

## **PinkMonkey Literature Notes on . . .**

<http://monkeynote.stores.yahoo.net/>

### **Sample MonkeyNotes**

**Note: this sample contains only excerpts and does not represent the full contents of the booknote. This will give you an idea of the format and content.**

# *The Odyssey*

by

**Homer**



MonkeyNotes Study Guide Edited by Diane Sauder

<http://monkeynote.stores.yahoo.net/>

PinkMonkey.com Copyright ©1997, All Rights Reserved.

Distribution without the written consent of PinkMonkey.com is strictly prohibited.

## KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

### SETTING

Set in ancient Greece, *The Odyssey* is about the hero Odysseus' long-awaited return from the Trojan War to his homeland, Ithaca, after ten years of wandering. The current action of *The Odyssey* occupies the last six weeks of the ten years, and the narrative includes many places - Olympus, Ithaca, Pylos, Pherae, Sparta, Ogygia, and Scheria. In Books 9-12, Odysseus narrates the story of his travels in the years after the fall of Troy, and.....

### LIST OF CHARACTERS

#### Major Characters

**Odysseus** - the protagonist and hero of the poem. Odysseus is the King of Ithaca, a small, rugged island on the western coast of Greece. He takes part in the Trojan War on the side of Agamemnon. Of all the heroes who return from the war, his homeward voyage is the longest and most perilous. Although.....

**Penelope** - the "much-enduring" wife of Odysseus and the patient mother of Telemachus. If travel is Odysseus' test, staying home is Penelope's. She keeps home and family intact until.....

**Telemachus** - Odysseus' son. A mere child when his father left for the Trojan War, Telemachus is, at the beginning of *The Odyssey*, an inexperienced, unhappy, and helpless young.....

**Athena** - the goddess of wisdom and the daughter of Zeus. She is Odysseus' champion amongst the gods, and she aids him and Telemachus throughout the poem, displaying great.....

#### Minor Characters

**Nestor - the King of Pylos** - He had fought on the side of Agamemnon in the Trojan War. When Telemachus sails off to find news of Odysseus, he first visits Nestor at Pylos. Nestor .....

**Menelaus - the King of Sparta** - The Trojan War was fought to rescue his wife, Helen, who was abducted by Paris. In *The Odyssey*, both husband and wife are back at Sparta. An.....

**Helen** - the wife of Menelaus and the cause of the Trojan War. Helen's portrayal is more striking than that of Menelaus. She is back with Menelaus at Sparta, happy and at peace, having.....

**Antinous** - the most vociferous and proud of the suitors. He plots Telemachus' death and ....

**Eurymachus** - another outspoken and powerful suitor. In Book 22, he begs Odysseus for.....

**Athena in the disguise of Mentos** - in the first Book, Athena encourages Telemachus to go....

**Aegyptus** - one of the noble Ithacans. He speaks first at the assembly called by Telemachus in Book 2.

**Halitherses** - an Ithacan soothsayer. He is one of the few Ithacans in the assembly who....

**Mentor** - another Ithacan who is loyal to Odysseus. When Odysseus departed, he had given charge of his house to this man. Athena often disguises herself as Mentor in.....

**Leocritus** - one of the contemptible, villainous suitors who voices his opinion often.

**Peisistratus** - the son of Nestor and Telemachus' companion for much of his travels.

**Echephron, Stratius, Perseus, Aretus, Thrasymedes** - the other five sons of Nestor at Gerenia, who help their father in looking after the guest, Telemachus.

**Eurydice** - Nestor's wife, eldest of the daughters of Clymenus.

**Polycaste** - the youngest daughter of Nestor. She bathes Telemachus when he stays at her father's house in Pylos.

**Diocles** - son of Orsilochus and ruler of Pherae. Telemachus and Peisistratus stop at his place for the night on their way to and from Sparta.

