

## **The Odyssey**

### **Book 1**

#### **Multiple Choice Questions**

1. The first ten lines of the poem begin with a \_\_\_\_.
  - a) invocation to the Muse
  - b) a brief summary of what happened on Odysseus' return home
  - c) a statement summary of what happened in Troy (the content of the Iliad)
  - d) all of the above
  - e) none of the above
  
2. What does Book 1 say happened to Odysseus and his crew and why?
  - a) Some of the men died, but not Odysseus, because one of the gods was angry with Odysseus.
  - b) All of the men except Odysseus drowned at sea.
  - c) None of the men died because Athena took pity.
  - d) All of the men except Odysseus were destroyed because they ate the cattle of the sun god.
  - e) All of the men lived except Odysseus, who fought against the Cyclops and lost.
  
3. All of the gods took pity on Odysseus, who was trapped on Calypso's island, except \_\_\_\_.
  - a) Zeus
  - b) Poseidon
  - c) Hermes
  - d) Athena
  - e) Polyphemus
  
4. Why was this god, according to Zeus, angry with Odysseus?
  - a) Odysseus and his men had eaten his cattle.
  - b) Odysseus had not sacrificed to him.
  - c) Odysseus had blinded his son, the Cyclops Polyphemus.
  - d) All of the above
  - e) None of the above

5. Where was Poseidon when the gods had their democratic assembly?
  - a) in Ethiopia receiving sacrifices
  - b) in a grotto under the sea fuming
  - c) at a wedding feast
  - d) wreaking vengeance upon Odysseus
  - e) destroying the Cyclopes
  
6. Whom did Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, kill?
  - a) the one who killed his father
  - b) Aegisthus
  - c) an adulterer
  - d) All of the above
  - e) None of the above
  
7. Who are the "Atrides"?
  - a) Odysseus and Telemachus
  - b) Penelope and Clytemnestra
  - c) Nestor and Menelaus
  - d) Menelaus and Agamemnon
  - e) Aegisthus and Clytemnestra
  
8. Zeus accounts the troubles of men to \_\_\_\_.
  - a) Poseidon
  - b) himself
  - c) their own actions
  - d) Athena
  - e) Hermes
  
9. Calypso was the daughter of \_\_\_\_ and lived on the island of \_\_\_\_.
  - a) a nymph...Argos
  - b) Atlas...Ogygia
  - c) Odysseus...Delos
  - d) Mentos...Lemnos
  - e) Athena...Icaria
  
10. Athena disguises herself as \_\_\_\_ when she appears before Telemachus.
  - a) Eurymachus
  - b) Aegisthus

- c) Odysseus
- d) Penelope
- e) Mentos

11. What are the suitors doing when Athena enters the palace of Odysseus?

- a) spitting
- b) hunting
- c) sporting
- d) whistling while cleaning
- e) gambling

12. The bard (Phemius) in the palace of Odysseus is singing about the \_\_\_\_.

- a) warriors' voyage home from the Trojan War
- b) Trojan War
- c) creation of the world
- d) Odysseus and his wife Penelope
- e) the murder of Agamemnon

13. After Athena leaves, Telemachus first shows his awakened manhood by \_\_\_\_.

- a) wrestling with the suitors
- b) killing the suitors
- c) lifting weights
- d) telling his mother what to do
- e) making quiche

14. Who are Antinous and Eurymachus?

- a) friends of Odysseus
- b) suitors
- c) the sons of Laertes
- d) brothers of Telemachus
- e) None of the above

15. Who is Eurycleia?

- a) the nurse of Telemachus
- b) a friend of Penelope
- c) the grandmother of Telemachus
- d) a nymph and agent of Poseidon

e) the sister of Telemachus

### Topics for Discussion and Essay Writing

*Read over the following topics and plan but do not write an essay. BE prepared to talk about your essay in class.*

1. Penelope and Clytemnestra were cousins. Icarius, the father of Penelope, was the brother of Tyndareus, the father of Clytemnestra; Clytemnestra was the sister of Helen (both daughters of Leda, although Helen's father was Zeus).. These female relatives are important to the epic drama and are foil characters; Compare and contrast Penelope with Clytemnestra and Helen with Clytemnestra.
2. Orestes with Telemachus both have fathers that were betrayed and they in some way act to straighten things out. How is the case of Telemachus similar to that of Orestes? How is it different?
3. Telemachus is described as a boy coming of age in the following ways (lines given):
  - His manliness is encouraged by learning of his father's true state (232 ff.) We learn of the consequence of Athena's visit in lines 367-370.
  - He is physically becoming mature (240-246) (341) (346)
  - He must do something and Athena gives him directions. (320 ff.) (341). When boys come of age, they show their manhood by taking action. Telemachus must take revenge, a situation which reminds us of Orestes. (342 ff.) The revenge ethic is common in literature, such as in *Hamlet* and *Beowulf*. See Zeus paying back (436)
  - Telemachus shows awakened manhood by telling his mother what to do, and then the suitors. (409 ff.)
  - Telemachus, however, is still a boy attended by his nurse. (489)
4. In Book 1, we get a glimpse of the ancient etiquette for traveling guests (154-168) (141) (204-206), including bathing (356) and the giving of gifts (357-360).

