The Odyssey Part 2
Homer

PART 2
The Return of Odysseus

Review and Anticipate

In Part 1 of the Odyssey, Odysseus and his companions face many perils on their voyage from Troy to Ithaca. At some moments, they are tempted to forsake their voyage; at others, their lives are endangered by powerful enemies. Ultimately, Odysseus’ men bring about their own destruction at the hand of Zeus when they kill the cattle belonging to Helios.

As Part 2 begins, Odysseus is alone when he reaches Ithaca after a twenty-year absence. What do you predict will happen when Odysseus arrives home?

Motivation

Prepare an Anticipation Guide (General Resources, pp. 8–10) with the following statements:

• People anxiously await for their family members to return home.
• The important things in one’s home will never change, no matter how long you stay away.
• You should never trust people to remain faithful to your memory if you have been gone for a long time.
• You can never go home again.

Give students copies of the prepared Anticipation Guide. Have students mark their responses in the Me column. Then have students discuss the statements in pairs or groups and mark the Guides again, this time in the Group column.

Concept Connector

Students will return to the Anticipation Guide after completing the Odyssey, Part 2.

Learning Modalities

Interpersonal Learners

Key scenes in the Odyssey, Part 2 focus on tests—Odysseus tests people to see whether they have remained faithful to him. Penelope tests Odysseus to see whether he is truly who he claims to be. Ask these students to consider the unstated rules that govern interactions between people, especially in relationships that require trust. Have students describe an encounter in which people have tested one another to find out what they know, who they are, or whether they should be trusted.

Support for Below-Level Students [L1, L2]

Unit 6 Resources

Vocabulary Warm-up Word Lists, p. 36
Vocabulary Warm-up Practice, p. 37
Reading Warm-up A, p. 38
Selection Test A, pp. 48–50

Graphic Organizer Transparencies

Reading Skill Graphic Organizer
Transparency B, p. 204

Reader’s Notebook: Adapted Version
Adapted Reader’s Notebook Audio CD

Support for English Learners [EL]

Unit 6 Resources

Vocabulary Warm-up Word Lists, p. 36
Vocabulary Warm-up Practice, p. 37
Reading Warm-up A, p. 38

Reader’s Notebook: English Learner’s Version
Listening to Literature Audio CD
About the Selection
Of the two great epic poems attributed to Homer, the *Iliad* has been called a war poem, and the *Odyssey* has been called a postwar poem. The wanderings of Odysseus after his victory at Troy and the difficulties of readjusting to a civil society upon his eventual return home have helped make the themes of the *Odyssey* relevant to many generations of readers. The theme of the returning veteran, with the struggles to reestablish relationships with spouses and friends (and perhaps with a child for the first time) add a human poignancy to this epic adventure. Discuss with students the difficulties and emotions that Odysseus is likely to face after twenty years away.

Reading Check
Answer: Athena tells Odysseus that there are many suitors at the palace trying to persuade Penelope that Odysseus is surely dead after all this time, and so she must marry again. Each wants to be her new husband. Athena tells Odysseus that it is time he put an end to all this.

“Twenty years gone, and I am back again . . .”

Odysseus has finished telling his story to the Phaeacians. The next day, young Phaeacian noblemen conduct him home by ship. He arrives in Ithaca after an absence of twenty years. The goddess Athena appears and informs him of the situation at home. Numerous suitors, believing Odysseus to be dead, have been continually seeking the hand of his wife, Penelope, in marriage, while overrunning Odysseus’ palace and enjoying themselves at Penelope’s expense. Moreover, they are plotting to murder Odysseus’ son, Telemachus, before he can inherit his father’s lands. Telemachus, who, like Penelope, still hopes for his father’s return, has journeyed to Pylos and Sparta to learn what he can about his father’s fate. Athena disguises Odysseus as a beggar and directs him to the hut of Eumaeus, his old and faithful swineherd. While Odysseus and Eumaeus are eating breakfast, Telemachus arrives.

. . . From the air she walked, taking the form of a tall woman, handsome and clever at her craft, and stood beyond the gate in plain sight of Odysseus, unseen, though, by Telemachus, unguessed, for not to everyone will gods appear. Odysseus noticed her; so did the dogs, who cowered whimpering away from her. She only nodded, signing to him with her brows, a sign he recognized. Crossing the yard, he passed out through the gate in the stockade to face the goddess. There she said to him:

“Son of Laertes and the gods of old, Odysseus, master of landways and seaways, dissemble to your son no longer now. The time has come: tell him how you together will bring doom on the suitors in the town. I shall not be far distant then, for I myself desire battle.”

Saying no more, she tipped her golden wand upon the man, making his cloak pure white, and the knit tunic fresh around him. Lithy and young she made him.

Vocabulary Builder

dissemble (di sem’ bal) v. conceal under a false appearance; disguise

What does Athena reveal to Odysseus about the situation he will find at home?

Vocabulary Development

Think-Aloud: Context
Direct students’ attention to the dogs’ behavior at the appearance of Athena on this page: they cowered at the sight of the goddess. Using a think-aloud process, model how to use context to infer the meaning of an unknown word.

The dogs cowered because they see Athena. In the same sentence, they also whimper, or cry, and seem to run away from her. Are there any more clues? Well, Athena is a goddess and very powerful. The dogs might be afraid and run away from a powerful person. I think that to cower means to show fear before a powerful person or thing.
Humanities

Eumaeus, the Swineherd, by N.C. Wyeth

This illustration, like many for this selection, was among the sixteen paintings N.C. Wyeth, America’s foremost illustrator of children’s books and classics, painted for a 1929 edition of the Odyssey. Use the following questions for discussion:

1. In the Odyssey, Eumaeus is characterized as being loyal and noble. How does Wyeth’s painting convey these traits?
   Possible response: Eumaeus is pictured as tall, straight, and sturdy. He looks like a man who will not be easily moved. This firmness of his stance makes him look trustworthy.

2. Which dog in the illustration might be Argus?
   Possible response: Argus is described in lines 1163–1168 as “an old dog lying near.” Argus would be the dog on the left, lying down.

Critical Viewing

Possible Response: Eumaeus appears to be patient, loyal, and practical. The pigs in the sty behind him are a clue to his profession.

