

## The Odyssey Test Review

Your test will be comprised of the following:

- 33 multiple choice questions
  - 6 close reading questions over a nonfiction passage related to *The Odyssey*
  - 14 questions over background and plot
  - 13 APMC questions over a passage from *The Odyssey*
- 12 matching questions
  - You will match the archetype with the definition or example from *The Odyssey*
- **THIS IS A TOTAL OF 45 QUESTIONS**

### Practice APMC over *The Odyssey*

“Here Perimedes and Eurylochus held the victims, while I drew my sword and dug the trench a cubit each way. I made a drink offering to all the dead, first with honey and milk, then with wine, and thirdly with water, and I sprinkled white barley meal over the whole, praying earnestly to the poor deckless ghosts, and promising them that when I got back to Ithaca I would sacrifice a barren heifer for them, the best I had, and would load the pyre with good things. I also particularly promised that Teiresias should have a black sheep to himself, the best in all my flocks. When I had prayed sufficiently to the dead, I cut the throats of the two sheep and let the blood run into the trench, whereon the ghosts came trooping up from Erebus—brides, young bachelors, old men worn out with toil, maids who had been crossed in love, and brave men who had been killed in battle, with their armor still smirched with blood; they came from every quarter and flitted round the trench with a strange kind of screaming sound that made me turn pale with fear. When I saw them coming I told the men to be quick and flay the carcasses of the two dead sheep and make burnt offerings of them, and at the same time to repeat prayers to Hades and to Persephone; but I sat where I was with my sword drawn and would not let the poor feckless ghosts come near the blood till Teiresias should have answered my questions.

“The first ghost that came was that of my comrade Elpenor, for he had not yet been laid beneath the earth. We had left his body unburied and unburied in Circe’s house, for we had had too much else to do. I was very sorry for him, and cried when I saw him, ‘Elpenor,’ said I, ‘how did you come down here into this gloom and darkness? You have got here on foot quicker than I have with my ship.’

“‘Sir,’ he answered with a groan, ‘it was all bad luck, and my own unspeakable drunkenness. I was lying asleep on the top of Circe’s house, and never thought of coming down again by the great staircase but fell right off the rood and broke my neck, so my soul came down to the house of Hades. And now I beseech you by all those whom you have left behind you, though they are not here, by your wife, by the father who brought you up when you were a child, and by Telemachus who is the one hope of your house, do what I shall now ask you. I know that when you leave this limbo you will again hold your ship for the Aeaeon Island. Do not go thence leaving me unburied and unburied behind you, or I may bring heaven’s anger upon you; but burn me with whatever armor I have, build a barrow for me on the seashore, that may tell people in days to come what a poor unlucky fellow I was, and plant over my grave the oar used to row with when I was yet alive and with my messmates.’ And I said, ‘My poor fellow, I will do all that you have asked of me.’

“Thus, then, did we sit and hold sad talk with one another, I on the one side of the trench with my sword held over the blood, and the ghost of my comrade saying all this to me from the other side. Then came the ghost of my dead mother Anticlea, daughter to Autolycus. I had left her alive when I set out for Troy and was moved to tears when I saw her, but even so, for all my sorrow I would not let her come near the blood till I had asked my questions of Teiresias.

“Then came also the ghost of Theban Teiresias, with his golden scepter in his hand. He knew me and said, ‘Odysseus, noble son of Laertes, why, poor man, have you left the light of day and come down to visit the dead in this sad place? Stand back from the trench and withdraw your sword that I may drink of the blood and answer your questions truly.’

“So I drew back and sheathed my sword, whereon when he had drunk of the blood he began with his prophecy.

“You want to know,’ said he, ‘about your return home, but heaven will make this hard for you. I do not think that you will escape the eye of Poseidon, who still nurses his bitter grudge against you for having blinded his son. Still, after much suffering you may get home if you can restrain yourself and your companions when your ship reaches the Thrinacian island, where you will find the sheep and cattle belonging to the sun, who sees and gives ear to everything. If you leave these flocks and unharmed and think of nothing but getting home, you may yet after much hardship reach Ithaca; but if you harm them, then I forewarn you of the destruction of both your ship and of your men. Even though you may yourself escape, you will return in bad plight after losing all your men, in another man’s ship, and you will find trouble in your house, which will be overrun by high-handed people, who are devouring your substance under the pretext of paying court and making presents to your wife.

