Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ #\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Block:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The Odyssey Notebook Check

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# Notebook Check # 1:The Heroic Journey - Grid

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|  |  |  |  |   |
|  |  | Definition | “The Sandlot” |
| 1 | The Call |   |  |
| 2 | Allies |   |  |
| 3 | Preparation |   |  |
| 4 | Guardian(s) of the Threshold |   |  |
| 5 | Crossing the Threshold |   |  |
| 6 | The Road of Trials |   |  |
| 7 | The Saving Experience |   |  |
| 8 | The Transformation |   |  |
| 9 | The Return |   |  |
| 10 | Sharing the Gift |   |  |

**Notebook Check #2: What Makes a Hero?**

Annotate the infographic. Identify the title and legend, and make notes about the organization, images and author/illustrator’s purpose.

****

1. Consider why an artist/designer might choose the categories of “strength,” “skill,” “brains,” “gadgets,” and “heart” to assess superheroes.

 a. What do these categories suggest about successful superheroes?

 b. What other categories might the artist/designer include to examine superheroes?

2. Examine the section beneath each superhero that list “greatest strength,” “greatest weakness,” and “swagger meter.”

 a. What is “swagger?” Why is swagger important to the superhero identity?

 b. What do you notice about each superhero in relationship to these categories?

 c. By choosing these categories, what is the artist/designer arguing about superheroes?

3. What kind of reaction does this infographic produce in a reader/viewer?

4. What does the artist/designer hope to accomplish by creating this infographic?

5.It is important to consider that superheroes symbolize the types of heroes that we long for in our everyday lives. While everyday heroes do not possess superhuman strength, their personality and behavior can and does mimic those heroes we idealize in literature and film. Make a list of character traits that we associate with real life heroic deeds.

**Notebook Check #3:** Background and historical context of “the odyssey”

1. Homer:
	1. No one knows for sure who Homer was.
	2. Later Greeks believed he was a blind minstrel, or ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, from the island of Chios.
	3. One scholar suggests Homer was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because home and hearth played such important roles in his stories.
	4. Some scholars think there were\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Homers. Others think he was just a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The Odyssey, like other epic poems, begins \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_).
3. Odysseus is not a typical epic hero. He is faced with:
	1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
	2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
	3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Before the Trojan War, Odysseus:
	1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
	2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. The Trojan War:
	1. War between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
	2. Lasted\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_years.
6. How did the Trojan War start?
	1. The goddess \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was not invited to a wedding, so she became upset and decided to throw a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_into the party. On the apple, there was a note that read, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
	2. Because of the note on the apple, every goddess at the wedding claimed it was for her.
	3. The final decision of who the apple belonged to came down to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