Differentiated Instruction

Strategy for Less Proficient Readers
Have partners paraphrase the opening passage that describes the entrance of Athena. A possible paraphrase might be: “The goddess Athena, looking like a beautiful, intelligent woman, appeared to Odysseus. Telemachus, however, could not see her.”

Strategy for English Learners
Students may find the appearance of a goddess in this scene challenging. Explain that gods and goddesses often appear in human form in Greek literature. Tell them that readers would be familiar with this convention, as well as with the Telemachus’ inability to see the god, although his father sees her plainly. Ask students to identify details that emphasize Athena’s godlike qualities—for example, her height and the dogs’ fear of her—and the details that make her seem more like a human being.
**Reading Skill**
**Historical and Cultural Context**

- Tell students that the Greeks believed their gods often intervened in the affairs of human beings, taking an interest in their welfare and helping or hindering them. Remind them of the gods who have made Odysseus’ journey back to Ithaca so difficult.

- **Ask** students the Reading Skill question: What lines 1021–1029 suggest about the way ancient Greeks responded to the presence of a god?

**Possible response:** Taking the transformed Odysseus for a god, Telemachus shows awe, fear, and reverence. However, he also speaks freely to the “god,” and makes requests. These lines suggest that Greeks responded to the gods as higher, but approachable, beings.

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**Themes in Literature: Heroism**

ruddy with sun, his jawline clean, the beard no longer gray upon his chin. And she withdrew when she had done.

Then Lord Odysseus reappeared—and his son was thunderstruck. Fear in his eyes, he looked down and away as though it were a god, and whispered:

“Stranger, you are no longer what you were just now! Your cloak is new; even your skin! You are one of the gods who rule the sweep of heaven! Be kind to us, we’ll make you fair oblation and gifts of hammered gold. Have mercy on us!”

The noble and enduring man replied:

“No god. Why take me for a god? No, no. I am that father whom your boyhood lacked and suffered pain for lack of. I am he.”

Held back too long, the tears ran down his cheeks as he embraced his son.

uncomprehending, wild with incredulity, cried out:

“You cannot be my father Odysseus! Meddling spirits conceived this trick to twist the knife in me!

No man of woman born could work these wonders by his own craft, unless a god came into it with ease to turn him young or old at will. I swear you were in rags and old, and here you stand like one of the immortals!”

Odysseus brought his ranging mind to bear and said:

“This is not princely, to be swept away by wonder at your father’s presence. No other Odysseus will ever come, for he and I are one, the same; his bitter fortune and his wanderings are mine. Twenty years gone, and I am back again on my own island.”

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**Vocabulary Builder**
**incredulity** (in‘ krŏ dol’tē) n. unwillingness or inability to believe

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**Word Forms**

Two of the Vocabulary Builder words for the Odyssey can form other parts of speech by adding suffixes. Give students a blank Word Form Chart (General Resources, p. 16) with dissemble and incredulity in the correct columns. Work with the class, or have students work with a partner, to determine the related forms. The final chart should look like the one shown.

Hold students accountable for integrating the related forms of the words into their speaking and writing.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
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<td>dissembler</td>
<td>dissemble</td>
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<td>incredulity</td>
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Literary Analysis
Epic Simile

To what are Odysseus’ and Telemachus’ cries compared in the epic simile in lines 1063-1065?

Answer: The cries of Odysseus and Telemachus are compared to those of a hawk that has lost its nestlings to a farmer.

Reading Check

Telemachus is initially doubtful because of the change in Odysseus’ appearance, which leads Telemachus to assume he is a god.

Differentiated Instruction

Strategy for Less Proficient Readers

Some readers may need help following the time span covered by Odysseus’ lengthy journey. Display the Timeline (Graphic Organizer Transparencies, p. 242) and have students chart some of the important events that occurred in the Odyssey in the twenty years between the end of the Trojan War and Odysseus’ return to Ithaca. Remind students to plot events that Odysseus tells about long after they happen—such as the arrival of the suitors.
Remind students that Athena was the goddess of wisdom. Then ask students why she might be particularly interested in helping Odysseus.

**Possible response:** Odysseus is known for his wit and cleverness. Athena, the goddess of wisdom, may admire his intelligence.

Then ask students the Reading Skill question: What does Odysseus’ statement in lines 1109–1111 suggest about ancient Greek beliefs about the gods’ interest in human affairs.

**Possible response:** Odysseus’ response indicates that the Greeks believed they could depend on the gods to help them in very specific ways in time of need.

Discuss with students how Homer’s story shows the Greek gods responding to humans’ material needs in very active ways. In this section, for example, Athena has disguised Odysseus and then restored him to his youthful appearance.

“O Father, all my life your fame as a fighting man has echoed in my ears—your skill with weapons and the tricks of war—but what you speak of is a staggering thing, beyond imagining, for me. How can two men do battle with a houseful in their prime? For I must tell you this is no affair of ten or even twice ten men, but scores, throngs of them. You shall see, here and now. The number from Dulichium alone is fifty-two picked men, with armorers, a half dozen; twenty-four came from Same, twenty from Zacynthus; our own island accounts for twelve, high-ranked, and their retainers, Medon the crier, and the Master Harper, besides a pair of handymen at feasts. If we go in against all these I fear we pay in salt blood for your vengeance. You must think hard if you would conjure up the fighting strength to take us through.”

Odysseus, who had endured the long war and the sea answered:

“I'll tell you now.
Suppose Athena’s arm is over us, and Zeus her father’s, must I rack my brains for more?”

Clearheaded Telemachus looked hard and said:

“Those two are great defenders, no one doubts it, but throned in the serene clouds overhead; other affairs of men and gods they have to rule over.”

And the hero answered:

“Before long they will stand to right and left of us in combat, in the shouting, when the test comes—our nerve against the suitors’ in my hall. Here is your part: at break of day tomorrow home with you, go mingle with our princes. The swineherd later on will take me down the port-side trail—a beggar, by my looks, hangdog and old. If they make fun of me in my own courtyard, let your ribs cage up

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**Vocabulary Builder Reinforcement**

Students will benefit from additional examples and practice with the Vocabulary Builder words. Reinforce their comprehension with “show-you-know” sentences. The first part of the sentence uses the vocabulary word in an appropriate context. The second part of the sentence—the “show-you-know” part—clarifies the first. Model the strategy with the example for bemusing:

*The bemusing* air in the garden made us sleepy with its odor of sweet flowers.

