

# 5 Knowledge Map: The Odyssey (Book 19)

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 19

1	Book 19	Odysseus and Telemachus remove the weapons from the hall. Odysseus tells Penelope about his travels. His tale is a mixture of truth and lies. Penelope asks Eurycleia to wash the beggar's feet, and the nurse sees the scar. Odysseus warns her to say nothing. Penelope tests the beggar to find out if he really did meet Odysseus, as he claims.
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## Breakdown of Book 19 (Line-by-Line)

2	Lines 1–52	<b>Odysseus and Telemachus Hide the Weapons</b> Odysseus has made his way to his home with Telemachus disguised as a beggar. With Telemachus and Athena they plot on how to kill the suitors. Their first action is to hide the weapons in the main hall away. We are also introduced to Eurycleia, a loyal maid.
3	Lines 53–99	<b>Penelope Prepares to Question the Stranger</b> Disguised Odysseus sees Penelope for the first time in 20 years. Whilst looking at his wife, he is abused by one of the disloyal maids, and Odysseus reacts angrily to her lack of hospitality. Penelope then interjects to speak to the 'stranger' that is Odysseus as he has apparently met him.
4	Lines 100–163	<b>Penelope and Odysseus Converse</b> Penelope and Odysseus sit down and talk, with Penelope unaware it is Odysseus. They talk of her troubled situation and Telemachus maturing into a man. She asks the stranger of his past.
5	Lines 164–219	<b>Odysseus Tells a False Tale</b> In this conversation, Odysseus tells his wife a false story of who he is as he does not want to place his wife in danger yet until his plan is fully prepared. She then tests this stranger to see if he has really ever met Odysseus.
6	Lines 220–307	<b>Odysseus Prophesies his Own Return</b> Odysseus invents a story of him meeting her husband and is able to describe obvious details to her convincing her of his 'truth'. He reveals to Penelope that Odysseus is alive and will return this very month to avenge her.
7	Lines 308–360	<b>Penelope Offers Hospitality</b> On hearing of Odysseus' impending return, Penelope offers the stranger <i>xenia</i> for as long as he wishes. She asks Eurycleia to wash Odysseus' feet.
8	Lines 361–475	<b>Eurycleia Recognises Odysseus</b> As she is washing Odysseus' feet, she notices a scar on his leg and knows it is Odysseus. We then hear the famous boar hunt story from <i>The Odyssey</i> and how Odysseus got the scar. At the end she tells Odysseus she knows who he is.
9	Lines 476–507	<b>Odysseus Tells Eurycleia to Conceal his Identity</b> Odysseus, worried that Eurycleia will reveal his true identity too soon, threatens Eurycleia and insists on her secrecy. She shows her loyalty and support for Odysseus by promising to keep his identity secret.
10	Lines 508–553	<b>Penelope's Dream</b> Penelope meets with Odysseus again and reveals to him her dilemma of refusing all proposals of marriage or should she accept one of the suitors. She then reveals a dream to Odysseus about the killing of the suitors and that Odysseus had done this.
11	Lines 554–604	<b>Penelope Proposes a Challenge for the Suitors</b> Odysseus confirms that the dream will likely come true. Penelope makes a decision to hold a contest for the suitors to win her hand in marriage – a contest of stringing Odysseus' great bow and firing an arrow through 12 axe handles. Odysseus encourages this contest.

## Themes in Book 19

12	Fate	Book 19 explores the concept of fate, but this time from the point of view of the suitors. It is their fate that lies in the balance due to Odysseus' actions which are arguably fated as well from Athena.
13	Xenia	Book 19 has <i>xenia</i> at the heart of it as Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, is offered perfect hospitality by Penelope.
14	Deceit and Trickery	Book 19 explores the theme of deceit and trickery as Odysseus disguises himself as a beggar to all but his son and loyal servants. He spends the whole chapter deceiving his wife but for good intentions. He wants to keep her safe but also enable her to create a situation in which he can reveal himself to all when ready.

## Key Characters in Book 19 (Mortals and Gods)

15	Odysseus	The main protagonist of the story. He is King of Ithaca, a Greek island, and he wants to return home after having been away for ten-years fighting in the Trojan War. He employs guile as well as courage to return to Ithaca, defeat the suitors, and resume his proper place as king.
16	Penelope	Wife of Odysseus. Whilst Odysseus was away, she had to fight off over a hundred suitors who wanted to marry her thinking that Odysseus was dead. She is depicted as shrewd, resourceful, and faithful.
17	Telemachus	The son of Odysseus. He would spend the first part of the story trying to find his father. Telemachus was born just when Odysseus left for the Trojan War, so is about twenty-years old at the point of his return.
18	Eurycleia	A maid in Odysseus' palace, she is loyal to Odysseus and Penelope and helps in Odysseus' pursuit of the suitors. She would recognise him when he is disguised.
19	Antinous	One of the main suitors in the story. A violent and over-confident character who strives hard to take Odysseus' throne.
20	Eurymachus	Another of the suitors. He is sly and manipulative, at one point fooling Penelope that he has no ill-intent. He arranges for the death of Telemachus, only to be outwitted by him.
21	Athena	Athena plays a vital role in the book as Odysseus' protector. It is she who secures the release of Odysseus from Calypso, and supports Odysseus in his plans to defeat the suitors.

## Key Literary Techniques and Examples:

22	Epithet	Lines 1–2	"So, <b>noble</b> Odysseus remained in the hall, planning with Athena's aid how to kill the Suitors."
23	Epithet	Lines 22–23	"The Stranger, here, will do it,' <b>wise</b> Telemachus replied, 'since I'll not have a man idle who eats from my table, no matter how far he's travelled."
24	Epithet	Lines 45–46	" <b>Resourceful</b> Odysseus, answered him: 'Silence, and let such thoughts go by without question: this is the way of the gods who rule Olympus."
25	Epithet	Lines 101–103	' <b>Noble long-suffering</b> Odysseus sat there, and listened as <b>wise</b> Penelope spoke..."
26	Simile	Lines 53–56	'Now wise Penelope came down from her chamber, <b>looking like Artemis or golden Aphrodite</b> , and they placed a chair by the fire for her in her usual place..."
27	Simile	Lines 208–212	'As the snow that the West Wind pours on the high mountains melts when the East Wind thaws it, and fills the streams with its water till the rivers overflow, so her lovely cheeks were drenched as she sorrowed and wept for her husband, who was even then sitting by her side."