

Lesson 1

The Cyclops and the Minotaur

Word Knowledge

Discovering Meanings

1. The people of the country were subject to the *whims* of incompetent bureaucrats who made the laws that they had to obey.
 - a) cruelty
 - b) disturbing behavior
 - c) sudden ideas not well thought out
2. Through his *commerce* with the East Indies, the Dutch merchant amassed a great fortune.
 - a) travels
 - b) interconnection
 - c) business or trade
3. How long has he been Mr. Wilson's *tenant*?
 - a) landowner
 - b) husbandman
 - c) one who rents out property
4. In the deep *recess* of the mountainside we found a treasure.
 - a) cave
 - b) steep slope
 - c) trees or other foliage
5. We ate our lunch during *recess*.
 - a) a period of work
 - b) period for recreation
 - c) place of entertainment
6. The court *recessed* for the day.
 - a) was active

- b) stopped regular activity
 - c) delivered a verdict
7. Water seeped through the *crannies* of the surface.
- a) tunnels
 - b) cracks
 - c) mountains
8. Darrell made an *uncouth* remark to his sister.
- a) rude or unmannered
 - b) humorous
 - c) polite
9. They watched with horror the *brutal* flogging of the slaves.
- a) painful
 - b) violent
 - c) unique
10. The *brutish* treatment of the government toward its citizens should be punished.
- a) like an animal, often in its lowness or cruelty
 - b) prudish
 - c) simple like a beast
11. What are the funeral *rites* practiced by that ancient culture?
- a) polytheistic religions
 - b) ceremonial practices
 - c) lighting of funeral pyres
12. Rocco and Oliver were *constrained* by time and had to leave the painting of the house unfinished.
- a) practiced
 - b) slavishly followed
 - c) limited
13. Elie and Julie watched the pig eat its *swill*.
- a) animal food made of remnants of what has been eaten
 - b) root vegetables
 - c) grain

14. Annie and Elise spoke ill of the *execrable* villain.
- a) worthy of hatred
 - b) cowardly
 - c) comical
15. Michael and Mary's team *routed* the opposition.
- a) mocked
 - b) beat
 - c) lost to
16. Jerry joined the *rout* in a nonsensical and violent protest.
- a) mob
 - b) orderly protestors
 - c) sailors
17. The *fell* villain was condemned to death.
- a) clumsy
 - b) thieving
 - c) cruel
18. The lumberjack *felled* the tree with one stroke of his ax.
- a) hewed
 - b) ruined
 - c) knocked down
19. His behavior *rankled* all of us.
- a) amazed
 - b) entertained
 - c) annoyed
20. Abby and Edith watched as the fire engine was followed by a *convoy* of police cars down the street.
- a) a noisy group
 - b) vehicles, etc. that go along for guarding or assistance
 - c) fast moving cars

ANSWERS

- 1) c 2) c 3) c 4) a 5) b 6) b 7) b 8) a 9) b 10) a 11) b 12) c 13) a 14) a
15) b 16) a 17) c 18) a 19) c 20) b

Learning about Words: Words from Myth

An Aeolian harp (from the mythical Aeolus, the king of the winds) is a harp that is not plucked by human fingers, but by the wind. The musician here, then, is the invisible breeze that strokes the strings, which are tuned so that the vibration produces a kind of music in itself. The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge liked the suggestive idea of music made from such a harp and he wrote a poem about it titled “The Eolian Harp.” In the poem he talks about the harp music as if it were produced from fairies from fairy-land.

Vocabulary Exercise

Write down the word from the word bank suggested by the sentence or phrase. Each word is used only once. The first one has been completed for you.

WORD BANK

whim, commerce, tenant, cranny, uncouth, rite, constrain, swill, rout, rankle, convoy

EXAMPLE

The little piglets hungrily ate the scraps that the farmer dumped into their trough.

Answer: swill

1. Her rude and overbearing manners irritated everyone that came into contact with her at the office.
2. How did the British trucks carrying the needed supplies to the soldiers arrive safely into the camp?
3. The Western nations wanted to establish trade relations with the Asian country.
4. After being a house owner for thirty years, Bob sold his house and rented an apartment in town.
5. The young men never learned manners: they slurped their soup, wiped their noses on their sleeves and often used the dining table as an ottoman.

6. Teresa never made plans or thought thoroughly through her ideas, no matter how extraordinarily weird they were.
7. There were little slits in the old wooden floor through which we could see the room beneath.
8. The angry mob surrounded the governor's building and chanted their grievances.
9. Although they wanted to go out to play, the two little boys were forced to stay at the table until they finished eating their dinner.
10. Do you know the meaning of the various Jewish sacrifices and ceremonies described in the Old Testament?