Then give students these sentence prompts and coach them in creating the clarification part.

1. The *bemusing* singer drew us in with her amazing voice;

   **Sample answer:** her songs lulled us into forgetting all our troubles.

2. We questioned the *equity* of the law;

   **Sample answer:** it seemed to favor one group of people over another.
your springing heart, no matter what I suffer, no matter if they pull me by the heels or practice shots at me, to drive me out. Look on, hold down your anger. You may even plead with them, by heaven! in gentle terms to quit their horseplay—not that they will heed you, rash as they are, facing their day of wrath. Now fix the next step in your mind.

Athena, counseling me, will give me word, and I shall signal to you, nodding: at that point round up all armor, lances, gear of war left in our hall, and stow the lot away back in the vaulted storeroom. When the suitors miss those arms and question you, be soft in what you say: answer:

'I thought I’d move them out of the smoke. They seemed no longer those bright arms Odysseus left us years ago when he went off to Troy. Here where the fire’s hot breath came, they had grown black and drear.

One better reason, too, I had from Zeus: suppose a brawl starts up when you are drunk, you might be crazed and bloody one another, and that would stain your feast, your courtship. Temper iron can magnetize a man.'

Say that.

But put aside two broadswords and two spears for our own use, two oxhide shields nearby when we go into action. Pallas Athena and Zeus All-Provident will see you through, bemusing our young friends.

Now one thing more.

If son of mine you are and blood of mine, let no one hear Odysseus is about. Neither Laertes, nor the swineherd here, nor any slave, nor even Penelope. But you and I alone must learn how far the women are corrupted; we should know how to locate good men among our hands, the loyal and respectful, and the shirkers who take you lightly, as alone and young."

**Vocabulary Builder**

bemusing (bé môoz’ in) v. stupefying or muddling

shirkers (shirk’ ers) n. people who get out of doing what needs to be done.

**Reading Check**

How does Odysseus tell his son to respond if the suitors “practice shots” on Odysseus?

from the *Odyssey, Part 2* ■ 999

**Literature in Context**

**Cultural Connection**

Athena. Athena was the goddess of wisdom, skills, and warfare. When she helps Odysseus in this epic, it is not the first time that she offers assistance to a Greek hero. In Homer’s *Iliad*, Athena helps the Greek hero Achilles defeat the Trojan warrior Hector. Athena favored Achilles for his unmatched skill in battle, but Odysseus was her favorite among the Greeks. He displayed not only skill in warfare, but also ingenuity and cunning.

**Connect to the Literature**

Which of Odysseus’ deeds in the *Odyssey* might have helped him to earn Athena’s favor? Explain.

**Strategy for Special Needs Students**

Students may need additional support and practice with the Reading Skill, Historical and Cultural Context. Explain that many details within the text offer insight into the way Greeks lived at the time of Homer. For example, Odysseus’ instructions to hide weapons from the suitors (lines 1137–139) reveals how much “gear of war” was stored in a house at any time.

To model how to analyze the historical and cultural context, show students Reading Skill Graphic Organizer B (Graphic Organizer Transparencies, p. 204) The completed chart will give students insight into the process of analyzing a story’s context. They can use it as a model for their own analysis as they read.
Critical Viewing

Answer: Students may say that the Greeks incorporated worship of their gods into everyday events. The scenes on the pottery show the importance to the Greeks of honoring and commemorating significant events in Greek history and mythology.

Humanities
Greek vessel

This vessel is one of several being used to illustrate this edition of the Odyssey. The Greeks used this vessel to store or transport liquids such as oil or wine. Greek artists used several methods to decorate these vessels. In the “black figure” technique, color is applied to the figures, with the background taking the natural color of the clay. The vessel on p. 1000 is an example of this style. In the “red figure” technique, the process is reversed; the background is painted black. The krater, or bowl, on p. 972 is an example of the “red figure” process.”

These artifacts have survived for thousands of years—a durable art form that is not only intrinsically beautiful, but that presents a detailed picture of the life and culture of ancient Greeks. Use the following question for discussion:

• In a thousand years, what objects from our own culture might reveal our values to the people who find them?

Possible response: Our televisions, computers, and musical equipment might indicate our culture’s interest in entertainment.

Themes in Literature: Heroism

Argus

1165 Odysseus heads for town with Eumaeus. Outside the palace, Odysseus’ old dog, Argus, is lying at rest as his long-absent master approaches.

While he spoke
an old hound, lying near, pricked up his ears
and lifted up his muzzle. This was Argus,
trained as a puppy by Odysseus,
but never taken on a hunt before
his master sailed for Troy. The young men, afterward,
hunted wild goats with him, and hare, and deer,
but he had grown old in his master’s absence.
Treated as rubbish now, he lay at last
upon a mass of dung before the gates—
manure of mules and cows, piled there until
fieldhands could spread it on the king’s estate.

1175 Abandoned there, and half destroyed with flies,
old Argus lay.

But when he knew he heard
Odysseus’ voice nearby, he did his best
to wag his tail, nose down, with flattened ears,
having no strength to move nearer his master.

1180 And the man looked away,
wiping a salt tear from his cheek; but he
hid this from Eumaeus. Then he said:

“I marvel that they leave this hound to lie
here on the dung pile:

1185 he would have been a fine dog, from the look of him,
though I can’t say as to his power and speed
when he was young. You find the same good build
in house dogs, table dogs landowners keep
all for style.”

And you replied, Eumaeus:

1190 “A hunter owned him—but the man is dead
in some far place. If this old hound could show
the form he had when Lord Odysseus left him,
going to Troy, you’d see him swift and strong.
He never shrank from any savage thing

1195 he’d brought to bay in the deep woods; on the scent
no other dog kept up with him. Now misery has him in leash. His owner died abroad, and here the women slaves will take no care of him. You know how servants are: without a master they have no will to labor, or excel.

For Zeus who views the wide world takes away half the manhood of a man, that day he goes into captivity and slavery.”

