

THE ODYSSEY

STUDY GUIDE



NAME _____

PERIOD _____



To be collected at the end of the 1st semester. Complete this guide as you read.

The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions

Name _____

Period: _____

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



PART ONE: A Son Seeks His Father

Book 1: Athena Advises Telemachus

Important information not included in your Book 1 excerpt:

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

1. Who are the Muses?
2. Who is the "man skilled in all ways of contending"—the subject of the story the narrator would like to hear?
3. What happened to Odysseus's men on the way home? (lines 10-15).
4. For how long has Odysseus been away from home? Where had he been?
5. Who kept Odysseus prisoner?
6. Who is Odysseus's patron goddess?
7. What does Athena beg her father? Who is her father?
8. Who is Odysseus's enemy, and why is he mad at him?
9. Who is sent to deliver the message from Zeus to free Odysseus?
10. What is Odysseus's son's name, and where does he live?
11. What is going on in his home?

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12. What do the suitors want? (**suitors** are men who wish to date/marry a woman)
13. What are the **three main themes** of this epic?
14. Who is Athena disguised as? Where does she go?
15. What would Telemachus like his father to do? (lines 21-24).
16. What does Telemachus ask Athena? (lines 41-44).
17. What have the suitors done to Telemachus's home?
18. What does Athena advise Telemachus to do at daybreak?
19. Telemachus is advised to take a boat to find out news about what person?
20. What two men does Telemachus need to talk to? Who are they?
21. What should Telemachus do if he discovers Odysseus is alive?
22. What should Telemachus do if he discovers Odysseus is deceased?
23. What can Telemachus do to the suitors now that he is no longer a child?



Book 2: Telemachus Confronts the Suitors

Important information not included in your Book 2 excerpt:

During the assembly, **Zeus** sends two **eagles—omens of death**—to fly over the suitors. **Halitherses**, a prophet, interprets the eagles that fly over the assembly by saying Odysseus is coming home and Odysseus will kill those who disrespect his house. The suitors say Halitherses' omen means nothing. **Telemachus** says if he learns his father is alive and on his way home, he will put up with the suitors for another 12 months. If Telemachus learns his father is dead, he will honor his father with a funeral and force his mother to marry one of the suitors. *What power do sons have over their mothers?*

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1. Who does Telemachus assemble and talk to at dawn?
2. Who is the most arrogant (egotistical) suitor?
3. What does this suitor demand?
4. Who is Penelope?
5. For how many years has Penelope refused to marry the suitors?
6. Penelope tells the suitors that she will marry one of them when _____.
7. What did Penelope do at the weaving loom in the day? At night?
8. Who told the suitors Penelope's secret?
9. What did the suitors tell Telemachus he should do to Penelope if she would not marry one of the them?
10. Where does Telemachus go? (see italics before line 120).
11. To whom does Athena compare Telemachus?
12. What good qualities does this person possess?
13. Who helps Telemachus prepare for his journey? Who is she to Telemachus?
14. What is Telemachus's only concern as he prepares to leave?



Book 3: The Visit to Nestor

Important information not included in your Book 3 excerpt:

After they eat, **Telemachus** tells **Nestor**, who fought alongside and was a great friend to **Odysseus** during the **Trojan War**, that he is seeking information about his father. Nestor does not know what befell Odysseus. After Ilion (**Troy**) fell, **Athena** provoked a fight between the **brothers Menelaus**

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and Agamemnon and divided the **Achaean/Greeks** into two camps; those under command of Menelaus left, while the latter stayed. Odysseus left, but he and his crew soon returned to please Agamemnon. Nestor and his crew made it back home, as did a few other groups, but many did not. Telemachus asks Nestor how **Aegisthus** managed to **kill Agamemnon**. Nestor says that while **Agamemnon and Menelaus** were away fighting, **Aegisthus** eventually won over **Agamemnon's queen, Clytemnestra**. He ruled over Agamemnon's kingdom as a tyrant for seven years before **Orestes killed him and Clytemnestra**. Nestor warns **Telemachus** not to make the same mistake and stay away from home too long.