* 1. The person deciding whom the apple belonged to was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, so each of the three goddesses bribed him in order to be chosen as the “fairest.”
	2. Aphrodite promised \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, so naturally, he chose her.
	3. Because Aphrodite promised Paris the most beautiful woman in the world, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was the “most beautiful woman” who was promised.
	4. The problem with this promise was that Helen was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to Menelaus, king of Sparta.
	5. In order to claim his prize of the most beautiful woman (Helen), Paris traveled to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, got Helen (with full cooperation from her and a portion of Menelaus’ fortune).
	6. Menelaus was furious with this, so he gathered an army (under the command of his brother \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) and traveled to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to overtake the city. Thus, the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ began.
1. How did it end?
	1. The Spartans (Greeks) built \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
	2. They then hid \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ inside of the horse, wheeled it to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and left it outside the Trojan gates.
	3. The Trojans thought it was an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the gods and wheeled it inside their city walls.
	4. As the Trojans were celebrating the horse, the Spartans (Greeks) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the city of Troy. At the end of the attack, the entire city of Troy was burned to the ground.
2. HUMAN CHARACTERS:
	1. Odysseus: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		1. Fought among the other Greek heroes at Troy and now struggles to return to his kingdom in Ithaca.
		2. Husband of Queen Penelope and father of Prince Telemachus.
		3. Athena favors him by sending divine aid.
		4. Poseidon interrupts his journey every chance he gets.
	2. Telemachus: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		1. An infant when Odysseus left for Troy, so he is about 20 years old at the beginning of the story.
		2. He is a natural obstacle to the suitors desperately courting his mother.
		3. Athena often assists him.
	3. Agamemnon: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		1. Commander of the forces at Troy.
		2. Odysseus encounters Agamemnon’s spirit in Hades.
		3. Murdered by his wife and her lover upon his return from the war.
		4. His son avenges his death.
	4. Menelaus: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		1. He offers Telemachus assistance in his quest to find Odysseus.
	5. Penelope: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		1. Deeply misses her husband (Odysseus).
		2. She is easily excitable, but also clever and faithful to her husband despite his absence.
	6. Helen: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		1. Helen’s abduction from Sparta by the Trojans sparked the Trojan War.
		2. Most beautiful woman in the world, but blamed for allowing her own abduction and starting war.
		3. She offers Telemachus assistance in his quest to find his father.
3. GODS:
	1. The Olympians: Group of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. All are related in some way. Named after their dwelling place🡪 Mount Olympus.
	2. Zeus: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		1. Zeus is occasionally depicted as weighing men’s fates in his scales.
		2. He sometimes helps Odysseus or permits Athena to do the same.
	3. Cronus: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
	4. Hermes: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		1. God of land travel and shepherds.
		2. Hermes comes as a messenger to persuade Calypso let Odysseus go.
		3. Hermes gives Odysseus advice on how to avoid danger from Circe and how to get his men back from her🡪 magical plant.
	5. Apollo: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ called on by Odysseus just before he shoots the bow on his (Apollo's) festival day.
	6. Poseidon: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		1. As the suitors are Odysseus’s mortal antagonists, Poseidon is his divine antagonist.
		2. He despises Odysseus for blinding his son, the Cyclops Polyphemus, and constantly hampers his journey home.
		3. Ironically, Poseidon is the patron of the seafaring Phaeacians, who ultimately help to return Odysseus to Ithaca.
	7. Athena: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		1. Athena assists Odysseus and Telemachus with divine powers throughout the epic, and she speaks up for them in the councils of the gods on Mount Olympus.
		2. She often appears in disguise as Mentor, an old friend of Odysseus.
	8. Persephone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. MONSTERS AND OTHER MYTHICAL CREATURES:
	1. Polyphemus: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ One of the Cyclopes (uncivilized one-eyed giants) whose island Odysseus comes to soon after leaving Troy.
		1. Imprisons Odysseus and his crew and tries to eat them, but Odysseus blinds him through a clever ruse and manages to escape.
	2. Calypso: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		1. Calypso holds him prisoner there for seven years until Hermes, the messenger god, persuades her to let him go.
	3. Circe: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
		1. With \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ help, Odysseus resists Circe’s powers and then becomes her lover, living in luxury at her side for a year.
	4. Sirens: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ portrayed as femmes fatales who lured nearby sailors with their enchanting music and voices to shipwreck on the rocky coast of their island.
		1. One of the dangers that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ warns Odysseus of in the sea.

**NOTEBOOK CHECK #4:** *THE ODYSSEY* Reading Guide

**Key**: LE= Literary Element; RS= Reading Strategy; BI= Big Idea

Part One:

1. RS- What is the function of the italicized paragraphs?
2. BI- How has Odysseus proved to his audience that he is determined to achieve his journey’s end?
3. LE- What traits does Odysseus reveal in this episode (lines 52-53) that set him apart from his men?
4. BI- Why is Odysseus making this expedition? What does this side trip suggest about epic journeys?
5. LE- What is Odysseus admitting in line 124? What do we learn about the traits of an epic hero form this decision?
6. LE- Epics include a mixture of the everyday and the supernatural. How does the Cyclops embody both of these states?
7. BI- What is Odysseus suggesting about misfortunes that occur on a journey?
8. LE- What character trait does Odysseus display in line 187?
9. What hint is Odysseus dropping here (244) about the future of his journey?
10. LE- What do you think Odysseus has in mind (273-274)? What does it confirm about his character?
11. LE- Why did Odysseus tell the Cyclops his name was Nohbdy? How well has Odysseus’s plan worked?
12. LE- What emotions does the Cyclops express in this passage (377-378)? Contrast his character with that of Odysseus.
13. LE- Why does Odysseus behave in this way (399)?
14. LE- How would you characterize Odysseus’s judgment (426-428)?
15. BI- What does this passage (462) suggest about Odysseus’s return journey to Ithaca?

**NOTEBOOK CHECK #5:** *THE ODYSSEY* Reading Guide

**Key**: LE= Literary Element; RS= Reading Strategy; BI= Big Idea

Part two:

1. BI- Assess how Odysseus’s men must be feeling at the beginning of this journey (6-7). Why might Odysseus feel differently?
2. RS- How has a change in the weather influenced the actions of the men?
3. LE- Why are the men disobeying Odysseus? What would happen if they obeyed him?
4. LE- What potential conflict is Odysseus trying to avoid here (95-96)? Do you think his is being wise?
5. LE- The men are in conflict with both Scylla and Charybdis. Why are the two a particularly dangerous combination?
6. RS- How can you tell that Odysseus’s ship has successfully navigated Scylla and Charybdis?
7. BI- What does this passage (176-178) suggest about sea journeys in Homer’s time?
8. RS- What do the men do before mourning their dead companions?
9. RS- What sequence of events is described in lines 218-232?
10. LE- With whom, or what, are Eurylochus and the other men in conflict?
11. BI- Why would Eurylochus rather drown than starve?
12. LE- Why has Zeus entered the conflict?
13. BI- Is Zeus’s action just (338)? Why or why not?
14. RS- Odysseus has been telling his story to the Phaeacians. When did this narrative begin?