Eumaeus crossed the court and went straight forward into the megaron among the suitors: but death and darkness in that instant closed the eyes of Argus, who had seen his master, Odysseus, after twenty years.

The Suitors

Still disguised as a beggar, Odysseus enters his home. He is confronted by the haughty suitor Antinous.

But here Antinous broke in, shouting:

“What evil wind blew in this pest? stand in the passage! Nudge my table, will you? Egyptian whips are sweet to what you’ll come to here, you nosing rat, making your pitch to everyone!

These men have bread to throw away on you because it is not theirs. Who cares? Who spares another’s food, when he has more than plenty?”

With guile Odysseus drew away, then said:

“A pity that you have more looks than heart. You’d grudge a pinch of salt from your own larder to your own handyman. You sit here, fat on others’ meat, and cannot bring yourself to rummage out a crust of bread for me!”

Then anger made Antinous’ heart beat hard, and, glowering under his brows, he answered:

How does Antinous react to Odysseus, who is disguised as a beggar?
Reading Skill
Historical and Cultural Context
- Remind students of Greek culture’s emphasis on hospitality. Point out also that Antinous is an unwanted guest in another person’s home, and that he has been treated with courtesy.
- Ask students how they think a polite guest would treat the entrance of a beggar.
  Possible response: Students may say that a more polite guest could have offered food to the beggar and asked him to leave. An even more gracious guest would offer to share his meal and find the beggar a seat.
- Ask students the first Reading Skill question: What conflicting values does this exchange between Antinous and Odysseus reveal?
  Possible response: Odysseus practices the values of the gods and treats strangers with courtesy. Antinous is not only rude, he also violates his culture’s rules regarding hospitality.

Reading Skill
Historical and Cultural Context
- Review the exchange between Antinous and Odysseus, beginning with the suitor’s insult of the disguised Odysseus.
- Ask students why Antinous becomes so angry with the beggar. Answer: The disguised Odysseus points out Antinous’ selfish and inappropriate behavior.
- Ask the second Reading Skill question: What values regarding the use of physical force are evident in this speech?
  Possible response: Odysseus’ speech indicates that physical force is appropriate when defending one’s property. Antinous, however, used force for an inappropriate reason.
- Discuss with students the difference in power between Antinous (a suitor) and a beggar, who is Odysseus in disguise. Tell them that Antinous takes advantage of someone who is in a lower social and economic class, and who is not in a position to defend himself.

Expressive Vocabulary
As students are discussing Odysseus’ encounter with the suitors, encourage them to use the expressive vocabulary presented earlier. You might encourage them with sentence starters like these.
1. Odysseus practiced deception when he . . .
2. The suitors’ behavior made Odysseus furious because . . .
3. The Greek culture required that hosts extend courtesy to . . .

Themes in Literature: Heroism
“Now! You think you’ll shuffle off and get away after that impudence? Oh, no you don’t!”

The stool he let fly hit the man’s right shoulder on the packed muscle under the shoulder blade—like solid rock, for all the effect one saw.
Odysseus only shook his head, containing thoughts of bloody work, as he walked on, then sat, and dropped his loaded bag again upon the door sill. Facing the whole crowd he said, and eyed them all:

“One word only, my lords, and suitors of the famous queen. One thing I have to say.
There is no pain, no burden for the heart when blows come to a man, and he defending his own cattle—his own cows and lambs.
Here it was otherwise. Antinous hit me for being driven on by hunger—how many bitter seas men cross for hunger!
If beggars interest the gods, if there are Furies pent in the dark to avenge a poor man’s wrong, then may Antinous meet his death before his wedding day!”

Then said Eupeithes’ son, Antinous:

“Enough. Eat and be quiet where you are, or shamble elsewhere, unless you want these lads to stop your mouth pulling you by the heels, or hands and feet, over the whole floor, till your back is peeled!”

But now the rest were mortified, and someone spoke from the crowd of young bucks to rebuke him:

“A poor show, that—hitting this famished tramp—bad business, if he happened to be a god. You know they go in foreign guise, the gods do, looking like strangers, turning up in towns and settlements to keep an eye on manners, good or bad.”

But at this notion...
1260 Antinous only shrugged. Telemachus,
after the blow his father bore, sat still
without a tear, though his heart felt the blow.
Slowly he shook his head from side to side,
containing murderous thoughts.
Penelope

1265 on the higher level of her room had heard
the blow, and knew who gave it. Now she murmured:

“Would god you could be hit yourself, Antinous—
hit by Apollo’s bowshot!”
And Eurynome
her housekeeper, put in:

“He and no other?”

1270 If all we pray for came to pass, not one
would live till dawn!”

Her gentle mistress said:

“Oh. Nan, they are a bad lot; they intend
ruin for all of us; but Antinous
appears a blacker-hearted hound than any.

1275 Here is a poor man come, a wanderer,
driven by want to beg his bread, and everyone
in hall gave bits, to cram his bag—only
Antinous threw a stool, and banged his shoulder!”

So she described it, sitting in her chamber
among her maids—while her true lord was eating.
Then she called in the forester and said:

“Go to that man on my behalf, Eumaeus,
and send him here, so I can greet and question him.
Abroad in the great world, he may have heard
rumors about Odysseus—may have known him!”

Penelope

_In the evening, Penelope interrogates the old beggar._

“Friend, let me ask you first of all:
who are you, where do you come from, of what nation

from the _Odyssey, Part 2_ ■ 1003
Literary Analysis
Epic Simile

- Read aloud lines 1290–1297 and tell students it is an example of an epic simile.
- Ask students to draw the Literary Analysis graphic organizer on p. 1014, or give them a copy of Literary Analysis Graphic Organizer A (Graphic Organizer Transparencies, p. 203). Have students write down the two items that are being compared in this epic simile, and the details that are included in the comparison.
- Discuss with students Odysseus’ reasons for drawing this extended comparison and point out that he is avoiding Penelope’s question about his homeland. Then ask what they think Odysseus’ comparison reveals about his feelings toward his wife.

Possible response: The epic simile indicates that Odysseus believes that Penelope has been faithful to him.
- After students have discussed Odysseus’ comparison, ask them to fill out the “Purpose” section of their graphic organizers.

Monitor Progress: Review students’ graphic organizers to ensure that they understand the items being compared in the epic simile and the purpose of the comparison.