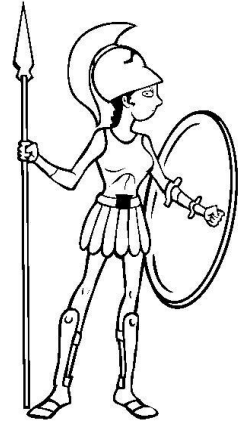
1. Where is Telemachus's first stop?
2. For what celebration do Telemachus and Athena arrive?
3. What is it ironic that they arrive during this celebration?
4. What did the people of Pylos sacrifice to Poseidon?
5. Why is Telemachus nervous about talking to Nestor? (lines 168-171).
6. Athena is referred to as the "_____ goddess".
7. How did Nestor and his friends behave toward Telemachus?
8. What does Nestor ask Telemachus after he feeds him?
9. How does Nestor feel about Odysseus?
10. What does Nestor know (or not know) about Odysseus? (lines 197-198).
11. Who is Odysseus's patron goddess? (line 203).
12. According to Athena, what do the gods need to do to save a man? (lines 211-213).



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Book 4: The Visit to Menelaus and Helen

1. Where does Telemachus go after Pylos?
2. Who does Telemachus visit here?
3. What does Telemachus *not* reveal about himself to these people?
4. Who is Athena disguised as?
5. Who does King Menelaus tell favorable stories about?
6. What does Telemachus do when he hears the stories?
7. What does Menelaus realize? (line 225).
8. What does Helen think about Telemachus?
9. What news do Menelaus and Helen give Telemachus?



Important information not included in your Book 4 excerpt:

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

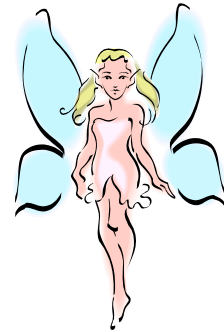
PART TWO: The Wanderings of Odysseus

Book 5: Calypso, the Sweet Nymph

1. What is the name of the messenger god?
2. Where does Calypso live?
3. What does Calypso promise Odysseus?

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4. What is Calypso doing? (lines 259-263).
5. What objects of nature surround her? Describe the setting.
6. What does Hermes tell Calypso?
7. How did Odysseus begin to feel about living with Calypso? (lines 289-291).
8. What did Odysseus do at night? Why? (lines 292-293).
9. How did Odysseus behave during the day? (lines 294-296).
10. Why does Calypso tell Odysseus he would likely want to stay on the island with her? (lines 314-318).
11. What questions does Calypso ask Odysseus? (lines 318-320).
12. According to Odysseus, how does Calypso compare to his wife?
13. Where does Odysseus want to sail?
14. Who makes sailing difficult for him?
15. What happens to Odysseus's raft?
16. Where does Odysseus land?
17. What does Odysseus do once he lands?



Book 6: The Princess Nausicaa

1. Is Nausicaa mortal or immortal?
2. Who first discovers Nausicaa sleeping?

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3. Who is Nausicaa's father?
4. What does Athena warn Nausicaa she must do? (lines 350-354)
5. What big event should be coming up in Nausicaa's life?
6. What does Athena tell Nausicaa she should ask her father?
7. Where does Athena go? Where do the gods live? (lines 367-369)
8. What does Nausicaa ask her father in the morning?
9. What is her father's response?
10. What, other than laundry, does Nausicaa bring with her?
11. Who goes to the water with Nausicaa?
12. What did the girls do after they did the laundry?
13. Who made Nausicaa late? Why?
14. Who did the girls see when the ball went into the water? How did they react?
15. Who is speaking between lines 440 and 447?
16. How was Odysseus dressed when he saw the girls?
17. To what animal is Odysseus compared?
18. Describe Odysseus's appearance. (line 459).
19. Who was the only girl who did not run away?



