

Signature School Freshman English Summer Assignment

The *Odyssey* Project

Please contact Ms. Atkinson with any questions (erin.atkinson@signature.edu).

For this assignment, you will read the *Odyssey* and analyze what you have read. This analysis will strengthen critical thinking and writing skills and improve your knowledge of Greek mythology.

Here are important things to know about the *Odyssey* and Greek mythology before you begin the assignment:

- The *Odyssey* is an epic poem.
- Epic poems are narrative-style poems describing heroic journeys.
- Narrative-style means that the poem tells a story (the poem narrates a story).
- Researchers believe the *Odyssey* was composed by a Greek poet named Homer in the 8th century BCE.
- The *Odyssey* incorporates many elements of Greek mythology and ancient Greek culture.
- When we study Greek mythology, we study the origin stories and explanatory stories of the ancient Greeks.
- Greek mythology is important to study because modern literature often includes references to characters, stories, or symbols from Greek mythology, and these references, which are called allusions, add meaning to the text.

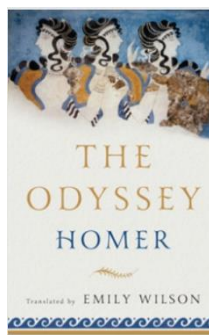
Instructions

1. Read Emily Wilson's (2017) translation of the *Odyssey*.

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Emily R. Wilson,
W.W. Norton and Company, 2018.

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2. Write organized notes for each book of the poem.

- Write thorough, organized notes on each book (note that the poem is divided into books the same way that novels are divided into chapters).
- Be sure to separate the notes for each book with a label that includes the book's number and title (e.g., "Book 1: The Boy and the Goddess").
- Record the names of key figures/characters as well as their individual characteristics (e.g., "Penelope, wife of Odysseus, mother of Telemachus").
- List and explain key events and conflicts.
- In your explanations, include
 - what caused the conflict;
 - how the conflict ended;
 - who was involved; and
 - anything else you find essential to understanding the conflict.
- Your notes should be handwritten, neatly, and your name should be at the top right-hand corner of each page of your notes.
- You will submit your notes, stapled together, on the first day of school.

3. Analyze the events of the poem with respect to two values.

- First, **select 2 values** from the following list that you recall being demonstrated by events or scenes in the *Odyssey*:
 - Athleticism
 - Hospitality
 - Ingenuity

- Intuition
- Justice
- Loyalty
- Respect
- Teamwork
- For each value you selected, **list 3 specific events in the poem that illustrate the value.**
 - For each event, provide the book number, page number, and a brief description of what occurs.
 - Do this in your neatest handwriting.
- Finally, in complete, neatly hand-written sentences, **answer the following questions for each value:**
 - Question 1 – What does each event demonstrate about the value?
 - Question 2 – Does a pattern exist where each event demonstrates the same thing about the value? Or does each event illustrate something different about the value?
- Be sure to use quotations from the poem to support your answers.
- Your value analysis should be handwritten, neatly, and your name should be at the top right-hand corner of each page and all pages should be stapled together.
- You will submit this analysis on the first day of school.

Below is an example of how your notes should be organized—remember, only the most important details.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Chapter One: "The Boy Who Lived"

- Values: Normalcy versus difference; hope

Characters

- Mr. Dursley
- Mrs. Dursley
- Dudley Dursley (baby)
- Albus Dumbledore
- Professor McGonagall
- Hagrid

Plot

- We're introduced to the Dursley family. They're so normal it hurts. Even the slightest out-of-the-ordinary occurrence appears to disturb them.
- Mr. Dursley drives to work and sees a cat reading a map but convinces himself that it was his imagination. He notices strangely dressed people walking around the city. On his way to lunch later in the day, he overhears a conversation about his wife's family, the Potters. He's annoyed, and wonders if he should tell his wife, but decides against it. There are reports of strange occurrences—shooting stars, owls flying during the day—on the news.
- Next, we meet Albus Dumbledore, who turns off all the lights on the Dursleys' street with some kind of magical device that looks like a lighter. He approaches the cat Mr. Dursley had seen earlier that day, and it proceeds to transform into Professor McGonagall. McGonagall is worried that "You-Know-Who," clearly a bad magical guy, isn't actually dead, as reported.
- Dumbledore reveals that the Potters were victims of Voldemort's evil designs, but that their baby, Harry, survived. Somehow, Voldemort ("You-Know-Who") has disappeared after failing to kill the infant.
- Dumbledore, despite McGonagall's protests about the terrible character of the Dursleys, insists that Harry stay with them, safely hidden in the "Muggle" world until he is older.
- Hagrid, an enormous, shaggy man on a flying motorcycle, arrives with baby Harry, and Dumbledore leaves the child at his new home along with a letter.