Reteach: If necessary, review with students the trick that Odysseus is playing on Penelope by hiding his identity. Discuss how the epic simile is a way of testing her faithfulness.

And he replied:

"My lady, never a man in the wide world
should have a fault to find with you. Your name
has gone out under heaven like the sweet
honor of some god-fearing king, who rules
in equity over the strong: his black lands bear
both wheat and barley, fruit trees laden bright,
new lambs at lambing time—and the deep sea
gives great hauls of fish by his good strategy,
so that his folk fare well.

O my dear lady,
this being so, let it suffice to ask me
of other matters—not my blood, my homeland.

Do not enforce me to recall my pain.
My heart is sore; but I must not be found
sitting in tears here, in another’s house:
it is not well forever to be grieving.
One of the maids might say—or you might think—
I had got mauldin over cups of wine."

And Penelope replied:

"Stranger, my looks,
my face, my carriage, were soon lost or faded
when the Achaeans crossed the sea to Troy,
Odysseus my lord among the rest.

If he returned, if he were here to care for me,
I might be happily renowned.
But grief instead heaven sent me—years of pain.
Sons of the noblest families on the islands,
Dulichium, Same, wooded Zacynthus,
with native Ithacans, are here to court me,
against my wish; and they consume this house.
Can I give proper heed to guest or suppliant
or herald on the realm’s affairs?

How could I?
wasted with longing for Odysseus, while here
they press for marriage.

Ruses served my turn
to draw the time out—first a close-grained web
I had the happy thought to set up weaving
on my big loom in hall. I said, that day:
Reading Skill
Historical and Cultural Context

How do the ancient Greek ideas in Penelope’s speech about honoring the dead compare to modern ideas?

Possible response: Students may say that both the Greeks and people in modern times have rituals that honor the dead. They may observe that modern society does not always follow a strict set of burial customs as people did in ancient Greece.

22 Reading Check

Answer: Penelope said that she could not marry until she completed weaving her dead husband’s shroud. She wove the shroud by day and unraveled it each night.

from the Odyssey, Part 2  1005
Humanities

The Trial of the Bow, by
N.C. Wyeth

N.C. Wyeth studied with Howard Pyle, an illustrator famous for his work on children’s classics such as the tales of Robin Hood. Pyle encouraged Wyeth to use make his paintings dramatic and to paint from his own experience.

In The Trial of the Bow, Penelope promises that she will marry the man who can string Odysseus’ bow and shoot an arrow through twelve ax handle sockets. In this painting, Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, has succeeded in the first part of this challenge. Use these questions for discussion:

1. Why do you think Wyeth chose to illustrate this particular moment in the story?
   **Answer:** This is an especially dramatic moment because Odysseus is about to win the contest, reveal his true identity to the suitors, and then take his revenge.

2. Why didn’t the artist illustrate the scene a few moments later, when the arrow goes through the ax handles?
   **Answer:** At that point, Odysseus would no longer be focusing on the target, but would be giving instructions to Telemachus. This moment shows Odysseus at his best—muscles flexed and his attention fixed on his target.

Critical Viewing

**Answer:** The emotional tension is captured in the physical tension of Odysseus’ arm and leg muscles and the taut bowstring. In addition, everyone else is focused on the targets. Additional suspense comes from the point in time the picture captures: The arrow has not been released, and the viewers, like the people in the painting, wait in expectation.

Critical Viewing

The winner of the archery contest will win Penelope’s hand in marriage. What details or artistic techniques capture the tension in this scene? [Interpret]
The Challenge

Pressed by the suitors to choose a husband from among them, Penelope says she will marry the man who can string Odysseus’ bow and shoot an arrow through twelve ax handle sockets. The suitors try and fail. Still in disguise, Odysseus asks for a turn and gets it.

And Odysseus took his time, turning the bow, tapping it, every inch, for borings that termites might have made while the master of the weapon was abroad. The suitors were now watching him, and some jested among themselves:

“A bow lover!”

“Dealer in old bows!”

“Maybe he has one like it at home!”

“Or has an itch to make one for himself.”

“See how he handles it, the sly old buzzard!”

And one disdainful suitor added this: “May his fortune grow an inch for every inch he bends it!”

But the man skilled in all ways of contending, satisfied by the great bow’s look and heft, like a musician, like a harper, when with quiet hand upon his instrument he draws between his thumb and forefinger a sweet new string upon a peg: so effortlessly Odysseus in one motion strung the bow. Then slid his right hand down the cord and plucked it, so the taut gut vibrating hummed and sang a swallow’s note.

In the hushed hall it smote the suitors and all their faces changed. Then Zeus thundered overhead, one loud crack for a sign. And Odysseus laughed within him that the son

25 Literary Analysis

Epic Simile

• Ask students to discuss why Odysseus may give such special attention to the bow.

Possible response: Odysseus has not seen this cherished possession in twenty years; he is clearly savoring the experience of holding it again. He must also make sure the bow is fully reliable as a weapon.

• Ask students the Literary Analysis question: Which of Odysseus’ qualities is highlighted in the epic simile in lines 1372–1379.

Possible response: The epic simile highlights Odysseus’ skillfulness with the bow. The comparison with a musician shows the grace and ease he brings to archery.

• Draw students’ attention to the aptness of the simile, pointing out the similarity of a taut bowstring to the taut string of a harp.

26 Reading Check

Answer: Penelope says that she will marry whoever can string Odysseus’ bow and shoot an arrow through twelve ax handle sockets.
of crooked-minded Cronus had flung that omen down.
He picked one ready arrow from his table
where it lay bare: the rest were waiting still
in the quiver for the young men’s turn to come.
He nocked\textsuperscript{16} it, let it rest across the handgrip,
and drew the string and grooved butt of the arrow,
aiming from where he sat upon the stool.

Now flashed

1385
arrow from twanging bow clean as a whistle
through every socket ring, and grazed not one,
to thud with heavy brazen head beyond.

Then quietly

1390
Odysseus said:

"Telemachus, the stranger
you welcomed in your hall has not disgraced you.

1395
I did not miss, neither did I take all day
stringing the bow. My hand and eye are sound,
not so contemptible as the young men say.
The hour has come to cook their lordships’ mutton—
supper by daylight. Other amusements later,

1400
with song and harping that adorn a feast."