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20. What does Odysseus ask Nausicaa?
21. To what does Odysseus compare the wonder he feels at Nausicaa's presence? (lines 485-490).
22. For how many days was Odysseus stranded at sea when leaving Ogygia?
23. What does Odysseus ask Nausicaa?
24. What are the people who live in town called? (line 520).
25. Who is Nausicaa's father?
26. What does Nausicaa tell her maids who are afraid of Odysseus?
27. Strangers and beggars are sent by whom? (lines 532-533).
28. What does Nausicaa tell the maids to do for Odysseus?
29. Who also helps Odysseus look better after his bath?
30. What does she do to make him look better? (lines 553-557).
31. Who does Nausicaa wish her husband would look like? (line 570).
32. Where does Nausicaa take Odysseus? (lines 582-4).
33. Where does Nausicaa tell Odysseus to walk as they go into town? (lines 586-9).
34. If people see Odysseus with Nausicaa, what is she afraid they will think? (lines 602-614).
35. How would Nausicaa's parents feel if they thought she was with Odysseus? (lines 615-9).

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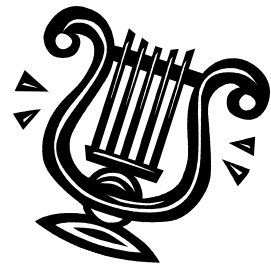
Book 7 Summary: (Book 7 was omitted from your reading. Read the summary below)

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

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

Book 8: The Song of the Minstrel

1. Who orders a banquet to honor the stranger guest, Odysseus?
2. Who is Demodocus?
3. What story does Odysseus ask Demodocus to tell him?
4. Who destroyed the city of Troy? (lines 634-6).
5. At what point does Alcinous demand to know Odysseus's identity?



Important information not included in your Book 8 Excerpt

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

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Book 9: The Lotus Eaters and the Cyclops

1. To whom does Odysseus reveal his name?
2. What is Odysseus's father's name?
3. Where is Odysseus's home? (line 649).
4. Who, other than Calypso, kept Odysseus in her home? (line 650).
5. After Odysseus and his men drifted aimlessly for 9 days, where did they land?
6. What feeling do the Lotus plants produce in those who ingest them?
7. How many men did Odysseus send to check out the Lotus Eaters? (line 671).
8. What happened to those men? (lines 672-679).
9. What does Odysseus do to the men to prevent them from eating the Lotus?
10. Odysseus is the _____ of the ancient Greek heroes.
11. What is the Cyclops's name with whom Odysseus has a conflict?
12. Who is the father of this Cyclops?
13. Where did the men wait for the Cyclops to return?
14. What did the Cyclops put at the entrance to the cave?
15. What does the Cyclops ask the men? (lines 711-714).
16. What does Odysseus tell the Cyclops? (lines 719-721).



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17. What does Odysseus say they need from the Cyclops? (lines 725-6).
18. How does the Cyclops respond to Odysseus who tells him to listen to Zeus?
19. What does Odysseus say happened to their ship?
20. What does the Cyclops do to two of his men?
21. Why does Odysseus decide not to kill the Cyclops while he is sleeping?
22. What does the Cyclops eat for breakfast?
23. What does Odysseus make out of a wooden club? What does he plan to do with it?
24. What does Odysseus offer the Cyclops after he eats the two men? (lines 710-711).
25. What happens to the Cyclops after he drinks 3 bowls? (lines 825-6).
26. What name does Odysseus say is his name? (lines 828-9).
27. What is the Cyclops doing in lines 834-836?
28. What do Odysseus and the four other men do with the spike? (846-59).
29. How does Cyclops react? (lines 859-865).
30. Who does Cyclops tell the other Cyclopes about who hurt him?
31. What did Odysseus do to his men so they could escape the cave? (890-900).
32. How did Odysseus and his men escape? (lines 901-929).