“When you get home you will take your revenge on these suitors; and after you have killed them by force or fraud in your own house, you must take a well-made oar and carry it on and on, till you come to a country where the people have never heard of the sea and do not even mix salt with their food, nor do they know anything about ships, and oars that are as the wings of a ship. I will give you this certain token which cannot escape your notice. A wayfarer will meet you and will say it must be a winnowing shovel that you have got upon your shoulder; on this you must fix the oar in the ground and sacrifice a ram, a bull, and a boar to Poseidon. Then go home and offer hecatombs to all the gods in heaven one after the other. As for yourself, death shall come to you from the sea, and your life shall ebb away very gently when you are full of years and peace of mind, and your people shall bless you. All that I have said will come true.”

**1. The first paragraph is developed primarily through the use of**

- a. Figurative language
- b. Metaphorical allusions
- c. Concrete details
- d. Parallel structure
- e. Syntactical complexity

**2. It can be inferred that the dead**

**I. Must be appeased by the living**

**II. Can cause harm to come to the living**

**III. Do not ever have to obey the living**

- a. I only
- b. III only
- c. I and II only
- d. I and III only
- e. I, II, and III

**3. In Elpenor’s words to Odysseus (lines 36-54), the words that are most incongruous with his words as a whole are those in lines**

- a. 38-40
- b. 41-43
- c. 46-48
- d. 49-51
- e. 53-54

**4. Elpenor’s characterization of himself as “a poor unlucky fellow” (line 52) is an example of**

- a. Foreshadowing
- b. Irony
- c. Euphemism
- d. Sarcasm
- e. Allusion

5. **The detail about the people who “do not even mix salt with their food” (lines 102-103) serves to emphasize the people’s lack of**
  - a. Social graces
  - b. Education and refinement
  - c. A satisfying diet
  - d. Economic prosperity
  - e. Contact with the sea
  
6. **The meaning of the phrase “on this” (line 107) would be made more explicit if it were restated as**
  - a. Upon hearing this
  - b. On this land
  - c. Because of this
  - d. On this day
  - e. At this time
  
7. **Teiresias’ prophecy (lines 77-114) contains examples of all of the following EXCEPT**
  - a. Simile
  - b. Conditionals
  - c. Personification
  - d. Paradox
  - e. Alliteration
  
8. **From the prophecy as a whole, the reader can predict that**
  - a. Odysseus will refuse to offer sacrifices to Poseidon
  - b. Odysseus and his men will not leave the sun’s flocks unharmed
  - c. Poseidon will kill Odysseus before he reaches Ithaca
  - d. Odysseus will find that his wife has agreed to remarry
  - e. Odysseus will teach the wayfarer about the sea

**Background and Plot**

- Basics about the Trojan War (things we talked about in class and read about in the background section of the textbook’s *The Odyssey*)
- Information included in your study questions
- Epics and epic heroes
- Point of View throughout *The Odyssey*
- Names of characters and places (islands, mostly)
- Sequence of events (first this happens, then this happens, etc.)

**Archetypes**

- |                         |                               |                    |                       |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| • Friendly beast        | • Hunting group of companions | • The devil figure | • The task            | • The gentle peacemaker |
| • Creature of nightmare | • Mentor                      | • Loyal retainers  | • Father-son conflict | • The beautiful mortal  |
| • The quest             | • Unhealable wound            | • The fall         | • The faithful wife   |                         |
| • The hero              |                               | • Magic weapon     |                       |                         |
|                         |                               | • Temptress        |                       |                         |

**Literary Terms**

Author’s purpose	Symbolism	Epithet	Detail
Allusion	Epic hero	Theme	Archetype
Conflict	Plot		

## **Epics and Epic Heroes**

### **Conventions of an Epic**

**Invocation** – a prayer; Homer asks the Muse to help him tell the story of Odysseus' adventures.

**Epithet** – descriptive word or phrase added to or substituted for the name of somebody or something, highlighting a feature or quality. In the invocation, Homer refers to Odysseus as "the man skilled in all ways of contending." He also refers to Zeus as "he who moves all day through heaven."