He dropped his eyes and nodded, and the prince
Telemachus, true son of King Odysseus,
belted his sword on, clapped hand to his spear,
and with a clink and glitter of keen bronze
stood by his chair, in the forefront near his father.
Odysseus’ Revenge

Now shrugging off his rags the wiliest fighter of the islands leapt and stood on the broad doorsill, his own bow in his hand. He poured out at his feet a rain of arrows from the quiver and spoke to the crowd:

“So much for that. Your clean-cut game is over. Now watch me hit a target that no man has hit before, if I can make this shot. Help me, Apollo.”

He drew to his fist the cruel head of an arrow for Antinous just as the young man leaned to lift his beautiful drinking cup, embossed, two-handled, golden; the cup was in his fingers: the wine was even at his lips: and did he dream of death? How could he? In that revelry amid his throng of friends who would imagine a single foe—though a strong foe indeed—could dare to bring death’s pain on him and darkness on his eyes?

Odysseus’ arrow hit him under the chin and punched up to the feathers through his throat.

Backward and down he went, letting the winecup fall from his shocked hand. Like pipes his nostrils jetted crimson runnels, a river of mortal red, and one last kick upset his table knocking the bread and meat to soak in dusty blood.

Now as they craned to see their champion where he lay the suitors jostled in uproar down the hall, everyone on his feet. Wildly they turned and scanned the walls in the long room for arms; but not a shield, not a good ashen spear was there for a man to take and throw. All they could do was yell in outrage at Odysseus:

“Foul! to shoot at a man! That was your last shot!”
“Your own throat will be slit for this!”
“Our finest lad is down!”
You killed the best on Ithaca.”
“Buzzards will tear your eyes out!”

For they imagined as they wished—that it was a wild shot, an unintended killing—fools, not to comprehend.

Reading Skill

Does the manner in which Odysseus kills Antinous agree with your idea of a “fair fight”? Explain.

Possible response: Students may say that in some cultures, people fight duels in response to insults. In other cultures, insults may be forgiven with apologies or gifts.

Ask the Reading Skill question: Does the manner in which Odysseus kills Antinous agree with your idea of a “fair fight”?

Possible response: Students may say that the fight was not fair because Antinous did not get a chance to fight back. Other students may say that Odysseus acted fairly because Antinous had insulted him and taken advantage of his family and their hospitality.

Reading Check

Answer: Odysseus kills the suitor Antinous first.
Humanities

The Slaughter of the Suitors,
by N.C. Wyeth

In this painting of Odysseus’ revenge, Wyeth adds drama and animation to an already exciting story. His depiction includes several pieces of Greek armor; the fighters’ helmets and armor would likely have been made of bronze. Use the following questions for discussion.

1. Which lines from the Odyssey does this painting illustrate?
   **Answer:** It illustrates lines 1521–1530.

2. Who are the four figures on the right side of the painting? How do you know?
   **Answer:** They are Odysseus, Telemachus, Eumaeus, and the cowherd. They are wearing armor, have weapons, and are obviously winning the battle.

3. What details make the painting exciting?
   **Possible responses:** The flung spear, the spears about to be thrown, the position of the men’s bodies, or the dust of battle make the painting exciting. The giant columns in the background create a heroic mood for the scene.

Critical Viewing

**Answer:** Students may say that the suitors were sitting at tables. Others may say that Odysseus’ bow and arrows should have been represented.

Critical Viewing

Do you think this illustration presents the slaughter of the suitors accurately? Explain. [Evaluate]
they were already in the grip of death.
But glaring under his brows Odysseus answered:

“You yellow dogs, you thought I’d never make it
home from the land of Troy. You took my house to
plunder... You dared bid for my wife while I was still alive.
Contempt was all you had for the gods who rule wide
heaven, contempt for what men say of you hereafter.
Your last hour has come. You die in blood.”

As they all took this in, sickly green fear
pulled at their entrails, and their eyes flickered
looking for some hatch or hideaway from death.
Eurymachus\(^19\) alone could speak. He said:

“If you are Odysseus of Ithaca come back,
all that you say these men have done is true.
Rash actions, many here, more in the countryside.
But here he lies, the man who caused them all.
Antinous was the ringleader, he whipped us on
to do these things. He cared less for a marriage
than for the power Cronion has denied him
as king of Ithaca. For that
he tried to trap your son and would have killed him.
He is dead now and has his portion. Spare
your own people. As for ourselves, we’ll make
restitution of wine and meat consumed,
and add, each one, a tithe of twenty oxen
with gifts of bronze and gold to warm your heart.
Meanwhile we cannot blame you for your anger.”

Odysseus glowered under his black brows
and said:

“Not for the whole treasure of your fathers,
all you enjoy, lands, flocks, or any gold
put up by others, would I hold my hand.
There will be killing till the score is paid.
You forced yourselves upon this house. Fight your way out,
or run for it, if you think you’ll escape death.
I doubt one man of you skins by.”

They felt their knees fail, and their hearts—but heard
Eurymachus for the last time rallying them.

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**Vocabulary Builder**

contempt (ken tempt’)  *n.* disdain or scorn

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**Reading Skill**

**Historical and Cultural Context**

What cultural values are revealed by Odysseus’ explanation
for his anger in lines 1441–1444?

**Possible responses:** Odysseus is angry because the suitors have plundered his house and tried to claim his wife while he was gone. He also is angry because the suitors have dishonored the Greeks’ religious laws regarding hospitality and the authority of the gods.

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**Reading Check**

**Answer:** He offers to make restitution of all the meat and wine consumed, plus gifts of oxen, bronze, and gold.
Literary Analysis

Epic Simile

• Have students review the Literary Analysis section of the Build Skills page, p. 992. Ask them to compare a typical simile with an epic simile and to give an example of each.

Possible response: A typical simile makes a comparison to one thing, for example, “The arrow flew like a hawk.” An epic simile is longer and more complex. A possible example is, “The arrow flew like a hawk. Its feathers glinted in the sun, and it point bit like a hawk’s beak. It attacked its victim as a hawk clutches its prey.”

• Stress to students that not all similes in the Odyssey are epic similes.