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33. What did the men take to their boat?
34. What did Odysseus yell to the Cyclops once they were on their boat?
35. What did Cyclops throw at the men?
36. What happened to the boat?
37. What do the men warn Odysseus not to do? (962-9).
38. What does Odysseus tell Cyclops? (972-4).
39. What does Cyclops ask Odysseus to do? (986-91).
40. What does Odysseus say he wishes he could do to the Cyclops?
41. What request does the Cyclops make to his father? (998-1007).



Book 10: The Bag of Winds and the Witch Circe

1. What is the name of the island where the men next land?
2. Who is Aeolus, and what does he do?
3. What do the sailors do to the bag of winds? What happens?
4. Who are the Laestrygonians, and what do they do?
5. Where do the men land next, and who lives there?
6. Who leads the party of 22 men to explore the island?
7. What creatures surround Circe?

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8. What was the goddess Circe doing when the men found her?

9. Who is Polites?

10. Which man does not go inside Circe's home? Why?

11. What did Circe add to the men's drinks?

12. What happened to the men? (lines 1039-1045).

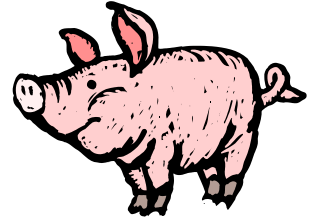
13. What does Hermes give Odysseus?

14. What does Circe persuade Odysseus to do?

15. For how long does Odysseus stay with Circe?

16. Where do Odysseus and the men have to go before heading home?

17. Who will share a prophecy with Odysseus?



Book 11: Land of the Dead

1. Where does Odysseus go next?

2. Who is the blind prophet?

3. What does Odysseus sacrifice to the dead?

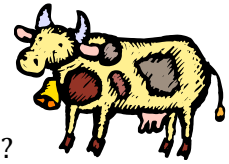
4. What does Odysseus sacrifice to Teiresias?

5. Who were some of the dead? (lines 1076-1080).

6. According to Teiresias, who will cause Odysseus trouble? Why? (1103-1106).

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7. What will Odysseus find on Thrinakia?



8. If Odysseus's crew eats the cows, what will happen to them and their ship?

9. How many survivors will remain? (lines 1116-7).

10. What does Teiresias say Odysseus will find when he returns home?

11. After Odysseus returns home and kills the suitors, to whom should he make sacrifice? (lines 1133-37).

12. Whose ghost does Odysseus see? (1145).



13. What is Odysseus's mother's name?

14. How did she die?

15. What did Odysseus try to do to his mother three times but fail?

16. Who does Odysseus accuse of making his mother appear as a hallucination?

17. What are the people's "bodies" like in the Underworld?

18. After the Land of the Dead, where does Odysseus go?

Important information not included in your Book 11 Excerpt

It is appropriate that the cause of death for **Odysseus' mother** is loneliness and longing - the central emotions in a poem about a relentless search for home and its attendant isolation. This book also casts light on **four other defining themes in the poem: fidelity, obedience to the gods, temptation, and endurance.**

Odysseus relates how he saw **Agamemnon**, who tells him how **Aegisthus** and his wife **Clytemnestra** killed him, and warns him about the wickedness of women; he should return home secretly, without warning to his wife. **Agamemnon** says, ""The day of faithful wives is gone forever". **Suspense should be building for you, the reader. What is Penelope up to at home? Will she betray her husband?** **Odysseus** talks with other shadows, including **Achilles**, about whose son, Neoptolemos, he tells him. He sees **Tantalus**, tortured by food and drink always just out of

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reach, and **Sisyphus**, perpetually pushing a boulder up a hill. The shadows mass in the thousands and frighten away **Odysseus**, who sails away with his crew.

