and said, “Your looks, my fine sir, are better than your breeding; if you were in your own house you would not spare a poor man so much as a pinch of salt, for though you are in another man's, and surrounded with abundance, you cannot find it in you to give him even a piece of bread.”

30 This made Antinous very angry, and he scowled at him saying, “You shall pay for this before you get clear of the court.” With these words he threw a footstool at him, and hit him on the right shoulder blade near the top of his back. Odysseus stood firm as a rock and the blow did not even stagger him, but he shook his head in silence as he brooded on his revenge. Then he went back to the threshold and sat down there, laying his well filled wallet at his feet.

35 “Listen to me,” he cried, “you suitors of Queen Penelope, that I may speak even as I am minded. A man knows neither ache nor pain if he gets hit while fighting for his money, or for his sheep or his cattle; and even so Antinous has hit me while in the service of my miserable belly, which is always getting people into trouble. Still, if the poor have gods and avenging deities at all, I pray them that Antinous may come to a bad
40 end before his marriage.”

“Sit where you are, and eat your victuals in silence, or be off elsewhere,” shouted Antinous. “If you say more I will have you dragged hand and foot through the courts, and the servants shall flay you alive.”

45 The other suitors were much displeased at this, and one of the young men said, “Antinous, you did ill in striking that poor wretch of a tramp: it will be worse for you if he should turn out to be some god—and we know the gods go about disguised in all sorts of ways as people from foreign countries, and travel about the world to see who do amiss and who righteously.”

50 Thus said the suitors, but Antinous paid them no heed. Meanwhile Telemachus was furious about the blow that had been given to his father, and though no tear fell from him, he shook his head in silence and brooded on his revenge.

Now when Penelope heard that the beggar had been struck in the banqueting-cloister, she said before her maids, “Would that Apollo would so strike you, Antinous,” and her waiting woman Eurynome answered, “If our prayers were answered not one
55 of the suitors would ever again see the sun rise.” Then Penelope said, “Nurse, I hate every single one of them, for they mean nothing but mischief, but I hate Antinous like the darkness of death itself. A poor unfortunate tramp has come begging about the house for sheer want. Everyone else has given him something to put in his wallet, but Antinous has hit him on the right shoulder-blade with a footstool.”

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE PROMPT #4

In the following passage from the *Odyssey*, Odysseus fights with Irus, an irascible tramp. Carefully read the passage. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the source or sources of the conflict and explain what the conflict contributes to the overall meaning of the text. Avoid mere plot summary.

Now there came a certain common tramp who used to go begging all over the city of Ithaca, and was notorious as an incorrigible glutton and drunkard. This man had no strength nor stay in him, but he was a great hulking fellow to look at; his real name, the one his mother gave him, was Arnaeus, but the young men of the place called him Irus, because he used to run errands for anyone who would send him. As soon as he came he began to insult Odysseus, and to try and drive him out of his own house.

“Be off, old man,” he cried, “from the doorway, or you shall be dragged out neck and heels. Do you not see that they are all giving me the wink, and wanting me to turn you out by force, only I do not like to do so? Get up then, and go of yourself, or we shall come to blows.”

Odysseus frowned on him and said, “My friend, I do you no manner of harm; people give you a great deal, but I am not jealous. There is room enough in this doorway for the pair of us, and you need not grudge me things that are not yours to give. You seem to be just such another tramp as myself, but perhaps the gods will give us better luck by and by. Do not, however, talk too much about fighting or you will incense me, and old though I am, I shall cover your mouth and chest with blood. I shall have more peace tomorrow if I do, for you will not come to the house of Odysseus any more.”

Irus was very angry and answered, “You filthy glutton, you run on trippingly like an old fishtail. I have a good mind to lay both hands about you, and knock your teeth out of your head like so many boar’s tusks. Get ready, therefore, and let these people here stand by and look on. You will never be able to fight one who is so much younger than yourself.”

Thus roundly did they rate one another on the smooth pavement in front of the doorway, and when Antinous saw what was going on he laughed heartily and said to the others, “This is the finest sport that you ever saw; heaven never yet sent anything like it into this house. The stranger and Irus have quarreled and are going to fight, let us set them on to do so at once.”

The suitors all came up laughing, and gathered round the two ragged tramps. “Listen to me,” said Antinous, “there are some goats’ paunches down at the fire, which we have filled with blood and fat, and set aside for supper; he who is victorious and proves himself to be the better man shall have his pick of the lot; he shall be free of our table and we will not allow any other beggar about the house at all.”

The others all agreed, but Odysseus, to throw them off the scent, said, “Sirs, an old man like myself, worn out with suffering, cannot hold his own against a young one; but my irrepressible belly urges me on, though I know it can only end in my getting a drubbing. You must swear, however that none of you will give me a foul blow to favor Irus and secure him the victory.”

They swore as he told them, and when they had completed their oath Telemachus put in a word and said, “Stranger, if you have a mind to settle with this fellow, you need not be afraid of anyone here. Whoever strikes you will have to fight more than

one. I am host, and the other chiefs, Antinous and Eurymachus, both of them men of understanding, are of the same mind as I am."

Everyone assented, and Odysseus girded his old rags about his loins, thus baring his stalwart thighs, his broad chest and shoulders, and his mighty arms; but Athena came
45 up to him and made his limbs even stronger still. The suitors were beyond measure astonished, and one would turn towards his neighbor saying, "The stranger has brought such a thigh out of his old rags that there will soon be nothing left of Irus."

Irus began to be very uneasy as he heard them, but the servants girded him by force, and brought him into the open part of the court in such a fright that his limbs were all
50 of a tremble. Antinous scolded him and said, "You swaggering bully, you ought never to have been born at all if you are afraid of such an old broken down creature as this tramp is. I say, therefore—and it shall surely be—if he beats you and proves himself the better man, I shall pack you off on board ship to the mainland and send you to king Echetus, who kills everyone that comes near him. He will cut off your nose and ears, and draw
55 out your entrails for the dogs to eat."

This frightened Irus still more, but they brought him into the middle of the court, and the two men raised their hands to fight. Then Odysseus considered whether he should let drive so hard at him as to make an end of him then and there, or whether he should give him a lighter blow that should only knock him down; in the end he deemed
60 it best to give the lighter blow for fear the Achaeans should begin to suspect who he was. Then they began to fight, and Irus hit Odysseus on the right shoulder; but Odysseus gave Irus a blow on the neck under the ear that broke in the bones of his skull, and the blood came gushing out of his mouth; he fell groaning in the dust, gnashing his teeth and kicking on the ground, but the suitors threw up their hands and nearly died of laughter,
65 as Odysseus caught hold of him by the foot and dragged him into the outer court as far as the gate-house. There he propped him up against the wall and put his staff in his hands. "Sit here," said he, "and keep the dogs and pigs off; you are a pitiful creature, and if you try to make yourself king of the beggars any more you shall fare still worse."

Then he threw his dirty old wallet, all tattered and torn over his shoulder with the
70 cord by which it hung, and went back to sit down upon the threshold; but the suitors went within the cloisters, laughing and saluting him, "May Zeus, and all the other gods," said they, "grant you whatever you want for having put an end to the importunity of this insatiable tramp. We will take him over to the mainland presently, to king Echetus, who kills everyone that comes near him."

Odysseus hailed this as of good omen, and Antinous set a great goat's paunch before
75 him filled with blood and fat. Amphinomus took two loaves out of the bread-basket and brought them to him, pledging him as he did so in a golden goblet of wine. "Good luck to you," he said, "father stranger, you are very badly off at present, but I hope you will have better times by and by."

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE PROMPT #5

Select a novel, play, or epic* in which a character is separated from his or her “home,” whether that home is his or her literal homeland or another special place. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character’s experiences away from home are challenging, yet enriching, and how these experiences illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid simply summarizing the plot.

** Note to students: For the purposes of this unit, you must choose the Odyssey.*

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE PROMPT #6

Select a novel, play, or epic* in which women are prominently represented. Then, write an essay in which you analyze the role or roles female characters perform and explain what the representations of these characters contribute to your understanding of the society portrayed in the text.

** Note to students: For the purposes of this unit, you must choose the Odyssey.*

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE PROMPT #7

Choose a work of literary merit* in which a character struggles to reconcile his or her personality with the expectations imposed upon the character by her or his society or culture. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the sources of this struggle and explain what this struggle contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid plot summary.

** Note to students: For the purposes of this unit, you must choose the Odyssey.*

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE PROMPT #8

Minor characters can play important roles in works of literature; authors sometimes use them to lend support to narrative and thematic elements or throw a major character’s attributes into sharp relief. Select a work of literary merit* in which a minor character has an important effect on at least one element of the text. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze this minor character and explain what he or she contributes to the development of an element or elements of the text. Avoid plot summary.

** Note to students: For the purposes of this unit, you must choose the Odyssey.*

Practice Multiple-Choice Questions

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 1–5

Carefully read the following passage from Book XII of the *Odyssey*. Then, select the best answers to multiple-choice questions 1–5.

“For a whole month the wind blew steadily from the South, and there was no other wind, but only South and East. As long as corn and wine held out the men did not touch the cattle when they were hungry; when, however, they had eaten all there was in the ship, they were forced to go further afield, with hook and line, catching birds, and taking whatever they could lay their hands on; for they were starving. One day, therefore, I went up inland that I might pray heaven to show me some means of getting away. When I had gone far enough to be clear of all my men, and had found a place that was well sheltered from the wind, I washed my hands and prayed to all the gods in Olympus till by and by they sent me off into a sweet sleep.

“Meanwhile Eurylochus had been giving evil counsel to the men, ‘Listen to me,’ said he, ‘my poor comrades. All deaths are bad enough but there is none so bad as famine. Why should not we drive in the best of these cows and offer them in sacrifice to the immortal gods? If we ever get back to Ithaca, we can build a fine temple to the sun-god and enrich it with every kind of ornament; if, however, he is determined to sink our ship out of revenge for these homed cattle, and the other gods are of the same mind, I for one would rather drink salt water once for all and have done with it, than be starved to death by inches in such a desert island as this is.’

“Thus spoke Eurylochus, and the men approved his words. Now the cattle, so fair and goodly, were feeding not far from the ship; the men, therefore, drove in the best of them, and they all stood round them saying their prayers, and using young oak-shoots instead of barley-meal, for there was no barley left. When they had done praying they killed the cows and dressed their carcasses; they cut out the thigh bones, wrapped them round in two layers of fat, and set some pieces of raw meat on top of them. They had no wine with which to make drink-offerings over the sacrifice while it was cooking, so they kept pouring on a little water from time to time while the inward meats were being grilled; then, when the thigh bones were burned and they had tasted the inward meats, they cut the rest up small and put the pieces upon the spits.

“By this time my deep sleep had left me, and I turned back to the ship and to the sea shore. As I drew near I began to smell hot roast meat, so I groaned out a prayer to the immortal gods. ‘Father Zeus,’ I exclaimed, ‘and all you other gods who live in everlasting bliss, you have done me a cruel mischief by the sleep into which you have sent me; see what fine work these men of mine have been making in my absence.’

“Meanwhile Lampetie went straight off to the sun and told him we had been killing his cows, whereon he flew into a great rage, and said to the immortals, ‘Father Zeus, and all you other gods who live in everlasting bliss, I must have vengeance on the crew of Odysseus’ ship: they have had the insolence to kill my cows, which were the one thing I loved to look upon, whether I was going up heaven or down again. If they do not square accounts with me about my cows, I will go down to Hades and shine there among the dead.’

40 “‘Sun,’ said Zeus, ‘go on shining upon us gods and upon mankind over the fruitful earth. I will shiver their ship into little pieces with a bolt of white lightning as soon as they get out to sea.’

“I was told all this by Calypso, who said she had heard it from the mouth of Hermes.

45 “As soon as I got down to my ship and to the sea shore I rebuked each one of the men separately, but we could see no way out of it, for the cows were dead already. And indeed the gods began at once to show signs and wonders among us, for the hides of the cattle crawled about, and the joints upon the spits began to low like cows, and the meat, whether cooked or raw, kept on making a noise just as cows do.

50 “For six days my men kept driving in the best cows and feasting upon them, but when Zeus the son of Cronus had added a seventh day, the fury of the gale abated; we therefore went on board, raised our masts, spread sail, and put out to sea. As soon as we were well away from the island, and could see nothing but sky and sea, the son of Cronus raised a black cloud over our ship, and the sea grew dark beneath it. We did not get on much further, for in another moment we were caught by a terrific squall from the West that snapped the forestays of the mast so that it fell aft, while all the ship’s gear tumbled about at the bottom of the vessel. The mast fell upon the head of the helmsman in the ship’s stern, so that the bones of his head were crushed to pieces, and he fell overboard as though he were diving, with no more life left in him.

60 “Then Zeus let fly with his thunderbolts, and the ship went round and round, and was filled with fire and brimstone as the lightning struck it. The men all fell into the sea; they were carried about in the water round the ship, looking like so many sea-gulls, but the god presently deprived them of all chance of getting home again.

65 “I stuck to the ship till the sea knocked her sides from her keel (which drifted about by itself) and struck the mast out of her in the direction of the keel; but there was a backstay of stout ox-thong still hanging about it, and with this I lashed the mast and keel together, and getting astride of them was carried wherever the winds chose to take me.

70 “The gale from the West had now spent its force, and the wind got into the South again, which frightened me lest I should be taken back to the terrible whirlpool of Charybdis. This indeed was what actually happened, for I was borne along by the waves all night, and by sunrise had reached the rock of Scylla, and the whirlpool. She was then sucking down the salt sea water, but I was carried aloft toward the fig tree, which I caught hold of and clung on to like a bat. I could not plant my feet anywhere so as to stand securely, for the roots were a long way off and the boughs that overshadowed the whole pool were too high, too vast, and too far apart for me to reach them; so I hung patiently on, waiting till the pool should discharge my mast and raft again—and a very long while it seemed. A jury-man is not more glad to get home to supper, after having been long detained in court by troublesome cases, than I was to see my raft beginning to work its way out of the whirlpool again. At last I let go with my hands and feet, and fell heavily into the sea, hard by my raft on to which I then got, and began to row with my hands. As for Scylla, the father of gods and men would not let her get further sight of me—otherwise I should have certainly been lost.

80 “Hence I was carried along for nine days till on the tenth night the gods stranded me on the Ogygian island, where dwells the great and powerful goddess Calypso. She took me in and was kind to me, but I need say no more about this, for I told you and your noble wife all about it yesterday, and I hate saying the same thing over and over again.”

85

1. The author uses the sun god's cattle as a device to do all of the following except
 - A. pass judgment on the actions of Odysseus' men.
 - B. initiate conflict between the men and the sun god.
 - C. criticize Odysseus' lackluster leadership.
 - D. fulfill the prophecy that Odysseus will return home alone.
 - E. illuminate the nature of and relationships between the immortals.
2. The shift in tone from the beginning of the passage to the end can best be described as
 - A. informative to reflective.
 - B. frustrated to determined.
 - C. flippant to serious.
 - D. contradictory to assertive.
 - E. persuasive to indignant.
3. Zeus's role in this episode can be described as ironic because he is
 - A. the most powerful of all gods and intervenes on behalf of a mortal.
 - B. instrumental in many of Odysseus' punishments, yet protects Odysseus from Scylla.
 - C. a powerful god, yet he is frightened by the sun god's threat to move the sun to Hades.
 - D. capable of saving Odysseus from Scylla, but he is unable to save the other men.
 - E. able to destroy the ship with a lightning bolt, but is unable to kill Odysseus.
4. Eurylochus' use of rhetoric is persuasive because he appeals to the men's
 - A. acknowledgement that Odysseus has failed them.
 - B. innate sense of self-preservation.
 - C. unwavering sense of right and wrong.
 - D. determination to thwart the will of the gods.
 - E. enduring optimism in times of despair.
5. The diction in the passage as a whole can best be described as
 - A. colloquial.
 - B. technical.
 - C. scholarly.
 - D. old-fashioned.
 - E. conversational.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 6–10

Carefully read the following passage from Book XVI of the *Odyssey*. Then, select the best answers to multiple-choice questions 6–10.

