

# The Odyssey

An exciting and dramatic adaptation of Odysseus's return to Ithaca

## About the Story

**Lexile:** 900L (captions)

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

**Learning Objective:** to write a fictional news broadcast or article that summarizes the events in a drama

**Key Skills:** character, inference, summarizing

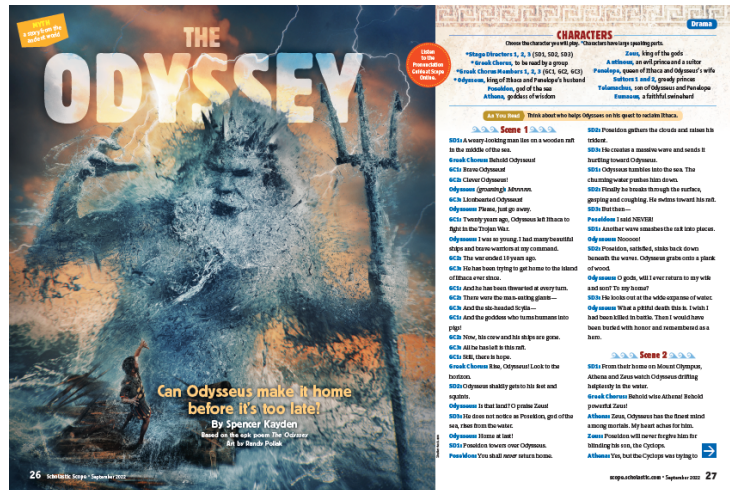
### Essential Questions:

- What can we learn about a society from its stories and myths?
- How can stories promote certain values?
- What is a hero?

### Standards:

The play and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.10, W.4, 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](https://scope.scholastic.com).

### Audio:

- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary
- Pronunciation Guide

### Video:

- Greek Mythology

### Slideshows:

- Background Builder: 9 Things to Know About *The Odyssey*
- Mythology in Modern Language

### Connected readings from the

#### Scope archives:

- Other read-aloud plays based on Greek myths

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

- Theme Anticipation Guide
- Pronunciation Guide
- Writing Planner: Odysseus Returns to Ithaca
- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Genre Explorations: Greek Mythology
- Choice Board
- Quiz\*
- Contest Entry Form

\*Available on two levels

# Step-by-Step Lesson

## 1. Preparing to Read

20 minutes

### Do Now: Anticipation Guide (5 minutes)

- Project the **Theme Anticipation Guide** on your whiteboard or share the Google Form version with each student (both available in your Resources tab). Have students decide whether they agree or disagree with each statement, then discuss. After reading the play, ask students to share whether any of their answers have changed and, if so, why. You could also have them complete the Theme Anticipation Guide as one of the characters.

### Watch the Video. (10 minutes)

- Watch the **Greek Mythology video** to explore elements of Greek mythology in modern culture.

### View a Slideshow. (5 minutes)

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

### Preview Vocabulary. (5 minutes)

- Project **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice**. Review the definitions as a class. Highlighted words: *devised, diminish, haste, suitors, thwarted, wrath*. Optionally, print or share the interactive link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently beforehand. (Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded in the interactive slides.)

## 2. Reading and Discussing

45 minutes

- Have a volunteer read the As You Read box on page 27 of the magazine or at the top of the digital story page.
- Project our **Pronunciation Guide** at Scope Online, and as a class, listen to the names pronounced aloud. Then assign parts and read the play as a class.

- Break students into groups to discuss the following close-reading and critical-thinking questions.

### Close-Reading Questions

(15 minutes)

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

1. **In Scene 3, what does the interaction between Penelope and the suitors reveal about Penelope?** (character) *The interaction between Penelope and the suitors in Scene 3 reveals that Penelope, as the Greek Chorus states, is clever and loyal. By holding off her suitors with the ruse of completing a giant tapestry—which she is in fact unraveling every night, just as Antinous suspects—before she chooses a new husband, she buys herself time during which Odysseus might return. Her actions are clever and also show her loyalty to Odysseus.*
2. **In Scene 6, Penelope says, “My son tells me you have news of my Odysseus.” Odysseus replies, “Yes, Queen Penelope. I encountered him many years ago. I recall his fine purple cloak and gold pin in the shape of a fawn.” Why might the disguised Odysseus mention the cloak and the pin to Penelope?** (inference) *Odysseus may share these details just to convince Penelope of his story—that he really did see Odysseus. He may also mention the pin—an object that she gave to him—and the cloak as a way of letting Penelope know his true identity.*
3. **After Odysseus tells Penelope that he believes her husband is alive and on his way to the palace, SD2 says, “A strange look passes over Penelope’s face as she stares at the old man before her.” What does Penelope’s look suggest?** (inference) *Penelope’s look could be interpreted several ways. It could suggest that Penelope realizes that the old man is Odysseus. Or the look could suggest that Penelope merely finds something familiar about the man or that she is puzzled by or even skeptical of this old man’s knowledge of Odysseus, because no one in Ithaca has heard news of him in a very long time.*
4. **In Scene 7, Penelope announces, “I have devised a contest. String this bow and shoot an arrow through the holes in a dozen ax-heads—with a single shot. Whoever can do it, I will marry.” Why is Penelope suddenly open to the idea of marrying one of the suitors?** (inference) *Penelope knows that none of the suitors is strong and skilled enough to win the contest. Therefore she’s not really expecting to marry any of them. It could also be that Penelope suspects that the old man is Odysseus—and that he will win.*
5. **When Telemachus asks Antinous whether he’ll participate in the contest, Antinous responds, “Perhaps tomorrow. Now it is time for supper.” What does Antinous’s response suggest?** (inference) *Antinous’s response suggests he knows that he, like the other suitors, will not be able to string the bow, let alone shoot an arrow through a dozen ax-heads with a single*

shot. In an effort to avoid failure, he tries to play the situation off casually, as if he has no anxiety or enthusiasm about the contest.

