

# The Human Experience



## PLAN OF STUDY

by october tenth

### THE MAJOR STORIES

Internalize Books 9–12 in *The Odyssey* to give you a fundamental working knowledge of the story and the major events in Odysseus's travels.

by october eleventh

### PROVE THE HERO

Complete part I.C. of the SOP to clearly establish Odysseus as an epic hero. With your group, compose a thesis paragraph establishing your argument.

october eleventh to fourteenth

### WATCH THE MOVIE

Consider directorial decisions and answer discussion questions provided.

by october fourteenth

### THE EARLY STORIES

After learning what Odysseus did after leaving Troy, read what he did to get back to Ithaca. Follow the SOP Reading Process to internalize Books 5 & 6.

by october eighteenth

### THE FINAL STORIES

Following the SOP Reading Process, use Books 16 & 19–23 to learn how Odysseus really made it home (contrary to the film).

by october twentieth

### COMPLETE THE MWDS

With your group, document the literary value of *The Odyssey* using your *Primer*.

*\*Do not use your original MWDS. You will need six this year, so make copies or print extras from the website.*

by october twenty-first

### COMPLETE THE SOP

Fully document all features of *The Odyssey* that qualify it as an epic. With your group, compose a thesis paragraph establishing your argument.

## Studying Life Through Literature

### Thematic Connections in *The Odyssey*

For a literary work to be considered a “classic”, it must revolve around timeless themes that are relevant to the human experience. That way, most anyone can appreciate the work and enjoy a personal connection with its subject matter, and likely its characters, as well. When readers can associate with the experiences of a character, the entire story becomes more real.

With a story as vast and fantastically over-stated as *The Odyssey*, it can be difficult to directly associate with the characters or situations. The passage of thousands of years doesn't help keep the events and situations modern, either.

Enter literary themes. Last quarter, you worked in small groups to identify themes common among the collection of short stories we studied. The same themes that you considered then are still relevant with this story... perhaps even more so. As you continue reading *The Odyssey*, watch for the appearance of the major literary themes throughout.

### The Method to My Madness

#### Overall Project Goals

This assignment is designed to get you to analyze the story on several levels. First, you will explore the elements that hold the story together as an effective narrative, using the Pre-AP Major Works Data Sheet (MWDS) in your *Primer*. With the MWDS, you will identify key elements that highlight the characters in, and effectiveness of, the story. The information you present in your MWDS will be helpful next year and in AP Language.

The SOP (also from your *Primer*) will help you illustrate why *The Odyssey* is considered an exquisite example of the epic form. You will document examples of each of the characteristics and conventions common in this style of writing.

After gathering all the preliminary information, you will then write an individual essay discussing the relevance of a particular literary theme from *The Odyssey* in modern life. You will likely find that the same theme your group used last quarter will fit perfectly in with this story (as most great literature works on the same basic principles, just from different angles). Feel free to shift, adjust, or rephrase as your group deems necessary.

Your final essay will be either persuasive or informative in nature and will discuss the relation of the theme you identified to current issues in human thought. I'm looking for a discussion of big ideas here, not just a recap of story events.

### Just For the Paranoid...

#### Grading, Details, etc.

On the back of this paper, you'll find the rubrics and grade sheet used for this project. At each stage of the assignment, you'll want to use the rubrics to check the quality of your own before submission, and to ensure that you are working at the right pace to successfully accomplish the stated project goals.

Be sure to review the information included in the sidebars on the front and back of this paper. Most of the specific information, including important due dates, is discussed there.

# Making Connections

## OTHER SUBJECTS

### SOCIAL STUDIES

Major social reforms often occur when the populace reaches a critical level of suffering, prompting revolution. Historians might view these reforms as a learning process for a society.

### SCIENCE

Many of the greatest discoveries in scientific history were a response to perceived human suffering. In other cases, the creations of science and technology have lead to massive human suffering; man's knowledge and understanding was incomplete until the mistake had been made.

### MATH

The typical pattern of a math class is to learn a new process, then to master the process through repetition and practice. Students are expected to gain their knowledge by suffering through the endless problems in the textbook.

### MUSIC

Misery and suffering, often followed by redemption, are frequently depicted through classical music, especially during the development of the romantic era. Composers have a purpose for writing music, just as authors have a purpose when writing a story.

### DISASTER RECOVERY

Many government agencies, including FEMA and the city government of New Orleans, did not adequately review their emergency preparedness procedures for a storm as strong as Katrina; hundreds had to die in the aftermath before the authorities learned what systems needed to be improved.

by october twenty-fourth

### IS IT PREVENTABLE?

With so much emphasis on this theme in popular literature (Don't even think you've seen the last of it yet...) and so much evidence of it in our everyday lives, are there alternatives to suffering in order to gain wisdom? Can the goal be achieved through more desirable means, or doe the ends truly justify them?

Compose a five-paragraph, well-structured essay explaining your perspective. The writing can be persuasive or simply informative. Your choice.

## Exploring Bigger Ideas

### Drawing Connections to Other Subjects

The discussion of wisdom through suffering is not limited only to an English classroom. In order to write an effective essay, you'll need to consider how this theme relates to:

- ♦ the world around you
- ♦ other subject areas
- ♦ current events
- ♦ other means of communication
- ♦ other legendary stories

## Scoring Policies

### Grading Rubrics and Other Fun Stuff

#### Progress Checklist (Mark Completion Date)

SOP I.C.	Hero ¶	Movie Qs	MWDS	SOP	Epic ¶	Essay

#### Hero/Epic Paragraphs Rubric

	Concision	Clarity	Formatting	Effectiveness	Thoroughness	Structure	Thesis
<b>A</b>	¶ includes required information, directly stated	writing is succinct and direct	text meets all req's on <i>Primer</i> p.112	convincingly proves intentions (is hero / is epic)	addresses all relevant concepts	thesis is at end of ¶; other sents. logically arranged	clear, effective, accurate
<b>C</b>	required info included, some sentences sloppy	some parts have lapses in understand-ability	meets some requirements	slightly successful argument & proof	addresses several concepts, with omissions	thesis is at end; other parts in odd order	accurate, but with awkwardness
<b>F</b>	sentences ramble or wander w/ verbosity	sentences are difficult to understand	ignores requirements	no use of proof; unconvincing	shows no indication of consideration of SOP	no indication of structure; thesis not at end of ¶	vague, ineffective, or missing

#### Theme Essay Rubric

	Relevance	Clarity	Formatting	Effectiveness	Thoroughness	Structure	Thesis
<b>A</b>	draws all needed connections to life	writing is succinct and direct	text meets all req's on <i>Primer</i> p.112	argues or explains well	sufficiently explains concepts	¶s in order that follows from thesis	clear, effective, accurate; correct place
<b>C</b>	hints at modern life without tying in	some parts have lapses in understand-ability	meets some requirements	slightly successful	addresses ideas, with omitted explanations	¶ structure is good; order is odd	accurate, right spot; but with awkwardness
<b>F</b>	does not incorporate broad ideas	sentences are difficult to understand	ignores requirements	writing does not accomplish intent	little to no attempt at explanations	structure w/in ¶s is sloppy	vague, ineffective, or mis-located