Spelling

mountain, sovereign, granite, crept, sandal, pretense, palace, Cyclopes (plural of *Cyclops*), Odysseus, shepherd, pillar, ewe, insensible, courteous, covetous

Reading

Multiple-Choice Questions:

The Cyclopes and Aeolus by Charles Lamb

1. Which of the following best identifies the Cyclopes?
 - a) wild men who follow strict rules of welcoming hospitality
 - b) uncouth merchants who are excellent sailors
 - c) primitive giants who farm an isolated island
 - d) savage one-eyed monsters who keep sheep
 - e) cannibals who make strong wine and sell it to neighboring lands across the sea
2. What is the stated reason behind Odysseus' decision to bring the wine to the Cyclopes' home?
 - a) to make the Cyclopes drunk so that he would be able to kill him
 - b) to show the Cyclopes the wealth and greatness of the Greeks
 - c) to have something to drink on the hot island

- d) to trade wine for food
 - e) to encourage a warm welcome
3. Which of the following best describes the contents of the Cyclops' dwelling?
- a) small
 - b) beautiful
 - c) savage
 - d) organized
 - e) dull
4. In reply to the Cyclops, why does Odysseus mention the name of Zeus?
- a) Odysseus knows that when he mentions the god, the Cyclops will not get angry.
 - b) Odysseus suspects that the Cyclops will do something bad to him and his crew.
 - c) Odysseus is bragging that the Greeks worship the chief of the gods.
 - d) Odysseus wants to make sure that the Cyclops knows that he and his men are religious.
 - e) By saying that they worship Zeus, Odysseus is telling the Cyclops they are Greeks, and therefore dangerous men.
5. Why does Odysseus say to the Cyclops that he has no ship or companions (paragraph 11)?
- a) Odysseus thinks that the Cyclops wants the ship for trade.
 - b) Odysseus knows that the ship has left for Greece.
 - c) Odysseus tells the Cyclops a false story of his misfortune to try to get the Cyclops' sympathy.
 - d) Odysseus does not want the Cyclops to harm his crew.
 - e) Odysseus believes that the Cyclops might not want to be hospitable to so many men.
6. What are the "wise thoughts" that restrain Odysseus (paragraph 13)?
- a) thoughts of killing the Cyclops with a stake
 - b) thoughts of finding help from the Cyclops' relatives
 - c) thoughts of how his crew would find food
 - d) thoughts of bloody revenge immediately by sword
 - e) thoughts of getting out of the cave

7. What is the “manly wisdom” of Odysseus (paragraph 15)?
 - a) a trick to get the Cyclops blind by first getting him drunk
 - b) a plan to kill the Cyclops
 - c) a scheme to steal the Cyclops’ sheep
 - d) a plan to get the Cyclops to cry for help
 - e) a plan to return to the ship with the rest of the wine
8. Who is “Noman”?
 - a) the real name of Odysseus
 - b) a name meant to trick the Cyclops
 - c) the name of a crew member that the Cyclops has already devoured
 - d) the name of the city from which Odysseus has come
 - e) the name of a wandering merchant
9. Which of the following best identifies Odysseus’ parting words to the Cyclops?
 - a) a genuine “thank you” for the Cyclops’ hospitality
 - b) a lie so that the Cyclops will never know who injured him
 - c) a warm farewell
 - d) a boast in which Odysseus reveals his true identity
 - e) a curse upon all the Cyclopes
10. Which of the following describes King Aeolus’ “curious gift” to Odysseus?
 - a) an ox-hide bag wrapped in a shiny silver band
 - b) a way of finally getting home
 - c) what the crew members think is gold but really is a bag of wind
 - d) a gift that becomes a curse because of greed
 - e) all of the above

Identification:

The Minotaur by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Write the answers in the boxes below to find the mystery word hidden in the black-colored boxes. (The boxes are on the next page.)

1. ___ was the father of Theseus.

2. ___ was the town in which Theseus was raised.
3. Every year fourteen Athenian youths had to sail to ___ to be sacrificed to a horrible monster.
4. ___ was the mother of Theseus.
5. Ariadne's father was a ___.
6. The Minotaur was trapped in a ___.
7. Theseus traveled far away to ___ the horrible monster.
8. On the way, the ship met up with the Man of Brass, fashioned by Vulcan, named ___.
9. ___ was able to lift the heavy stone where he found sandals and a sword.
10. The ___ was half man and half bull.
11. Theseus returned to his father with ___ sails.
12. ___ was a cruel king who won in war against Athens.
13. The Brass man was a ___.
14. In order to get out of the ___, Theseus used a thread given to him by Ariadne.

Answers to the Identification

1.
2.
3.
4.
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11.
12.
13.
14.

Write down the mystery word. In one or two sentences, explain what the mystery word has to do with Alfred's deeds as king.

Literary Terms

Epic, Dramatic Irony, Ballad

The very first poems written in the Western canon of literature were Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*. Not much is known about the author of these important works except that most likely he lived somewhere near Troy and that, so legend tells us, he was blind.

