

# The Odyssey by Homer – Summaries and Study Questions

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Block \_\_\_\_\_

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

## PLOT SUMMARY

A Greek hero returns to his home and family after 20 years of imprisonment and wandering.

**BACKGROUND** Odysseus, King of Ithaca, has been away from home for 20 years-10 years fighting in the Trojan War and 10 years wandering. For the last seven years, he has been held captive by the goddess Calypso on her island. In Ithaca, his wife, Penelope, remains faithful and clings to her belief that he is still alive, but she is being courted by a group of men—the suitors—who have forced their attentions on her and are living on Odysseus's wealth. Each of them wants to marry her, but she refuses to make a choice, confident that Odysseus will soon return. She and her son Telemachus are powerless to get rid of them.

### Tell the Story – invocation (890)

1. Who are the muses?
2. Who is the "man skilled in all ways of contending" – the protagonist of the story we are about to read?
3. What happened to Odysseus' men on the way home? (lines 10-15)
4. Which god does not pity Odysseus?
5. What is he/she the god of?
6. Why do you think this might be a problem for Odysseus?

**BOOKS 1-4** Athena, goddess of wisdom, asks her father, Zeus, king of the gods, to allow Odysseus to return home, despite the sea god Poseidon's grudge against Odysseus for having blinded his son.

#### 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?*

When Zeus agrees, Athena disguises herself as a mortal stranger and visits Telemachus. He receives her kindly despite the suitors' rudeness. On her advice, he protests the suitors' behavior, but the suitors refuse to leave Odysseus's house. Now disguised as Mentor, an old friend of Odysseus, Athena urges Telemachus to visit the neighboring kingdoms in search of news of Odysseus.

#### Important information not included in your Book 2 excerpt:

During the assembly, Zeus sends two eagles—omen 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

Campbell, W. John. *The Book of Great Books*. New York: Metabooks, 2000. Print.

"The Odyssey." *Shmoop*. Web. 22 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/odyssey/>>.

Sokama, Erin. "The Odyssey Study Guide: Guided Reading Questions." *Odyssey*. Cornell Clay Schools, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2012.

<<http://www.lccs.k12.in.us/teachers/erulama/ODyssey.htm>>.

# American Odyssey Study Guide

**Jianjun Gao**

**American Odyssey Study Guide:**

## **American Odyssey Study Guide** Book Review: Unveiling the Magic of Language

In an electronic era where connections and knowledge reign supreme, the enchanting power of language has been more apparent than ever. Its power to stir emotions, provoke thought, and instigate transformation is truly remarkable. This extraordinary book, aptly titled "**American Odyssey Study Guide**," written by a highly acclaimed author, immerses readers in a captivating exploration of the significance of language and its profound impact on our existence. Throughout this critique, we will delve into the book's central themes, evaluate its unique writing style, and assess its overall influence on its readership.

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