Book 12: The Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis

1. What is the first danger about which Circe warns Odysseus?
2. Describe the Sirens.
3. What will happen to Odysseus if he hears the sirens sing?
4. What does Circe tell Odysseus to do to the men's ears?
5. If Odysseus wants to listen to the sirens, what can he do?
6. What is the second danger?
7. Describe Scylla.
8. How many men does Scylla eat from passing ships?
9. What is the third danger? (1220-21).
10. What does Charybdis do three times?
11. What advice does Circe offer? (1226-28).
12. After going past Scylla, where will they go? What is on this island? (1229-1232).
13. If Odysseus's crew eats the beeves (cattle), what will happen?
14. What does Odysseus *not* reveal to his crew?

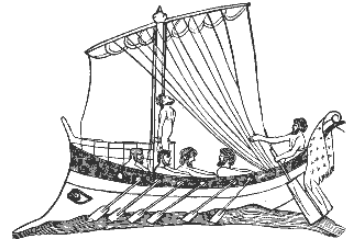


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15. What does Odysseus ask his men to do to him so he can hear the sirens?

16. What does Odysseus put in the men's ears?

17. Who sang to Odysseus's ship?



18. What did Odysseus cry out to his men when he heard the sirens sing?

19. What did the men do when they heard a strange sound? (lines 1286-1291).

20. What did Odysseus tell the men as they went toward Scylla? Why? (1311-3).

21. What was Odysseus looking for? (lines 1318-1323).

22. What does Charybdis do? (1327-1331).

23. What do the men see after Charybdis swallows water?

24. How many men does Scylla eat?

25. Where is the last place the men land?

26. What do the men eat that belongs to Helios?

27. Who punishes the men? How?

28. Where does Odysseus go (which is where we met him in Book 5)?



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PART THREE: The Return of the Hero

Book 13 Summary: (Book 13 was omitted from your reading. Read the summary below)

Odysseus stops telling his story, and the next day **Alcinous** and others give him gifts. Odysseus thanks Alcinous for his hospitality, and after some fanfare Alcinous' men set sail while Odysseus sleeps peacefully on board. The **Phaeacians** arrive at Ithaca the next day, unload Odysseus and his gear, and return home.

Poseidon appeals to **Zeus**, angry that Odysseus has had such a placid return home. He receives permission from Zeus to turn the **Phaeacians ship** into stone near their harbor for punishment. Alcinous observes this, which fulfills a prophecy (from Book 8) and leads his men in a sacrifice to Poseidon; the Phaeacians resolve never again to give strangers transportation. This episode marks a change in the Greek attitude toward hospitality. While the Phaeacians are gracious as ever in helping Odysseus, the fulfillment of the prophecy and sinking of their ship forces them to stop helping travelers. **Zeus** wearily permits the destruction of the ship only because **Poseidon** feels he has been wronged by the other gods; ensuring harmony among the gods, it seems, is more important than maintaining hospitality at all costs among the mortals.

Odysseus awakens, thinking he is in a strange land. **Athena comes to him in the form of a shepherd** and informs him he is in **Ithaca, his home**. Odysseus makes up a story about how he came to Ithaca. **Athena turns into a woman** and good-naturedly tells him she knows he is lying, and then reveals her identity. **She warns him not to let anyone know of his return**, and helps him plan death for the suitors. He will reunite with his old swineherd, while she will recall **Telemachus** from Lacedaemon. **Athena transforms Odysseus into a decrepit old man for safety**, and they part ways.

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

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

Odysseus displays his gifts for disguise (albeit aided by Athena) and improvisation (lying) in his encounter with Eumaeus. Just as he did in the famous Trojan horse story, Odysseus must secretly "invade" a city - this time his own - under wraps, and he must maintain this air of secrecy no matter what. His ability to weave spontaneous stories is exceptional, and this story even has some parallels to his own. He speaks of the greed of his crew, and we have seen evidence of greed in his men when they opened the bag of winds and sacrificed the oxen of Helios, and the story of his enslavement is not far off from what the suitors are attempting to do.

