

3 Knowledge Map: The Odyssey (Book 9)

This component is called the 'Literature Study' and will form 50% of the Homeric World paper. It is focused entirely on Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*. This topic focuses on the plot of the Odyssey, with a particular focus on Books 9, 10, 19, 21, and 22. It also analyses the literary techniques employed by its author, Homer. Certain characters need to be analysed, particularly Odysseus, the main protagonist. The key themes that are threaded through the book, such as the concept of *xenia* (guest friendship and hospitality), must be examined.

Summary of Book 9

1	Book 9	Odysseus reveals his identity to the Phaeacians and tells the story of his adventures with the Cicones, the Lotus Eaters, and Polyphemus, the Cyclops. As he leaves the blinded Cyclops, Odysseus shouts out his own name, thus allowing the giant to call upon his father, Poseidon, to punish Odysseus.
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Breakdown of Book 9 (Line-by-Line)

2	Lines 1-62	The Cicones Odysseus recounts the tale of his arrival in Ismarus at the city of Cicones. He tells how his men sacked the city only to face a counter-attack in which a number of his men died.
3	Lines 63-104	The Lotus-Eaters Odysseus recounts them landing at the island of the Lotus-Eaters after nine days at sea in storms. Here a number of his crew eat the lotus and enter into a dream-like status. Odysseus drags his crew back to the ships, but not all make it.
4	Lines 105-151	The Land of the Cyclopes Odysseus begins the tale that will be the rest of Book 9 – his adventures on the land of the Cyclopes. He introduces the landscape of the island, its population, and weather.
5	Lines 152-192	The Cyclopes' Cave Odysseus continues his story by focusing on his exploration of the island and his discovery of Polyphemus' cave.
6	Lines 193-255	Polyphemus Returns Odysseus recounts entering the cave and admiring its contents. Despite his crews wishes, he wants to stay and meet the Cyclops and test his <i>xenia</i> .
7	Lines 256-306	Trapped Odysseus tells of how he asks for hospitality and Polyphemus refuses and even eats two of his crew, trapping Odysseus and the rest within the cave.
8	Lines 307-359	Offering the Cyclops Wine Odysseus sets in motion his plan to escape by blinding Polyphemus with a stake after the Cyclops has drunk some of Odysseus' wine.
9	Lines 360-412	Blinding the Cyclops Odysseus tells of how they blinded Polyphemus and tricked him into believing that no-one had attacked him.
10	Lines 413-479	Escape Odysseus explains how they escaped the cave the next morning by clinging to the bellies of Polyphemus' sheep and rams, eventually taking them on board their ships for food.
11	Lines 480-525	Telemus' Prophecy Odysseus and his men escape to their ships, but Odysseus cannot resist revealing who he was to Polyphemus. This act of arrogance will bring about the wrath of Poseidon.
12	Lines 526-566	Polyphemus' Curse Odysseus tells of how when his men sailed away, Polyphemus cried out to his father, Poseidon, for help in avenging him.

Key Characters in Book 9 (Mortals, Monsters, and Gods)

13	Odysseus	The main protagonist of the story. In Book 9, he is currently shipwrecked in Phaeacia where he recounts the story of his journey from Troy. Book 9 primarily focuses on his story of his battle with Polyphemus, but does touch on two other adventures: The Cicones and The Lotus-Eaters.
14	Alcinous and Arete	Alcinous is a Phaeacian king, and Arete his queen. He befriends Odysseus and helps him on his journey. She is descended from Poseidon, and is considered a wise woman in the story. Odysseus recounts his story of the cyclops to them.
15	Polyphemus	One-eyed giant of son of Poseidon, and one of the Cyclopes in the Odyssey. After eating some of Odysseus' men, Odysseus would blind him by driving a stake through his one eye.
16	Poseidon	Whilst not directly involved in this book, his presence is felt. God of the Seas, who takes great offence at Odysseus, primarily because he blinds his son, Polyphemus, the cyclops.

Themes in Book 9

17	Fate	Book 9 questions the concept of Odysseus' fate being determined by the Gods. It is not the gods that take him to the land of the cyclops, and it is not the gods that make Odysseus explore the island and meet Polyphemus. These are the actions of Odysseus, but fate will play a part with the intervention of Poseidon.
18	Judgement	Book 9's heaviest theme is Odysseus' judgement which is shown to be very good for most of the time, but foolish on occasions. Perhaps the biggest example of this, is his decision to tell Polyphemus his name despite having already escaped.
19	Revenge	Another theme of Book 9 is revenge. Odysseus seeks revenge on Polyphemus for killing some of his crew so murderously, but equally, Polyphemus will want revenge on Odysseus for him blinding him.
20	Xenia	Book 9 explores the theme of <i>Xenia</i> in a number of ways. Primarily, there is the failure of Polyphemus to offer <i>xenia</i> in how it should be. He does not take on the role of host to his guests, and indeed, even eats some of his crew.
21	Deceit and Trickery	Book 9 is laden with examples of Odysseus' celebrated trickery. The best example is the way that he tricks Polyphemus by giving him a false name meaning he will not face the wrath of other cyclops who come to Polyphemus' aid.

Key Literary Techniques and Examples:

22	Epithet	Line 1	'Resourceful Odysseus answered the king, saying: 'Lord Alcinous, most illustrious of men, it is a fine thing, in truth, to hear a bard such as this, with a godlike voice.'
23	Epithet	Lines 154 and 285	'The Nymphs, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus, disturbed the mountain goats, driving them towards my hungry comrades.' and '...since the Cyclopes care nothing for aegis-bearing Zeus: we are greater than they.'
24	Epithet	Lines 290 and 524	'...and answered him with cunning words: Poseidon, Earth-Shaker, smashed my ship...' and '...and send you to the House of Hades, as surely as the Earth-Shaker will fail to heal your eye.'
25	Formulae	Line 152	'As soon as rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, we explored the island, marvelling at what we saw.'
26	Formulae	Line 167	'As soon as rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, I gathered my men together, saying: "The rest of you loyal friends stay here, while I and my crew take ship and try to find out who these men are, whether they are cruel, savage and lawless, or good to strangers, and in their hearts fear the gods."
27	Formulae	Line 307	'As soon as rosy-fingered dawn appeared, cyclops relit the fire.'
28	Simile	Lines 54-55	'At dawn they came, as many as the leaves and flowers in spring: and disaster sent by Zeus overtook us, doomed, as we were, to endless trouble.'
29	Simile	Lines 295-296	'Two he seized and dashed to the ground like whelps, and their brains ran out and stained the earth.'
30	Simile	Lines 296-298	'He tore them limb from limb for his supper, eating the flesh and entrails, bone and marrow, like a mountain lion, leaving nothing.'
31	Simile	Lines 375-379	'They held the sharpened olivewood stake, and thrust it into his eye, while I threw my weight on the end, and twisted it round and round, as a man bores the timbers of a ship with a drill that others twirl lower down with a strap held at both ends, and so keep the drill continuously moving.'
32	Simile	Lines 382-383	'As a great axe or adze causes a vast hissing when the smith dips it in cool water to temper it, strengthening the iron, so his eye hissed against the olivewood stake.'