**Homeric similes (heroic similes)** – an extended comparison or simile used in narrative poetry. One of the famous Homeric similes used in The Odyssey occurs when Odysseus is stringing his bow. Homer compares him to a person stringing a harp (page 939).

"But the man skilled in all ways of contending,  
Satisfied by the great bow's look and heft,  
Like a musician, like a harper, when  
with quiet hand upon his instrument  
he draws between his thumb and forefinger  
a sweet new string upon a peg; so effortlessly"

**In medias res** – in the middle of the action; when the story jumps straight into the middle of a sequence of events, especially in a literary narrative that has no introduction. This occurs because the story begins as Odysseus is preparing to leave Calypso's island. When he arrives at the island of King Alcinous. After receiving hospitality, Odysseus tells of his travels – his adventures are thus a flashback.

**Catalogues of things and characters** – lists of ships and their crew

**Long formal speeches** – these sometimes happen in the heat of battle and other seemingly inappropriate times, but more often they occur at various kinds of meetings, as in an assembly of chieftains.

**Gods intervene in the affairs of humans** – when Odysseus battles the suitors in his home, the aegis of Zeus appears; Athena makes him look like a beggar when he returns home.

**Epic digressions** – these passages do not further the action of the story because they are asides or repetitions to remind audience of background information. Penelope's weaving a shroud, but she unravels it at night to delay her choice in choosing a suitor.

**Settings are vast** – the known world was used. Odysseus wanders the seas of the known world; he even journeys to the Underworld.

**Heroes embody the values of their civilization** – these may include hospitality, strength, bravery, intelligence. He is usually of great national importance; the ideal man of his culture.

**Deeds of valor or superhuman courage** – faces the Cyclops; Scylla and Charybdis; the Underworld

### **Elements of an Epic Hero**

Most epic heroes possess most or all of 7 general characteristics you can use to help you decide if a character is, indeed, an epic hero or heroine.

- **Trait 1: A Noble Birth**
  - Most epic heroes will have an above average station in life. They will be kings, princes, or nobles of some sort. Commoners usually do not become epic heroes.
- **Trait 2: Capable of deeds of great strength and courage**
  - Basically, this means the hero has the potential for great deeds. The magnitude of these actions are well above and beyond what the commoner does. While most epic heroes are good, not all are.
- **Trait 3: Great Warrior**
  - Before the hero of an epic does his business in the epic, he has usually established himself in combat during a war. Sometimes, as in The Iliad, we see the hero at war. In most, like Beowulf and The Odyssey, the hero has spent much time in battle.
- **Trait 4: Travels Over a Vast Setting**
  - Simply put, you cannot be an epic hero if you stay in your village your whole life. The more countries or areas traveled to, the better. The farther away from your own country, the better. Distance makes the hero's actions greater because they aren't selfish; they are for another country or people.
- **Trait 5: National Heroism**
  - Before a hero can be celebrated by countries the world over, he must first be recognized in his home country as a great and heroic person.
- **Trait 6: Humility**
  - Even as the rest of the world recognizes the great deeds of the hero, he is never a braggart or even willing to take applause. He commits his deeds because he knows they need doing, and the fame and rewards that he receives are only a matter of course, not the reason for completing his quests.
- **Trait 7: Faces Supernatural Foes and/or Receives Supernatural Help**
  - Most epic heroes either receive aid from a god or goddess or battle some superhuman enemy. This is what makes a hero's action epic: they fight something mere mortals cannot battle. Beowulf has his Grendel; Odysseus his Cyclops. For each hero, the enemy is unique. You won't see two heroes battling the same foe.