Odysseus' lying to Eumaeus may seem somewhat unnecessary, but he must test the loyalty of his old swineherd if he is to execute the suitors as planned. He can trust few people, but Eumaeus'

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overwhelming loyalty - he forgoes sleep to take care of Odysseus' herd, and he even treats the "beggar" as if he were, indeed, his lord - proves that he will be a strong ally. **Homer** reminds us of **Telemachus'** return and the impending ambush by the suitors, creating suspense in this otherwise transitional episode.

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

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

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

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

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

1. In Book 13, where does Odysseus secretly go?
2. How does Athena disguise Odysseus?
3. Whose house does Odysseus go to in Book 14?
4. In Book 15, where is Telemachus?
5. Where does Athena advise Telemachus to go?
6. What does she warn Telemachus?

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Book 16: The Meeting of Father and Son

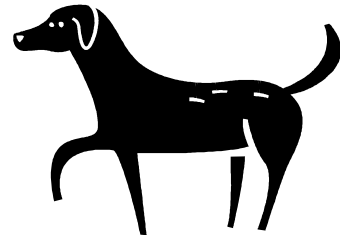
1. Who is in the hut?
2. Who appears at the door to the hut? (line 1378).
3. How does Eumaeus react to this appearance? (lines 1380-1390).
4. Why does Telemachus go to see Eumaeus before he goes to see anyone else? (1400-1405)
5. What does Eumaeus say about Penelope?
6. Who does Telemachus think is the third person in the hut? (1414-15)
7. What does Telemachus tell his father, disguised as a beggar, he will do for him?
8. What would happen to “the beggar” if he were to stay in the palace?
9. What does Eumaeus tell Penelope?
10. What does Athena do for the beggar?
11. How does Telemachus react to this transformation? How does he think is the beggar?
12. What does “the beggar” reveal to Telemachus about his identity?
13. How does Telemachus react to Odysseus’s admission?
14. For how many years was Odysseus gone from Ithaca?
15. How do the father and son react to one another’s presence?



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Book 17: The Beggar and the Faithful Dog

1. How do Eurycleia and Penelope react to Telemachus's return?
2. What did the soothsayer (fortune-teller) inform Penelope?
3. Who is Odysseus disguised as on his return to his home?
4. What is the name of Odysseus's old dog?
5. How old is the dog?
6. Where was the dog lying when Odysseus found him?
7. What does the dog do when he recognizes Odysseus?
8. What happens to the dog after he sees Odysseus? (1514-15).
9. What do the suitors do to the beggar?
10. Why is Penelope supportive of the beggar?
11. What does Penelope say to Telemachus in Book 18?



Book 17 Note:

When **Antinous** hits **Odysseus'** shoulder with his stool, Odysseus "the beggar" is unfazed by the blow and calls on the gods to kill Antinous. The other suitors scold Antinous for hitting the beggar in case he is a god in disguise, but he shrugs it off. Odysseus wisely resists the temptation to fight back against both Melanthios and Antinous. Temptation, to borrow a Homeric phrase, has been his Achilles' heel throughout *The Odyssey*, as exemplified by his taunting Polyphemus and earning the wrath of Poseidon. Now, with so much at stake, he has learned from his past mistakes and bears the unjust blows of the suitors, knowing his revenge will have to be plotted carefully, not executed rashly.

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

An actual beggar, Iros, enters the palace and violently orders **Odysseus** to leave. Odysseus tries to calm him down, but Iros challenges him to a fight. **Antinous** overhears the squabble and gathers the suitors to watch, promising a goat stomach and unlimited access to meals at the palace from now on to the victor. After ensuring that none of the suitors will strike him when he is not looking, Odysseus' strong body, with aid from **Athena**, intimidates Iros. Odysseus makes short work of him

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and takes him outside. The suitors congratulate Odysseus “the beggar” and reward him with food. Odysseus warns them that the lord of the house will return soon and win his revenge through blood. The suitor Amphinomos, knowing he will die, tries to leave, but Athena makes sure he stays.