**Lord Elconeus** - the squire of Menelaus. He announces the arrival of Telemachus and Peisistratus to his king.

**Asphalion** - another squire of Menelaus - He helps to look after Telemachus and Peisistratus at Sparta.

**Eidothii** - daughter of the mighty Proteus. She helps Menelaus to trap her father so that he may hear about the past and future from him.

**Noemon** - an Ithacan. Athena borrows his ship for Telemachus to take to Pylos for finding news of Odysseus. It is through Noemon that the suitors realize Telemachus has left Ithaca and has gone to Pylos.

**Medon** - a herald in Odysseus' home at Ithaca. He is loyal to Penelope and often overhears.....

**Calypso** - a goddess. She abides on a distant isle, Ogygia, and, when Odysseus reaches there after a shipwreck, he stays with her for eight years. It is from her isle that Odysseus leaves for Phaeacia, from.....

Many additional characters are discussed in the complete study guide.

## CONFLICT

**Protagonist** - The protagonist of this epic poem is Odysseus, the pivot of most of the action. After his ten years of war at Troy, Odysseus is away from home another ten years. He is kept away for so long by the wrath of Poseidon, who is angered by the blinding of his son, Polyphemus. *The Odyssey* is about Odysseus' struggle and final return home. The Trojan War lies in the background as Odysseus leaves.....

**Antagonist** - The antagonist of Odysseus is the series of trials, inflicted by many individual antagonists; in order to successfully return home and regain his rightful place, he must overcome each of them. The god of the sea, Poseidon, keeps Odysseus wandering for ten weary years, forcing him to arrive in Ithaca in a pitiable condition, with trouble waiting for him at home. He has punished Odysseus for blinding his one-eyed giant son, Polyphemus. Through the eventful course of these ten years, Odysseus is pitted.....

**Climax** - *The Odyssey* reaches its climax in the combination of two events - the stringing of the great bow by Odysseus and the slaughter of the suitors. At the end of Book 21, Odysseus, still disguised as a beggar, lifts the heavy bow, bends it, picks up an arrow, and sends it effortlessly through a line of twelve axes. The suitors are greatly surprised at this incredible feat. In Book 22, Odysseus strips himself of his.....

**Outcome** - The epic poem ends in comedy for Odysseus; he manages to reach his homeland despite all odds and slay the suitors of his wife, who far outnumber him. He is recognized and accepted by his family.....

## SHORT PLOT SUMMARY (Synopsis)

At Odysseus' palace in Ithaca, the suitors of his wife, Penelope, are wasting his wealth during his long absence. Odysseus had left Ithaca to battle against the Trojans in the Trojan War, which lasted twelve years. The battle had been won, and most warriors have long since returned home. Odysseus and his men, however, are still missing. The reader learns that he is living in captivity at the isle of Ogygia with the nymph Calypso, who loves him dearly. In a council of the gods, Athena obtains permission to have Odysseus freed. She then appears at Ithaca in front of Odysseus' son, Telemachus, in disguise and urges him to go looking for news of his father. Telemachus visits Pylos and Sparta and learns about his father's heroic acts from Nestor, Menelaus, and Helen.

In the meantime, Odysseus is released from his captivity on Calypso's isle and reaches the kingdom of Phaeacia. He recounts the tales of his adventures after the battle of Troy to the Phaeacians, after which the Phaeacians aid him in reaching his homeland. Upon reaching Ithaca, Athena disguises him as a.....

## THEMES

**Major Themes** - *The Odyssey*, like *The Iliad*, is pre-eminently a poem of action. It resembles other heroic poetry, as well as sub-heroic oral narrative verse, in the way it engages the listeners or readers with the poem and involves them imaginatively in it. In such poems the thrill of action is important, but it is attended by a notable concern for what humans do and suffer and the many ways in which they face their challenges. While the plot is advanced by strong, dramatic action, the poem also goes into detail about the characters' thoughts, words, and feelings. Indeed, there is almost no human emotion which Homer does not present in his characters or arouse in his listeners/readers. Human emotions are an important theme of the epic.