- Meanwhile Odysseus and the swineherd had lit a fire in the hut and were getting breakfast ready at daybreak, for they had sent the men out with the pigs. When Telemachus came up, the dogs did not bark but fawned upon him, so Odysseus, hearing the sound of feet and noticing that the dogs did not bark, said to Eumaeus:
- 5 “Eumaeus, I hear footsteps; I suppose one of your men or some one of your acquaintance is coming here, for the dogs are fawning upon him and not barking.”
- The words were hardly out of his mouth before his son stood at the door. Eumaeus sprang to his feet, and the bowls in which he was mixing wine fell from his hands, as he made towards his master. He kissed his head and both his beautiful eyes, and wept for joy. A father could not be more delighted at the return of an only son, the child of his old age, after ten years’ absence in a foreign country and after having gone through much hardship. He embraced him, kissed him all over as though he had come back from the dead, and spoke fondly to him saying:
- 10 “So you are come, Telemachus, light of my eyes that you are. When I heard you had gone to Pylos I made sure I was never going to see you any more. Come in, my dear child, and sit down, that I may have a good look at you now you are home again; it is not very often you come into the country to see us herdsmen; you stick pretty close to the town generally. I suppose you think it better to keep an eye on what the suitors are doing.”
- 15 “So be it, old friend,” answered Telemachus, “but I am come now because I want to see you, and to learn whether my mother is still at her old home or whether someone else has married her, so that the bed of Odysseus is without bedding and covered with cobwebs.”
- 20 “She is still at the house,” replied Eumaeus, “grieving and breaking her heart, and doing nothing but weep, both night and day continually.”
- As he spoke he took Telemachus’ spear, whereon he crossed the stone threshold and came inside. Odysseus rose from his seat to give him place as he entered, but Telemachus checked him; “Sit down, stranger,” said he, “I can easily find another seat, and there is one here who will lay it for me.”
- 25 Odysseus went back to his own place, and Eumaeus strewed some green brushwood on the floor and threw a sheepskin on top of it for Telemachus to sit upon. Then the swineherd brought them platters of cold meat, the remains from what they had eaten the day before, and he filled the bread baskets with bread as fast as he could. He mixed wine also in bowls of ivy-wood, and took his seat facing Odysseus. Then they laid their hands on the good things that were before them, and as soon as they had had enough to eat and drink Telemachus said to Eumaeus, “Old friend, where does this stranger come from? How did his crew bring him to Ithaca, and who were they?—for assuredly he did not come here by land.”
- 30 To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaeus, “My son, I will tell you the real truth. He says he is a Cretan, and that he has been a great traveler. At this moment he is running away from a Thesprotian ship, and has taken refuge at my station, so I will put him into your hands. Do whatever you like with him, only remember that he is your suppliant.”
- 35 “I am very much distressed,” said Telemachus, “by what you have just told me. How can I take this stranger into my house? I am as yet young, and am not strong enough
- 40

to hold my own if any man attacks me. My mother cannot make up her mind whether to stay where she is and look after the house out of respect for public opinion and the memory of her husband, or whether the time is now come for her to take the best man of those who are wooing her, and the one who will make her the most advantageous offer; still, as the stranger has come to your station I will find him a cloak and shirt of good wear, with a sword and sandals, and will send him wherever he wants to go. Or if you like you can keep him here at the station, and I will send him clothes and food that he may be no burden on you and on your men; but I will not have him go near the suitors, for they are very insolent, and are sure to ill treat him in a way that would greatly grieve me; no matter how valiant a man may be he can do nothing against numbers, for they will be too strong for him.”

Then Odysseus said, “Sir, it is right that I should say something myself. I am much shocked about what you have said about the insolent way in which the suitors are behaving in despite of such a man as you are. Tell me, do you submit to such treatment tamely, or has some god set your people against you? May you not complain of your brothers—for it is to these that a man may look for support, however great his quarrel may be? I wish I were as young as you are and in my present mind; if I were son to Odysseus, or, indeed, Odysseus himself, I would rather someone came and cut my head off, but I would go to the house and be the bane of everyone of these men. If they were too many for me—I being single-handed—I would rather die fighting in my own house than see such disgraceful sights day after day, strangers grossly maltreated, and men dragging the women servants about the house in an unseemly way, wine drawn recklessly, and bread wasted all to no purpose for an end that shall never be accomplished.”

And Telemachus answered, “I will tell you truly everything. There is no enmity between me and my people, nor can I complain of brothers, to whom a man may look for support however great his quarrel may be. Zeus has made us a race of only sons. Laertes was the only son of Arceisius, and Odysseus only son of Laertes. I am myself the only son of Odysseus who left me behind him when he went away, so that I have never been of any use to him. Hence it comes that my house is in the hands of numberless marauders; for the chiefs from all the neighboring islands, Dulichium, Same, Zacynthus, as also all the principal men of Ithaca itself, are eating up my house under the pretext of paying court to my mother, who will neither say directly that she will not marry, nor yet bring matters to an end, so they are making havoc of my estate, and before long will do so with myself into the bargain. The issue, however, rests with heaven. But do you, old friend Eumaeus, go at once and tell Penelope that I am safe and have returned from Pylos. Tell it to herself alone, and then come back here without letting anyone else know, for there are many who are plotting mischief against me.”

“I understand and heed you,” replied Eumaeus; “you need instruct me no further, only as I am going that way say whether I had not better let poor Laertes know that you are returned. He used to superintend the work on his farm in spite of his bitter sorrow about Odysseus, and he would eat and drink at will along with his servants; but they tell me that from the day on which you set out for Pylos he has neither eaten nor drunk as he ought to do, nor does he look after his farm, but sits weeping and wasting the flesh from off his bones.”

“More’s the pity,” answered Telemachus, “I am sorry for him, but we must leave him to himself just now. If people could have everything their own way, the first thing I should choose would be the return of my father; but go, and give your message; then make haste back again, and do not turn out of your way to tell Laertes. Tell my mother to send one of her women secretly with the news at once, and let him hear it from her.”

Thus did he urge the swineherd; Eumaeus, therefore, took his sandals, bound them to his feet, and started for the town. Athena watched him well off the station, and then came up to it in the form of a woman—fair, stately, and wise. She stood against the side of the entry, and revealed herself to Odysseus, but Telemachus could not see her, and knew not that she was there, for the gods do not let themselves be seen by everybody. Odysseus saw her, and so did the dogs, for they did not bark, but went scared and whining off to the other side of the yards. She nodded her head and motioned to Odysseus with her eyebrows; whereon he left the hut and stood before her outside the main wall of the yards. Then she said to him:

“Odysseus, noble son of Laertes, it is now time for you to tell your son: do not keep him in the dark any longer, but lay your plans for the destruction of the suitors, and then make for the town. I will not be long in joining you, for I too am eager for the fray.”

As she spoke she touched him with her golden wand. First she threw a fair clean shirt and cloak about his shoulders; then she made him younger and of more imposing presence; she gave him back his color, filled out his cheeks, and let his beard become dark again. Then she went away and Odysseus came back inside the hut. His son was astounded when he saw him, and turned his eyes away for fear he might be looking upon a god.

“Stranger,” said he, “how suddenly you have changed from what you were a moment or two ago. You are dressed differently and your color is not the same. Are you some one or other of the gods that live in heaven? If so, be propitious to me till I can make you due sacrifice and offerings of wrought gold. Have mercy upon me.”

And Odysseus said, “I am no god, why should you take me for one? I am your father, on whose account you grieve and suffer so much at the hands of lawless men.”

As he spoke he kissed his son, and a tear fell from his cheek on to the ground, for he had restrained all tears till now. But Telemachus could not yet believe that it was his father, and said:

“You are not my father, but some god is flattering me with vain hopes that I may grieve the more hereafter; no mortal man could of himself contrive to do as you have been doing, and make yourself old and young at a moment’s notice, unless a god were with him. A second ago you were old and all in rags, and now you are like some god come down from heaven.”

Odysseus answered, “Telemachus, you ought not to be so immeasurably astonished at my being really here. There is no other Odysseus who will come hereafter. Such as I am, it is I, who after long wandering and much hardship have got home in the twentieth year to my own country. What you wonder at is the work of the redoubtable goddess Athena, who does with me whatever she will, for she can do what she pleases. At one moment she makes me like a beggar, and the next I am a young man with good clothes on my back; it is an easy matter for the gods who live in heaven to make any man look either rich or poor.”

6. Eumaeus' relationship with Telemachus is best characterized as
 - A. sycophantic.
 - B. amorous.
 - C. paternal.
 - D. disinterested.
 - E. domineering.
7. The author uses the discussion between Eumaeus and Telemachus to do all of the following except
 - A. acknowledge that Penelope has yet to remarry.
 - B. clarify Telemachus' position concerning the suitors.
 - C. establish Eumaeus as a trusted servant.
 - D. demonstrate the Greek guest-host relationship.
 - E. undermine Odysseus' authority in his homeland.
8. Odysseus withholds the truth about his identity from his son primarily to
 - A. assess his son's worthiness.
 - B. evaluate his son's character.
 - C. punish his son.
 - D. inflame his son's emotions.
 - E. test his son's perceptiveness.
9. The tone in which Odysseus addresses his son's inability to remove the suitors from his home is
 - A. questioning.
 - B. faultfinding.
 - C. supportive.
 - D. argumentative.
 - E. condescending.
10. Telemachus' reluctance to accept his father's true identity reflects his
 - A. underlying bitterness due to his father's prolonged absence.
 - B. carefulness and control over his impulsive urges.
 - C. animosity towards the gods due to their trickery.
 - D. stubbornness and inability to alter his perceptions.
 - E. inability to experience positive and joyful emotions.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 11–15

Carefully read the following passage from Book XXII of the *Odyssey*. Then, select the best answers to multiple-choice questions 11–15.

Then Odysseus tore off his rags, and sprang on to the broad pavement with his bow and his quiver full of arrows. He shed the arrows on to the ground at his feet and said, “The mighty contest is at an end. I will now see whether Apollo will vouchsafe it to me to hit another mark which no man has yet hit.”

5 On this he aimed a deadly arrow at Antinous, who was about to take up a two-handled gold cup to drink his wine and already had it in his hands. He had no thought of death—who amongst all the revellers would think that one man, however brave, would stand alone among so many and kill him? The arrow struck Antinous in the throat, and the point went clean through his neck, so that he fell over and the cup
10 dropped from his hand, while a thick stream of blood gushed from his nostrils. He kicked the table from him and upset the things on it, so that the bread and roasted meats were all soiled as they fell over on to the ground. The suitors were in an uproar when they saw that a man had been hit; they sprang in dismay one and all of them from their seats and looked everywhere towards the walls, but there was neither shield nor
15 spear, and they rebuked Odysseus very angrily. “Stranger,” said they, “you shall pay for shooting people in this way: you shall see no other contest; you are a doomed man; he whom you have slain was the foremost youth in Ithaca, and the vultures shall devour you for having killed him.”

20 Thus they spoke, for they thought that he had killed Antinous by mistake, and did not perceive that death was hanging over the head of everyone of them. But Odysseus glared at them and said:

“Dogs, did you think that I should not come back from Troy? You have wasted my substance, have forced my women servants to lie with you, and have wooed my wife while I was still living. You have feared neither God nor man, and now you shall die.”

25 They turned pale with fear as he spoke, and every man looked round about to see whither he might fly for safety, but Eurymachus alone spoke.

“If you are Odysseus,” said he, “then what you have said is just. We have done much wrong on your lands and in your house. But Antinous who was the head and front of the offending lies low already. It was all his doing. It was not that he wanted to marry
30 Penelope; he did not so much care about that; what he wanted was something quite different, and Zeus has not vouchsafed it to him; he wanted to kill your son and to be chief man in Ithaca. Now, therefore, that he has met the death which was his due, spare the lives of your people. We will make everything good among ourselves, and pay you in full for all that we have eaten and drunk. Each one of us shall pay you a fine worth
35 twenty oxen, and we will keep on giving you gold and bronze till your heart is softened. Until we have done this no one can complain of your being enraged against us.”

Odysseus again glared at him and said, “Though you should give me all that you have in the world both now and all that you ever shall have, I will not stay my hand till I have paid all of you in full. You must fight, or fly for your lives; and fly, not a man of
40 you shall.”

Their hearts sank as they heard him, but Eurymachus again spoke saying:

45 “My friends, this man will give us no quarter. He will stand where he is and shoot us down till he has killed every man among us. Let us then show fight; draw your swords, and hold up the tables to shield you from his arrows. Let us have at him with a rush, to drive him from the pavement and doorway: we can then get through into the town, and raise such an alarm as shall soon stay his shooting.”

50 As he spoke he drew his keen blade of bronze, sharpened on both sides, and with a loud cry sprang towards Odysseus, but Odysseus instantly shot an arrow into his breast that caught him by the nipple and fixed itself in his liver. He dropped his sword and fell doubled up over his table. The cup and all the meats went over on to the ground as he smote the earth with his forehead in the agonies of death, and he kicked the stool with his feet until his eyes were closed in darkness.

55 Then Amphinomus drew his sword and made straight at Odysseus to try and get him away from the door; but Telemachus was too quick for him, and struck him from behind; the spear caught him between the shoulders and went right through his chest, so that he fell heavily to the ground and struck the earth with his forehead. Then Telemachus sprang away from him, leaving his spear still in the body, for he feared that if he stayed to draw it out, some one of the Achaeans might come up and hack at him with his sword, or knock him down, so he set off at a run, and immediately was at his father’s side. Then he said:

“Father, let me bring you a shield, two spears, and a brass helmet for your temples. I will arm myself as well, and will bring other armor for the swineherd and the stockman, for we had better be armed.”

65 “Run and fetch them,” answered Odysseus, “while my arrows hold out, or when I am alone they may get me away from the door.”

70 Telemachus did as his father said, and went off to the store room where the armor was kept. He chose four shields, eight spears, and four brass helmets with horse-hair plumes. He brought them with all speed to his father, and armed himself first, while the stockman and the swineherd also put on their armor, and took their places near Odysseus. Meanwhile Odysseus, as long as his arrows lasted, had been shooting the suitors one by one, and they fell thick on one another: when his arrows gave out, he set the bow to stand against the end wall of the house by the door post, and hung a shield four hides thick about his shoulders; on his comely head he set his helmet, well wrought with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it, and he grasped two redoubtable bronze-shod spears.

75 Now there was a trap door on the wall, while at one end of the pavement there was an exit leading to a narrow passage, and this exit was closed by a well-made door. Odysseus told Philoetius to stand by this door and guard it, for only one person could attack it at a time. But Agelaus shouted out, “Cannot someone go up to the trap door and tell the people what is going on? Help would come at once, and we should soon make an end of this man and his shooting.”

85 “This may not be, Agelaus,” answered Melanthius, “the mouth of the narrow passage is dangerously near the entrance to the outer court. One brave man could prevent any number from getting in. But I know what I will do, I will bring you arms from the store-room, for I am sure it is there that Odysseus and his son have put them.”

90 On this the goatherd Melanthius went by back passages to the store-room of Odysseus’ house. There he chose twelve shields, with as many helmets and spears, and brought them back as fast as he could to give them to the suitors. Odysseus’ heart began to fail him when he saw the suitors putting on their armor and brandishing their spears.

He saw the greatness of the danger, and said to Telemachus, "Some one of the women inside is helping the suitors against us, or it may be Melanthius."

Telemachus answered, "The fault, father, is mine, and mine only; I left the store room door open, and they have kept a sharper look out than I have. Go, Eumaeus, put
95 the door to, and see whether it is one of the women who is doing this, or whether, as I suspect, it is Melanthius the son of Dolius."

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile Melanthius was again going to the store room to fetch more armor, but the swineherd saw him and said to Odysseus who was beside him,
100 "Odysseus, noble son of Laertes, it is that scoundrel Melanthius, just as we suspected, who is going to the store room. Say, shall I kill him, if I can get the better of him, or shall I bring him here that you may take your own revenge for all the many wrongs that he has done in your house?"

Odysseus answered, "Telemachus and I will hold these suitors in check, no matter what they do; go back both of you and bind Melanthius' hands and feet behind him.
105 Throw him into the store room and make the door fast behind you; then fasten a noose about his body, and string him close up to the rafters from a high bearing-post, that he may linger on in an agony."

