

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.

Odysseus' Journey Influences His Character

		The Telemachy (1-4)	The Homecoming of Odysseus (5-8)	The Wanderings of Odysseus (9-12)	Odysseus in Ithaca (13-24)
1	Changing Odysseus	Odysseus is not directly in this section, only referred to	Odysseus is with the Phaeacians disguised as a traveller. He is humble, but reacts when challenged to prove himself. It could be that he is does not reveal his identity until he is sure the Phaeacians will give him passage back to Ithaca.	Odysseus recounts his stories where he is at times reckless, lacking in judgement, is egotistical, and a lot of decisions sees his crew die. Yet, he equally shows real leadership, resourcefulness, cunning and strength. It is like he has to go through all this to be the hero ready for the final stages of The Odyssey.	Odysseus is almost now the complete Greek hero. Careful in his planning, controlled in his behaviour, trusting in his allies, and brutal on his enemies. He has perfected the art of manipulation and disguise to support his mission to win back Penelope and his kingdom.

Odysseus Journey

2	Summary	Odysseus takes ten years to return to home to Ithaca from the Trojan War. He visits various places and people and faces struggle after struggle. The key events for the exam are: (1) The Battle with Cicones, (2) The Land of the Lotus-Eaters; (3) Polyphemus the Cyclops, (4) The Land of the Laestrygonians, (5) Circe the Enchantress, (6) Odysseus' return to Ithaca and the killing of the Suitors.
3	Struggles	Whilst journeying home from Troy, Odysseus experiences much struggle and heartache, and as a direct result of this, his character changes. He is a complex character that demonstrates many different qualities, not always good or heroic, which makes him a fascinating hero to study.
4	Epithets	Listed are the epithets Homer uses to describe Odysseus: Resourceful, great, wise, godlike, long-enduring, favourite of Zeus, long-suffering, patient, noble, shrewd, sacker of cities, nimble-witted, the master-schemer, illustrious. All of these epithets show the complexity of his character.

Book 9: Leaving Troy

5	Intelligence and Resourceful	Odysseus demonstrates his undoubted intelligence and initiative by providing the Greeks with the opportunity to defeat Troy through his creation of the Trojan Horse. In order to bring about a stalemate, Odysseus devises a plot to infiltrate Troy. Interestingly, it would be Odysseus who leads the small Greek army inside the horse when it enters Troy.
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Book 9: Battle of Cicones

6	Sacker of Cities	Odysseus' demonstrates his power as a warrior and a leader of men when he and his men travel to Ismarus and sack the city. They attack the city, defeat the Cicones, and rob it of its wealth. It shows his skills as a warrior and as a leader of an army.
7	Complacent	Despite their initial success, the Ithacans are unprepared for a counter-attack by the Cicones. They complacently stay by their boats revelling in the glory of their previous victory rather than leaving immediately. This demonstrates Odysseus' poor leadership skills here as he should have left and results in the death of some of his men.

Book 9: Land of the Lotus-Eaters

8	Strong Leader	Odysseus learns from the previous battle against the Cicones, when he drags his men from the Lotus-Eaters. He physically shows his strength by forcing them back onto the ships, and then leaving immediately. It is a sign that Odysseus is willing to learn from his previous mistakes.
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Book 9: Polyphemus the Cyclops

9	Curious	Odysseus does not listen to his crew when they express their desire to leave the island of the Cyclops. Odysseus wants to stay and test the Cyclops' hospitality. This curiosity would see his men become trapped in Polyphemus' cave and see a number of his men eaten by Polyphemus.
10	Clever	Odysseus demonstrates his resourcefulness and cunning to be able to get out of Polyphemus' cave. His idea to pretend to be 'Nobody' has huge outcomes as it convinces Polyphemus it is his name and no threat, but also the other Cyclops who run to Polyphemus' cries of anguish when he is blinded. Equally, his escape using the sheep and rams is incredibly clever.
11	Arrogant and Egotistical	Odysseus flees the island with his men to, what should be, safety but his arrogance and ego places him and his men in immediate and long-term danger. His desire to let Polyphemus know his real name means the Cyclops can locate roughly where they are and launch rocks at the escaping ship, but also sees Poseidon now seek revenge on Odysseus and his crew. Polyphemus' prophecy of only Odysseus returning to Ithaca after struggling comes true.