As in *The Iliad*, the framework of myth is used here to discuss such themes as endurance, courage, pride, vengeance, and the role of destiny in human lives. The plot of *The Odyssey* recounts Odysseus' supernatural adventures on his way home from the Trojan War and his epic battle with the suitors who have plagued his wife during his absence. But, it is also the story of Odysseus' own development, especially his gaining of humility and patience. Each of his encounters changes him and teaches him more about himself, until he is ready at the end to prove himself to his enemies.

*The Odyssey* serves in some sense as a sequel to *The Iliad*, and the relationship between the two poems is obvious throughout. At the very beginning of *The Odyssey*, when the gods are discussing Odysseus' fate as he languishes on Calypso's island, they turn almost immediately to the fate of his old comrade, Agamemnon, who has been murdered by his wife's lover. This episode broaches the topic of what happens to the heroes of Troy. The original audience would have known all about the Trojan War and would have.....

**Minor Themes** - An epic deals with a large canvas, and, as such, there are numerous minor themes. While Odysseus dominates the poem, his wife and son play important roles as well. The growth and development of Telemachus from an inexperienced, naive youth to a hero is a minor theme. His mother Penelope's endurance and prudence, in contrast to Clytemnestra's infidelity and cruelty in *The Iliad*, is another theme of some importance.

The suitors occupy quite a large part of the epic, and their unheroic, impudent behavior is in great contrast with the noble qualities of the heroic ideal. They are a part of the generation that did not fight at.....

## MOOD

The mood is exciting, which is typical of an ancient epic. The excitement is seen especially in the first half, when the canvas is very large and includes numerous fabulous events. There is adventure, mystery, suspense, and even terror, especially in the recounting of Odysseus' supernatural adventures on the.....

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION - BIOGRAPHY**

By the 8th century BC, Greece had passed through her "Dark Age" and had re-emerged a strong force. Colonies burgeoned northeastward towards the Black Sea and westward to Sicily and Southern Italy. Homer was active in Ionia during this time. No authentic biography can be attached to him, except that he is said to have composed both *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. He was supposed to have been an "aoidos," a singer, for the age of true literacy was still to come.

Accurate and complete works of Homer took a long time to be produced, and not for several generations did anything like an official text exist. As there was not a reading public, Homer's poems were learned by heart by boys at school. The texts owned by cultivated Athenians in the 5th century BC were merely memory aides, rather than versions to be continuously studied.

Some critics consider it unlikely that the same man wrote both *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*, or that either is the work of a single poet. It is most likely that both poems combined and remodeled earlier poems, which were in turn enlarged and remodeled by others. Of the two poems, *The Odyssey* has a closer structural unity and is generally held to consist of a substantial core poem with some later additions. The 3rd century Greek.....

## **LITERARY/HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

*The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are ancient Greek poems that are concerned with the events and consequences of the Trojan War. Nothing conclusive can be said about the actual history of that war. It is conjectured that some contest between peoples of more or less kindred stocks, who occupied the isles and the eastern and western shores of the Aegean, left a strong impression on the popular fancy. Many older myths, stories, and legends which previously floated unattached now gathered around the memories of this contest. Later, minstrels, poets, and priests shaped all these materials into a definite body of tradition. Thus, scattered stories.....

## **BOOK SUMMARIES WITH NOTES / ANALYSIS**

### **BOOK 1**

#### **Summary**

*The Odyssey* opens with the traditional invocation to the Muse of poetry, in which the poet asks for her assistance in telling his story and presents the theme of his poem, which is about a man who suffers through years of wandering before he is able to return home.

At the beginning of the story, Odysseus is being held prisoner on the island of Ogygia by the nymph Calypso, who wishes to marry him. At a council of the gods on Mt. Olympus, in which Poseidon, who is angry at Odysseus, is absent, Athena appeals for Odysseus' release. She then flies down to assist Telemachus, Odysseus' son. At Odysseus' house in Ithaca, the scene is chaos. His wife, Penelope, is being courted by suitors who, believing him to be dead, have taken over his house and lounge about wasting his wealth on endless feasts, which Telemachus is unable to stop.