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said; they went to the store room, which they entered before Melanthius saw them, for he was busy searching for arms in
110 the innermost part of the room, so the two took their stand on either side of the door and waited. By and by Melanthius came out with a helmet in one hand, and an old dry-rotted shield in the other, which had been borne by Laertes when he was young, but which had been long since thrown aside, and the straps had become unsewn; on this the two seized him, dragged him back by the hair, and threw him struggling to the ground.
115 They bent his hands and feet well behind his back, and bound them tight with a painful bond as Odysseus had told them; then they fastened a noose about his body and strung him up from a high pillar till he was close up to the rafters, and over him did you then vaunt, O swineherd Eumaeus saying, "Melanthius, you will pass the night on a soft bed as you deserve. You will know very well when morning comes from the streams of
120 Oceanus, and it is time for you to be driving in your goats for the suitors to feast on."

There, then, they left him in very cruel bondage, and having put on their armor they closed the door behind them and went back to take their places by the side of Odysseus; whereon the four men stood in the cloister, fierce and full of fury; nevertheless, those who were in the body of the court were still both brave and many. Then Zeus' daughter
125 Athena came up to them, having assumed the voice and form of Mentor. Odysseus was glad when he saw her and said, "Mentor, lend me your help, and forget not your old comrade, nor the many good turns he has done you. Besides, you are my age-mate."

But all the time he felt sure it was Athena, and the suitors from the other side raised an uproar when they saw her. Agelaus was the first to reproach her. "Mentor," he cried,
130 "do not let Odysseus beguile you into siding with him and fighting the suitors. This is what we will do: when we have killed these people, father and son, we will kill you too. You shall pay for it with your head, and when we have killed you, we will take all you have, indoors or out, and bring it into hotch-pot with Odysseus' property; we will not let your sons live in your house, nor your daughters, nor shall your widow continue to
135 live in the city of Ithaca."

This made Athena still more furious, so she scolded Odysseus very angrily. "Odysseus," said she, "your strength and prowess are no longer what they were when you fought for nine long years among the Trojans about the noble lady Helen. You killed many a man in those days, and it was through your stratagem that Priam's city was

140 taken. How comes it that you are so lamentably less valiant now that you are on your own ground, face to face with the suitors in your own house? Come on, my good fellow, stand by my side and see how Mentor, son of Alcimus shall fight your foes and requite your kindnesses conferred upon him.”

145 But she would not give him full victory as yet, for she wished still further to prove his own prowess and that of his brave son, so she flew up to one of the rafters in the roof of the cloister and sat upon it in the form of a swallow.

11. The author’s diction during this passage can best be described as
 - A. detached.
 - B. archaic.
 - C. figurative.
 - D. simplistic.
 - E. sentimental.
12. In this passage, Melanthius functions *primarily* as a
 - A. scapegoat.
 - B. plot device.
 - C. source of dramatic irony.
 - D. messenger from the gods.
 - E. foil to Eumaeus.
13. Which of the following is the best meaning of “prove” (line 144) in the context of the passage?
 - A. verify
 - B. test
 - C. demonstrate
 - D. undergo
 - E. approve
14. Telemachus’ actions during the attack on the suitors demonstrate his
 - A. reliance on his father’s strength.
 - B. insecurities during battle.
 - C. impulsive bloodlust.
 - D. thoughtfulness and control.
 - E. superiority over Odysseus.
15. Athena’s tone towards Odysseus is
 - A. supportive.
 - B. chastising.
 - C. humorous.
 - D. belittling.
 - E. dismissive.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 16–20

Carefully read the following passage from Book XI of the *Odyssey*. Then, select the best answers to multiple-choice questions 16–20.

- “When Persephone had dismissed the female ghosts in all directions, the ghost of Agamemnon son of Atreus came sadly up to me, surrounded by those who had perished with him in the house of Aegisthus. As soon as he had tasted the blood, he knew me, and weeping bitterly stretched out his arms towards me to embrace me; but he had no strength nor substance any more, and I too wept and pitied him as I beheld him. ‘How did you come by your death,’ said I, ‘King Agamemnon? Did Poseidon raise his winds and waves against you when you were at sea, or did your enemies make an end of you on the main land when you were cattle-lifting or sheep-stealing, or while they were fighting in defense of their wives and city?’
- 5 “‘Odysseus,’ he answered, ‘noble son of Laertes, I was not lost at sea in any storm of Poseidon’s raising, nor did my foes despatch me upon the mainland, but Aegisthus and my wicked wife were the death of me between them. He asked me to his house, feasted me, and then butchered me most miserably as though I were a fat beast in a slaughter house, while all around me my comrades were slain like sheep or pigs for the wedding breakfast, or picnic, or gorgeous banquet of some great nobleman. You must have seen numbers of men killed either in a general engagement, or in single combat, but you never saw anything so truly pitiable as the way in which we fell in that cloister, with the mixing bowl and the loaded tables lying all about, and the ground reeking with our blood. I heard Priam’s daughter Cassandra scream as Clytemnestra killed her close beside me. I lay dying upon the earth with the sword in my body, and raised my hands to kill the slut of a murderess, but she slipped away from me; she would not even close my lips nor my eyes when I was dying, for there is nothing in this world so cruel and so shameless as a woman when she has fallen into such guilt as hers was. Fancy murdering her own husband! I thought I was going to be welcomed home by my children and my servants, but her abominable crime has brought disgrace on herself and all women who shall come after—even on the good ones.’
- 10 “And I said, ‘In truth Zeus has hated the house of Atreus from first to last in the matter of their women’s counsels. See how many of us fell for Helen’s sake, and now it seems that Clytemnestra hatched mischief against you too during your absence.’
- 15 “‘Be sure, therefore,’ continued Agamemnon, ‘and not be too friendly even with your own wife. Do not tell her all that you know perfectly well yourself. Tell her a part only, and keep your own counsel about the rest. Not that your wife, Odysseus, is likely to murder you, for Penelope is a very admirable woman, and has an excellent nature. We left her a young bride with an infant at her breast when we set out for Troy. This child no doubt is now grown up happily to man’s estate, and he and his father will have a joyful meeting and embrace one another as it is right they should do, whereas my wicked wife did not even allow me the happiness of looking upon my son, but killed me ere I could do so. Furthermore I say—and lay my saying to your heart—do not tell people when you are bringing your ship to Ithaca, but steal a march upon them, for after
- 20 all this there is no trusting women. But now tell me, and tell me true, can you give me any news of my son Orestes? Is he in Orchomenus, or at Pylos, or is he at Sparta with Menelaus—for I presume that he is still living.’
- 25
30
35
40

“And I said, ‘Agamemnon, why do you ask me? I do not know whether your son is alive or dead, and it is not right to talk when one does not know.’

45 “As we two sat weeping and talking thus sadly with one another the ghost of Achilles came up to us with Patroclus, Antilochus, and Ajax who was the finest and godliest man of all the Danaans after the son of Peleus. The fleet descendant of Aeacus knew me and spoke piteously, saying, ‘Odysseus, noble son of Laertes, what deed of daring will you undertake next, that you venture down to the house of Hades among us silly dead, who are but the ghosts of them that can labor no more?’

50 “And I said, ‘Achilles, son of Peleus, foremost champion of the Achaeans, I came to consult Teiresias, and see if he could advise me about my return home to Ithaca, for I have never yet been able to get near the Achaean land, nor to set foot in my own country, but have been in trouble all the time. As for you, Achilles, no one was ever yet so fortunate as you have been, nor ever will be, for you were adored by all us Argives as long as you were alive, and now that you are here you are a great prince among the dead. Do not, therefore, take it so much to heart even if you are dead.’

“‘Say not a word,’ he answered, ‘in death’s favor; I would rather be a paid servant in a poor man’s house and be above ground than king of kings among the dead. But give me news about my son; is he gone to the wars and will he be a great soldier, or is this not so? Tell me also if you have heard anything about my father Peleus—does he still rule among the Myrmidons, or do they show him no respect throughout Hellas and Phthia now that he is old and his limbs fail him? Could I but stand by his side, in the light of day, with the same strength that I had when I killed the bravest of our foes upon the plain of Troy—could I but be as I then was and go even for a short time to my father’s house, anyone who tried to do him violence or supersede him would soon rue it.’

65 “‘I have heard nothing,’ I answered, ‘of Peleus, but I can tell you all about your son Neoptolemus, for I took him in my own ship from Scyros with the Achaeans. In our councils of war before Troy he was always first to speak, and his judgement was unerring. Nestor and I were the only two who could surpass him; and when it came to fighting on the plain of Troy, he would never remain with the body of his men, but would dash on far in front, foremost of them all in valor. Many a man did he kill in battle—I cannot name every single one of those whom he slew while fighting on the side of the Argives, but will only say how he killed that valiant hero Eurypylos son of Telephus, who was the handsomest man I ever saw except Memnon; many others also of the Ceteians fell around him by reason of a woman’s bribes. Moreover, when all the bravest of the Argives went inside the horse that Epeus had made, and it was left to me to settle when we should either open the door of our ambushade, or close it, though all the other leaders and chief men among the Danaans were drying their eyes and quaking in every limb, I never once saw him turn pale nor wipe a tear from his cheek; he was all the time urging me to break out from the horse—grasping the handle of his sword and his bronze-shod spear, and breathing fury against the foe. Yet when we had sacked the city of Priam he got his handsome share of the prize money and went on board (such is the fortune of war) without a wound upon him, neither from a thrown spear nor in close combat, for the rage of Ares is a matter of great chance.’

85 “When I had told him this, the ghost of Achilles strode off across a meadow full of asphodel, exulting over what I had said concerning the prowess of his son.

“The ghosts of other dead men stood near me and told me each his own melancholy tale; but that of Ajax son of Telamon alone held aloof—still angry with me for having won the cause in our dispute about the armor of Achilles. Thetis had offered it as a prize, but the Trojan prisoners and Athena were the judges. Would that I had never

gained the day in such a contest, for it cost the life of Ajax, who was foremost of all the Danaans after the son of Peleus, alike in stature and prowess.

95 “When I saw him I tried to pacify him and said, ‘Ajax, will you not forget and forgive even in death, but must the judgement about that hateful armor still rankle with you? It cost us Argives dear enough to lose such a tower of strength as you were to us. We mourned you as much as we mourned Achilles son of Peleus himself, nor can the blame be laid on anything but on the spite which Zeus bore against the Danaans, for it was this that made him counsel your destruction—come hither, therefore, bring your proud spirit into subjection, and hear what I can tell you.’

100 “He would not answer, but turned away to Erebus and to the other ghosts; nevertheless, I should have made him talk to me in spite of his being so angry, or I should have gone on talking to him, only that there were still others among the dead whom I desired to see.

105 “Then I saw Minos son of Zeus with his golden sceptre in his hand sitting in judgement on the dead, and the ghosts were gathered sitting and standing round him in the spacious house of Hades, to learn his sentences upon them.

“After him I saw huge Orion in a meadow full of asphodel driving the ghosts of the wild beasts that he had killed upon the mountains, and he had a great bronze club in his hand, unbreakable for ever and ever.

“And I saw Tityus son of Gaia stretched upon the plain and covering some nine acres of ground. Two vultures on either side of him were digging their beaks into his liver, and he kept on trying to beat them off with his hands, but could not; for he had violated Zeus’ mistress Leto as she was going through Panopeus on her way to Pytho.

115 “I saw also the dreadful fate of Tantalus, who stood in a lake that reached his chin; he was dying to quench his thirst, but could never reach the water, for whenever the poor creature stooped to drink, it dried up and vanished, so that there was nothing but dry ground—parched by the spite of heaven. There were tall trees, moreover, that shed their fruit over his head—pears, pomegranates, apples, sweet figs and juicy olives, but whenever the poor creature stretched out his hand to take some, the wind tossed the branches back again to the clouds.

120 “And I saw Sisyphus at his endless task raising his prodigious stone with both his hands. With hands and feet he tried to roll it up to the top of the hill, but always, just before he could roll it over on to the other side, its weight would be too much for him, and the pitiless stone would come thundering down again on to the plain. Then he would begin trying to push it up hill again, and the sweat ran off him and the steam rose after him.”

16. Odysseus’ questions about the nature of Agamemnon’s death reveal Odysseus’
- A. preoccupation with honor.
 - B. fear of the gods.
 - C. disapproval of thieves.
 - D. criticism of ineffectual warriors.
 - E. flippant attitude towards death.

17. The purpose of the retelling of Agamemnon's death at the hands of his wife is primarily to
- A. insert conflict into the otherwise peaceful scene.
 - B. create a negative tone towards marriage.
 - C. explain why his spirit remains in the underworld.
 - D. prove that all women are inherently prone to evil acts.
 - E. establish Agamemnon as a parallel character to Odysseus.
18. The overall tone of the passage can best be described as
- A. accusatory.
 - B. bewildered.
 - C. sardonic.
 - D. contemplative.
 - E. fanciful.
19. Odysseus' discussion with Achilles reminds Odysseus of all of the following except that
- A. fame and glory should be the ultimate goal for every man.
 - B. avoiding glory-seeking is the only way for him to return home.
 - C. being a servant in a poor man's house is better than being king among the dead.
 - D. much like Achilles, his own son's abilities and character are unknown to him.
 - E. his fame on the battlefield is well-known throughout the world.
20. The purpose of the author describing both Odysseus' comrades and other characters of Greek legend is to
- A. establish the similarities between the underworld and the Christian concept of Hell.
 - B. emphasize that men and women are only of equal status in the underworld.
 - C. foreshadow the role of these other Greek legends in the end of the narrative.
 - D. demonstrate how the actions of the living may affect their existence in the underworld.
 - E. encourage both the reader and Odysseus to cherish life and fear death.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 21–25

Carefully read the following passage from Book IV of the *Odyssey*. Then, select the best answers to multiple-choice questions 21–25.

Menelaus overheard him and said, “No one, my sons, can hold his own with Zeus, for his house and everything about him is immortal; but among mortal men—well, there may be another who has as much wealth as I have, or there may not; but at all events I have traveled much and have undergone much hardship, for it was nearly eight years before I could get home with my fleet. I went to Cyprus, Phoenicia and the Egyptians; I went also to the Ethiopians, the Sidonians, and the Erembians, and to Libya where the lambs have horns as soon as they are born, and the sheep lamb down three times a year. Everyone in that country, whether master or man, has a great deal of cheese, meat, and good milk, for the ewes yield all the year round. But while I was traveling and getting great riches among these people, my brother was secretly and shockingly murdered through the perfidy of his wicked wife, so that I have no pleasure in being lord of all this wealth. Whoever your parents may be they must have told you about all this, and of my heavy loss in the ruin of a stately mansion fully and magnificently furnished. Would that I had only a third of what I now have so that I had stayed at home, and all those were living who perished on the plain of Troy, far from Argos. I often grieve, as I sit here in my house, for one and all of them. At times I cry aloud for sorrow, but presently I leave off again, for crying is cold comfort and one soon tires of it. Yet grieve for these as I may, I do so for one man more than for them all. I cannot even think of him without loathing both food and sleep, so miserable does he make me, for no one of all the Achaeans worked so hard or risked so much as he did. He took nothing by it, and has left a legacy of sorrow to myself, for he has been gone a long time, and we know not whether he is alive or dead. His old father, his long-suffering wife Penelope, and his son Telemachus, whom he left behind him an infant in arms, are plunged in grief on his account.”

Thus spoke Menelaus, and the heart of Telemachus yearned as he thought of his father. Tears fell from his eyes as he heard him thus mentioned, so that he held his cloak before his face with both hands. When Menelaus saw this he doubted whether to let him choose his own time for speaking, or to ask him at once and find what it was all about.

While he was thus in two minds Helen came down from her high vaulted and perfumed room, looking as lovely as Artemis herself. Adraste brought her a seat, Alcippe a soft woollen rug while Phylo fetched her the silver workbox which Alcandra wife of Polybus had given her. Polybus lived in Egyptian Thebes, which is the richest city in the whole world; he gave Menelaus two baths, both of pure silver, two tripods, and ten talents of gold; besides all this, his wife gave Helen some beautiful presents, to wit, a golden distaff, and a silver work box that ran on wheels, with a gold band round the top of it. Phylo now placed this by her side, full of fine spun yarn, and a distaff charged with violet colored wool was laid upon the top of it. Then Helen took her seat, put her feet upon the footstool, and began to question her husband.