• Then ask students the Literary Analysis question: Why is the comparison of Eurymachus’ sharp sword to a razor only a simile and not an epic simile?

Possible response: This is a simile because it compares a sword to a razor. An epic simile, however, is an elaborate comparison that can run across several lines. Here, the comparison is mentioned once and is not sustained.

Monitor Progress: Review students’ graphic organizers to ensure that they understand the comparison and why it is not an epic simile.

Reteach: Work with students to expand this simile into an epic simile. Brainstorm words that might be used to extend the simile, including blade, slice, sever, slash, and cut.

"Friends," he said, “the man is implacable.

Now that he’s got his hands on bow and quiver
he’ll shoot from the big doorstone there
until he kills us to the last man.

Fight, I say.

don’t let’s remember the joy of it. Swords out!
Hold up your tables to deflect his arrows.

After me, everyone: rush him where he stands.

If we can budge him from the door, if we can pass into the town, we’ll call out men to chase him.

This fellow with his bow will shoot no more.”

He drew his own sword as he spoke, a broadsword of fine
honied like a razor on either edge. Then crying hoarse and
loud
he hurled himself at Odysseus. But the kingly man let fly
an arrow at that instant, and the quivering feathered butt
sprang to the nipple of his breast as the barb stuck in his
liver.
The bright broadsword clanged down. He lurched and fell
aside,
pitching across his table. His cup, his bread and meat,
were spilt and scattered far and wide, and his head slammed
on the ground.

Reulsion, anguish in his heart, with both feet kicking out,
he downed his chair, while the shrouding wave of mist closed
on his eyes.

Amphinomus now came running at Odysseus,
broadsword naked in his hand. He thought to make
the great soldier give way at the door.

But with a spear throw from behind Telemachus hit him
between the shoulders, and the lancehead drove
clear through his chest. He left his feet and fell
forward, thudding, forehead against the ground.

Telemachus swerved around him, leaving the long dark
spear
planted in Amphinomus. If he paused to yank it out
someone might jump him from behind or cut him down with
a sword
at the moment he bent over. So he ran—ran from the tables
to his father’s side and halted, panting, saying:

Father let me bring you a shield and spear.

Themes in Literature: Heroism
a pair of spears, a helmet.
I can arm on the run myself; I’ll give
outfits to Eumaeus and this cowherd.
Better to have equipment.”

Said Odysseus:
“Run then, while I hold them off with arrows
as long as the arrows last. When all are gone
if I’m alone they can dislodge me.”

Quick
upon his father’s word Telemachus
ran to the room where spears and armor lay.
He caught up four light shields, four pairs of spears,
four helms of war high-plumed with flowing manes,
and ran back, loaded down, to his father’s side.
He was the first to pull a helmet on
and slide his bare arm in a buckler strap.
The servants armed themselves, and all three took their
stand beside the master of battle.
   While he had arrows
he aimed and shot, and every shot brought down
one of his huddling enemies.

But when all barbs had flown from the bowman’s fist,
he leaned his bow in the bright entryway
beside the door, and armed: a four-ply shield
hard on his shoulder, and a crested helm,
horsetailed, nodding stormy upon his head,
then took his tough and bronze-shod spears. . . .

Aided by Athena, Odysseus, Telemachus, Eumaeus, and
other faithful herdsmen kill all the suitors.

And Odysseus looked around him, narrow-eyed.
for any others who had lain hidden
while death’s black fury passed.
   In blood and dust
he saw that crowd all fallen, many and many slain.

Think of a catch that fishermen haul in to a half-moon bay
in a fine-meshed net from the whitecaps of the sea:
how all are poured out on the sand, in throes for the salt sea,
twitching their cold lives away in Helios’ fiery air:
so lay the suitors heaped on one another.

Reading Skill
Historical and Cultural Context
What cultural values are reflected in
Telemachus’ behavior toward his father?

Literary Analysis
Epic Simile
Which aspects of the slain suitors’ appearance does the epic simile in lines 1535–1539 emphasize?

Possible responses: The image of the fish flopping on the deck of a ship emphasizes the suitors’ struggling and writhing in their final moments.

Who helps Odysseus defeat the suitors?

Answer: Athena, Telemachus, Eumaeus, and a herdsman help Odysseus defeat the suitors.

Reading Check

Strategy for Less Proficient Readers
Review with students some of the critical details that take place in Odysseus’ slaughter of the suitors, beginning with the death of Antinous. Have students use a Series-of-Events Chain (Graphic Organizer Transparencies, p. 239) to plot important moments in the story, including Odysseus’ use of his bow and arrows, Eumymachus’ offer of reparations, and Telemachus’ coming to his father’s aid.

Strategy for English Learners
Preview with English Learners some of the vocabulary that relates to Odysseus’ battle with the suitors. The specific vocabulary can include words that relate to weapons, such as broadsword, spear, armor, shields, and helms. It also can include poetic phrases such as bowman’s fist, and the master of battle.
Humanities

The Fall of Troy, by Romare Bearden
Born in North Carolina, African American artist Romare Bearden grew up in New York. His work is most remarkable for its sophisticated use of the idiom of Cubism to portray the everyday realities of African American life. The Fall of Troy is a collage from a series done by Bearden on the adventures of Odysseus. The large white horse to the right is the Trojan horse; the boats in the harbor are waiting to carry Odysseus and his men from Troy to numerous adventures. Use these questions for discussion:

- Which aspects of the collage recall what you have read from the Odyssey? Which aspects of the collage reflect a modern mind at work?

   **Answer:** Students should recognize epic references such as the Trojan Horse, the burning towers of Troy, and the sea and ships. Modern references include the collage technique; the flat, childlike style of the cutouts; and the whimsical inclusion of dolphins and other sea creatures.

Critical Viewing

**Answer:** Students should compare their impressions of such specific details as the Trojan Horse, the burning towers, and the waiting ships.