**NOTEBOOK CHECK #6:** *THE ODYSSEY* Reading Guide

**Key**: LE= Literary Element; RS= Reading Strategy; BI= Big Idea

Part three:

1. BI- What has happened to Odysseus since he left Helios’s island? What is happening now (7)?
2. RS- What is the purpose of Athena’s transformation of Odysseus?
3. LE- What do you learn about Odysseus here (42)?
4. LE- Why did Telemachus not believe his father at first? What are your impressions of Telemachus?
5. RS- Why does Homer include these details?
6. BI- In what sense is Odysseus’s journey far from over (100)?
7. LE- What have you learned about Antinous so far?
8. RS- What is Odysseus’s main point about Antinous’s behavior?
9. LE- From what have you read so far, how would you describe Penelope?
10. RS- Why is this a particularly difficult interview for Odysseus (109)?
11. LE- What characteristic do Odysseus and Penelope share?
12. BI- Why was this the perfect time for Odysseus to arrive home?
13. RS- How does the inclusion of this line (25) among the taunts and jeers of the suitors relate to the main idea presented in this scene?
14. LE- To what is Homer comparing Odysseus in lines 28-34? What do these comparisons contribute to his characterization?
15. BI- Do you think that Odysseus’s long journey is finally over? Why or why not?

**NOTEBOOK CHECK #7:** *THE ODYSSEY* Reading Guide

**Key**: LE= Literary Element; RS= Reading Strategy; BI= Big Idea

Part four:

1. LE- How would you describe the level of suspense at this point in the story? Explain.
2. RS- What has caused Odysseus to decide to kill the suitors? Explain.
3. RS- The suitors vastly outnumber Odysseus and Telemachus. Why are they so alarmed?
4. LE- Is tension rising or falling at this point? Explain.
5. BI- How is Telemachus responding to the challenges of the fight?
6. LE- How does Odysseus perform as a fighter?
7. RS- What causes and effects did you notice in this scene (141)?
8. BI- Why does Penelope hesitate to accept her husband?
9. RS- What does Odysseus fear will be the effect of his slaughter of the suitors?
10. LE- How is Homer introducing rising tension?
11. RS- What is Athena doing? Why?
12. LE- How does Odysseus respond to Penelope’s suggestion that the maid move the bed outside the bedchamber?
13. BI- How has Penelope’s tone shifted? Why?
14. BI- What do you think the future holds for Odysseus, Penelope, and Telemachus? What roles might his past journeys play in Odysseus’s future? Do you believe he is home for good?

**Notebook Check #8: Hero Journey Phases in *The Odyssey***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  | Applied to The Odyssey \*\*\*INCLUDE PAGE NUMBERS!\*\*\* |
| 1 | The Call |   |
| 2 | Allies |   |
| 3 | Preparation |   |
| 4 | Guardian(s) of the Threshold |   |
| 5 | Crossing the Threshold |   |
| 6 | The Road of Trials |   |
| 7 | The Saving Experience |   |
| 8 | The Trans-formation |   |
| 9 | The Return |   |
| 10 | Sharing the Gift |   |   |

**Notebook Check #9: Ancient Gestures**

**Related Literature: “An Ancient Gesture” by Edna St. Vincent Millay**

**Like Penelope in the Odyssey, Edna St. Vincent Millay held off many suitors, preferring her independence and writing career to marriage and domestic life. Through her poetry and her life, she came to represent the rebellious, independent, youthful spirit of the 1920s . At age thirty-one, however, she married a man who supported her dedication to her writing and assumed all domestic responsibilities in order to give her time for her literary pursuits.**

Paraphrase the poem:

I thought, as I wiped my eyes on the corner of my apron:
Penelope did this too.
And more than once: you can't keep weaving all day
And undoing it all through the night;
Your arms get tired, and the back of your neck gets tight;
And along towards morning, when you think it will never be light,
And your husband has been gone, and you don't know where, for years.
Suddenly you burst into tears;
There is simply nothing else to do.

And I thought, as I wiped my eyes on the corner of my apron:
This is an ancient gesture, authentic, antique,
In the very best tradition, classic, Greek;
Ulysses did this too.
But only as a gesture,—a gesture which implied
To the assembled throng that he was much too moved to speak.
He learned it from Penelope...
Penelope, who really cried.

* Why does it say that Ulysses’ tears were “only as a gesture”?
* What is the “assembled throng” referring to?
* What does the last line mean?
* **Quickwrite:** Create a thematic statement for this poem. Use your list of abstract thematic ideas located in your reference handbook. How does Millay use the story of Penelope and Odysseus to convey a modern theme?
* What do you think Penelope values? Explain.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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Notebook Check #10: IthaKa Close Reading

**Close Reading**

Read the following passage, marking the text and making notes as needed.

