

Unit : The Odyssey

Duration: 41 days

- Students read various literary texts to understand how great literature reflects life and how in any journey (be it physical or metaphysical), patience is important for gaining wisdom and experience along the way. Students express their understanding of the heroic journey by writing an argumentative essay about The Odyssey and then writing their own personal narrative about a similar journey.

Tasks:

Cold Read Task: Literary Analysis (Explanatory)

- Text: excerpts from Book 6 of Homer's *The Iliad*
- Task: Write an extended response that explains how Hector's multiple, conflicting motivations in this scene develop a theme. Cite evidence from both texts to support your response. Be sure to observe the conventions of standard English.
- Standards: RL.9.1, RL.9.2, RL.9.3, RL.9.4, L.9.5A, L.9.6, W.9.2, L.9.1, L.9.2

Culminating Task: Literary Analysis--Argument

- Text: *The Odyssey*
- Task: Which is more important to the development of Odysseus' character and a theme of the epic—the journey or the goal? To answer this question:
  - Reread the last three stanzas from "Ithaka" by Constantine Cavafy beginning with, "Keep Ithaka always in your mind" and ending with, "you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean."
  - Consider what it means to "come home"? Review Odysseus's journey home to Ithaca and the symbolism of "coming home." While he returned home in the literal sense, did he return to the same place as he left?
- Write an argumentative essay in which you determine whether the journey or the goal was more important to the development of Odysseus' character and a theme of the epic. Use proper grammar, conventions, spelling, and grade-appropriate words and phrases. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support both your claim and counterclaims, pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.
- Standards: W.9.1, W.9.9A, L.9.1, L.9.2, RL.9.1, RL.9.2

Extension Task: Literary Task--Narrative

Lessons:

Informational Texts

- analyze connections between a modern informational piece and a work of classical literature

Literary Texts

- understand features of an epic
- analyze main characters' responses to conflict
- analyze character and diction in an allegory
- analyze how figurative language (specifically epic similes) helps to convey a character's development over the course of a long work
- analyze the structure of an epic
- analyze the style of a classical work of literature
- analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme
- analyze representation of a character from classical texts in two media--literature and visual art
- analyze a contemporary poem inspired by the anchor text *The Odyssey*
- analyze a poem that introduces characters, conflicts, and themes of the anchor text *The Odyssey*
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Writing:

- add variety to sentences by using phrases in the style of a published author
- compose an extended response exploring universal themes in classical and modern works

Speaking and Listening:

- engage in a class discussion about universal themes in two allegorical stories
- engage in a class discussion on reflections of life in literature

- Texts: No--Man's Lands: excerpts from *One Man's Odyssey Through the Odyssey*, "The Truth About Being a Hero," and "Back from War, but Not Really Home"
- Prepare for and participate in a Socratic Seminar on this question: What about the human experience is revealed through the various depictions of the quest motif of the unit texts?
- Write a multi-paragraph personal narrative essay modeled after the experiences and structure of a selected character or story from the unit: Tell the story of your own personal quest or a challenge you faced and how, like Odysseus with the Sirens, Penelope with the suitors, or Phoenix with the woods, you grew from the challenge to reach a desired goal. Develop a theme through the narrative that reflects the value you place on the journey or the goal.

- engage in a class discussion to answer the question, "How do temptations and trials develop a person's character?"
- participate in a class discussion based on the following question: what about the human experience is revealed through the various depictions of the quest motif of the texts?

Texts:

- RL--*The Odyssey*, selected books
- RL--"Siren Song" by Margaret Atwood
- RL--"An Ancient Gesture" by Edna St. Vincent Millay
- RL--"A Worn Path" by Eudora Welty
- RL--"Ithaka" by Constantine Cavafy
- RL--"Half a Day" from *The Time and the Place* by Naguib Mahfouz
- RI--"The Truth About Being a Hero" by Karl Marlantes
- RI--"Back from War, but Not Really Home" by Caroline Alexander
- media--*Ulysses and the Sirens*
- media--"An Ancient Gesture" by Michael Learned