“Do we know, Menelaus,” said she, “the names of these strangers who have come to visit us? Shall I guess right or wrong?—but I cannot help saying what I think. Never yet have I seen either man or woman so like somebody else (indeed when I look at him I hardly know what to think) as this young man is like Telemachus, whom Odysseus left

as a baby behind him, when you Achaeans went to Troy with battle in your hearts, on account of my most shameless self."

45 "My dear wife," replied Menelaus, "I see the likeness just as you do. His hands and feet are just like Odysseus; so is his hair, with the shape of his head and the expression of his eyes. Moreover, when I was talking about Odysseus, and saying how much he had suffered on my account, tears fell from his eyes, and he hid his face in his mantle."

Then Pisistratus said, "Menelaus, son of Atreus, you are right in thinking that this young man is Telemachus, but he is very modest, and is ashamed to come here and
50 begin opening up discourse with one whose conversation is so divinely interesting as your own. My father, Nestor, sent me to escort him hither, for he wanted to know whether you could give him any counsel or suggestion. A son has always trouble at home when his father has gone away leaving him without supporters; and this is how Telemachus is now placed, for his father is absent, and there is no one among his own
55 people to stand by him."

"Bless my heart," replied Menelaus, "then I am receiving a visit from the son of a very dear friend, who suffered much hardship for my sake. I had always hoped to entertain him with most marked distinction when heaven had granted us a safe return from beyond the seas. I should have founded a city for him in Argos, and built him a
60 house. I should have made him leave Ithaca with his goods, his son, and all his people, and should have sacked for them some one of the neighboring cities that are subject to me. We should thus have seen one another continually, and nothing but death could have interrupted so close and happy an intercourse. I suppose, however, that heaven grudged us such great good fortune, for it has prevented the poor fellow from ever
65 getting home at all."

Thus did he speak, and his words set them all a weeping. Helen wept, Telemachus wept, and so did Menelaus, nor could Pisistratus keep his eyes from filling, when he remembered his dear brother Antilochus whom the son of bright Dawn had killed. Thereon he said to Menelaus,

70 "Sir, my father Nestor, when we used to talk about you at home, told me you were a person of rare and excellent understanding. If, then, it be possible, do as I would urge you. I am not fond of crying while I am getting my supper. Morning will come in due course, and in the forenoon I care not how much I cry for those that are dead and gone. This is all we can do for the poor things. We can only shave our heads for them and
75 wring the tears from our cheeks. I had a brother who died at Troy; he was by no means the worst man there; you are sure to have known him—his name was Antilochus; I never set eyes upon him myself, but they say that he was singularly fleet of foot and in fight valiant."

"Your discretion, my friend," answered Menelaus, "is beyond your years. It is plain
80 you take after your father. One can soon see when a man is son to one whom heaven has blessed both as regards wife and offspring—and it has blessed Nestor from first to last all his days, giving him a green old age in his own house, with sons about him who are both well disposed and valiant. We will put an end therefore to all this weeping, and attend to our supper again. Let water be poured over our hands. Telemachus and I can
85 talk with one another fully in the morning."

On this Asphalion, one of the servants, poured water over their hands and they laid their hands on the good things that were before them.

Then Zeus' daughter Helen thought of another matter. She drugged the wine with an herb that banishes all care, sorrow, and ill humor. Whoever drinks wine thus drugged

90 cannot shed a single tear all the rest of the day, not even though his father and mother
both of them drop down dead, or he sees a brother or a son hewn in pieces before his
very eyes. This drug, of such sovereign power and virtue, had been given to Helen by
Polydamna wife of Thon, a woman of Egypt, where there grow all sorts of herbs, some
good to put into the mixing bowl and others poisonous. Moreover, everyone in the
95 whole country is a skilled physician, for they are of the race of Paeon. When Helen had
put this drug in the bowl, and had told the servants to serve the wine round, she said:

“Menelaus, son of Atreus, and you my good friends, sons of honorable men (which
is as Zeus wills, for he is the giver both of good and evil, and can do what he chooses),
feast here as you will, and listen while I tell you a tale in season. I cannot indeed name
100 every single one of the exploits of Odysseus, but I can say what he did when he was
before Troy, and you Achaeans were in all sorts of difficulties. He covered himself with
wounds and bruises, dressed himself all in rags, and entered the enemy’s city looking
like a menial or a beggar, and quite different from what he did when he was among his
own people. In this disguise he entered the city of Troy, and no one said anything to
105 him. I alone recognized him and began to question him, but he was too cunning for me.
When, however, I had washed and anointed him and had given him clothes, and after I
had sworn a solemn oath not to betray him to the Trojans till he had got safely back to
his own camp and to the ships, he told me all that the Achaeans meant to do. He killed
many Trojans and got much information before he reached the Argive camp, for all
110 which things the Trojan women made lamentation, but for my own part I was glad, for
my heart was beginning to yearn after my home, and I was unhappy about the wrong
that Aphrodite had done me in taking me over there, away from my country, my girl,
and my lawful wedded husband, who is indeed by no means deficient either in person
or understanding.”

21. Menelaus’ overall attitude during this passage can best be described as
- A. accusatory.
 - B. apologetic.
 - C. reflective.
 - D. patronizing.
 - E. unassuming.
22. The primary function of Menelaus’ story about the death of his brother is to
- A. establish that women cannot be trusted.
 - B. demonstrate that Menelaus is ashamed of showing emotions.
 - C. ascribe blame to his brother.
 - D. prove that Menelaus prefers the love of family to the pleasures of wealth.
 - E. compare his brother’s conflicts to those of Odysseus.
23. Which of the following does NOT occur in this passage?
- A. Menelaus condemns Odysseus’ flaws and mistakes.
 - B. Pisistratus reveals Telemachus’ identity.
 - C. Menelaus condemns his brother’s wife.
 - D. Helen speaks of Odysseus’ exploits.
 - E. Telemachus remains silent.

24. The conversations in this passage are best characterized as
- A. distant.
 - B. elegiac.
 - C. guarded.
 - D. maudlin.
 - E. hostile.
25. Of the following, which can be inferred is the action that Pisistratus urges Menelaus to take in lines 70–78?
- A. Command supper to be served.
 - B. Shave your head to mourn the dead.
 - C. Stop discussing sad subjects.
 - D. Forget the Battle of Troy.
 - E. Stop crying.

Multiple-Choice Answers and Explanations

1. The author uses the sun god's cattle for a variety of purposes. Firstly, the slaughter of the cows allows both the reader and the immortals to pass judgment (A) on the actions of Odysseus' men. On the most basic plot structure level, he uses the cows to create conflict between Odysseus' men and the sun god (B). The slaughter of the cows becomes part of the rising action in the scene which leads to the eventual climax, the deaths of the men. The men's deaths also fulfill the prophecy (D) that Odysseus will return home alone, which was foretold many times throughout the narrative. **The author does not use the sun god's cattle to criticize Odysseus' lackluster leadership (C) because Odysseus was not present when the men decided to eat the sun god's cows. In addition, he is blameless because he instructed his men appropriately and was temporarily put to sleep by the gods, thus taking him out of the leadership position.**
2. The tone in the beginning of the passage is straightforward and lacks strong emotional cues, making a frustrated tone (B) impossible. In addition, there are no verbal cues that either Odysseus or the author address the situation as frivolous (C) and undeserving of attention. There is no contradictory evidence (D) presented in the text or contradictory opinions about the cause or effect of his men's actions. The men's actions and the gods' response are simply retold as they happened, and there is no attempt to persuade (E) the reader to believe anything other than the simple truth. **It is not until the end of the passage that Odysseus reflects emotionally upon the death of his companions and his own plight. The shift in tone from the beginning of the passage to the end can best be described as from informative to reflective (A).**
3. While it may seem strange that such a powerful god would intervene on behalf of a mortal (A), it is a common occurrence throughout epic narratives and is the foundation for Odysseus' personal growth and travels home. Also, while it is true that the sun god threatens to remove the sun from earth and take it to the underworld, Zeus is not frightened or coerced (C) by the threat, but is in full agreement that the men must be punished. When he destroys the ship, it is not that he is unable to save the men (D), but that he is unwilling to do so. He did not intend to kill Odysseus (E) because Odysseus was not to blame for the actions of the men, especially since Zeus himself put Odysseus to sleep. **Zeus's role in this episode can be described as ironic because he is instrumental in many of Odysseus' punishments, yet he protects Odysseus from Scylla at the end of the episode (B). His relationship with Odysseus is tumultuous at best; Zeus is responsible for the winds that initiated the conflict with the sun god's cows and he throws the lightning bolt that kills Odysseus' men, but then he is credited with protecting Odysseus from Scylla.**

4. Eurylochus' use of rhetoric is persuasive because he appeals not to the men's acknowledgement that Odysseus has failed them (A), but to their innate sense of self-preservation (B). Eurylochus does not blame Odysseus for not being allowed to eat the cattle of the sun god, but he does express to the men that they will perish if they do not eat and that this is their only chance of survival, even if the gods do punish them. The answer cannot be (C) because if the men did follow their sense of right and wrong, they would surely not make the choice to anger the gods. They also do not purposely make this decision to irritate the gods or defy their will (D). The decision is made purely regarding their own survival. Lastly, the men are not enduringly optimistic in times of despair (E), but fatalistic about their chances of surviving this test from the gods.
5. The language in the passage is not colloquial (A) in that there are no examples of slang, pronunciation differing from the norm, or phraseology known only to the author's region. The diction is also not technical and objective (B), but detailed and full of imagery. While the text itself is found in academia, the word choice is far from scholarly (C) because the author does not use advanced vocabulary, syntax, or logic. Lastly, the language is not old-fashioned (D) because the author does not use out of date references or antiquated language choices. **The overall diction in the passage can best be described as conversational (E) because the narrative is told through Odysseus' experiences and, quite literally, his conversations with his hosts.**
6. Eumaeus is a genuine, sincere, and caring servant in Odysseus' palace and does not fawn over Telemachus for selfish gain. He is not sycophantic (A) and does not abuse his position as a trusted confidant. Even though Eumaeus supports Telemachus' journey and compliments him for the way he handles the suitors, he does not show romantic feelings towards Telemachus, so the answer cannot be amorous (B). The faithful servant is also not disinterested (D) in the affairs of the estate, but informs Telemachus of what has happened during his absence. Eumaeus is also not a domineering (E) character and does not treat Telemachus as an inferior simply because Telemachus is young and alone. **Telemachus and Eumaeus' relationship is positive and loving in a familial way. (C) Eumaeus has a paternal relationship with Telemachus and treats him as a son during Odysseus' absence.**
7. The discussion between Eumaeus and Telemachus mostly serves as a plot device and as a means to summarize what has happened in Odysseus' absence. Eumaeus answers Telemachus' questions about the house and acknowledges that while Penelope has yet to remarry (A), she is slowly losing her strength to reject the suitors. This discussion allows for Telemachus to clarify his feelings towards the suitors (B), which also allows Odysseus to understand his son's position. Eumaeus is clearly established as a trustworthy servant (C) and friend throughout his conversation with Telemachus. Telemachus feels trapped by the guest-host relationship (D) even though he feels that the suitors have overstayed their welcome. **The one thing the discussion does not do is undermine Odysseus' authority in his homeland (E) because during his absence that authority was given to Telemachus as the new man of the house. Eumaeus and Telemachus do not criticize Odysseus during this conversation, but mourn his loss and the destruction of his palace.**

8. Nowhere in the passage does Odysseus allude to any thoughts of assessing his son's worthiness (A). Odysseus does wish to assess what has happened during his absence, but he does not suggest that his son is not worthy of his lineage. Likewise, Odysseus is not angry with his son and does not wish to punish him (C). Telemachus was just a boy when the suitors arrived and cannot be held accountable for their actions or the actions of his mother. There also would be no purpose in Odysseus inflaming his son's emotions (D). Telemachus is completely unaware of the suspense in the scene, so inflaming his emotions would not create any tension. If anything, Odysseus withholding his identity inflames the readers' emotions because they are waiting for him to reveal his identity. It is also unlikely that Odysseus would hold off on revealing his identity in the hopes that Telemachus would guess on his own (E). Telemachus has no frame of reference for identifying Odysseus, so Odysseus would have needed to give him some obvious hints. **This leaves (B) as the answer because Odysseus wants to get to know his son and evaluate his character. Odysseus does not know what his son thinks about the suitors or, more generally, how his son responds to insults upon his home and character. Odysseus is simply prying for information about his son's personality and character.**
9. When Odysseus addresses his son's inability to remove the suitors from the palace, he is not intending to criticize or find fault (B) with his son's actions. His tone is not critical or accusatory, but accepting of his son's struggles to adhere to the guest-host relationship while defending his estate. While Odysseus seems to accept his son's struggles, he is not entirely supportive (C) until he questions why Telemachus does not request help from friends or family members. When Telemachus answers Odysseus' questions, Odysseus is not argumentative (D). He simply collects information about who Telemachus has used as a resource and who has abandoned him. The tone is also not condescending (E) because Odysseus feels for Telemachus because he has been through so much. He does not make Telemachus seem weak or incapable, but simply the victim of bad circumstance. **Odysseus' tone is simply questioning (A) in this episode because he is looking for information about who is loyal and who has neglected his house and son.**
10. Throughout the narrative, Telemachus withholds criticism of Odysseus and instead mourns the loss of his father. He does not demonstrate underlying bitterness towards his father (A), although he is frustrated by the situation. Telemachus knows better than to find fault with the gods (C), but he is aware of their possible role in this situation. He is not angry towards the gods because of his father's fate, but he questions Odysseus' identity because he knows gods often use trickery to test mortals. Telemachus is not stubborn or unable to alter his perceptions (D); he has proven throughout the narrative that he is flexible and curious. He takes information from different hosts on his journey and applies it to his understanding of his father and his situation at home. Even though Telemachus has been under huge emotional stress, that does not mean he is unable to experience joy and happiness (E). Simply because we do not see him experience joy does not mean that he cannot. **Telemachus' reluctance to accept his father's announcement about his true identity shows his carefulness and control (B). Telemachus could fall prey to an impostor and it is important for him to be wary when meeting someone who claims to be his father.**

11. The author's diction during this passage is not objective and detached (A) from the intensity of the scene. Homer's diction is detailed and emotional, capturing the fear of the suitors and the anger of Odysseus. Even though the text itself is many centuries old, the language is not archaic or outdated (B). The translation does not use antiquated phrases or images, but modern language. The diction is also not simplistic (D), but quite detailed. Homer describes the death of the suitors in specific detail that includes the sounds and images associated with how their bodies fell to the ground. Homer's diction is not sentimental (E), and he does not fixate on overly emotional moments. **The diction is simply figurative because he uses detailed imagery and literary devices to describe Odysseus' attack (C).**
12. Scapegoats (A) are punished because those seeking justice cannot impose it on the true transgressor. Melanthius is not punished in place of the suitors, he is punished for his own misdeeds. Characterizing Melanthius as primarily a plot device (B) ignores the effect he has on Eumaeus' characterization; Melanthius, by his disloyal actions, helps reveal Eumaeus' loyalty. There is no evidence of dramatic irony (C) regarding Melanthius and his actions in this passage. Melanthius does not deliver a message from the gods (D) in this passage. **Melanthius' actions primarily highlight the differences between a good servant (Eumaeus) and a bad servant (Melanthius). Thus, (E) is the best answer.**
13. While Athena would be pleased if she could verify (A) Odysseus' prowess, she is unsure that he even possesses that prowess. Athena would like Odysseus to demonstrate (C) his own prowess; however, she cannot demonstrate it herself. Undergo (D) is essentially nonsensical in context. There is no evidence that prove is an abbreviation of approve (E), and even if it were, Athena would already approve of Odysseus' prowess were it on display, making this choice redundant in context. **Athena does not give Odysseus complete victory at this point because she wishes to test him. This is why she says (while disguised as Mentor) that she will help Odysseus but then transforms into a swallow and watches the fight from the rafters. Thus, (B) is the best answer.**
14. While Telemachus may be less experienced in battle than Odysseus, he is far from incapable. Telemachus may defer to his father's strategy during the fight with the suitors, but he depends on his own strength to attack the suitors (A). Even though he may defer to his father's leadership, he is not insecure during the battle (B). He fights alongside his father and has astute observations about how the battle should be fought and who may be assisting the suitors. Telemachus clearly does not show that he is superior to his father or that he intends to overshadow his father's leadership and abilities (E). They are equals and fight side by side, both reflecting the same positive mental and physical qualities. Telemachus also shows great control and does not give in to impulsive bloodlust or revenge (C). **He is aware of his surroundings and has a calculated plan of attack which shows his thoughtfulness and control over his emotions (D).**