Athena, disguised in human shape as Odysseus' friend Mentos, ruler of the Taphians, greets Telemachus, who apologizes for the condition of the house and asks for news of his father. Athena assures him that Odysseus is alive and advises him to go to Pylos and Sparta in search of news of his fate. She also asks him to call the Ithacan lords to an assembly in which he must ask Penelope's wooers to return to their own homes.

After Athena leaves, Penelope enters the hall, where a bard is singing about the pitiful return of the Achaeans (the ancient Greeks name for themselves) from Troy. She asks him to stop, as it reminds her of Odysseus. But Telemachus sends her back to her chamber and himself addresses the suitors, asking them to attend an assembly the next day in which he might ask them to leave his house. Eurymachus, one of the suitors, asks him who the

visitor was. Telemachus replies that the guest was Mentos, though he knows in his heart that it was really Athena in disguise. Telemachus is unable to sleep that night and keeps thinking of Athena's advice of a journey in search of news of Odysseus.

## Notes

*The Odyssey*, like *The Iliad* and other ancient Greek poems, begins with an invocation to the Muse. The opening lines here, however, are much less descriptive than those of *The Iliad*. The fantastic adventures of Odysseus are inadequately suggested in the reference to his encountering various cities and minds. The Cyclops and other monsters do not really have minds, and the only city seen by Odysseus is the capital of Phaeacia. The poet emphasizes Odysseus' brave struggle to survive, but underplays Odysseus' failure to secure the return of his men. While Odysseus does look after them, he also takes risks with their lives and is often responsible for their deaths. Finally, the suitors and Odysseus' ultimate vengeance on them are not mentioned. The lapse is odd, as this conflict provides a central theme and occupies more than half of the poem.

Ancient epics traditionally began "in media res" - in the middle of things. Thus, it may seem that Books 1- 4 could have been omitted by bards who wished to begin the tale with the more thrilling adventures of Odysseus. But the opening Books do serve a dramatic purpose. They show the general state of Ithaca and the plight of Penelope in the absence of Odysseus. This is important to any understanding of his difficulties on his return and of the necessity for him to extract vengeance on the suitors. These Books also show how little is known of Odysseus' fate and how anticipation of his return varies. This creates the suspense at which Homer excels. The other characters with which Odysseus will be associated are also introduced in these Books, adding to the epic's range and richness and helping to set its plot to work.

Book 1 prepares the way for much that comes later. It introduces the theme of the role of fate and the gods in human destiny through the decision of the gods to allow Odysseus to return home and Athena's helping of Telemachus. It also anticipates the dual nature of *The Odyssey*, in which elements of domestic comedy and elements of fable and fancy are combined into a unified whole.

Telemachus' development also begins here. Cast for a large part and unready for it, he begins to face his responsibilities and even to test his powers after being visited by Athena. His courage takes the suitors by surprise, and before long they are sufficiently afraid of him to plot his death. He, therefore, becomes an important participant in the action and later helps his father in slaying the suitors.

## BOOK 2

### Summary

Telemachus calls the Achaeans to an assembly. He complains in vain about the wasting of his property by the suitors. Though he asks them to leave and feast in their own houses, they refuse flatly; instead, led by Antinous, they blame Penelope for deceiving them by false messages and hopes. Only Halitherses, a seer, Mentor, and an old companion of Odysseus take Telemachus' side. The assembly breaks up without having reached a definite conclusion. Telemachus is disillusioned but is encouraged once again by Athena, this time disguised as Mentor. She helps him to make arrangements in order to leave in a ship for Pylos. He returns to his house for supplies, where he is mocked by the suitors and helped by his nurse Eurycleia. He tells her to keep his departure a secret from Penelope, so as not to worry her. Telemachus, the crew, and Athena disguised as Mentor leave Ithaca secretly in the middle of the night after having made drink offerings to the gods.