Book 10: The Laestrygonians

12	Reckless	Odysseus had seen the potential danger in the Laestrygonians' harbour, but rather than warning the rest of his fleet and men, he chose to moor only his ship outside of it. As they flee the island, his men are trapped in the harbour, something Odysseus foresaw, and this sees all but his ship sunk and all but his crew killed.
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Book 10: Circe's Island

13	Crew's Lack of Respect	Clearly, Odysseus' crew lack respect for him. When he is travelling to Circe's island, they open the bag of wind given to him by Aelous, the Wind God, and thus the fleet are blown away from Ithaca. This would not have happened if the crew respected him and they followed him with discipline.
14	Responsible	Once Odysseus' crew are captured by Circe and turned into pigs, it is Odysseus who sets out to free them himself.
15	Faithful	In freeing his men, Odysseus must listen to the advice given to him by Hermes who is disguised. Odysseus trusts his faith in the Gods and destiny when accepting that advice and actioning it.
16	Unfaithful	Despite his faithfulness to the Gods, it appears that Odysseus is openly unfaithful to his wife, Penelope, when he sleeps with Circe. Whilst in modern terms, this would simply be adultery to the Ancient Greeks, it may not be so. It would have enhanced Odysseus' reputation to have slept with a Goddess, and it could be argued, he was 'forced' to when he was instructed to by Hermes.
17	Homesick and Vulnerable	There are moments in Book 10, when a more vulnerable Odysseus is exposed. He contemplates death on a number of occasions but is this through defeat and lack of hope or from the thought of dying unnoticed by people and the Gods? In Circe's home we see him visibly moved to want to return home (nostos) after one year on her island.
18	Unforgiving	We see Odysseus change in Book 10 from someone who would not listen to his men in Book 9 to someone who does in Book 10, when he spares Eurylochus' life. He feels completely disrespected by Eurylochus and thinks he is a terrible leader. His first instinct is to kill him, but his men persuade him not to.

Books 19, 21 and 22: Ithaca

19	Deceitful	Odysseus' return to Ithaca is shrouded in secrecy and he keeps his identity secret from all but a couple of close allies. His ability to disguise himself is something that would have been celebrated and applauded in Ancient Greece as it symbolises the Greek's superior intellect to other nationalities.
20	Planner	Odysseus plots an intricate route to killing the Suitors. He takes on a hidden identity, he tests the loyalty of his servants, he manipulates people into carrying out his plan in which he ends up in a locked room with the Suitors armed with his Great Bow.
21	Trusting	Odysseus is trusting of only but a few people in his plot to win back his home and kill the Suitors: Telemachus, Eumaeus, Philoetius, and reluctantly, Eurycleia. With each of these he tests their loyalty to him before trusting them.
22	Manipulative	Odysseus shows his ability to manipulate people throughout his return to Ithaca. This is perhaps best demonstrated in his concealment of his identity to his wife, Penelope. He uses false stories to manipulate her into doing what he needs to defeat the Suitors, with the Archery Contest being the most obvious.
23	Fatherly	Odysseus portrays all the values needed in a father from Ancient Greek times, and he seems to revel in it despite not being a father to Telemachus for 20 years. He provides him with instruction and inspiration which Telemachus happily accepts. This is perhaps best exemplified with his simple shake of the head to stop Telemachus trying to string the bow one more time.
24	Inspiring	Odysseus is an inspiration to three key members of the Odysseus household: Telemachus, Eumaeus and Philoetius, all of whom weep at his return. Equally, Eurycleia responds to his return with pure emotion.
25	Vengeful	Odysseus takes his vengeance out on the Suitors in dramatic and brutal fashion. He exacts swift vengeance on two Suitors in particular: Antinous and Eurymachus.
26	Judgemental	Odysseus carries out his own form of justice, even if in modern times it would be seen as being a vigilante. The manner in which he deals with the disloyal servants is brutal but Odysseus feels this is justice for their betrayal.