15. While it is true that Athena supports Odysseus' revenge, she is not entirely supportive of his actions (A). Instead of praising him for taking on over one hundred suitors, she criticizes his fighting prowess and bravery. She does not go so far as to belittle Odysseus (D) or make him feel foolish during this scene, but she clearly criticizes him in the hopes of sparking an intense assault on the suitors. A humorous tone (C) is certainly not apparent in this scene. Odysseus' actions and Athena's critical view of his actions do not demonstrate humor or even sarcasm. Athena does not dismiss Odysseus (E) and his attack on the suitors, nor is she condescending. She acknowledges his previous accomplishments on the battlefield and inspires him to reclaim his previous fighting abilities. **Athena may be chastising him, but her tone shows her maternal love and support for him (B).**
16. Odysseus does question whether or not Agamemnon died at the hands of the gods, but it does not reveal his own fear of the gods (B). He does not seem to be asking about Agamemnon's death in order to vent his own concerns or gather information about how he may be treated by the gods. Odysseus also questions whether or not he was killed while pillaging a town, but he does not disparage this act because he too has raided towns and taken supplies (C). He certainly does not belittle or criticize (D) Agamemnon as a warrior, and he does not allude to his death being due to his ineffectual fighting abilities. Odysseus also does not treat his surroundings or this experience lightly. He is not flippant (E) towards death or the underworld, but treats these concepts with reverence. **Despite his best efforts to avoid glory-seeking, Odysseus is still preoccupied with honor. When he questions how Agamemnon died, he is trying to ascertain whether or not he died a glorious death (A).**
17. The purpose of the retelling of Agamemnon's death is not to insert conflict into an otherwise peaceful scene (A). The scene itself is anything but peaceful because Odysseus is visiting the frightening and unusual land of the underworld. The scene is dramatic, intense, and detailed, and it does not need a retelling of a story to increase the suspense or sense of struggle. While Agamemnon does criticize women and many famous marriages, he does not say that all marriages are doomed to fail (B). He compliments Penelope for being an admirable woman and tells Odysseus that he does not think Penelope will murder him as Agamemnon's wife did to him. This discussion also does not prove that all women are inherently prone to evil acts (D). His complimentary tone towards Penelope disproves this. Also, his feelings towards women do not prove a generality that everyone else must believe, but instead just state his opinion about women. Assuming that Agamemnon remains in the underworld because of his wife's acts would lead the reader to make false assumptions about the nature of the underworld (C). The underworld is not meant to be the equivalent of the Christian image of Hell or Purgatory, therefore Agamemnon is not caught in limbo in the underworld; he is simply in the place where all spirits go. **The purpose of retelling the story of Agamemnon's return home and then his death at the hands of his wife is to establish Agamemnon as a parallel character to Odysseus (E). Both men return home after an extended absence and encounter hardships at home. It is simply yet to be seen whether or not Odysseus suffers the same fate as Agamemnon.**

18. The overall tone of the passage is not accusatory (A). While some spirits, such as Ajax, may harbor bitterness towards Odysseus, the majority of the spirits do not blame him for their deaths. Also, Odysseus does not have a negative tone towards these spirits or their messages. Odysseus may be uneasy and even surprised by the spirits he meets in the underworld, namely his mother, but he is not confused or overwhelmed by their presence or their messages to him (B). He understands what he must accomplish in the underworld and performs his task appropriately. Odysseus is certainly not disrespectful to the spirits, therefore his tone is not sarcastic or sardonic (C). While the scene itself is certainly supernatural and magical, the tone itself is not fanciful (E). Odysseus takes this experience seriously and his actions and words do not reveal an incredulous or frivolous attitude towards the experience. **The overall tone for the passage is contemplative (D) because Odysseus reflects upon both the lives of those whom he meets in the underworld and his connections with them. He takes their advice and attitudes seriously, and he uses this experience to become a better man and continue his journey home.**
19. Odysseus' discussion with Achilles in the underworld does serve to remind Odysseus that (B) avoiding glory-seeking is the only way for him to return home. Homer uses Achilles to demonstrate the dangers of glory-seeking and of excessive pride, of which Odysseus has frequently been guilty. Also, during their conversation, Achilles bemoans his life in the underworld and claims that he would rather be a poor and nameless man than be honored and famous among the dead (C). While Odysseus does not know the fate of his own son (D), nor any specific details about Achilles' son's current life, the discussion with Achilles is not intended to remind Odysseus of this fact. It is likely that his ignorance of his son's life has never been far from his thoughts and he would not need to be reminded of this. Also, there has been no doubt throughout the narrative that Odysseus' fame on the battlefield is well-known and he certainly would not need to be reminded of his own reputation (E). **The discussion with Achilles does not serve to remind Odysseus that fame and glory should be the ultimate goal of every man because it was those very goals that led to his involvement in the Trojan war and then his disappearance at sea (A). Odysseus must learn moderation and live a balanced life that values both heroism and his role as a father and husband.**

20. The purpose of Homer including the descriptions of the different spirits in the underworld is not to establish the similarities between the underworld and the Christian concept of Hell (A) because Christianity was not existent at the time. Additionally, the two are not similar because according to Greek beliefs all spirits went to the underworld whereas in Christianity souls are separated to either Heaven or Hell based upon their deeds. The various spirits in the underworld may not be separated by gender, but that does not provide any commentary about their equality either in the living world or in the underworld (B). The description of the spirits also does not foreshadow their involvement anywhere else during the narrative (C). Their presence may comment thematically on the narrative, but they will not play an active role in the plot and there is nothing in the text to allude to their future involvement. While it is obvious that Odysseus and the reader should value their lives, it is not clearly stated that he (or the reader) should necessarily fear death (E). He is uncomfortable meeting the spirits, but they do not make him fear the existence of the underworld or of the pains of death itself. **The purpose of the various spirits is to demonstrate how the actions of the living may affect their existence in the underworld (D). Individuals who have offended the gods may receive eternal punishment while those who have impressed the gods may receive eternal praise.**
21. Menelaus' overall attitude during this passage is not accusatory (A) because he is simply retelling events that have already happened. He does not place the blame entirely on any individual. If anything, he refrains from placing the blame on himself, and he certainly would not accuse the gods of any misdeeds. He is also not apologetic (B). While he feels badly for Odysseus and for Telemachus, it was not Menelaus' fault that Odysseus never returned home, so he does not apologize for any wrongdoing. Menelaus is also quite paternal towards Telemachus and does not speak to him in a patronizing or condescending manner (D). He wishes to help Telemachus, and his story telling and hospitality are genuine. Menelaus is not an entirely unassuming figure (E). He does credit the gods when credit is due, but he does not criticize his own behaviors or pick out any of his own flaws. He is modest to a point, but it should be noted that he is the one narrating his adventures and coloring the events with his own perspective. **Menelaus' overall attitude is simply reflective (C). He thinks back to his adventures and comments on his experiences and emotional growth.**

22. The purpose of Menelaus' story about the death of his brother is not to establish that women cannot be trusted (A). Though Menelaus criticizes his brother's wife, he does not criticize good women such as Penelope. The answer is also not (B) because if anything, Menelaus seems to relish a moment to demonstrate his heartfelt emotions. He does not appear to be ashamed of his emotions (B), but he understands the need to keep them from interfering with action or with storytelling. He also does not criticize Telemachus for showing his emotions. Menelaus certainly does not blame his brother for his own death (C). He clearly places this blame on his brother's wife. While Menelaus does comment on how he would be willing to forgo wealth and power to have his brother back, it does not encompass the main point of his story about his brother's death (D). His love for his brother was also never really in question, so this statement does not address the most important aspect of his story. **The purpose of Menelaus' story about the death of his brother is mainly to compare his brother's conflicts to those of Odysseus (E). His brother returned to his home after many years abroad and was murdered by his disloyal wife. Odysseus also will return home and will have to address his wife and her suitors. This story encourages the reader to compare Menelaus' brother's fate with Odysseus' while also creating suspense about Odysseus' fate once he reaches home.**
23. Only (A) does not occur in this passage. Menelaus does not condemn Odysseus' flaws and mistakes. It would appear that he knows little of Odysseus' mistakes along his journey home. This makes sense because at this moment in the narrative, no one knows the details of his adventures. Even if he knew of Odysseus' flaws, it is doubtful he would condemn them outright based upon his respect for Odysseus and Telemachus.
24. Though Pisistratus and Telemachus are strangers to Menelaus and Helen, the latter pair treats the former with kindness and warmth. Both are open and display their emotions freely. They cannot be said to be distant (A) in conversation. For similar reasons, these conversations cannot reasonably be said to be guarded (C). All participants express themselves in an open manner, particularly where emotion is involved. Though the passage is characterized by a high degree of emotionality, it is not maudlin (D). It could be argued that the tears shed by the participants produce a maudlin tone in the passage as a whole, but these tears are not part of the conversations—they are caused by the conversations. There is no evidence of hostility (E) in the passage; Menelaus and Helen are welcoming and kind toward their guests. **Throughout the passage, the participants in these conversations mourn the dead and the missing, and generally lament the circumstances that devastated their friends and families. Thus, (B) is the best answer.**

25. Supper has already been served by the time Pisistratus makes his request, so (A) is incorrect. Though Pisistratus does mention shaving one's head as a way to mourn the dead (B), he indicates that he does not wish to cry while eating his supper. He is trying to avoid feeling strong unpleasant emotions, and mourning the dead would accomplish the opposite. Pisistratus does not want Menelaus to forget the Battle of Troy (D); however, his brother died there, and he does not want to discuss the subject. Pisistratus does want Menelaus (and everyone else) to stop crying (E), but there is an underlying reason for the group's laments: **they are discussing sad subjects (C). Pisistratus identifies this as the source of their tears, and so he requests that Menelaus steer the discussion to a different course. Menelaus accedes to this request when he says that he and Telemachus can speak with one another in the morning.**

The Odyssey

Book I

1. How does Homer maintain the audience's interest in the story, knowing that the audience is aware of the outcome from the very beginning?

Homer begins the Odyssey in medias res, or, "in the middle of things." By beginning the story many years into Odysseus' disappearance, he establishes that Penelope and Telemachus are on the verge of giving up hope of his return. There is a sense of urgency for Telemachus to begin his journey in search of his father, which creates suspense for the audience as they await the outcome of both journeys. Homer also tells the story out of chronological order, which allows for detailed flashbacks and discussions of the events from the Trojan War. First-time readers learn about the history of the battle and the important historical figures, while those who already know the story are able to focus on imagery, foreshadowing, and missed details. Homer also engages his readers by coming full-circle in the narrative; he begins the story with the haughty suitors destroying Odysseus' palace and ends with their deaths by Odysseus' hand.

2. What does the invocation of the Muse in the opening lines clarify about Odysseus' culpability during his voyage home?

When the speaker invokes inspiration from the Muse, he clarifies that Odysseus is not to blame for the deaths of his men during the voyage home. The speaker notes that he "suffered much by sea while trying to save his own life and bring his men safely home; but do what he might he could not save his men, for they perished through their own sheer folly." The speaker also defends Odysseus' inability to return home quickly by stating that he was "detained by the goddess Calypso" and that he received the help of the gods except for Poseidon, "who still persecuted him without ceasing and would not let him get home."

3. What role do the gods play in the *Odyssey* and how does their involvement illuminate expectations from Greek society?

The gods in the Odyssey play numerous roles including: functioning as plot devices, establishing symbols, and reflecting upon the expectations for Greek society. The most basic role of the gods is to play the role of a messenger who brings a warning to the protagonist. Often the lesser gods perform this duty, but at times important gods such as Athena and Zeus step in to assist the hero. Gods also take a more active role as protector, by assisting the main character physically (such as when Zeus sends favorable winds, or when Athena assists Odysseus in punishing the suitors) or simply emotionally (such as when Athena comforts and encourages Telemachus). Gods often help characters maintain confidence, have patience, and learn from their mistakes.

Unfortunately, when shunned or offended, gods can take a more sinister role by becoming the obstacle placed before the hero. Gods such as Poseidon, and at times even Zeus, become Odysseus' obstacle because of Odysseus' mistakes and struggles with hubris. It is clear from the discussion of the gods in Book I that the gods expect mortals to be self-sufficient yet subservient to the gods. Men should possess positive qualities, such as determination, bravery, moderation, patience, and intelligence. They should also make liberal offerings to the gods and realize their dependence on them.

4. How does Homer use Telemachus as a plot device?

Without Telemachus, the story could not be told in medias res or as a series of flashbacks sewn into the fabric of the chronology. It is Telemachus' journey in search of his father that allows the reader to hear tales of Troy and the state of affairs at Odysseus' palace. Telemachus functions as a makeshift narrator around which to frame the first third of the narrative. Telemachus is also experiencing his own metaphorical journey as he becomes a man and learns the many lessons that Odysseus also learns on his difficult journey home. Telemachus' experiences and discoveries reflect upon Odysseus' struggles and his character.

5. How does Homer use dramatic irony in Book I both as a plot device and as a means to foreshadow Odysseus' return?

Athena's visit to the palace while she is in disguise is a clear example of dramatic irony because the reader is aware of Athena's true identity, but the suitors, and for a time, even Telemachus, are unaware of who she is. By disguising her true identity, Athena is able to evaluate Telemachus' character and determine whether or not he deserves her help. Dramatic irony comes into play because the suitors do not know that she is a god and that her comments foreshadow her desired role in their deaths.

Athena functions as a plot device because it is her encouragement that inspires Telemachus to go in search of his father, which also leads him to go in search of himself. She is also able to judge the suitors and determine her opinion about their future punishment.

6. How does the author establish a negative tone towards the suitors?

Homer establishes his negative tone towards the suitors through Telemachus' diction, Athena's disapproval, and the suitors' unwillingness to adhere to society's expectations.

Throughout Book I, Telemachus uses disparaging words when he discusses or addresses the suitors. He uses such words as "shameless," "insolent," "brawling," and "spunging." Telemachus' diction persuades the reader to perceive the suitors' actions in the same negative way.

Homer also uses Athena's disapproval of the suitors to persuade the reader that his tone is justifiably negative. If the reader cannot believe Telemachus' attitude because he is personally affected by their behavior, then the reader can trust the word of a goddess as she uses similar language to criticize the suitors.

Lastly, the fact that the suitors do not adhere to Greek society's expectations for honoring hosts and behaving as proper guests establishes a negative tone. Throughout Book I they are continually criticized for overstaying their welcome and mistreating the servants and Odysseus' family members.

Book II

1. What rhetorical strategies does Antinous use for justifying his and the other suitors' behavior?

Antinous blames the suitors' extended stay at Odysseus' palace on Penelope, whom he claims seduced the suitors but would not commit to any of them. He uses an anecdote about Penelope to justify this claim; he tells the story of her promise to remarry once she completes a burial shroud for Odysseus and how she secretly undid the weaving at night, thus drawing out the suitors' wooing.

Antinous uses his limited and biased perspective of the situation to manipulate the truth and paint a very different picture of Penelope than Telemachus previously described. Antinous assumes authority amongst the suitors and attempts to affect the council's decision by using emotional arguments and appealing to their understanding of social expectations about marriage and a woman's role in the household. He declares that Penelope should be sent back to her father so that he can choose a new husband for her, but Telemachus refuses to throw his mother out.

2. Explain the surprising shift in Telemachus' tone and diction from the beginning of Book I up to the end of Book II.

Telemachus goes through many changes within and between Books I and II. In the beginning of Book I, Telemachus lacked confidence in his speech and his tone. He was fatalistic about his father's disappearance and had a negative attitude about his own abilities and situation. With the encouragement of Athena, he begins speaking with confidence and optimism about the potential for his father's return. He becomes so confident that he even rebukes his mother for her behavior around the suitors and what he considers her selfish unhappiness about the loss of her husband.

Telemachus' tone and diction shifts yet again in Book II as he becomes very emotional when explaining his plans to search for any word about his father. His tone quickly shifts once the suitors criticize him, however, and he uses strong and confident language to protect his mother and criticize the suitors' behavior. It is clear from his shifting diction and tone that Telemachus struggles with his emotions and his confidence.