### Notes

Telemachus takes a step forward to maturity by assuming responsibility. At the assembly, he actually occupies his father's seat, and the elders do not challenge him. However, he has not yet acquired the self-control and presence of mind of his father. When he makes a speech asking the suitors to leave his house, they refuse; as a



result, he dashes his staff to the ground and begins to weep. This event highlights the utter helplessness of Odysseus' family in his absence. Their crisis is heightened by Penelope's having exhausted her resources in putting off the suitors. For the last three years, she has been weaving and unweaving a funeral shroud meant for Laertes, Odysseus' father, having promised to choose one of the suitors upon its completion. At the assembly, Antinous condemns her deception and demands that she make a decision. The poet, therefore, creates a situation where everything hinges on the possible return of Odysseus. This is genius at work.

The role of gods and fate plays an important part once again. Zeus sends forth two eagles in answer to Telemachus' threat in the assembly as punishment for the suitors. Halitherses interprets this sign as doom for the suitors and reminds them that he has predicted all these events and that all his past prophecies have come true. In response, Eurymachus denies fate brutally and mocks the seer. Athena, Zeus' daughter, intervenes to make Telemachus' task easier, leaving the reader to wonder whether Odysseus and his son would ever have accomplished heroic feats without her divine help.

It is important to mention Eurycleia's role here. She is a loyal servant of the family and helps Telemachus to collect food and wine for the journey. Telemachus trusts her even more than his own mother. His decision to inform Eurycleia and not Penelope of his impending journey not only shows his trust in his servant, but also shows that despite all his naiveté, Telemachus, like his father, possesses a shrewd, suspicious mind and is capable of acting on the sly.

## **BOOK 3**

### **Summary**

Telemachus, Athena disguised as Mentor, and the crew reach Pylos, the capital of Nestor's kingdom. They are greeted at the seashore by Nestor and his sons, who are performing a sacrifice to the gods. Telemachus introduces himself as Odysseus' son and asks for news of his father. Nestor praises Odysseus and relates how the heroes of Troy went their separate ways after a dispute between Agamemnon, the leader of the expedition, and Menelaus, his brother, over whether they should sail for home immediately or stay and make sacrifices to the gods. Odysseus had originally sailed for home with Nestor and Menelaus, but after a dispute decided to rejoin Agamemnon, whereupon Nestor lost contact with him.

Nestor then tells the stories of the return home of various heroes, including Agamemnon and Menelaus. Agamemnon was murdered upon his return home by Aegisthus, his wife's lover, and Nestor praises Orestes, Agamemnon's son, who avenges his father's murder by killing Aegisthus. Telemachus wishes to have similar strength so that he might take vengeance on his mother's suitors. Nestor suggests that Telemachus go to Sparta to speak to Menelaus, who, having only recently returned home, may have some more recent news of Odysseus' whereabouts.

After the stories of Agamemnon and Menelaus are told and libations poured to the gods, Athena-Mentor leaves for the ship in the semblance of a sea-eagle, while Telemachus is taken to Nestor's house. He sleeps there comfortably and the next morning is given a chariot to leave for Sparta with Peisistratus, Nestor's youngest son, as companion. He leaves only after Nestor has performed another sacrifice to Athena. They reach Pherae, stay there for the night, and the next day drive onwards once again.

### **Notes**

*The Odyssey* serves as a sequel to *The Iliad* in several ways. The Trojan War lies in the background as the reader learns about Odysseus and Ithaca. In this Book, Nestor talks about the war, and the large canvas of an epic comes alive with the mention of other heroes and events. Odysseus' valor obtains a special meaning for Telemachus when he hears it praised by Nestor, who has been a friend and companion of his father in war. These stories provide Telemachus with the inspiration to mature and act out his role as a hero.

