

# Odyssey Reading Guide

## Book 5

### Vocabulary Words:

Indignation (page 156)

Buoyed (page 158)

Pine (158)

Sodden (167)

Strewing (163)

### Reading Questions:

- 1.) How does Calypso feel about the way the gods treat relationships between immortal and mortal beings? (Lines 129-150)
- 2.) Why does Calypso eventually allow Odysseus to return to his home of Ithaca? (Lines 152-160)
- 3.) Why does Zeus feel the need to stop relationships from happening between mortals and gods?
- 4.) Why does Odysseus not trust Calypso's offer to send him home? (Lines 190-199)
- 5.) Why didn't Calypso tell Odysseus that the gods of Olympus were the ones who wanted to send him home and not her?
- 6.) Why does Odysseus mention that Zeus will be part of his inevitable pain but not Poseidon when he was the one who put the curse on him?
- 7.) How is Calypso trying to persuade Odysseus to stay on her island and not return home? (Lines 219-236)
- 8.) Why does Odysseus still want to leave after Calypso predicted that he would go through pain, pain, when Odysseus has already experienced, first hand, predicted fates coming true?
- 9.) How does Calypso feel about Odysseus returning home to Ithaca? (Lines 230-236)
- 10.) How does Odysseus use the environment around him to his advantage when he's beached on the Phaeacians' island? (Lines 524-547)
- 11.) How is Odysseus' experience on the Phaeacians' island versus his experiences being at sea during Poseidon's storm? (Lines 524-547)
- 12.) How does Athena treat Odysseus in this passage compared to previous ones in *The Odyssey*? (Lines 543-547)
- 13.) What are the parallels between Odysseus' life on the water during Poseidon's storm and Odysseus' life on Calypso's island? (Lines 365-380)
- 14.) What are the relationships between Odysseus and immortal beings in this passage?(Lines 365-386)
- 15.) What does Odysseus' predicted fate, said by Calypso, already coming true show about Greek culture?

## **Book 6**

### **Vocabulary Words:**

Blithe (page 169)  
Exultant (page 172)  
Rapt (173)  
Stark (175)  
Donned (175)

### **Reading Questions:**

1. What does a future telling dream with Athena show about Nausicaa and what she believes? (Page 169)
2. What was the importance of Athena being disguised? How does her being disguised effect the encounter she has with Nausicaa? (Page 169)
3. Who is the “bright-eyed goddess”? Why is she referred to with an epithet and Nausicaa only referred to by her name? What does this show about the God/Human hierarchy? (Page 169)
4. Why does Odysseus ask Nausicaa if she is human or god? (Page 172)
5. How did Odysseus use persuasion to convince Nausicaa to trust him? Which specific examples of persuasion did he use? Which methods were the most effective? (Page 172)
6. How does this passage use the concept of on the journey/at home? (Page 173)
7. How does Odysseus feel about the land as opposed to the sea? Explain. How does he show this? (Page 173)
8. To what extent does Odysseus try to persuade Nausicaa? Which persuasion techniques does he use and how do they help him? (Page 173-174)
9. Does Odysseus have the power to promise gifts from the gods? Why or why not? Which Odyssey concepts is Odysseus displaying? How/why? (Page 174)
10. What kind of persuasive element(s) does Nausicaa use to show her handmaids that Odysseus was a good man? (Page 174)
11. Why does Nausicaa trust Odysseus? (Page 174)
12. How did the Phaeacians respond to Odysseus emerging from the sea? What does that reveal about Odysseus and the Phaeacians? (Page 175)
13. Why did Athena reward Odysseus after years of cursing him? What does she reward him with? (Page 175)
14. How does Nausicaa react to the new Odysseus? What does this show about her character? (175)
15. What does Nausicaa want from Odysseus? Why can't she get it? (176)

## **Book 7 - Mounkhal**

### **Book 8**

#### **Vocabulary Words:**

Strife (194)  
Slander (197)  
Ablaze (200)  
Battened (205)  
Staunch (210)