3. What is the effect of the literary devices used to describe the beginning of Telemachus' journey?

Homer uses similes, metaphors, and onomatopoeia to describe the beginning of Telemachus' journey to learn of his father's fate. On a basic level, the literary devices allow the reader to envision life aboard a ship through the descriptions of sights, smells, and sounds. The literary devices also create tension and suspense. Telemachus' journey will not be an easy voyage, but a dangerous adventure on the seas. Lastly, the descriptions allow the reader to imagine Odysseus' long travels aboard his ship and sympathize with the difficult lifestyle.

Book III

1. What role does the expanding setting play in the plot structure of the narrative?

As Telemachus sets out on his journey around southern Greece to learn of his father's fate, the setting of the story expands. This expansion in the setting allows for the expansion of the story itself. With each stop on his journey, Telemachus meets important friends and acquaintances of his father. Each host who welcomes Telemachus adds his own details to the narrative of the Odyssey. The hosts provide flashbacks to the Trojan War and explanations of the fates of Odysseus and other heroic figures. Their storytelling serves the function of providing both the reader and Telemachus with key details about Odysseus' journey.

2. What function do Nestor's, Menelaus', and Helen's stories of the events of the Trojan War perform in the Odyssey?

Nestor's, Menelaus', and Helen's stories of their experiences in the Trojan War function as a reminder to the reader. They summarize Helen's role in the war; Menelaus' connection with Odysseus on the battlefield and the fates of many famous figures. Their stories make connections with legends and tales from The Iliad, with which Homer's audience would have been familiar.

3. What is the significance of Nestor's story about the fate of Agamemnon?

At first glance, the story of Agamemnon may seem disconnected from Telemachus' and Odysseus' travels, but upon examination the concerns about marriage and other suitors become very clear.

The story of Agamemnon's murder is meant as a warning for Telemachus. While Agamemnon was fighting in the Trojan War, Aegisthus wooed Agamemnon's wife. Upon his return, Aegisthus killed Agamemnon to prevent him from reclaiming his wife, property, and money. Agamemnon's son, Orestes, killed Aegisthus in revenge. This tale is clearly relevant to Telemachus because just as Aegisthus took advantage of Agamemnon's absence, the suitors are taking advantage of Odysseus' absence.

Telemachus is a parallel character to Orestes in a sense because he must avenge his father by punishing the suitors who have taken over his father's house. Nestor emphasizes that Agamemnon's fate connects with his long absence from home. He warns Telemachus that he should not leave his home unprotected for too long for fear that the suitors will take advantage of his absence.

4. How does Telemachus' pessimistic mood serve as a plot device?

Telemachus' despondent attitude touches the hearts of his hosts and inspires them to assist the young man on his journey. His hosts see his need and desire to find his father and are driven to tears by the boy's longing. His negative attitude functions as the motivation his hosts need to provide him with assistance on his journey.

Book IV

1. What is the effect of repetition in the narrative?

Repetition is a common technique used in epic poetry and oral poems. Homer uses repetition frequently throughout the Odyssey both by repeating images and even whole events. Often the narrator or a knowledgeable character explains what is going to happen or needs to occur, and then those events unfold immediately afterwards.

In Book IV, Menelaus' story about the Old Man of the Sea uses repetition that contains variations in the details of the event. He describes his discussion with Idothea, daughter of Proteus, who explained how he could appease the gods and return home. Immediately after this explanation, he describes what actually happened with more detail, slight variations, and his reactions to the events. This allows for these repeated phrases and events to develop new or deeper meanings. The repetition also serves to build suspense for the reader as he or she compares the outcome of the second rendition with the intentions of the first. By using repetition, Homer is able to clarify any confusion the reader may have, and he is able to stall suspenseful moments and hold the reader's interest.

2. How does the story of Menelaus' encounters with the Old Man of the Sea serve a thematic purpose?

Menelaus' encounters with the Old Man of the Sea allow the reader to compare his journey with Telemachus' and, eventually, with Odysseus' journey. Menelaus' journey outlines the expectations that all good Greeks must follow. His journey warns both the reader and Telemachus of the dangers of not obeying and appreciating the gods, and of being too proud and boastful. He emphasizes the need for men to be strong, brave, intelligent, and patient. His encounters with the gods demonstrate themes concerning proper behavior, moderation, and respect for the gods.

3. How does Helen explain Menelaus' paradoxical decision to accept her again, even after she shamed him by being the start to the Trojan War?

While Menelaus' decision to fight for Helen's return fits into the expectations for men in Greek society, it seems unlikely that Menelaus would actually forgive and accept his wife after the Trojan War because of the negative impact it had on his reputation and on the lives of his family and friends. Fortunately, Helen explains this decision in a way that renders her an innocent player and therefore not to blame for the start of the war or the stain on Menelaus' reputation.

She describes her unhappiness while away from her home and her longing for her country and lawfully wedded husband. She explains how Aphrodite mistreated her: The goddess had promised her to Paris in order to be named the most beautiful among the goddesses. Helen removes herself from blame by putting her fate and the origins of the war in the hands of the gods.

4. How might Menelaus' descriptions of his journey home to Sparta be different if they were presented from a third-person point of view?

Whenever a character tells the story of their own journey, the reader must question his or her reliability as a narrator. The reader should consider that Menelaus portrays himself as innocent of any wrongdoing during his voyages and that he claims to have the support of the gods. He uses strong diction to describe his own abilities, valor, and bravery during his journey.

However, Menelaus' words are not verified by another speaker. These events may have a very different tone if told from a different perspective. Menelaus may not appear to be as capable or innocent of wrongdoing if his escapades were told from an objective point of view. Lastly, without his first-person narration about his journey home, the reader would not get his perspective on Odysseus' conflicts or character.

Book V

1. How does Zeus' order for Calypso to set Odysseus free function not only as a plot device but also as the entry point for a discussion on gender bias?

Were it not for Athena's insistence and Zeus' commands, Odysseus would have remained a prisoner on Calypso's island and the story would never have continued. Odysseus had been detained by the goddess for seven years already because she fell in love with him and would not let him return home, so Homer uses Zeus as a means for moving the story forward.

Zeus' orders allow Calypso to voice her frustration at the double standard that appears to exist among the gods. She claims that the gods hate it when immortal women have relationships with mortal men, such as Odysseus. She does not explicitly say that no one criticizes Zeus and the other immortal men who have affairs with (or rape) mortal women, but her point can be implicitly understood.

2. How does Odysseus' rejection of Calypso reflect ideals from Greek society?

Odysseus shows his bravery, intelligence, humbleness, and respect for his wife and family when he accepts the opportunity to leave the comforts of Calypso's island. At first he does not trust Calypso's offer to leave the island, which shows his intelligence and carefulness. He is not impulsive, but calm and calculating, carefully questioning the goddess about her motives. When Calypso compliments him, he does not give in to arrogance, but rejects the temptation to remain with her. She then describes his upcoming conflicts, possibly attempting to deter him, but he does not give in to fear. When she compares herself to Penelope, he passes this test as well and exclaims his respect for her, but his unchanged love for his wife. Homer uses Calypso as a means to test Odysseus' qualities and assure that he reflects the ideals of Greek society and deserves to return home safely.

5. In what way does Book V demonstrate an example of "Deus ex machina"?

Two goddesses demonstrate an example of deus ex machina when they intervene on Odysseus' behalf as he struggles to survive the wrath of Poseidon. Just as Poseidon is dragging Odysseus to the bottom of the sea, the sea nymph, Ino, comes to his rescue. She arrives just in time and gives him her veil that will prevent him from drowning. Poseidon appears satisfied with his storm and leaves before seeing Odysseus perish.

Thankfully for Odysseus, yet another goddess, Athena, arrives just in time and calms the seas. She then calls up a wind to blow Odysseus toward land and safety. If it were not for the uncanny timing of the two goddesses, Odysseus would not have survived.

Book VI

1. How do Athena's interactions with Nausicaa function as a plot device that ensures Odysseus will receive assistance?

Athena disguises herself as Nausicaa's friend and, within the context of a dream, plants the idea that Nausicaa needs to marry. She encourages Nausicaa to wash her bridal linens at the shore the following morning, thus ensuring that Nausicaa will encounter the shipwrecked Odysseus. Without Athena's suggestion, Nausicaa would never have met Odysseus and he may never have received the help of the queen, Arete.

Also, without Athena's suggestion to wash her bridal linens, Nausicaa would never have encountered Odysseus while they were both naked. By structuring the encounter to have Nausicaa and her maidens naked, it makes Odysseus' nudity less intimidating and unusual. If Nausicaa had not been naked herself, it is possible that she would not have received Odysseus' supplication with favor. This moment allows for Odysseus to be on equal ground with the women and also allows for Nausicaa to demonstrate her strong character, as she is not frightened away during the scene.

2. How does Nausicaa's behavior towards the naked and stranded Odysseus demonstrate her adherence to the expectations of her society?

While Nausicaa's servants are frightened by Odysseus, she stands her ground and questions him. Her bravery and confidence, especially while nude, is to be admired. She readily admits that her confidence is due to the help of Athena, which reflects the expectation that she has a positive relationship with the gods.

Nausicaa also demonstrates the expectations of Greek society when she offers assistance to a stranger. She offers to bathe him and provide him with clothing, but she also respects his wishes when he declines to be bathed by the women. This adherence to the guest-host relationship is further demonstrated when she invites him back to the palace and gives him advice on how to request the queen's assistance.

3. What does Odysseus' refusal to embrace Nausicaa's knees and his decision to not allow her maidens to bathe him reveal about his character?

Throughout the narrative, Odysseus becomes more skilled at weighing the outcomes of his decisions, whether they be big or small. When Odysseus decides not to embrace Nausicaa's knees (a customary gesture of supplication) but instead requests her assistance from a distance, he demonstrates his cautious and calculating mentality. Odysseus is known for his warrior abilities, including being aggressive and persistent, but here he shows his civilized nature. He is not rash and violent, but shrewd and cautious. He could use force, coercion, or his fame to achieve his goals, but instead he uses his social skills, relying on his charm and charisma. With the simple decision to not embrace Nausicaa's knees, he avoids making the women uncomfortable due to his nudity, and this endears him in their hearts.

Book VII

1. How does Arete's characterization change or contribute to the text's overall representation of women and femininity?

It is important to note that Athena and Nausicaa instruct Odysseus to direct his supplication towards the queen, Arete. Arete's powerful position encourages the reader to compare her to other important female characters. She is wise like her daughter, sympathetic like Athena, and powerful like the other female goddesses. While it is clear that Arete possesses great power and influence along with great sympathy, she is not quickly won over, and Odysseus needs to use his charm to ease her suspicions. She is shrewd in her questioning about his clothing and his identity, which shows her intelligence. Arete is characterized as a powerful, gracious, and sympathetic woman, and the reader can compare her to other women, notably Penelope.

Book VIII

1. What does the contrast between the behaviors of the young men and Odysseus during the games contribute to Odysseus' characterization?

The young men of Phaeacia are eager, rash, and inexperienced compared to Odysseus, and this episode illuminates his newly-gained perspective and maturity. The young men goad him into participating in the games, which he easily wins, but he takes little joy in his victory.

The young men seek glory and honor through the games, never having experienced true hardships or emotional trials. Odysseus has achieved considerable fame and glory from his experiences at the battle of Troy and his journey home, but he does not revel in his glory. Instead, he bemoans his separation from his family and homeland. The stark contrast between the behavior of the young men and Odysseus' somberness illuminates how his painful experiences have matured him and allowed him to reflect upon his failures. Odysseus is clearly capable of defeating the young men in every competition and only competes to defend his honor. He states that he is not overly concerned with the glory of winning the competitions because he has greater priorities now—stopping the destruction of his family and homeland. He has finally overcome the trivial concern with glory for its own sake.

2. What function does Demodocus' story about Ares and Aphrodite perform in the story?

Demodocus' detailed song about the affair between Ares and Aphrodite functions to both highlight the blossoming feelings that Nausicaa has for Odysseus and to allude to the suitors who are at this moment courting Odysseus' wife. The song is meant to be lighthearted, but it clearly has a more somber effect on Odysseus.

Through the song, the reader cannot help but recall Odysseus' affair with the controlling goddess, Calypso. Even though he is considered blameless in this controlling tryst, the issue of adultery is still in mind.

The end of the song details how Hephaestus catches his wife, Aphrodite, with her lover, Ares. This story clearly alludes to Odysseus' future encounter with the suitors and his wife, Penelope. At this point however, it is unclear to Odysseus if he will in fact interrupt a tryst or if his wife has remained faithful. It is also suggested that just like Hephaestus, Odysseus will take revenge upon those who have tried to steal his wife.

Book IX

1. What do the three stories about the Cyclops, the Cicons, and the Lotus Eaters illuminate about Odysseus' leadership abilities and character?

While attacking the city of the Cicons, Odysseus does not demonstrate positive leadership qualities. He is unable to control his men and their greed for plunder, and as a result many are killed.

However, in the Lotus Eaters episode, Odysseus redeems himself and protects all of his men, including the ones affected by the narcotic lotus flower. Odysseus uses his strength, powerful leadership traits, and his intelligence to get the men back onto the boat and tied to the ship so that they do not succumb to the influence of the lotus flower.

During the Cyclops episode, Odysseus demonstrates a mix of positive and negative characteristics. He shows his cunning when he avoids telling the Cyclops his name, instead calling himself Noman. This (temporarily) protects Odysseus and his men and allows for a humorous joke at the Cyclops' expense. Odysseus also shows his wit when he supplies the Cyclops with wine, getting him drunk so that he is more vulnerable to attack.

Odysseus is also calm and controls his rash impulses when he blinds the Cyclops and waits for him to open the door, instead of killing him out of anger. If he had killed the Cyclops in revenge for the death of his men, they would have been stuck in the cave with no hope of escape. Odysseus excels at keeping his men calm and focused as the now blinded Cyclops rages. Again he shows his cunning when he hides his men under the wooly sheep so that they can all escape undetected.

Unfortunately, Odysseus fails to maintain his composure as they are leaving the island and he calls back to the Cyclops, taunting and threatening him. Odysseus makes an even worse mistake when he tells the Cyclops his name. Odysseus does not simply state his name, however; rather, he tells the Cyclops of his lineage and that he is from Ithaca. Odysseus' glory-seeking gets the best of him as he explicitly instructs the Cyclops to make sure others are also aware of who he is and what he did to the Cyclops' eye. This act of hubris, or excessive pride, ensures that Odysseus will suffer at the hands of the gods.

2. How does the author position Odysseus as a reliable narrator?

Odysseus is in an interesting position to retell his journeys however he chooses. It is important to note that while speaking with his hosts, he chooses to include not only his remarkable feats, but also his failures. He does not shy away from admitting that he lost men and that it was his lack of leadership that caused it. He praises himself when appropriate, but also criticizes his own behavior, especially in regards to the Cyclops episode. Seeing that Odysseus did not have to include these negative events in his retelling, he can be seen as a reliable narrator. This is especially important to establish so that in the upcoming events, namely the death of the suitors, we trust his narration and perspective of how the events unfold.

3. How does the author establish some sense of sympathy for the Cyclops?

While the Cyclops is far from pitiable, the author does establish some sense of sympathy for him. The Cyclops comes from a brutish community that lacks moral order and civilized codes for behavior. However, the author does make a point to demonstrate his gentleness with his rams and his childlike ignorance of alcohol. He is also completely incapable of competing with Odysseus' wit. His simplicity is all the more sympathetic at the end of the book when he shouts a pitiful prayer to his father, Poseidon. For all of his strength and size, he is almost helpless against an intelligent foe.

Book X

1. How do this book's conflicts serve a thematic purpose, especially regarding the pitfalls of temptation and excess?

Episode 10 demonstrates the consequences of excess and temptation, both through Odysseus' actions and the behavior of his men. Just as Odysseus was unable to reject the temptation to boast about his defeat of the Cyclops, his crew is unable to resist the temptation of Aeolus' magic bag of wind. Their excessive greed and unjustified belief that the bag holds gold and treasures disrupts their journey home when they accidentally release the helpful winds.

Once on Circe's island, temptation and excess continue to plague their journey. Odysseus lets a year pass as he enjoys the affections of Circe. It is clear his crew also enjoys aspects of the break from their journey, but Odysseus particularly gives in to temptation and the excessive comforts that Circe provides. Penelope and Telemachus seem to be far from his thoughts at this moment and the critical tone of the episode highlights his inappropriate behavior.