Nestor is garrulous, generous, helpful, and wise. He has no precise information about Odysseus' fate but is able to relate the stories of Agamemnon's and Menelaus' return in great detail. His grand sacrifice to Athena when he realizes that it is she disguised as Mentor is indicative of the importance of the need to please the gods. The role of Athena deserves a special mention here. It is she who helps Telemachus to introduce himself in an articulate manner to Nestor and his people. And it is she who reminds him that a god can bring a man home safe even from afar. She helps him now as she had helped Odysseus during the Trojan War.

The details of the sacrifices performed contribute to the vivid portrayal of the life and customs of the ancient Greeks. Mention of where Telemachus slept and how he was bathed accounts for a controlling realism that gives the poem much of its special flavor. There is a certain quiet poetry to these domestic scenes that makes *The Odyssey* familiar and friendly.....

## OVERALL ANALYSES

### CHARACTER ANALYSIS

**Odysseus** - Odysseus is driven to many wanderings during which he sees many wonders and endures many sufferings. Part of the poet's theme is the vicissitudes that have fostered the hero's multi-faceted character. Yet, Odysseus' adventures are not random, for they reach a goal that in him implies unity of character. Many various strands, however, are interwoven to reveal the various traits of this hero. He can be clever, as seen when he tricks the Polyphemus by calling himself No-Body. He can be deceitful, as seen when he disguises himself as a beggar in Ithaca. He is always enduring, as seen in his refusal to give up during any of his struggles. The cleverness, deceitfulness, and endurance combine to help Odysseus survive.

Odysseus also has an eye for wealth and adventure, traits that are common to all Homeric heroes. He welcomes the Phaeacian gifts with unconcealed pleasure and enthusiasm; he is also pleased to see Penelope trick the suitors into presenting her with gifts. Just as he welcomes riches, Odysseus also.....

**Penelope** - The trait of endurance that marks Odysseus is mirrored in his wife Penelope, who is unwilling either to reject or to accept marriage. The former choice would endanger her son's life and property, while the latter would end her hope of reunion with her husband. It is for this loyalty to her husband's memory that she is praised in comparison to Clytemnestra's infidelity. Like her husband, Penelope is also seen as clever. She is able to trick the suitors and delay a decision of marriage by carefully knitting Laertes' shroud by day and removing the stitches at night. Since the shroud is never finished, she is able to postpone a decision about matrimony.

Penelope does not allow herself to sink into black despair at the thought of Odysseus' misfortune. She rises from her inertia when the time comes for action and decision. She appears before the.....

**Telemachus** - At the beginning of the story, Telemachus is young, inexperienced, unhappy, and helpless. He tells Athena in the guise of Mentos that he is the son of the worst fated of men, and the goddess sketches for him a plan of action. Athena gives Telemachus vitality and confidence and enlivens his father's memory. On rejoining the suitors after Athena-Mentos' strange departure, he shows his .....

**Athena** - The gods are treated with a different intention in *The Odyssey* than in *The Iliad*. In the latter epic, their interventions and frivolous actions provide a contrast to the destructiveness and dangers of heroic life. In this poem, the gods are treated in a more calculated way. While the gods do occasionally judge human actions, the dominant role played by them is to offer challenge and protection to.....

**Calypso** - Calypso's island, the reader learns at the start of the poem, has grown tedious to Odysseus. He would



gladly die if he could see the smoke leaping up in his native land. For eight years, Odysseus has lived in Ogygia, an enchanted land of marvelous beauty. Yet Odysseus longs to leave Calypso for the world of his home - the world that shows beneath Penelope's clouded beauty.

Calypso loves Odysseus deeply and sincerely. She expresses a chaffing regret when she learns that the gods at Olympus disapprove of her love for a mortal and that Zeus commands that she .....

**Nausicaa** - If Ogygia was timeless, Scheria has the brightness (and some of the sorrows) of youth. Nausicaa, Alcinous' daughter, has a dream of approaching marriage that Athena sends her. The goddess suggests she go to the river, on the pretext of washing clothes, where she might find a husband. Nausicaa charmingly conceals from her parents her real intention in going to the river. She displays virtuous concern that.....