#### **Reading Questions:**

1. How does Odysseus's presence in the song of the bard show that he will be remembered? (193-194)
2. What kind of relationship between gods and humans is shown by the interaction between the Muse and the bard? (193)
3. Why does Odysseus react the way he does to the bard's song of his past journeys and exploits? (194)
4. How and why does Odysseus show hubris in his reaction to Laodamas's challenge? (196-197)
5. What differences between gods and humans are exemplified by Odysseus in this passage? (196-197)
6. Is Xenia being violated by Laodamas's challenge of Odysseus? Explain. (197)
7. How are the gods depicted in this passage similar or different to humans? (200)
8. How is appetite vs. mind shown in the story of Hephaestus, Aphrodite, and Ares? (200)
9. How do Hephaestus's feelings in the passage relate to how Odysseus has been feeling while he has been away on his journey? (200)
10. How is the concept of Xenia expressed in this passage? (205)
11. What is the significance of Odysseus tying up his gifts to protect them on his journey in a way that he would not do if he were at home? (205)
12. How is Odysseus resourceful when he receives the gifts? (205)
13. How does Odysseus's telling of his story lead to him being remembered (even to today)? (209-210)
14. Why would the people want to hear about Odysseus's journey and why is Odysseus telling the story? (210)
15. How does Odysseus's character change when he agrees to tell everyone his true identity and how his journey brought him to Phaeacia? (210)

## **Book 9**

### **Vocabulary Words:**

Squadron (214)  
Suppliant (219)  
Spurting (223)  
Duped (224)  
Crag (226)

### **Reading Questions:**

1. What effect does the Odyssey concept of Appetite/Mind have on the crewmen of Odysseus? What effect does it have on Odysseus? What does this show about their character?(p. 214. L. 106-107)
2. What persuasive element does Odysseus use to get his crew off the Island of the Lotus-eaters and on to the ship? Why does this technique work? (p.214 l. 114)
3. How does the way Odysseus and his crew act on the Island of the Lotus-eaters show the similarities/ differences between their behavior on land and on sea?(p. 214 l. 106-117)
4. How is it ironic that Odysseus is reminding Polyphemus to respect Xenia?(p.220 l.203-205)
5. How well is Odysseus able to come up with an idea on how to talk to Polyphemus? What does this show about his resourcefulness? (p.219 l. 288-290)
6. Is Polyphemus' hubris ultimately the cause of him being blinded? Elaborate. (p.220 l. 306-311)
7. What is the significance of Odysseus telling Polyphemus that his name is Nobody? How is this related to Epithet?(p.223 l. 409-411)
8. What were the Xenia gifts that Polyphemus and Odysseus gave each other? How do these gifts violate Xenia?(p.223 l. 409-414)
9. How does stabbing Polyphemus in the eye at the end of the passage contradict Odysseus's fate?(p.223 l. 420-428)
10. How does Polyphemus' friends' reply to him telling them who is killing him show how resourceful Odysseus is?(p.224 l. 456-460)
11. What is Odysseus' escape plan? Does it work? What Odyssey concept does it relate to? Explain.(p. 224-225 l. 475-480)
12. What do Polyphemus' friends' suggest to Polyphemus when he tells them he is being killed by 'nobody'? What Odyssey concept does it relate to? How?(p.224 l. 456-460)
13. How would Odysseus's journey home have changed if he had remained humble and not taunted Polyphemus?(p.227 l. 557-562)
14. Is it the fate of Odysseus's crew to suffer alongside him for all of Odysseus's wrongdoings?(p.227 l. 555-557)
15. How does the Odyssey concept of Fate/Freedom have to do with the reasons for Odysseus taunting Polyphemus?(p. 227 l.557-562)

## **Book 10**

### **Vocabulary Words:**

Folly (231)  
Crag (234)  
Bristling (237-238)  
Potent (239-240)  
Listless (246)