“When someone reads the Odyssey he/she should pay close attention to the symbolic meaning of this poem.  Firstly, Ithaca should not be considered as being just an island, the home of Odysseus.  Reaching the island of Ithaca is Odysseus’ optimal achievement.  That is what keeps him alive while he faces all these dangers.  Therefore, Ithaca acts symbolically as a representation of the achievement of the goals people set in their lives.  Consequently, the quest for reaching Ithaca stops being just a fantastic voyage full of extraordinary and unrealistic incidents.  Instead, it can now be thought as everybody’s quest in their lives to make their dreams come true.  If you think this goes too far, then you should take a look at the poem “Ithaca” by Konstantinos Kavafis (C.P. Cavafy) (1863-1933), who is one of the greatest modern Greek poets, found on our page.  Kavafis is considered to be one of the greatest Greek poets and “Ithaca” is perhaps his most famous poem.  By reading this poem, it becomes perfectly clear that this island should not be seen as a specific island.

Ithaca is just a small and insignificant island out of the so many Greek islands.  The question then becomes why didn’t Homer choose a better, larger, and fancier island for his poem?  The answer, the way we view it, is straight forward.  Ithaca does not really matter in the literal way.  Instead, it is the idea of Ithaca that is important to Homer and the Greeks in general.  Ithaca exists for each and everyone of us, but in a different way.

All of us set some goals that we want to achieve in our lifetimes and we strive hard throughout our lives to reach these goals.  As a result, we can all relate to Odysseus’ quest to reach Ithaca as being our own journey in our lives to reach the goals we set before we start this long voyage.  Just like Odysseus, we will all face difficulties and problems while we try to achieve what we want.  The question now becomes whether we have the strength and patience to remain focused on achieving these goals when we come face to face with the extreme difficulties of life, just like Odysseus finally made it and reached Ithaca.

However, what happens if we do not achieve all our goals when we finally reach our “Ithaca”?  Should we be considered unsuccessful?  Should we feel that we have failed in our lives?  The answer is definitely not.  The reason for this is that the objective is not to actually achieve all the goals that you set before you started your journey in life.  The actual objective lies in making the voyage itself, and to face all those difficulties; to overcome the difficulties in life and gain experience while you are out making the voyage.  Therefore, by the time you reach your “Ithaca” you will already have gained so much from the trip that it does not matter so much whether you reached your goals or not.  For instance, Odysseus’ goal was definitely not to lose his men; but, he did.  That does not mean that he was unsuccessful, even though he failed in achieving all his goals.”

Taken from “The Meaning of Ithaca” <http://www1.union.edu/wareht/gkcultur/guide/4/Ithaca.html>

**What is the most important line in this passage? Explain.**

**Discuss this with a partner/group. Note other important lines from the passage.**

**Cavafy uses may symbols in this poem. Symbols are objects, places, or experiences that represent something other than what they mean literally**.

Highlight symbols you find in the poem.

What does “Ithaka” stand for (what does it symbolize)?

What do “Laistrygonians, Cyclops, angry Poseidon” seem to symbolize?What do you think they stand for? Make margin notes about what they stand for.

Where does the poem suggest that the “Laistrygonians, Cyclops, angry Poseidon” come from?

Re-read the last 3 stanzas.

What does it mean to “come home”? While Odysseus returned home in the literal sense, did he return to the same place as he left?

Which is more important to the development of Odysseus’ character and a theme of the epic—the journey or the goal?

**Ithaka by C.P. Cavafy**

As you set out for Ithaka

hope the voyage is a long one,

full of adventure, full of discovery.

Laistrygonians and Cyclops,

angry Poseidon—don’t be afraid of them:

you’ll never find things like that on your way

as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,

as long as a rare excitement

stirs your spirit and your body.

Laistrygonians and Cyclops,

wild Poseidon—you won’t encounter them

unless you bring them along inside your soul,

unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope the voyage is a long one.

May there be many a summer morning when,

with what pleasure, what joy,

you come into harbors seen for the first time;

may you stop at Phoenician trading stations

to buy fine things,

mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,

sensual perfume of every kind—

as many sensual perfumes as you can;

and may you visit many Egyptian cities

to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.

Arriving there is what you are destined for.

But do not hurry the journey at all.

Better if it lasts for years,

so you are old by the time you reach the island,

wealthy with all you have gained on the way,

not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.

Without her you would not have set out.

She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won’t have fooled you.

Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,

you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

 (C.P. Cavafy, Collected Poems. Translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. Edited by George Savidis. Revised Edition. Princeton University Press, 1992)