**The Suitors** - The suitors are close to being the "antagonists" in the poem, but since Odysseus does not know about them until the end, they become only one of his many challenges in this epic drama. They are a group of noble princes from Ithaca and nearby isles who begin to woo Penelope and, in the process, stay at her palace. Their stay there corrupts the household and wastes the property. For this, they.....

**Eumaeus** - Eumaeus is the most special among all the servants of Odysseus. His character delineation by Homer is deliberate and serves the purpose of humanizing Odysseus. The hero stays with Eumaeus upon reaching Ithaca, and the bond that he shares with the swineherd is a compassionate.....

## **PLOT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS**

At a cursory glance, it would seem that *The Odyssey* has a totally traditional structure. The first four Books are largely expository and expound the themes of the poem. The rising action begins in Book 5 and continues until the climax in Book 22, when Odysseus slays the suitors. The falling action occurs in the next chapter when Odysseus is reunited with Penelope. The final chapter, which was probably added at a date late than the rest of the poem, is the conclusion or denouement. Within this standard framework, however, there are innovations that make this epic different. References to the past repeatedly penetrate the present, especially in Books 9-12, where Odysseus narrates his previous adventures. At these times, the linear narration is not maintained, and the reader learns not only about the events that follow the council of the gods that open the work but also about people and events of the past. Some critics maintain that *The Odyssey* has a cyclic structure. Books 1-4 are concerned with human drama, Books 5-12 are on a more fabulous, incredible, and exalted scale, and Books 13-24 once again revert to human drama and tell the age-old tale of the hero's return and vengeance.

*The Odyssey* begins with the traditional invocation to the Muse, after which the story begins. The first four Books emphasize the general plight of Ithaca and the particular plight of Penelope and Telemachus in the absence of Odysseus. They build up the need for Odysseus' return and a growing assurance of it. In Books 5 to 8, the tale of Odysseus' departure from Ogygia and his arrival and welcome in.....

## **THEMES - THEME ANALYSIS**

**Major Themes** - The major theme of this poem of action is stated in the Invocation to the Muse. The Muse is asked to speak about the adventures of "the man of many devices." Since the hero of *The Odyssey* is not named at this stage, it indicates that his story is a familiar one. It is true that Odysseus and the stories of his adventures and final vengeance on the suitors are central to this epic poem, as stated by the Muse, but *The Odyssey* is much more than a simple tale of adventure. Odysseus' character undergoes major changes through the narrative. In the adventures with the Cicones, the Laestrygonians, and the.....

## **OTHER ELEMENTS**

**Style in The Odyssey / Homer's Style** - In *The Odyssey*, Homer invites his audience to share the emotions at work and enter into the spirit of the characters. He does this by concentrating on a single mood at a time, which allows him to maintain a simplicity of poetic effect. Every episode has, on the whole, a single character, but once it is finished, the reader may expect something quite different in the next. When Odysseus strings the bow, the reader is held in tense expectation, but the whole situation moves forward.....

## **STUDY QUESTIONS / BOOK REPORT TOPICS**

1. What is an epic? Analyze *The Odyssey* and explain how it is characteristically an ancient epic.
2. Analyze the role and nature of fate and gods in *The Odyssey*.
3. The growth and development of Odysseus' character is an important theme of the poem. Explain how Odysseus grows during the epic. Also explain why or why not you agree that his growth is a key theme.
4. Write a character analysis of Penelope.....

## **END OF SAMPLE MONKEYNOTES EXCERPTS**

<http://monkeynote.stores.yahoo.net/>

Copyright ©1997 PinkMonkey.com

[www.pinkmonkey.com](http://www.pinkmonkey.com)

All Rights Reserved. Distribution without the written consent of PinkMonkey.com is prohibited.