Study Guide: Homer’s *Odyssey*

*STRUCTURE OF* THE ODYSSEY

Books 1-4: Telemachus leaves Ithaca to try to discover some news of his father. *The Telemachia*

Books 5-8: The reader meets Odysseus on the isle of Calypso. Odysseus leaves, is shipwrecked, and is washed ashore on the island of Phacacia, where he is given a banquet at court.

Books 9-12: *Odysseus tells the court of Phaeacia of his adventures, taking the reader back to Troy and recounting the story of how he got from there to the island of the goddess Calypso.*

Books 13-24: *Odysseus finally returns to Ithaca, where he must fulfill his quest to become reunited with his wife and son and to reclaim his kingdom from the men who threaten it.*

*CHRONOLOGY OF THE STORY*

As you read the text, refer to this page to chronologically list the places Odysseus visits on his journey home from Troy to Ithaca. He visits some places twice…

1. Troy

2.

3.

4. Island of the Cyclops

5.

6.

7. Aeaea, the home of Circe

8.

9.

10.

11.

12. Thrinacia—Isle of the Cattle of the Sun God Helios

13.

14.

15.

16. Ithaca

*BOOK ONE: Athena Inspires the Prince*

Who are the following characters? What role does each play in the first book?

Odysseus Zeus

Athena Poseidon

Polyphemus Telemachus

Argives Antinous

Eurymachus Achaeans

1. What is foreshadowed of Odysseus’ adventures in the opening lines?
2. How does Zeus define Odysseus?
3. How does Athena appear to Telemachus?
4. What is the status in Ithaca—Odysseus’ kingdom—when the epic begins? Explain.
5. What does Telemachus believe about his father’s fate?
6. What prophecy does Athena make to Telemachus?
7. Describe Athena’s epiphany. What effect does it have on Telemachus?
8. How do Antinous and Eurymachus treat Telemachus? Describe their tone with him.

*BOOK TWO:* The Assembly meets and Telemachus tells the suitors they will be punished. He also announces his plan to search for Odysseus. Athena helps Telemachus organize a crew.

Characters— Icarius

Laertes

Haliitherses

Mentor

Preguntas:

1. Aninous tells the story of how Penelope deceived the suitors. What did she do? For how long? Why do you think it took that long for the suitors to figure it out?
2. We get our first “bird sign”. What is the sign and what does it mean?
3. On page 100 and 101, what does mentor tell the Achaens? Lines 267-270
4. What is Leocritus’ response to the above quote? (His name is not overly important—the attitude is)
5. What does Antinous attempt to do with Telemachus—lines 336-342 does it work?

*BOOK THREE:* Telemachus meets King Nestor of Pylos. Nestor tells Telemachus to visit Sparta, and gives Telemachus supplies and the aid of his son, Pisistratus.

This book is fairly difficult—unless you have read the Iliad. Homer’s audience would have known the characters and stories that Nestor explains. There are a few things of importance that happen and relate to culture.

Chaacters: Nestor

Pisistratos

1. Who is Orestes and what is he famous for? Why is that important to our story?
2. Lines 255-260 : what is Telemachus really saying?
3. What is Mentor’s response?
4. What does Mentor (Athena) do on line 415? WHY do you think she did this?
5. Line 521—we meet lovely Polycaste. Get your head out of the gutter. Why do you thinbk I bring this to your attention? 😊

*BOOK FOUR: The King and Queen of Sparta*

Who are the following characters? What role does each play in Book Four?

Nestor Pisistratus

Menelaus Helen

Proteus Eidothea

Penelope Eurycleia

What news does Menelaus reveal of Odysseus’ struggles?

What tale of Odysseus in Troy does Helen share?

According to Menelaus, how does Odysseus save lives within the Trojan horse?

How does Menelaus obtain information from Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea?

What does Menelaus learn about Odysseus from Proteus?

What plan does Antinous devise against Telemachus? Explain.

Who does Penelope call upon to save Telemachus? What is the result?