

English I Summer Reading
the *Odyssey* by Homer
(trans. Robert Fagles, Penguin Classics)

*READ the Odyssey. Then answer all questions on a **separate piece of paper**, and be prepared for a quiz the first week of school. Include the line from the book where you found the answer, i.e. 1.71 is book/chapter one, line 71. (The questions for the first three books have the line numbers of the answers, but you still must write out the answers.) Even though the highlighted questions have been answered for you, you are still responsible for knowing the information. You do **not** need to read the Introduction.*

Books 1-4

1. What is the Greek word that is used to describe Odysseus? [ANSWER: from review article posted—*polutropos*]

2. Give two examples of how *polutropos* could be translated into English. [ANSWER: much-turned, much-turning, wily, resourceful, complicated, contradictory. Robert Fagles translated it “man of twists and turns,” which carries a rich meaning with it, a man of many talents and interests, richly blessed and oft cursed, good at times, not so good other times.]

How does the poem start? [ANSWER: *en medias res*—in the middle of it all; that’s how the Greeks always do their storytelling.]

3. Why start in the middle of the story?

4. At what time in Odysseus’s adventures abroad are we when the poem starts? (Remember, he will spend twenty years abroad: 10 years fighting at Troy and 10 years wandering.)

5. How are we left feeling about the suitors? Name one of them.

6. Orestus is _____’s son. He killed _____. [ANSWER: Agamemnon; Orestus killed Aegisthus.] **Be sure to check out the fantastic index of characters in the back of the book.**

7. The threat that Telemachus tosses at the suitors is... (1.430+)

8. Halitherses reads prophesies in nature. What is it? (2.180+)

9. When they arrive in Sandy Pylos, Nestor is sacrificing to _____. (3.6)

10. After the sacking of Troy, what divides Agamemnon and Menelaus? (3.150+)

11. What advice is Telemachus given? Who should he be as brave as? (3.223)

12. How does Athena reveal herself to Nestor? (3.415) Why is this seen as a good omen for Telemachus? Who do the gods usually favor?
13. What is Menelaus' theory on bringing in strangers? (4.36)
14. Who recognizes Telemachus first?
15. How does Menelaus learn of the fortunes of his Achaean counterparts?
16. After we leave the suitors and Telemachus, what has Homer made sure that he has done with their story? (like the season one finale of a television drama series) Look at the last line of book four: what is the verb of that sentence—a perfect chapter conclusion?

Books 5-8

17. What purpose do the first lines of Book 5 serve? [ANSWER: scene change and to invoke the gods.]

18. Hermes is sent again to _____ to give her a final decision about Odysseus's fate. What is Zeus' plan for Odysseus?
19. At this time, Odysseus spend his days... and his nights... (HINT: Answer begins 5.93. Be sure to read far enough to answer completely).
20. What explanation does Odysseus give for refusing immortality? Does he really give an explanation?
21. On the 18th day, _____ sees Odysseus nearing Phaeacia (5.309). What is fated to happen once he reaches that island (5.318)? What is Poseidon's reaction to see this (5.322-23)?
22. How does Odysseus show his cunning or luck when Ino presents the veil to him?
23. Who rescues him from the shore?
24. Nausithous's parents are _____, son of the earthquake god, and _____, daughter of the King of the Giants.
25. Who is the *de facto* head of the Palace of Alcinoos? How is she described? (You'll find the answer in two different places.)
26. When will Odysseus leave for Ithaca?
27. Compare Homer and Demodocus. How does he describe the bard/poet/traveling singer, entertainer? How is this totally self-serving for Homer to describe Demodocus this way? (Think beyond the text.)
28. Despite all his resourcefulness, Odysseus has respect (or claims to have) for his elders and the gods, and did not make the mistake Eurypylos made. What did he do? Does Odysseus have that respect? Give an example.

29. His first song retells the story of...
30. The second song tells the story of...
31. What is Nausithous's warning to Alcinous?

Books 9-12

32. What are the two parts of Odysseus's resume that he gives when he introduces himself to the Assembly?
33. What does a man hold sweetest, according to Odysseus? What does this explain for us?
34. What is the key to Odysseus's escape from the Cyclops? (9.410; 9.428; 9.480)
35. Who doesn't Polyphemus fear?
36. What is Odysseus's stupidity (or lack of *polutropos*)?
37. What are the two options Polyphemus gives Poseidon?
38. What animal does Circe change the men into and what makes this so horrible?
39. What are Eurylochus's arguments against following Odysseus any longer?
40. Name two of Tiresias's prophecies
41. Choose two people who approach the trench of blood in Hades. What do they tell Odysseus?
42. Homer and the oral poets receive another validation. What is this one? (It's in Book 11.)
43. What are Agamemnon's two warnings?
44. Explain the Sirens, Scylla, Charybdis.
45. Whose fault is it that they stop on island of the Sun?
46. Who finishes off Eurylochus?

**DON'T FORGET TO READ THE ARTICLE *Heroic Enterprise*
AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AT THE END.**