

The Monster in the Cave

A dramatic adaptation of the story of Odysseus and the Cyclops

About the Story

Lexile: 910L (captions only)

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective:

to evaluate the characters of Odysseus and Polyphemus based on how they are portrayed in a drama and in a video

Key Skills: inference, word choice, author's purpose, character, shades of meaning, responding to literature

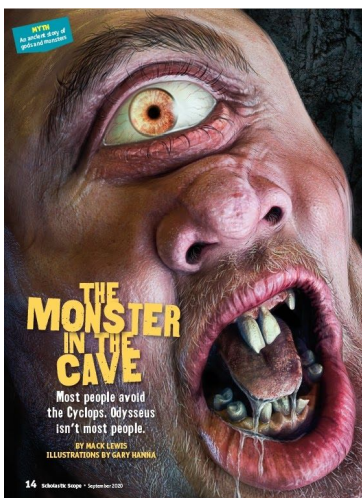
Essential Questions:

- Is there always more than one side to a story?
- What criteria do we use to judge people's actions?
- What is a hero?

Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.5, R.7, R.9, R.10, W.2, W.9, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Background Builder Slideshow:

9 Things to Know About
The Monster in the Cave

Audio:

- Vocabulary
- Pronunciation guide to names in the play

Video:

- Video: "Polyphemus: My Side of the Story"

Literature Connections: ideas for connecting to curricular texts

Skill Building Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Preparing to Write: Zeus's Judgment
- Video Discussion Questions
- **Literary Elements:** Theme Anticipation Guide, Character Thinking Tool
- Choice Board
- Quiz*
- Contest Entry Form

*Available on two levels



Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1. Preparing to Read

25 minutes

Do-Now: Theme Anticipation Guide (3 minutes)

- Project the **Theme Anticipation Guide**. As students enter the classroom, have them write down whether they agree or disagree with each statement. Take a quick poll for each statement and ask volunteers to explain their responses.

Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Share **Vocabulary: Words and Definitions** and review the words as a class. (Optionally, have students complete the **practice activity** for homework.) Highlighted words: *colossal, cunning, folly, helm, hoist, hospitality, treachery, vanquish*

View the Slideshow (15 minutes)

- Project the slideshow **9 Things to Know About *The Monster in the Cave***. The slideshow will build context and background knowledge for the play.

2. Reading and Discussing the Play

45 minutes

- Have a volunteer read the As You Read box on page 15 of the magazine or at the top of the digital story page.
- Listen to the **pronunciation guide**. Then assign parts.
- Read the play as a class.
- Break students into groups to discuss the following close-reading questions. *Tip: If you're remote, you can have each group respond in a shared Google Doc or discuss the questions in their own chat rooms.*

Close-Reading Questions

(10 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **In Scene 3, why do you think Odysseus says that his ship was destroyed by Poseidon?**
(inference) *Answers will vary but could include that Odysseus is worried that Polyphemus will destroy the ship or that Odysseus wants Polyphemus to think that the men had no choice but to land on the island.*
 2. **In Scene 3, SD3 says that Polyphemus “lifts a vat of milk and guzzles it down.” Why do you think the playwright chose the word **guzzles** instead of another word, like **drinks** or **sips**?** (word choice) *“Guzzles” helps you understand that Polyphemus drinks the milk in a fast, greedy way, which contributes to the characterization of Polyphemus as a brute.*
 3. **Why might the playwright have decided to have Polyphemus be gentle with his sheep?**
(author’s purpose, character) *Students might suggest that this choice was made for comic effect (the incongruity of him speaking gently to his sheep and then tossing humans into his mouth is funny) and/or to make Polyphemus a more sympathetic character.*
 4. **What do you learn about the Greek gods Poseidon and Zeus from the play? Explain.**
(inference, character) *In Scene 1, Eos and Thales say that Poseidon has a “sick sense of humor” and wonder if they angered Poseidon and are being punished. In Scene 3, Polyphemus tells Odysseus that Poseidon must have sent him and his men “so I could pick my teeth with your bones.” (You also learn in this scene that Poseidon is the father of all Cyclopes.) In the final scene, Polyphemus calls on Poseidon to avenge him and make sure that Odysseus never reaches home alive. All of these statements suggest that Poseidon is powerful and, if angered, vindictive. Zeus is also revealed to be powerful and prone to punishing those who defy him, as revealed in Scene 2 when Odysseus says, “Stronger than Zeus? I think not” and in Scene 3 when Odysseus tells Polyphemus that he will be the object of Zeus’s wrath if he does not obey Zeus’s command to be friendly to strangers.*
 5. **What is the difference between calling someone clever and calling someone cunning?**
(shades of meaning) *Calling someone clever is usually a compliment: You are saying that the person has a quick, inventive mind or that they show intelligence. Calling someone cunning is less complimentary. You are saying that the person is clever in a tricky, deceptive way—that they are good at tricking people to get what they want.*
- As a class, discuss the following critical-thinking questions.

Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **Odysseus demands that Polyphemus obey Zeus’s command to treat all guests kindly. The play doesn’t say whether Zeus had any commands for guests—but do you think that Odysseus was a good guest? Would you have felt like treating him kindly? Answers will vary, but students are likely to say that Odysseus was not a good guest. He told his men to eat Polyphemus’s food before it was offered to them, and he threatened Polyphemus with the comment “Treat us unkindly, and you will be the object of his wrath.”**
2. **At the end of the prologue, the Greek Chorus says that some called Odysseus a hero, describing him as courageous and clever, while others described him as cunning and cruel. (The caption on page 18 expresses a similar idea.) Then the Chorus asks, “How should we judge Odysseus?” How would you answer that question? Explain. Answers will vary. Some students may say that Odysseus is courageous as well as cunning and cruel, pointing to his bravery in approaching the Cyclops but also to the tricks he uses to escape (including the very cruel trick of blinding the Cyclops) and the fact that he steals Polyphemus’s sheep. Other students may have more sympathy for Odysseus. The Cyclops was eating his men, after all!**

3. Watching and Discussing the Video

15 minutes

- Share the **Video Discussion Questions** and preview as a class.
- Watch the video “**Polyphemus: My Side of the Story.**” Then have students respond to the Video Discussion Questions in small groups.

4. Skill Building and Writing

20 minutes

- Have students complete **Preparing to Write: Zeus’s Judgment**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 18 in the printed magazine and the bottom of the digital story article.
- Alternatively, have students choose a culminating task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of differentiated activities.