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

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

Book 19: Penelope, the Beggar, and the Nurse

1. What is the problem with the maids?
2. What does Penelope ask Odysseus, the beggar in disguise?
3. What does Odysseus request that Penelope not ask him about? (lines 1532-37).
4. What would make Penelope happy? (lines 1547-50).
5. What does Penelope tell Odysseus about the suitors? (lines 1547-1550).
6. How does Penelope feel about marrying one of the suitors?
7. What does “the beggar” pretend?
8. What does Penelope do as she listens to “the beggar”? (lines 1565-1574).
9. What does Penelope ask “the beggar” to do? (lines 1579-1584).

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10. What does “the beggar” tell Penelope about Odysseus? (1590-1600).
11. What does “the beggar” tell Penelope about Odysseus’s whereabouts?
12. What does Eurycleia say to Odysseus? (1604-09).
13. How does Odysseus respond to Eurycleia?
14. What did Eurycleia recognize on Odysseus’s thigh? What does she realize about “the beggar”?
15. What secret must Eurycleia keep?
16. Explain the spell Athena cast on Penelope.

Book 19 Note:

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

Book 20 Summary: (Book 20 was omitted from your reading. Read the summary below)

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

Telemachus awakens and the house springs to life. Outside, **Melanthios** again belittles **Odysseus**, who resists fighting back. The cattle foreman, **Philotios**, extends a warm welcome to the beggar and says his appearance reminds him of his lord Odysseus. The suitors make excessive demands on his cattle and he is agonizing over whether to relocate, but Odysseus promises that his lord will return and vanquish the suitors. Meanwhile, **the suitors plot to kill Telemachus**, but the passing of an **eagle** with a rockdove in its grip causes Amphinomos to abort the plan.

A feast ensues, and **Telemachus** seats his father and demands that the suitors leave him alone. Yet **Athena** allows the abuse of Odysseus to resume, and one, Ktesippos, throws a cow's foot at him and misses. Telemachus threatens him and the rest of the suitors with strong words. They agree not to touch the beggar anymore, but insist that Odysseus is dead and it is time for **Penelope** to choose a husband. Telemachus says he cannot force his mother to marry when she does not want to; the

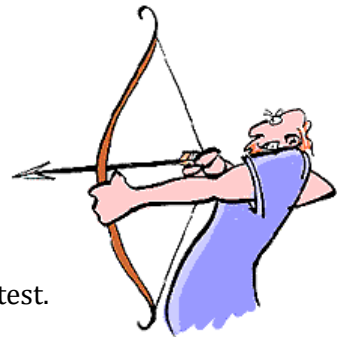
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suitors laugh uproariously. The **prophet Theoklymenos** sees the animal blood streaming from their mouths as signs of death for them, but they laugh it off.

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

Book 21: The Test of the Great Bow

1. What does Penelope take out of the storage room?
2. What is the prize for the suitor who wins the contest?
3. Explain the test the suitors must pass in order to win the contest.
4. What problem do the suitors run into as they try to win the contest?
5. Who does Odysseus, the beggar, talk to outside?
6. What does Odysseus, the beggar, ask these men? (lines 1680-1683).
7. What does Odysseus reveal about his identity to these men?
8. What does Odysseus promise the men if they help him? (1697-1707).
9. What does Odysseus show the men to prove his identity?
10. What orders does Odysseus give Eumaeus and Philoteus? (1717-1724).
11. What does Odysseus, the beggar, ask the suitors?
12. Who allows Odysseus to test the great bow?
13. After Eumaeus gives Odysseus the bow, what does he tell Penelope, the nurse, and the maids to do?



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14. What did Odysseus tell Telemachus to do with the suitor's weapons?
15. What great feat does Odysseus perform with the bow?
16. Who stands next to Odysseus as a sign of his willingness to help him defeat the suitors?

