

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.

Themes in The Odyssey			Examples of Themes in Book 19		
1	Fate	It might be presumed that Odysseus was always 'fated' to return to Ithaca and reclaim his throne, but the Greeks believed differently in the concept of fate. This is more about how the gods determined, even pre-determined, the fate of humans through their actions; Odysseus is a key example.	17	Fate	Fate is clearly evident in Book 19 as Odysseus has returned to Ithaca alone, on someone else's ship, and his house is full of Suitors. The curse from Polyphemus has come true.
2	Xenia: Hospitality and Friendship	In his journey, Odysseus is often dependent on the hospitality of strangers. The Greeks believed in a custom called Xenia where travellers would be given food, shelter, and protection. This theme is played out throughout the poem.	18	Xenia: Hospitality and Friendship	Xenia is definitely evident in Book 19 as Penelope acts as an impeccable host to the Suitors, some 100 of them. She allows them to return to her house each day and live off her wealth. Contrasting that is the attitude of the Suitors who abuse the hospitality of their host, something the Ancient Greeks would have hated.
3	Deceit and Trickery	Despite seemingly negative characteristics of someone, the Greeks admired Odysseus' trickery and lies. The Odyssey is full of examples of his lies. Indeed Books 9 and 10 could be entirely fabricated as they are all told from the viewpoint of Odysseus who is prone to lying.	19	Deceit and Trickery	This is perhaps the strongest theme in Book 19. Odysseus arrives at his home but does not reveal his identity to his wife, Penelope. He is disguised as a beggar and through all his conversations he tells false truths to continue his deception.
4	Civilisation and Barbarism	Throughout the book there is an examination of what it is to be civilised and uncivilised. It is often the monsters that are viewed as barbarous through their behaviour and failure to offer Xenia.	20	Deceit and Trickery	Another clear example of deceit and trickery is how Penelope has put off marrying one of the Suitors for four years. The story of her promising the Suitors she will only marry once she has completed the funeral shroud for her father-in-law, and her weaving the funeral shroud by day and undoing it by night is worthy of Odysseus himself.
5	Revenge and Justice	This theme is examined throughout and, as readers, we are asked to question what is justice and what is revenge and can the two be linked. An examination of Odysseus' actions to the suitors asks whether he carried out justice or revenge.	Examples of Themes in Book 21		
6	Nostos	Nostos is the name given to the desire to return home, and is the root of the word nostalgia. It is essential for Odysseus to have this focus permanently in his mind to keep him focused on his journey home.	21	Fate	When Penelope announces the Archery Contest, it is though she is committing her future to whatever destiny has decided for her. Her thinking is that her fate is either to marry another or Odysseus will appear and win the contest. Arguably, this decision is affected by her previous conversations with Odysseus and a growing belief that the Stranger may well be her husband.
Examples of Themes in Book 9			22	Xenia: Hospitality and Friendship	The Suitors in Book 21 continue to abuse Penelope and Telemachus' hospitality. They abuse Telemachus, the servants, and Odysseus himself although they only know him as a beggar.
8	Fate	Perhaps the greatest example of fate and destiny and that Odysseus' fate is in the hands of the gods, occurs in Book 9 when Polyphemus brings down a curse on Odysseus after he reveals his name. He says, "If he is destined to see his friends and his fine house in his own country, may he come there late and in sore distress, in another ship, losing all comrades, and let him find great trouble in his house."	23	Deceit and Trickery	Again, a prominent theme running through Book 21 is deceit and trickery. The whole book is about getting Odysseus' and Telemachus' plan to kill the Suitors into effect. As part of this plan, Odysseus will bring two loyal servants into his plan, but only after he has tested their loyalty.
9	Xenia: Hospitality and Friendship	A major theme of Book 9 is Xenia and how Polyphemus does not offer Odysseus' men hospitality and shelter. Indeed, part of offering Xenia correctly is never to ask who someone might be before you decide if you would offer them Xenia. Polyphemus asks Odysseus who they are and never offers them hospitality.	24	Deceit and Trickery	As part of the plan, Penelope needs to be removed from the main hall so she will not be harmed later. Odysseus and Telemachus engineer a situation in which Telemachus asserts his authority and tells Penelope to retire to her room.
10	Civilisation and Barbarism	Polyphemus in Book 9 represents barbarism and Odysseus and his crew represent civilised society. Again, this is best depicted in how Xenia is not offered by a monster like Polyphemus, but expected by Odysseus. Equally, Odysseus describes the Cyclops as having no laws or community.	25	Deceit and Trickery	Odysseus remains disguised throughout the whole book and only until he has his bow in his hand. It is only then that he reveals who he is to the Suitors.
11	Revenge and Justice	When Odysseus blinds Polyphemus it is out of revenge, and this is further added to with the revealing of his name. He wants Polyphemus to suffer physically and mentally by knowing who blinded him. Polyphemus exacts revenge on Odysseus by bringing his curse upon him. Remember at the point in the story this is happening, the Suitors are not yet in Odysseus' palace.	Examples of Themes in Book 22		
12	Deceit and Trickery	Deceit and trickery play a major role in how Odysseus and his crew escape Polyphemus. Odysseus convinces Polyphemus he is 'Nobody' and manages to escape the cave by hiding under the sheep and rams.	26	Fate	It is worth distinguishing here what is fate and what is not. We are told in Book 21 that Antinous would be the first to die by Odysseus but that is not the same as being fated to die by the gods. The Suitors fate is not predetermined, it is a consequence of their behaviour.
Examples of Themes in Book 10			27	Revenge and Justice	Revenge and justice is the most prominent theme of Book 22 as Odysseus kills the Suitors. He tells Eurymachus that all the Suitors will die either fighting or running.
13	Fate	The concept of fate is evident in Book 10 as Circe reveals a prophesy given to her by Hermes that Odysseus would visit her one day and be immune to her magic. Indeed, Hermes intervenes directly with Odysseus by telling him how to avoid Circe's magic.	28	Revenge and Justice	Odysseus killing the Suitors could be seen as revenge but for Odysseus it is about justice. When Eurycleia felt like crying out in triumph at the death of the Suitors, Odysseus stops her saying it is wicked to gloat. To him the Suitors deserved to die, but it is not a cause for celebration.
14	Xenia: Hospitality and Friendship	Both good and bad Xenia is displayed in Book 10. At first Circe is a poor host by turning Odysseus' crew to pigs without even a second's thought. Yet, once Circe frees the men, she becomes the perfect host and Odysseus and his crew stay with Circe for a whole year.	29	Revenge and Justice	In modern times, Odysseus' and Telemachus' punishments of the maids and suitors might be seen as vengeful, but not to Ancient Greeks. The severity of the punishments reflect the severity of the wrong-doings, and being disloyal was a serious wrong in the eyes of the Greeks.
15	Deceit and Trickery	Here is an element of deceit and trickery played by Odysseus in his plan to free his men. He avoids revealing who he is to Circe – a common theme for Odysseus – and pretends to accept her potion knowing that it will not affect him.	30	Revenge and Justice	Odysseus' treatment of Melanthius, the goatherd, could be argued goes beyond justice as his death is brutal. He has his nose and ears cut off, and his genitals are ripped away to be fed to the dogs. It appears the motivation here is suffering not justice.
16	Nostos	Nostos is definitely a theme running through Book 10. Odysseus contemplates dying after his ship is blown off-course when he is so close to home. Yet, his nostos could be questioned in Book 10 as he has to be reminded by his crew of returning to Ithaca after a year on Circe's island.			