### **Reading Questions:**

1. How does the idea that Odysseus could be so close to his home yet be swept away relate to Athena and Poseidon's curse? How does Odysseus' experience affect himself? (231)
2. How is Odysseus fate shown when he falls asleep near Ithaca? What element of persuasion does the characters use towards each other? (231)
3. How does Odysseus' crew persuade each other to open the bag? How does this relate to appetite vs. mind? (231-232)
4. What odyssey concept or element of literature can be found in this passage? (234)
5. Who survives the island? Who escapes the island? who is left at the end of the passage? (234)
6. Who lives on this island? What are they? What do they do to Odysseus and his army? (234)
7. Who stayed behind, why, and how does this foreshadow the fate of the other sailors? (Using specific words to indicate the changing tone) (237)
8. Why is it so important to the witch to turn these men into pigs but to keep their minds steadfast as humans and wipe away all memories of home? (237)
9. What rule does Circe violate, how? (237- 238)
10. Who helps Odysseus and why? How does this relate to immortals/mortals? What element of persuasion does the helper use to get Odysseus' trust? (239-240)
11. What does Odysseus do when he meets Circe? How does this relate to resourcefulness/at a loss? How does Circe persuade him to do what he does? (239-240)
12. Why does Odysseus trust Hermes? How does this relate to immortals/mortals? (239-240)
13. What does Odysseus going to Circe for directions home show about his character and his resourcefulness/at a loss conflict? (p. 246-247)
14. How does Circe's point of view specifically affect the tone of the passage and how Circe being home affects the directions she gives to Odysseus? (p. 246-247)
15. How does the Fate/Freedom controversy Odysseus faces prove his humility to the gods? (p. 246-247)

## **Book 11 - Mounkhal**

### **Book 12**

#### **Vocabulary Words:**

Transfix (Page 272)  
Quarry (Page 274)  
Radiant (Page 275 )  
Churned (Page 272)  
Ravishing (Page 277)

#### **Reading Questions:**

1. Why did Circe only tell Odysseus about the trials he will face, instead of informing the whole crew? Why does Odysseus trust her? (272-273)
2. Why does Circe help Odysseus when he is cursed? What does this say about Odysseus's relationship with the gods? (272-273)
3. Why does Odysseus tell Circe his whole story, including killing the woman in the temple? (272-273)
4. Is it possible to prevent Scylla from hurting the ship's crew? Or is it fate that Scylla will bring damage. (274)
5. Why would Circe send Odysseus on a path that passed by monsters like the Sirens and Scylla? Is there really only one path to get home? (274)
6. What does it say about the god's view of Scylla if she, an immortal, is afraid of the monster? (274)
7. Does Odysseus seem to care more about the possibility of him coming home late as a broken man or all of his men being destroyed? (275)
8. Why doesn't Odysseus fully explain to his men the consequences harming the cattle of the sun? (275)
9. Due to Circe's explanation that if Odysseus's men eat the cattle, then he will be hurt, is his motivation to stop them purely for their benefit? (275)
10. What does Odysseus plan to gain by excluding the information about Scylla to his men? (276)
11. Why is Odysseus so set on hearing the Siren's song to the point where he is demanding his men to tie him tighter to the pole if he pleads to be set free? (276)
12. Why does Odysseus make what he was told by Circe seem less extreme when telling his men? (276)
13. How does Odysseus show hubris by cheating death and becoming the only man to survive hearing the sirens song? (276-277)
14. How does Odysseus make himself to seem godly strong when telling this story and explaining how the wax became soft? (276-277)
15. How can Odysseus use this story to persuade people into helping him get back home to Ithaca? (276-277)

## **Book 13**

### **Vocabulary Words:**

Libations (287)  
Trove (Page 293)  
Guile (Page 296)  
Plunder (Page 291)  
Lithe (Page 299)

### **Reading Questions:**

1. How does the celebration in Phacia compare gods and humans and show their interaction? (287-8)
2. What does this celebration reveal about the character of the Phaeacians and their belief in Xenia? (287)
3. What does Homer's comparison of Odysseus to a farmer symbolize? (287)
4. Why is Athena referred to as "daughter of Zeus," rather than just Athena? How does this promote her character? (292)
5. Why is Odysseus so quick to negatively judge the land he arrives on? How does this relate to on the journey vs. at home? (293)
6. What does Athena do to Odysseus' appearance after covering him with mist? How does this display a difference between gods and humans? (292-293)
7. How are humans and gods comparable in the way they act like humans? (296)
8. How does Athena conceal the identity of Odysseus? Why does she do this? (296)
9. Why does Athena help Odysseus even though he is a human? (295-6)
10. Does the tone of Poseidon give the feeling that Odysseus' return to Ithaca was an act of hubris towards Poseidon? (290-1)
11. Why does Poseidon feel threatened by the mortals if he is immortal? What does this reveal about his character? (290)
12. Does the tone of Poseidon in his conversation with Zeus show respect or disrespect towards Zeus? (290-1)
13. What does the end of the passage reveal about Odysseus' belief in fate? (300)
14. How and when do the gods behave like human beings? What does this reveal about gods? (299)
15. How does the deception in this passage relate to other stories we have read? (299)