Book 22: Death at the Palace

1. In which Book does the **climax** occur? How do you know this is the **climax**?
2. How many suitors must Odysseus kill?
3. Who is Antinous? Why doesn't Odysseus like him?
4. Who is the first suitor Odysseus kills?
5. What do the suitors look for once Odysseus begins the fight? (1794-97).
6. How do the suitors respond? (1798-1800).
7. What are the reasons Odysseus provides for killing the suitors?
8. What deal does Eurymachus try to make with Odysseus? (1815-1829).
9. How does Odysseus respond to Eurymachus? (1832-1839)
10. What mortals help Odysseus and Telemachus?
11. What goddess shows up to help?
12. What covers the floor of the hall? (1851-1854).
13. What order does Odysseus give the maids? What does he do to them?

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Important information not included in your Book 22 excerpt:

While **Odysseus** staves off the suitors with his bow, **Telemachus** retrieves arms and armor from the room he stored them in and gives them to his father, **Eumaeus**, and **Philotios**. **Melanthios** steals away to the storeroom and returns with arms and armor for the suitors. Eumaeus catches him in the act the second time around, and he and Philotios tie him in a painful position to the rafters.

Athena appears in the main hall **in the form of Mentor**, though Odysseus knows it is she. The suitors threaten to kill Mentor if he joins the fight, but Athena, while on Odysseus' side, does not immediately join in the action; she wants Odysseus and Telemachus to prove their worth first.

With the suitors all dead, **Odysseus** asks **Eurycleia, the old nurse**, which of the women of his house were disloyal to him. Twelve were, she replies, and Odysseus has them clean the bloody room before they are hanged outside. The men amputate several of **Melanthios'** body parts. Odysseus orders the room to be purified with fire and brimstone, and weeps as all his loyal servants embrace him.

Book 23: Odysseus and Penelope

Important information not included in your Book 23 excerpt:

Eurycleia wakes **Penelope** and tells her about **Odysseus'** return and his victory over the suitors. Penelope believes she is wrong, that a god must have killed the suitors and that Odysseus is dead. She finally goes downstairs and observes Odysseus in silence and from a distance, unsure if it is really he. She wants to test him with "secret signs" only the two of them know. Odysseus consents, but first lays out a plan to deal with the aftermath of the massacre: to make sure no one finds out about the murders, they will pretend **Penelope's wedding** to one of the suitors is occurring in the palace to give them time to flee to the woods. **Telemachus** and the others set up a fake wedding celebration.

Odysseus has one more trial—in addition to Penelope's test that **Teiresias** told him about-- he must take an oar through the mainland and find men who do not know of the sea, until one asks what the oar is. Then he shall plant the oar there and make a sacrifice to **Poseidon**, return home, and make further sacrifices to all the gods.

1. Why does Penelope feel the need to test her husband?
2. What cruel comments does Telemachus make to his mother? (1865-1872).
3. How does Penelope respond to Telemachus?
4. How does Odysseus appear after his bath?
5. What does Odysseus ask the nurse to do for him? (line 1905).

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6. Where does Penelope tell Eurycleia to put the marriage bed?
7. Why does Odysseus become upset when Penelope makes her request?
8. Of what was one of the legs of the bed made?
9. What was built around the bed?
10. What would someone had to have done in order to move the bed?
11. How do Odysseus and Penelope act toward one another by the end of Book 23?



Book 24: Odysseus and His Father

1. Where do the ghosts of the suitors go?
2. Where is the last place Odysseus must go?
3. Who does Odysseus pretend to be?
4. How does Laertes behave when he hears mention of his son?
5. What does Laertes want Odysseus to do? (lines 1984-5).
6. What does Odysseus show Laertes?
7. What does Odysseus remind his father he once gave him?
8. Who eats together in celebration in the farmhouse?
9. What does Athena do to Laertes?
10. Who shows up seeking revenge?

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11. What does Athena, as directed by Zeus, say to everyone?

12. What is the situation in Ithaca by the end of the epic?

Important information not included in your Book 24 excerpt:

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

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

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

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