Vocabulary Development

**“Deceptive” Terms**

Odysseus’ return is full of the idea of secrets and deception. Review with students the words that Penelope uses on p. 1015 here to describe this deception:

- **frauds:** means of deceiving people
- **impostors:** cheaters, people who assume false disguises
- **underhanded:** secret, not straightforward
Greathearted Odysseus, home at last, was being bathed now by Eurynome and rubbed with golden oil, and clothed again in a fresh tunic and a cloak. Athena lent him beauty, head to foot. She made him taller, and massive, too, with crisping hair in curls like petals of wild hyacinth but all red-golden. Think of gold infused on silver by a craftsman, whose fine art Hephaestus taught him, or Athena: one whose work moves to delight: just so she lavished beauty over Odysseus’ head and shoulders. He sat then in the same chair by the pillar, facing his silent wife, and said:

“Strange woman, the immortals of Olympus made you hard, harder than any. Who else in the world would keep aloof as you do from her husband if he returned to her from years of trouble, cast on his own land in the twentieth year?

Nurse, make up a bed for me to sleep on. Her heart is iron in her breast.”

Penelope spoke to Odysseus now. She said:

“Strange man, if man you are . . . This is no pride on my part nor scorn for you—not even wonder, merely. I know so well how you—how he—appeared boarding the ship for Troy. But all the same . . .

Make up his bed for him, Eurycleia. Place it outside the bedchamber my lord built with his own hands. Pile the big bed with fleeces, rugs, and sheets of purest linen.”

With this she tried him to the breaking point,

40 Literary Analysis

Epic Simile

Which details in the epic simile in lines 1547–1551 compare Odysseus’ hair to a work of art?

Possible responses: The comparison to gold and silver, as well as the term craftsman and the references to Hephaestus and Athena all compare Odysseus’ hair to artwork.

41 Reading Check

How does Odysseus describe Penelope’s attitude toward him?

Penelope tests Odysseus to prove he really is her husband.
and he turned on her in a flash raging:

"Woman, by heaven you’ve stung me now!  
Who dared to move my bed?
No builder had the skill for that—unless
a god came down to turn the trick. No mortal
in his best days could budge it with a crowbar.
There is our pact and pledge, our secret sign,
built into that bed—my handiwork
and no one else’s!

... 

An old trunk of olive
grew like a pillar on the building plot.
and I laid out our bedroom round that tree,
lined up the stone walls, built the walls and roof,
gave it a doorway and smooth-fitting doors.
Then I lopped off the silvery leaves and branches,
hewed and shaped that stump from the roots up
into a bedpost, drilled it, let it serve
as model for the rest. I planed them all,
inlaid them all with silver, gold and ivory,
and stretched a bed between—a pliant web
of oxhide thongs dyed crimson.

There’s our sign!
I know no more. Could someone else’s hand
have sawn that trunk and dragged the frame away?”

Their secret! as she heard it told, her knees
grew tremulous and weak, her heart failed her.
With eyes brimming tears she ran to him,
throwing her arms around his neck, and kissed him,
murmuring:

“Do not rage at me, Odysseus!  
No one ever matched your caution! Think
what difficulty the gods gave: they denied us
life together in our prime and flowering years,
kept us from crossing into age together.
Forgive me, don’t be angry. I could not
welcome you with love on sight! I armed myself
long ago against the frauds of men,
impostors who might come—and all those many
whose underhanded ways bring evil on! . . .
But here and now, what sign could be so clear
as this of our own bed?
No other man has ever laid eyes on it—

Themes in Literature: Heroism

Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary Knowledge Rating
When students have completed reading and discussing the Odyssey, Part 2, have them take out their Vocabulary Knowledge Rating Chart for this selection. Read the words aloud once more and have students rate their knowledge of the words again in the After Reading column. Clarify any words that are still problematic. Have students write their own definition and example or sentence in the appropriate column. Then have students complete the Vocabulary Builder Practice activities on p. 1019. Encourage students to use the words in further discussion and written work about the Odyssey. Remind them that they will be accountable for these words on the Selection Test.
** Literary Analysis **

** Epic Simile **

In what way does this epic simile recall the dangers Odysseus faced on his journey home?

Possible response: Odysseus longs for his wife as a drowning person longs for dry land. The comparison to “rough water,” “gale winds,” and “tons of sea” recall the many times that Odysseus faced and that Odysseus was nearly drowned before he could return home.

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**The Ending**

Odysseus is reunited with his father. Athena commands that peace prevail between Odysseus and the relatives of the slain suitors. Odysseus has regained his family and his kingdom.

**Thinking About the Selection**

1. **Respond:** Do you think Odysseus acts heroically in this section of the Odyssey? Why or why not?

2. (a) **Recall:** How does Odysseus respond when Eurymachus offers to repay Odysseus for what the suitors have taken from his house? (b) **Infer:** What does Odysseus’ response reveal about his character?

3. (a) **Recall:** How does the fight turn out? (b) **Analyze:** Why does Odysseus take equal revenge on all the suitors?

4. (a) **Analyze:** What does Penelope’s doubt about her husband’s return suggest about her character? (b) **Draw Conclusions:** Given Odysseus’ reputation for guile, in what way is Penelope an appropriate companion for Odysseus?

5. (a) **Summarize:** During Odysseus’ long absence, how does Penelope handle the problem of the suitors? (b) **Summarize:** How does Odysseus handle the problem upon his return? (c) **Make a Judgment:** Do you think their means of handling the problem is appropriate? Why or why not?

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**Answers**

1. Students may believe that some sort of revenge is justified, but that Odysseus overreacts. They may say that he also could have been heroic by showing forgiveness.

2. (a) Odysseus will not be satisfied with treasure. He says the suitors must fight their way out. (b) **Possible response:** Odysseus can be inflexible and unforgiving when he thinks he has been treated disrespectfully.

3. (a) Caught by surprise, the suitors are quickly overcome by Odysseus, his son, and his servants. (b) Odysseus regards all the suitors as equally guilty of invading his home.

4. (a) Penelope’s doubt shows her caution. It may show how she has had to protect her feelings as she waited for her husband’s return. (b) Penelope is an appropriate companion for Odysseus because she, too, is clever.

5. (a) Penelope handles the problem by weaving a shroud, then unraveling it each night. (b) Odysseus disguises himself and, after seeing the suitors’ disrespect, makes a plan to kill them. (c) Students may say that Odysseus should have forced the suitors to leave, rather than kill them. They may say that Penelope should have been more assertive in expelling the suitors. 

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**ASSESS**

from the Odyssey, Part 2  ■  1017