5. The ancient audience, as we are, would be disgusted by the manners of the suitors; the ugly description creates suspense and stirs up a sense of injustice a need for setting things right. (264-267) (285-293)
6. Homer describes in luscious detail an ancient feast. (174-181)
7. Dramatic tension is increased by the repetition of the fact that Odysseus is dead, but if her *were* alive and came back to Ithaca, what would those suitors do? Audience knows that Odysseus is alive and well. (294-300) (307-310)

## **The Odyssey**

### **Book 2**

*Theme:* Inspiring Manhood in Telemachus

There is no closure for Telemachus while he is ignorant regarding his father's state. If Odysseus is dead, he can act as the full heir, but if he is alive, he is not heir, and must find his father's whereabouts and help him home. While Odysseus' state is not known, there is no rest. In a figure, Telemachus is much like a caterpillar in its chrysalis state: he is not fully man, nor fully boy, and finding his father will open the cocoon and let the new creature fly.

Telemachus shows his awakened manhood by giving the suitors an ultimatum at the assembly. He wakes up, and dressed with a sharp sword, "handsome as a god," (5) he calls for the Achaeans to assemble. As he enters the assembly, he has a look of an authority; he takes his father's seat. After the aged Aegyptius speaks, Telemachus makes his remarks: he has assembled the Achaeans together to talk about a personal crisis: the suitors.

At this point of the story, Odysseus is as good as dead, and Telemachus must fill his place and act the man. While Odysseus is gone to war and performing his larger-than-life feats of heroism, Telemachus must manage mundane domestic affairs. Although Telemachus' obstacles are more mundane and the deeds that he must perform less "glorious" than his father's, they are not less important. In response, the suitors make accusations against his mother, whom Telemachus must defend.

After the meeting was broken up, Telemachus walks to the beach and is encouraged by Athena; the goddess tells him that he has the spirit of his father, and that noble courage runs through his veins. To ordinary people, this great conflict would be hopeless, but to the brave son of Odysseus, there is hope. Athena not only bolsters the boy's spirits, but also guides him in his duties: he must get things ready for his voyage in search of his father.

When he returns home, Telemachus finds the suitors at their old, familiar stations. Antinous tries to appease him, urging him to allow things to be as he knows they have always been. Telemachus refuses, emphasizing the fact that he is no longer a boy. (346-350)

## **The Odyssey**

### **Book 3**

#### **Multiple Choice**

1. Neleus was the son of \_\_\_\_ and the father of \_\_\_\_, king of Pylos.
  - a) Poseidon...Nestor
  - b) Zeus...Odysseus
  - c) Cadmus...Laius
  - d) Icarius...Penelope
  - e) Io...Semele
2. In sailing from his homeland in Ithica to Pylos, Telemachus travels \_\_\_\_.
  - a) north
  - b) northwest
  - c) east
  - d) southeast
  - e) west
3. Which of the following is the son of Nestor?
  - a) Pisistratus
  - b) Thrasymedes
  - c) Antilochus

- d) Perseus
  - e) all of the above
4. What likeness of his father does Nestor first see in Telemachus?
- a) his hair color
  - b) his height and strength
  - c) his way with words
  - d) his bright and handsome countenance
  - e) his strange way of walking
5. According to Nestor, what delayed the soldiers from returning home?
- a) fighting between Menelaus and Agamemnon
  - b) a storm
  - c) finding booty
  - d) a Trojan insurgence
  - e) a farewell party with the Trojans
6. Which of the gods, according to Nestor, contrived their delay?
- a) Poseidon
  - b) Hermes
  - c) Athena
  - d) Hera
  - e) Eos
7. Which of the following was the leader of the Myrmidons?
- a) Achilles
  - b) Nestor
  - c) Menelaus
  - d) Agamemnon
  - e) Diomedes
8. Which of the following did NOT come home safely?
- a) the Myrmidons
  - b) Philoctetes
  - c) Agamemnon

- d) Nestor
  - e) Menelaus
9. Which of the following gods acts as Odysseus' champion?
- a) Poseidon
  - b) Athena
  - c) Zeus
  - d) Hermes
  - e) Amphitrites
10. Nestor portrays Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife, as a(n) \_\_\_\_.
- a) wicked adulteress
  - b) unwilling victim
  - c) innocent lamb
  - d) brave and resolutely chaste woman
  - e) ferocious tiger
11. Which of the two following events happened at the same time? (Circle two)
- a) Menelaus arrives home
  - b) Agamemnon arrives home
  - c) Orestes holds a feast after the burial of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus
  - d) Odysseus arrives home
  - e) Aegisthus kidnaps Clytemnestra
12. What excuse does the disguised Athena make to Nestor for not accepting his gracious hospitality?
- a) She does not like luxury.
  - b) She has to collect a debt from the Cauconians.
  - c) She has the hiccups.
  - d) All of the above
  - e) None of the above
13. Which of the following events or things was NOT included in the ceremonial sacrifice described in lines 480-520?



- a) a heifer
- b) a goat
- c) gold leafing
- d) pouring wine over the fire and sacrificed animal
- e) eating the sacrificed animal

14. Who accompanied Telemachus to his next destination?

- a) Thrasymedes
- b) Antilochus
- c) Perseus
- d) Nestor
- e) Pisistratus

15. What was their mode of transportation to their next destination?

- a) ship
- b) by foot
- c) horse and chariot
- d) horseback
- e) a royal litter

#### **For Further Class Discussion**

In 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, Paul talks about eating meat sacrificed to idols. In Book 2 (37, 85, 480 ff.), modern readers get an interesting glimpse of what this pagan sacrifice involved. Pay close attention to these passages, and compare them with the Hebrew sacrifices a millennium earlier in Leviticus 1-7, particularly Lev. 1:1-9.