The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are classified as epics. An *epic* is a long poem that tells the adventures of some hero. Epics are usually very formal in their style. For example, instead of saying that a hero took up a spear and went out to battle, an epic will use "dressed up" language to make what is being said sound very important, such as "The warrior picked up his war-weapon, crafted by his own people of the finest gold, and rushed out to where the battle was raging, like a lion upon his prey, heedless of danger."

Unlike lyrical poems, epics do not talk about the inner feelings of the poet. That does not mean, however, that they do not contain many passages that create strong emotions in the reader. There are many emotional passages, in fact, in the *Odyssey*.

What is most important in the epic, however, is the plot, or what happens in the story. In the *Odyssey*, the action is central to the poem, and is strengthened and supported by what is called dramatic irony. Dramatic irony is created by the poet when he makes the audience aware of something his characters are not. For example, when Odysseus finally does get home disguised as a beggar, the audience knows who he is, but most of the other characters do not. There is humorous dramatic irony when Penelope's villainous suitors say harsh things against Odysseus, as they do not know that the strong hero is there with them listening. Odysseus at last reveals himself in a very dramatic moment when the noble-hero-disguised-as-a-beggar surprises the suitors by stringing his bow—something only Odysseus can do! He then takes revenge on his enemies who have been ravaging his house and pestering his wife for nearly twenty years. The plot of the *Odyssey* is further strengthened and

supported by a lot of foreshadowing, which occurs when the poet hints what is to come later in the story.

Like epics, *ballads*—such as the ballads of Robin Hood—tell stories, but they are stories on a much smaller scale. Their structure is very different from that of the epic, too. The ballad is usually composed of quatrains (four-line stanzas) and contains lines of six or eight syllables. The classical epic, however, was written in dactyls or feet with a pattern of three beats, the first one being accented. There are about eighteen syllables in a line of epic poetry, called hexameters. The poet Longfellow wrote his poem *Evangeline* in dactylic hexameter, the same meter as the *Odyssey*.

Epics usually begin in the middle of the story. The technical word for this is *in medias res*. Thus, the *Odyssey*, does not start when Odysseus leaves Troy to begin his voyage home, but starts with the gods deciding on what to do with Odysseus, who has been stranded on an island with a sea nymph named Calypso. It is only later on in the poem that we learn of the earlier adventures that Odysseus has had before he was stranded.

Epics are enjoyable because most people relish reading about the adventures of a hero facing almost impossible odds and winning over them. Much of the charm of the epic poem *Odyssey*, however, does not rely so much on the physical strength of its hero Odysseus—although he is very strong and must be to endure the hardship that he does. It instead relies on the cunning of Odysseus. Odysseus gets out of many scrapes by his wits, as in this excerpt of Odysseus' encounter with the Cyclops.

Many other epics have been written in other languages, such as Latin. One revered classical epic was written by Virgil, a Roman poet who lived during the days of the emperor Augustus. His poem, the *Aeneid*, deals with the Trojan Aeneas. It is similar to the *Odyssey* in that the poem begins with the hero's flight from burning Troy. Aeneas is the reputed founder of Rome, and Virgil's classic epic gives honor to Rome by relating the adventures of its legendary founder.

Epics have been written in the English language as well. The poem *Beowulf* is a classic epic written a little more than a thousand years ago. Written in Anglo-Saxon—an old form of English—the

poem narrates the story of a hero from Geatland (Sweden) named Beowulf who has three major adventures: destroying a monster named Grendel that is wreaking havoc in the realm of the Danish king Hrothgar; destroying the monster's mother, who takes revenge for the death of her son; and slaying a wrathful dragon who wreaks havoc in Geatland where Beowulf is king. Other, more modern, English epic poems include Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Writing Response

Composition 1

Write a short ballad about Odysseus's adventure with the Cyclopes. Be sure to write it in the ballad stanza, which is discussed in the Literary Terms of Lesson 4. One way to write the ballad is to first write down what narrative part each stanza will contain. Then, convert what you have written down into prose.

Composition 2

Write a one-paragraph expository essay on the cleverness of Odysseus. This will be the format of your paragraph essay:

- Write down the main idea of your paragraph essay. You may use the following: Odysseus' outstanding characteristic is his cleverness that saves him and his crew members in the end.
- Write one or two sentences explaining the main idea. Explain how Odysseus was clever but not necessarily strong. You may do this by contrasting the brute strength of the Cyclopes with the puny size of Odysseus.
- Give specific examples of the cleverness of Odysseus. Be sure to connect your sentences with such words as "Another example of Odysseus' cleverness is . . ."
- Have one concluding sentence. In one sentence answer one of the following: Does being smart always win over strength? How does a smart hero make this story more exciting?
- The paragraph should have at least eight sentences.