Lastly, one of his crew members, Elpenor, is the ultimate example of the consequences of excessive behaviors. Elpenor gets drunk and falls asleep on the roof, and due to his extreme intoxication he falls to his death. His overindulgence directly leads to his death; this functions as a clear warning to the reader.

2. How does the author use Eurylochus as both a plot device and as a tool to reflect upon Odysseus' character?

Odysseus is only willing to leave Circe's island when his crew criticizes him and persuades him to leave. Only after Eurylochus repeatedly refuses to return to Circe's hall after many of the crew members are transformed into pigs does Odysseus decide to leave. Eurylochus functions as an essential plot device to move the men off of the island and back on their way home.

Book 10 is also the first clear example of Odysseus' crew outwardly criticizing his leadership and behavior. Eurylochus functions as a voice of reason who reproaches Odysseus for leading his crew astray. He directly blames Odysseus for the death of their shipmates due to his impulsivity and rashness during the Cyclops episode. Eurylochus clarifies Odysseus' faults both for him and for the reader, which encourages the reader to disapprove of Odysseus' choices and look for positive changes in his character.

Book XI

1. How does the visit to the underworld tie together the text's various settings?

During his discussions with the spirits, the various settings in the epic are reintroduced. While he speaks with his mother, Anticlea, the reader is reminded of those left behind in Ithaca. She describes Penelope, Telemachus, and the faithful servants who await his return. It has been long since Odysseus or the author has discussed the fate of his family, so Anticlea's discussion with Odysseus serves an important purpose.

When Odysseus encounters Agamemnon and Achilles, the reader is reminded of the battle of Troy. Troy was the origin of Odysseus' journey, and the discussion with the spirits allows the reader to reflect upon Odysseus' past behavior, accomplishments, and conflicts.

The encounter with Elpenor reminds the reader of the most recent setting, Circe's island. He recounts his death and many details of the men's time on the island.

Lastly, the reader is reminded of the current setting, the palace of the Phaeacians. These stories are a series of flashbacks, and the interruption by his audience seems to strictly serve the purpose of reminding the audience of his current whereabouts.

2. How does the author use the visit to the underworld as both a plot device and a thematic tool?

Not only does the author use the visit to the land of the dead as a means to summarize Odysseus' recent trips and to describe his upcoming return home, but he also uses it to force Odysseus to reflect upon his experiences and character. Unlike most of the other books, this episode does not test Odysseus' heroic qualities, but instead provides the opportunity for Odysseus to have an epiphany.

Tiresias reminds the reader and clarifies for Odysseus that Poseidon is angry with Odysseus for blinding his son, Polyphemus, the Cyclops. As a result, Poseidon will create many obstacles for Odysseus and his crew during their journey home. Tiresias tells Odysseus that they can get home alive if they avoid temptation and excess. Above all else, they must not harm the cattle of Helios, the sun god, no matter the temptation because if they do, Odysseus' men will die. Tiresias foreshadows the possible outcome of future events and emphasizes the need for Odysseus and his men to demonstrate the appropriate heroic qualities, such as patience, bravery, and self-control. Tiresias also explains how Odysseus will remain blameless for the death of the suitors if he makes sacrifices to Poseidon.

Along with the knowledge of his future, Odysseus also learns about his family's struggles during his absence. Until seeing her among the dead, Odysseus was unaware of his mother's death. He is pained to know that she died from heartbreak and longing for his return. She tells him of his father, Laertes, who still lives but similarly grieves and has lost his will and fame. Odysseus tries three times to hold his mother but cannot because she is only a spirit. This scene demonstrates Odysseus' sense of loss and regret and reminds the reader about his unchanged desire to return home.

The author again uses the story of Agamemnon's death by his murderous wife, Clytemnestra, to contrast the infidelity of Clytemnestra with the dedicated loyalty of Penelope. This encounter would again create a sense of urgency for Odysseus to return home and also a feeling of suspense as the reader questions how Penelope may compare with Clytemnestra.

Most interesting and perhaps controversial is Achilles' appearance because it contradicts the notions of honor and glory. Audiences would be well aware of Achilles' obsession with fame and glory, so his claims that he would rather be a living slave to a tenant farmer than king of the dead is both surprising and illuminating. The author uses Achilles to remind Odysseus that he must continue to avoid such glory-seeking if he wants to return home.

Book XII

1. Throughout the narrative, Odysseus struggles with resisting temptation. How do the events of this book compare with Odysseus' previous failures at resisting temptation and excess?

Again in this book, Homer touches upon a seemingly universal truth—that mankind struggles with temptation and excess. In previous episodes, Odysseus' failures to resist temptation led him to be cursed by the Cyclops and caused his authority to be questioned by his men.

Interestingly, in this book, the goddess Circe encourages Odysseus to satisfy his intellectual curiosity and listen to the Sirens' song. It appears that she knows him so well that she is aware that he will give in to the temptation to hear the Sirens. She gives the men the simple solution to tie Odysseus to the mast and then cover the ears of the crew with beeswax so that they are not tempted by the Sirens' song. Thanks to her advice, the crew survives the tempting song of the Sirens, although Odysseus is nearly driven out of his mind by his desire to give in to the Sirens' beckoning call.

It is curious that Circe would be aware of Odysseus' inability to resist temptation and yet still encourage him to give in to it. Perhaps this encourages the reader to believe that there are appropriate times to give in to temptation, as long as the consequences are well known and easily avoided. It is clearly noted, though, that previous encounters with temptation ended poorly and this encounter does not end in despair or death.

2. In what way does Book 12 demonstrate examples of both skilled and faultless leadership on the part of Odysseus?

Odysseus exercises proper judgment and control throughout book 12. While sailing past Scylla and Charybdis, he demonstrates ultimate control and leadership. He remembers the advice of Circe, remains calm, and does not act impulsively. Following Circe's advice, he avoids the whirlpool Charybdis and sails closer to the six-headed monster, Scylla, knowing full well that he would lose men doing so. He justly makes this decision though, because Charybdis would kill all of his men, while Scylla will only kill a few.

Against his warrior instincts, he sails through the monster's attack without stopping for a fight because he realizes that stopping to fight would only cost him more men. He appropriately uses reason and patience to survive the encounter with as many men as possible, which must have been difficult because he claims that seeing those six men die was the most heart-wrenching experience in all his wanderings.

The final test of Odysseus' leadership and judgment takes place in the land of the sun god, Helios. Odysseus wants to bypass the island because of Tiresias' prophecy and Circe's warning, but his men beg to rest. Showing perhaps more compassion than positive leadership qualities, Odysseus concedes, but only with the men's word that they will not harm the god's cattle.

Unfortunately, the men are stranded, and while Odysseus is away, the crew kills and eats the god's cattle. Odysseus' leadership is unblemished though, because as he prayed for the mercy of the gods, they put him into a deep sleep, therefore taking away his culpability for his men's actions.

Book XIII

1. How is Book 13 essential to both the structure of the narrative and in the progression of the narrative's many conflicts?

Book 13 finally brings the narrative back into the present moment and ends the lengthy flashbacks seen through Odysseus' stories. Book 13 picks up where Book 4 left off, and the narrative returns to Odysseus' conflict with the suitors who are destroying his home in Ithaca. Immediately upon his return to Ithaca's shores, the narrative refocuses from stories of adventures and trials on the seas to the current conflict in the present.

2. What does the punishment of the Phaeacians for following the guest-host relationship reveal about the gods?

Poseidon is furious with the Phaeacians for assisting Odysseus on his journey home, and he complains to Zeus. It is interesting to note that Zeus allows Poseidon to punish the Phaeacians even though they are adhering to the guest-host relationship that he so aggressively enforces in other parts of the text. Perhaps the Phaeacians exceeded the expectations of this code of conduct when they helped a mortal who had offended a god. It appears that the guest-host rule should be followed only when it does not interfere with the will or ego of the gods. This scene reveals interesting power struggles among the gods and how humans often interfere with the balance of power among the immortals. Zeus' submission to Poseidon's will demonstrates how maintaining the positive relationship with his brother and the balance of power among the gods is more important than praising humans for adhering to a code of conduct.

Book XIV

1. How does Eumaeus serve both thematic and structural functions in Book 14?

During Book 14 Eumaeus demonstrates another positive representation of the guest-friend relationship through his treatment of the "stranger." Eumaeus provides the disguised Odysseus with food and shelter. While hosting the stranger, Eumaeus speaks of his master, Odysseus, and expresses his unchanged love and loyalty to him, establishing himself as a trusted servant. Odysseus will need help to destroy the suitors, and now Eumaeus has distinguished himself as trustworthy and loyal. Eumaeus also provides information about Penelope, Telemachus, and the suitors. He clarifies that Penelope still pines after Odysseus, that Telemachus has grown up strong and has gone in search of his father, and that the suitors deserve to be punished for their misdeeds.

Structurally, Eumaeus also provides a moment of dramatic irony because the reader knows who he is speaking to but Eumaeus is unaware of the stranger's true identity. This dramatic irony also creates suspense and tension because it both builds up to the reunion of Odysseus and his family and to the death of the suitors.

Book XV

1. How does the author use symbolism both to reinforce Telemachus' characterization and as a plot device?

As Telemachus leaves Menelaus' palace in his chariot, an eagle carrying a goose swoops down beside him. Helen states that the eagle is a sign that Odysseus will also swoop down on his home and enact his revenge upon the suitors. Helen's interpretation of the eagle reminds the reader of the fate of the suitors and begins to tie together Telemachus' story with Odysseus' narrative.

Telemachus soon reaches the shores of his homeland, and upon his arrival Theoclymenus sees a hawk fly by carrying a dove in its talons. He interprets this as a positive and reassuring symbol of the strength of Odysseus' house and lineage. This reflects upon Telemachus' character because throughout the narrative he has been slowly transforming into a powerful and respectable man just like his father. When Theoclymenus interprets the hawk as a positive symbol of Odysseus' family's strength, that also reflects upon the developing strength and character of Telemachus. The symbolism indicates that Telemachus' confidence and abilities have grown during his journey.

Book XVI

1. How can the setting of Odysseus' reunion with his son be seen as a comment on his developing character?

It is important to note that Odysseus and Telemachus reunite in a run-down hut and not in the grand palace or during a heroic feat at sea. It is ironic that these royal figures would reunite in a lowly hut, but the setting reflects upon the two men's positive qualities. Odysseus and Telemachus have established themselves as larger-than-life, almost god-like men; but they have also learned to embrace their human qualities that demonstrate their emotions and their struggles. Having the two men meet in the hut simply reaffirms that these two men have balanced their heroic traits with the traits of everyman.

2. How does the differentiation of the suitors complicate Odysseus' justification for revenge?

Throughout the narrative, Homer rarely individualizes the suitors, but instead refers to them as a single entity. Thus far they have been single-minded in their desires and have all displayed the same base behavior. In Book 16, Homer initiates a debate amongst the suitors and the men split into two groups—one that sides with Antinous and the other with Amphinomus. Antinous is represented as aggressive, arrogant, and brutish while Amphinomus is more thoughtful, reflective, and observant of the gods' expectations. These different camps of men complicate Odysseus' justification for revenge because now the suitors are not faceless or all the same. Certain suitors now stand out as perhaps more deserving of punishment or of leniency. Odysseus' punishment of all of the suitors is supported by the gods, but it may leave the reader with mixed feelings about the death of the suitors, who were not entirely bad people.

Book XVII

1. How does the author utilize the minor character Melanthius both as a foil character and as a means to comment on Odysseus' characterization?

The most important minor character in Book 17 is Melanthius, a goatherd. Melanthius is supposed to be a loyal subject of Odysseus, but he has become a subordinate of the suitors. Homer uses Melanthius as a foil to the ever loyal Eumaeus. Melanthius criticizes Eumaeus for bringing Odysseus to the palace, and he even kicks the disguised Odysseus. This brutal treatment tests Odysseus' patience and his self-control. Odysseus debates killing Melanthius on the spot, but resists the temptation to let his rage fly. This is a good sign because Odysseus has struggled with his temper in the past, but seems to be in control now. His self-control in this scene foreshadows the controlled and calculated approach he will have when he attacks the suitors.

Through Melanthius' shift in loyalty, Homer demonstrates how some of the servants have remained loyal and some have been turned by the pressures of the suitors. This brings into question the loyalty of the other servants and creates suspense about whether or not they will assist Odysseus in his revenge. Melanthius' treatment of Odysseus also foreshadows Odysseus' future treatment by the suitors.

Melanthius also presents an interesting criticism of people who do not work for their bread and meat, but instead abuse the hospitality and generosity of others. His criticism is meant to be about Odysseus because he currently appears to be a beggar, but it also has interesting connections to the suitors. It is ironic that Melanthius does not criticize the abusive and selfish suitors, seeing that they are also not working for their bread and meat.

2. How does the disguised Odysseus' tale about his life and struggles both create dramatic irony and comment on the suitors' behavior?

The main purpose of Odysseus' tale about his life and journey to Egypt is to establish dramatic irony. The suitors are unaware of Odysseus' true identity and do not realize the kernels of truth within his story. Odysseus tells of how he used to be a powerful and wealthy man, which the suitors may find hard to believe, but the reader knows is actually true for the real Odysseus. He tells of how he used to receive beggars and visitors with open arms, which again is true.

This part of the story is also a comment on the suitors' behavior and their unwillingness to embrace the guest-host relationship. Odysseus continues his story and says that Zeus took everything away from him, which again reflects the reality of his situation. Zeus and the other gods did interfere with his journey home. The mention of the gods can also serve as a reminder for the suitors that they too should be concerned about punishment from the gods.

Also, the story serves to remind the reader of Odysseus' real adventures. He tells stories about how his men disobeyed orders which led to their destruction. A similar situation really happened during Odysseus' journey when his men stormed the land of the Cicones.

Book XVIII

1. How do Odysseus' final words to Irus after the fight reflect upon Odysseus' positive characterization?

At the end of the fight, Odysseus throws Irus out and tells him to not make himself a king among the beggars. This comment can be seen as a reflection of Odysseus' own transformation from a glory-seeking, arrogant warrior, to a humble and modest man. Also, his message to Irus serves as a comment about the inappropriate behavior of the suitors and how they assumed power and authority that did not belong to them. Through these comments, Homer shows that Odysseus has learned to reject hubris both within himself and in others.

2. How does Odysseus' fight with Irus function as foreshadowing?

Odysseus' fight with Irus serves to foreshadow the death of the suitors, and it also hints at his true identity due to his strength and skill. The fight with Irus is a prelude to the suitors' punishment. When Odysseus defeats Irus with ease this foreshadows the ease with which he will defeat the suitors.

Also, during the fight Athena lends Odysseus more strength, which foreshadows her involvement in the death of the suitors. The suitors may be unaware of her presence, but the readers are now confident in believing that Athena will assist Odysseus in getting revenge.

3. How does Irus function as a foil to Odysseus?

Staying in disguise to fight Irus, Odysseus appears to be fragile and weak, but when he reveals the muscular body underneath his rags he is anything but that. When he reveals his body, he demonstrates his strength, and during the fight he clearly shows his fighting prowess because he nearly kills Irus in the attack. Irus is a clear foil to Odysseus during the fight. Irus demonstrates an interesting mix of bravado and cowardice while Odysseus represents bravery, strength, and wit.

4. What are the effects of the literary devices and diction used to describe Odysseus' encounter with Irus?

Homer's diction during Odysseus' encounter with Irus is surprisingly detailed and emotional. He uses negative words such as incorrigible, drunkard, and hulking to describe Irus, which influences the reader's opinion of him. Clearly Homer encourages the reader to dislike Irus and see him as a base figure compared to Odysseus. This diction lends to the negative tone towards Irus, which helps the author justify Odysseus' actions.

Homer also uses metaphors and similes to create detailed imagery of verbal conflict and physical violence between the two men. These detailed images engage the reader by pulling them into the sensory details of the scene. Seeing that the reader is expecting Odysseus to win the fight, it is important for the author to engage the reader in the tension of the scene through the descriptions.

Dramatic irony also plays a role in this scene because Irus is unaware of who he is really fighting, and he is thus unprepared for the inevitable beating he receives. The dramatic irony engages the reader and also creates tension about whether or not Irus will be killed or if he will discover Odysseus' true identity.