6. **Analyze the role that the gods play in the story.** (character) *It is clear that Odysseus has been thwarted by the gods throughout his odyssey back to Ithaca, as demonstrated through Poseidon's wrath in Scene 1 and in the mishaps described in the text feature "Odysseus's Epic Journey: The Highlight Reel." But as Odysseus tells Telemachus, the gods also have the power to glorify mortals. In Scene 2, Athena convinces Zeus to let her intervene and help Odysseus achieve his goals of returning to Ithaca and restoring his kingdom to a land of plenty and generosity. Without her help, it's unlikely Odysseus would have ever made it home.*

### Critical-Thinking Questions

(8 minutes)

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

1. **Do you think Penelope recognizes that the old man is Odysseus? Why or why not?**  
*Answers will vary.*
2. **In ancient Greece, you were expected to show *xenia* (ZEE-nee-uh), or hospitality, to your guests. (Hospitality is treating guests in a friendly and generous way.) How is the idea that hospitality is important developed in the play?** *When Athena arrives at the palace, Telemachus welcomes her. Later, Eumaeus welcomes Odysseus, disguised as a weary old man, and feeds him despite having little to share. Odysseus tells Eumaeus that Zeus will bless him for his kind hospitality. In response, Eumaeus says that Odysseus welcomed beggars and strangers from far and wide, and that he tries his best to carry on Odysseus's legacy. Later, Penelope welcomes the disguised Odysseus to the palace. In all of these instances, hospitality is presented as a revered quality that is rewarded by the gods. On the other hand, those in the play who fail to show hospitality—the suitors—are portrayed as villainous. They abuse the hospitality shown to them by Penelope and Telemachus and treat the weary old man unkindly, calling him a beggar, scorning him, and resenting him for eating "their" food.*
3. **Based on the play, choose another quality you can conclude was highly valued in ancient Greece.** *In addition to hospitality, it's clear that loyalty was valued in ancient Greece. Penelope's loyalty to Odysseus is celebrated: After 20 years, she maintains that her husband's fate is yet unknown and refuses to marry any of the princes who wish to take his place. Odysseus praises his loyal swineherd, Eumaeus, who carries on Odysseus's legacy of kindness. (Answers will vary; other qualities students may identify include kindness, generosity, cleverness, strength, etc.)*
4. **Who is the greater hero of the story: Athena or Odysseus?** *Answers will vary.*

### 3. Skill Building and Writing

30 minutes

- Have students complete the **Writing Planner: Odysseus Returns to Ithaca**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 31 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page.
- Alternatively, have students choose a culminating task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of differentiated activities.

### Bonus! An Epic Trio of Plays

Teaching tips for using *Troy*, *The Monster in the Cave*, and *The Odyssey* as a text set

Odysseus appears in all three of these *Scope* read-aloud plays, which are based on the epic poems *The Odyssey*, *The Iliad*, and *The Aeneid*. As a class, read the three plays in chronological order: *Troy*, *The Monster in the Cave*, and *The Odyssey*. Alternatively, break your class into three groups and have each group perform their play for the rest of the class.

Below are six discussion questions that will require students to draw on the text set.

1. When it comes to the character of Odysseus, people have different opinions. Some see him as cruel and cunning and consider his trickery dishonorable. Others see him as a great hero who used his brains, not just his muscles, to achieve victory. What do you think and why?
2. In *The Odyssey*, Odysseus says, “The gods have the power to glorify or diminish us.” What does he mean? Analyze the relationship between the gods and the mortals in all three plays. How do the gods glorify or diminish the mortals? How do the mortals view the gods and the power the gods have in their lives?
3. Did Odysseus deserve Poseidon’s wrath?
4. In ancient Greece, you were expected to show *xenia*, or hospitality, to your guests or risk angering Zeus. How is the idea of hospitality portrayed in all three plays?
5. Based on the plays, what qualities can you conclude were highly valued in ancient Greece?
6. These three plays are based on the epic poems *The Odyssey*, *The Iliad*, and *The Aeneid*, which share a common element: the Trojan War. What do the plays say about the nature of war and its effect on people?

## Vocabulary Extension

### Words with origins in Greek mythology

#### View a Slideshow.

- Project the **Mythology in Modern Language slideshow** on your whiteboard or share the Google Slides version with each student (both available in your Resources tab). Words include: *cereal*, *echo*, *herculean*, *narcissistic*, *phobia*, *titanic*, *tantalize*.

#### Research Word Origins.

- Have students conduct research and create their own slides to add to the *Scope* slideshow. They can find their own words with origins in Greek mythology, or choose from this list: *atlas*, *chaos*, *fury*, *hypnosis*, *mentor*, *music*, *ocean*, *panic*, *psychology*. Slides should include the word, pronunciation, part of speech, modern definition, mythological roots, and an image that represents the word.

#### Other read-aloud plays from the *Scope* online library based on Greek myths:

- [Pandora's Box](#) (based on the myth of Pandora's box; April 2022)
- [The Golden Curse](#) (based on the myth of King Midas; April 2021)
- [Into the Burning Sun](#) (based on the myth of Daedalus and Icarus; February 2020)
- [Hunting a Snake-Headed Monster](#) (based on the myth of Perseus and Medusa; September 2018)
- [Hercules the Mighty](#) (based on the myth of the 12 Labors; September 2017)
- [Into the Maze of Doom](#) (based on the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur; December 2016/January 2017)