Book XIX

1. Based upon the interactions between Penelope and the beggar, is there any evidence that she is aware of his true identity?

There is some debate about whether or not Penelope was actually aware of the beggar's true identity. While it is interesting to believe that she knew she was actually speaking to Odysseus, there is no evidence from the text to support this claim. It is true that Homer often used dramatic irony in the text to create suspense, but in this case the dramatic irony connects only with the reader knowing the identity of the beggar. There is no double dramatic irony with Penelope and the reader being aware of Odysseus' identity and him being the unaware party. Penelope is cunning, but there would be no reason for her to test her husband's loyalty to her or his ability to defeat the suitors.

2. How does Penelope reflect the ideals of her society?

Like her husband, Penelope reflects the ideals from her society. During her conversation with her disguised husband, Penelope demonstrates positive qualities such as generosity, hospitality, beauty, intelligence, and loyalty. Penelope embraces the guest-host relationship by caring for the beggar and offering him food, shelter, a means of bathing, and clean clothes. She even explains that she could not be deemed superior to other women in goodness or understanding if she did not offer assistance. Also keeping with the guest-friend relationship, Penelope and the beggar exchange stories and information, which is important both for the plot development and their characterization.

Again like her husband, Penelope also reflects her society's expectations for her to be poised and attractive. When Odysseus first sees her, Homer even compares her beauty and elegance to the goddesses Aphrodite and Artemis. Importantly, Penelope is modest and humble about her beauty, hospitality, and reputation.

Penelope also represents her society's expectations for loyalty and for being a loving, family-oriented woman. She expresses her continued love for Odysseus and explains that she has been avoiding getting remarried so that she can remain both hopeful about and faithful to Odysseus. In order to avoid remarrying, Penelope relies on her cunning and skill, which are also valued qualities in Greek society. She promises to remarry after weaving a shroud for Odysseus, but she un-weaves the shroud at night to delay the impending marriage.

Book XX

1. How does Homer foreshadow the death of the suitors?

Throughout this passage, Homer uses several omens to foreshadow the death of the suitors. After his conversation with Penelope, Odysseus asks Zeus for a good omen or a sign of Zeus' support, to which Zeus responds with a thunderclap. Zeus is the god of the sky and controls the thunder and lightning, so his thunderclap demonstrates that he has received Odysseus' plea and responds positively to it. At the same moment of Odysseus' plea, a maid in the house is heard cursing the suitors and asking the gods to punish them, strengthening the association of Zeus' thunderclap with the suitors' impending doom.

While the suitors plot Telemachus' death, another symbol appears before them that suggests their inevitable deaths. Only one suitor, Amphinomus, steps forward to persuade the others to stop their plotting when he sees an eagle carrying a dove in its talons, which he interprets as an omen foreshadowing that the plot will fail.

Unfortunately for Amphinomus and the other suitors, the gods intervene and prevent them from heeding the ominous signs. During a conflict in which Telemachus threatens the suitors, Athena causes the suitors to laugh and ignore the obvious signs of their impending doom. Their laughter spurs Telemachus' desire for revenge and ensures that he will participate in their punishment.

The omens become even graver, and this time only Theoclymenus sees the signs and warns the suitors that they represent their doom. He sees that the walls of the room appear to be covered in blood, that the suitors are enveloped in a shadowy darkness, and that the court yard is full of ghosts. Theoclymenus rightly interprets these images as omens of inescapable destruction.

It is important to note that the symbols both throughout the entire narrative and within this book become increasingly frequent and more violent, which increases both the suspense of the suitors' impending deaths and verifies that these images are indeed symbols that the reader should note as moments of foreshadowing.

2. Athena inspires the suitors to behave even more inappropriately than usual. How might her interference complicate Odysseus' justifications for revenge?

Athena increases the antagonistic behavior of the suitors through this book to ensure that Odysseus' and Telemachus' anger do not wane. This complicates the revenge plot because it calls into question the suitors' responsibility for their own actions. They did abuse Penelope and Telemachus throughout the book, but they are robbed of the opportunity to correct their behaviors or respond to situations independently of each other or any influences. If they had not been controlled by Athena, there is a chance they would have stopped their abusive behavior and minded the obvious omens about their forthcoming punishment.

Also, Athena's interference calls into question Odysseus' own desire for revenge. She inflames his anger to ensure he pursues revenge because it is what she wants to happen. If she had not been involved, Odysseus may have lessened his punishment for the suitors. Athena's interference does inspire Odysseus to seek revenge with all of his might, so perhaps she saved his life by spurring him on and not allowing his bravery or strength to falter against the numerous suitors.

3. How does Homer use repetition to demonstrate how Odysseus' and Telemachus' reactions to the suitors' behavior have changed?

Homer uses repetition throughout the narrative, which allows the reader to see the characters' development and the emphasis of different themes and ideas. Usually this repetition varies between each telling, which gives each event a new or deeper meaning. During this book, the suitors insult Odysseus and Telemachus numerous times with the same insults, but Odysseus' and Telemachus' reactions to them gradually change. At first, the two men struggle to contain their anger at these insults, but gradually their reactions turn to feelings of pity and disbelief. Both men have learned to control their emotional responses and simply bide their time before enacting their revenge. Throughout the course of the Odyssey, the two men have learned to interpret the suitors' insulting behavior as justification for their imminent punishment.

Book XXI

1. How does the trial of the axes function as both a plot device and as a symbol?

The trial of the axes allows Odysseus an opportunity to reveal his identity by completing a task that only the true king and owner of the bow could complete. While he does not reveal his identity to the suitors until Book 22, the bow symbolically suggests Odysseus' true identity. By stringing the bow, Odysseus symbolically reclaims his position and power by demonstrating his physical superiority over the suitors.

The bow's history itself is also symbolic of Odysseus' return to power. Homer explains that Odysseus received the bow during a time when he ruled his land happily and unchallenged. By reclaiming the bow and again stringing it, Odysseus reclaims his status as the most powerful man in Ithaca.

Lastly, the trial also provides him with a weapon that he can use while the suitors are still in awe and unarmed.

Book XXII

1. How does Homer ensure that Odysseus and Telemachus are credited with defeating the suitors?

As expected, Athena arrives to assist in punishing the suitors. Yet when she first appears, she is disguised as Mentor and refrains from physically participating. Athena encourages Odysseus and bolsters his confidence because she wants to test Odysseus's strength and resolve. Only after Odysseus and Telemachus have both received slight injuries and killed some of the suitors does Athena join the battle. By withholding her support until the end of the battle, Homer portrays Odysseus and Telemachus as the true reasons for their success in the battle.

2. What is the significance of the order and the methods in which the suitors die?

Homer specifically chooses the order and method in which the suitors die. These choices are significant because it reflects the suitors' culpability in the mistreatment of Odysseus' family. Odysseus kills Antinous first because he is the ringleader of the suitors. Antinous is the one who most often plotted against Telemachus, and Antinous was consistently picked out as the most abusive of the guest-host relationship. Odysseus kills him with the very bow that Antinous and the other suitors could not string, which further demonstrates Odysseus' superiority. Telemachus picks Eurymachus to kill first because Eurymachus insulted him. It is significant that Telemachus is unassisted by his father as he uses his strength to drive a spear clear through Eurymachus.

Book XXIII

1. How does Penelope's decision to test Odysseus reinforce her characterization?

Throughout the narrative, Penelope has demonstrated her intelligence, cunning, and wariness. She previously showed these traits when she delayed a new marriage by unweaving the burial shroud at night and when she set up the archery contest—which she probably assumed no one could complete.

It is understandable that Penelope continues to remain wary even when Odysseus reveals himself to her. She is afraid that a god could be playing a trick on her. To ensure that this man truly is her husband, she uses a trick to test his identity. She orders Euryclea to move their bed from their chamber, knowing that it cannot be done. Odysseus angrily describes why this cannot be done—the bed was built from the trunk of an olive tree around which the house had been constructed. Knowing that no other man could possibly know these details, she finally acknowledges that this man must be her husband. This test reinforces evidence of Penelope's clever and shrewd character.

2. How does Penelope and Odysseus' wedding bed function as a metaphor?

The bed cannot be separated from that room, just as Penelope and Odysseus cannot be separated from each other. The bed has become an inseparable part of the foundation of their house, and without one there cannot be the other. Just the same, Penelope and Odysseus are intertwined not only through marriage but also through their characterization. Penelope and Odysseus cannot be separated because they are so similar. They both embrace intelligence, scheming, cautious planning, and loyalty. They could be considered “soul mates” or kindred spirits. The suitors could not separate Penelope from Odysseus, and the goddesses and other temptations that Odysseus faced could not separate him from Penelope. Just as their wedding bed cannot be moved or broken, their love cannot be changed or broken.

Book XXIV

1. How does Homer reinforce the negative tone towards the suitors?

Homer reinforces the negative tone towards the suitors through his descriptions of their journey to the underworld and through the discussion between Achilles and Agamemnon. Homer describes the suitors as “whining” and “gibbering” as Hermes leads the souls of the suitors into Hades. He compares the suitors to crying bats who have fallen from the security of their enclosure. This negative diction clearly criticizes the suitors for not accepting their deaths with bravery, grace, or honor.

Homer continues to reinforce his negative tone towards the suitors when he includes the discussion between Achilles and Agamemnon. The two famous spirits debate who had the more terrific and lamentable death between them, which clearly comments on the shameful death of the suitors. They also comment on the many people who mourned their deaths, perhaps calling into question who will mourn the death of such ignoble men as the suitors.

2. Why was it essential that the story did not end with Penelope’s and Odysseus’ reunion but with his journey to visit his father?

While ending the epic with Odysseus and Penelope’s reunion would end the narrative on a positive note, it would simply leave too many questions unanswered and too many conflicts unsettled.

Firstly, Odysseus needed to complete the journey that the prophet Tiresias told him about. If he did not, he could risk angering the gods further.

Secondly, Odysseus just killed over one hundred young men, and one can assume that their families will want justice. Odysseus himself predicts that they will seek revenge. Something must be done to quell their anger, and leaving this conflict unresolved would leave Odysseus’ future success in question.

Also, Odysseus previously mentioned the grief of his parents, and it would be awkward and even offensive for him to not reunite with his father, Laertes.

Finally, through his journeys Odysseus has learned to appreciate the assistance of the gods, so it is perhaps fitting that the epic should end with Athena restoring the peace and restraining the anger of the suitors’ families.

The Odyssey

Book I

1. How does Homer maintain the audience's interest in the story, knowing that the audience is aware of the outcome from the very beginning?

2. What does the invocation of the Muse in the opening lines clarify about Odysseus' culpability during his voyage home?

3. What role do the gods play in the *Odyssey* and how does their involvement illuminate expectations from Greek society?

4. How does Homer use Telemachus as a plot device?

5. How does Homer use dramatic irony in Book I both as a plot device and as a means to foreshadow Odysseus' return?

6. How does the author establish a negative tone towards the suitors?

Book II

1. What rhetorical strategies does Antinous use for justifying his and the other suitors' behavior?

2. Explain the surprising shift in Telemachus' tone and diction from the beginning of Book I up to the end of Book II.

3. What is the effect of the literary devices used to describe the beginning of Telemachus' journey?

Book III

1. What role does the expanding setting play in the plot structure of the narrative?

2. What function do Nestor's, Menelaus', and Helen's stories of the events of the Trojan War perform in the *Odyssey*?

3. What is the significance of Nestor's story about the fate of Agamemnon?

4. How does Telemachus' pessimistic mood serve as a plot device?

Book IV

1. What is the effect of repetition in the narrative?

2. How does the story of Menelaus' encounters with the Old Man of the Sea serve a thematic purpose?

3. How does Helen explain Menelaus' paradoxical decision to accept her again, even after she shamed him by being the start to the Trojan War?

4. How might Menelaus' descriptions of his journey home to Sparta be different if they were presented from a third-person point of view?

Book V

1. How does Zeus' order for Calypso to set Odysseus free function not only as a plot device but also as the entry point for a discussion on gender bias?

2. How does Odysseus' rejection of Calypso reflect ideals from Greek society?

5. In what way does Book V demonstrate an example of "Deus ex machina"?

Book VI

1. How do Athena's interactions with Nausicaa function as a plot device that ensures Odysseus will receive assistance?

2. How does Nausicaa's behavior towards the naked and stranded Odysseus demonstrate her adherence to the expectations of her society?

3. What does Odysseus' refusal to embrace Nausicaa's knees and his decision to not allow her maidens to bathe him reveal about his character?

Book VII

1. How does Arete's characterization change or contribute to the text's overall representation of women and femininity?

Book VIII

1. What does the contrast between the behaviors of the young men and Odysseus during the games contribute to Odysseus' characterization?

2. What function does Demodocus' story about Ares and Aphrodite perform in the story?

Book IX

1. What do the three stories about the Cyclops, the Cicons, and the Lotus Eaters illuminate about Odysseus' leadership abilities and character?

2. How does the author position Odysseus as a reliable narrator?

3. How does the author establish some sense of sympathy for the Cyclops?

Book X

1. How do this book's conflicts serve a thematic purpose, especially regarding the pitfalls of temptation and excess?

2. How does the author use Eurylochus as both a plot device and as a tool to reflect upon Odysseus' character?

Book XI

1. How does the visit to the underworld tie together the text's various settings?

2. How does the author use the visit to the underworld as both a plot device and a thematic tool?

Book XII

1. Throughout the narrative, Odysseus struggles with resisting temptation. How do the events of this book compare with Odysseus' previous failures at resisting temptation and excess?

2. In what way does Book 12 demonstrate examples of both skilled and faultless leadership on the part of Odysseus?

Book XIII

1. How is Book 13 essential to both the structure of the narrative and in the progression of the narrative's many conflicts?

2. What does the punishment of the Phaeacians for following the guest-host relationship reveal about the gods?

Book XIV

1. How does Eumaeus serve both thematic and structural functions in Book 14?

Book XV

1. How does the author use symbolism both to reinforce Telemachus' characterization and as a plot device?

Book XVI

1. How can the setting of Odysseus' reunion with his son be seen as a comment on his developing character?

2. How does the differentiation of the suitors complicate Odysseus' justification for revenge?

Book XVII

1. How does the author utilize the minor character Melanthius both as a foil character and as a means to comment on Odysseus' characterization?

2. How does the disguised Odysseus' tale about his life and struggles both create dramatic irony and comment on the suitors' behavior?

Book XVIII

1. How do Odysseus' final words to Irus after the fight reflect upon Odysseus' positive characterization?

2. How does Odysseus' fight with Irus function as foreshadowing?

3. How does Irus function as a foil to Odysseus?

4. What are the effects of the literary devices and diction used to describe Odysseus' encounter with Irus?

Book XIX

1. Based upon the interactions between Penelope and the beggar, is there any evidence that she is aware of his true identity?

2. How does Penelope reflect the ideals of her society?

Book XX

1. How does Homer foreshadow the death of the suitors?

2. Athena inspires the suitors to behave even more inappropriately than usual. How might her interference complicate Odysseus' justifications for revenge?

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Book XXI

1. How does the trial of the axes function as both a plot device and as a symbol?

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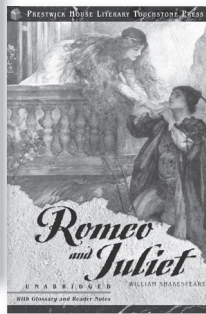
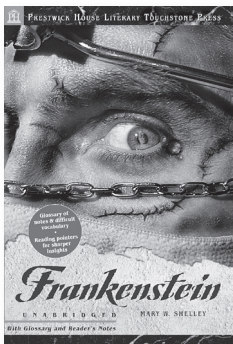
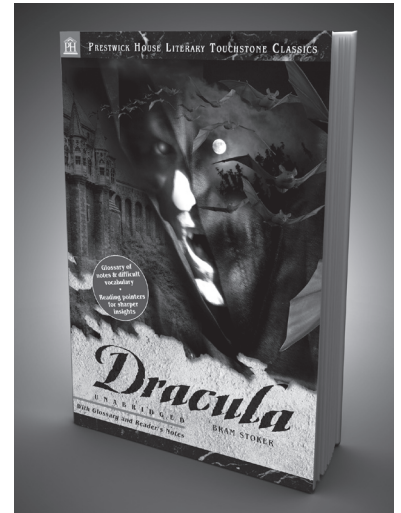
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