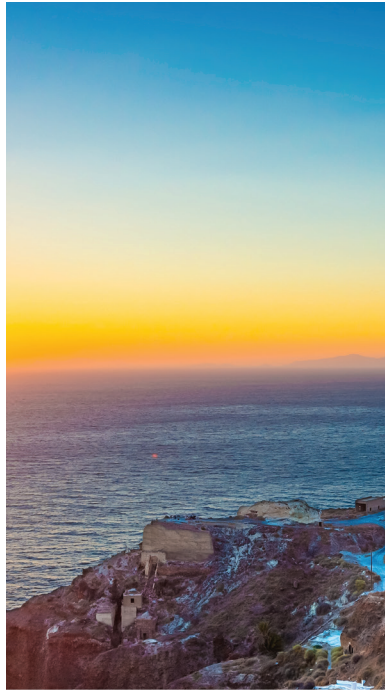
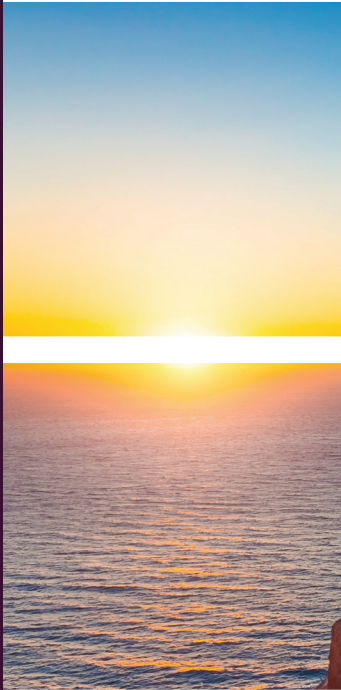


# WORLD LITERATURE

Level 530



Santorini Oia  
Cyclades, Greece

## FUN FACT

Virgil's dying wish was for the *Aenid* to be burned, but Augustus had it published against his wishes.



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## Literature

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World Literature with Language Arts

by the Sonlight Team

*All the nations you have made shall come  
and worship before you, O Lord,  
and shall glorify your name.  
For you are great and do wondrous things;  
you alone are God.*

Psalm 86:9–10 (ESV)

Sonlight Curriculum® 530 “World Literature with Language Arts” Parent Guide, Fifth Edition.

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“Do to others what you would have them do to you”  
(Matthew 7:12).

“The worker is worth his keep” (Matthew 10:10).

Published by

Sonlight Curriculum, Ltd.  
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Littleton, CO 80122-2705  
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## NOTE TO PURCHASER

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Printed in the United States of America.

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## Instructor’s Guide Overview

We’ve designed your Sonlight Instructor’s Guide (IG) to make your educational experience as straightforward and helpful as possible. We have carefully organized your materials to help you and your children get the most out of the subjects covered. For help reading your schedule, see “**How to Use the Schedule**” page just before Week 1.

Your IG includes an entire 36-week schedule of all the books you’ll read, followed by notes, assignments, readings, and other educational activities. For specific organizational tips, topics and skills addressed, the timeline figure schedule, and other suggestions for you, take a look at some of the great resources in **Section Three** so you’ll know what’s there and can turn to this section when needed.

If you are new to Sonlight this year, please look in **Section Four**, where you’ll find helpful resources for new users including tips for getting organized, ideas for adapting the curriculum to your needs, record keeping suggestions, an overview of the structure of your Instructor’s Guide, and more.

### What helpful features can you expect from your IG?

First, everything you need is located right after your schedule each week. If a note appears about a concept in a book, it’s easy to find it right after your schedule on the day the relevant reading is scheduled.

Second, using the blank maps provided, students will plot assigned locations for each book. Map answer keys are located in Section Three of the Parent’s Instructor’s Guide.

Third, your Instructor’s Guide includes a complete ready-to-use 5-Day schedule, which has been carefully planned to optimize use of the curriculum resources.

Fourth, “To Discuss After You Read” sections help you hone in on the basics of a book so you can easily gauge how well your children have comprehended the book. The questions are numbered to help you reference between the Parent Guide and the Student Guide.

Fifth, “Vocabulary” includes terms related to cultural literacy and general usage terms [words printed in **bold**] in one easy-to-find place.

Sixth, notes labeled “**Rationale**” contain information about specific books to help you know why we’ve selected a particular resource and what we trust children will gain from reading it. Other notes marked with “**Note to Mom or Dad**” will provide you with insights on more difficult concepts or content from some books.

Finally, don’t forget to have fun as you learn at home together!

## About “World Literature with Language Arts”

Congratulations! You are at the start of a course on some of the greatest literature of all time. My hope and prayer for you is that this course will open your eyes to the truth, goodness, and beauty of the classics, that the texts and questions will enrich your life, deepen your thoughts, touch you deeply, and, especially, bring you delight.

To begin with, let me start with a caveat. Many of these works have such long histories that they have dissertations written on them, thousands of pages of in-depth study analyzing words and actions. I had a college class in which the entire semester was spent on *The Aeneid* and *The Inferno*. It was a fabulous class, taught by an enthusiastic professor. We went almost paragraph by paragraph, cross-referencing passages, adding historical information. I was amazed! These works were gorgeous and incredibly full of complex detail! But those were the only two books that semester, and this schedule assigns many more than that!

In these notes I hope to point out some of the secrets the authors include, to show the depth and brilliance of the works. When I was in school, I hated how my teachers would find an obscure reference and try to persuade the class that it meant something. I told my mom of this pet peeve, and she said that even if the author did not intend to put symbols and meaning everywhere—that even if my teachers were wrong in their findings—the fact that one can find the symbols place the literature on a higher level than a work of lesser literature.

These are the secrets I want you to see, the wonder of the text.

But this is just a beginning acquaintance with these towering works of the literary canon, that list works permanently established as being of the highest quality. (For books published since 1900, it is probably too early to tell if those works will truly be part of the canon.) Happily, the books in the canon were not chosen because they were highbrow and unapproachable; rather, they have been winnowed out through the centuries until the best remains. Homer’s works, for example, entertain and move the reader.

If you think of this as a first taste of world lit, a way to meet marvelous works and hopefully come to view them as friends, I think you’ll be well served. But, like a real friend, a brief introduction is not a full relationship. Similarly, even if these were the world’s most outstanding notes, they still offer only an introduction. There is more depth awaiting you, with the friends you choose.

\* \* \*



A note about the workload. These works span three millennia and cultures around the world. The authors were not seeking to ensure each day's reading comes to us in precise 40-minute assignments.

So there is one day of *The Odyssey* that the reading is 901 lines long, though the average is about 600 lines. *The Odyssey* moves well, filled with fascinating stories and people, so although that one day's reading will take a bit more time, it is not onerous.

When reading Dante's *Inferno*, the readings cluster around 400 lines per assignment: fewer lines, but more references required to understand the details Dante includes. The book's notes add significantly to the total time.

I tell you this in advance so that when you come to a longer reading, you won't be concerned: it's an anomaly, perhaps necessary to keep the flow of the text, but not indicative of the course load as a whole.

\* \* \*

I considered choosing religious works, such as the *Koran* or the *Bhagavad Gita*. I opted against that, as outside the scope of this course.

Some books do include stories of gods and goddesses, such as a prose version of *The Ramayana* and *The Odyssey*. Though these include gods that people around the world either have worshipped or still worship, the books themselves are not religious works. No one uses *The Odyssey* as instruction in righteousness or how to live in the world. It's simply a story with gods and goddesses as characters.

\* \* \*

A note on the program's organization. The first half is roughly organized chronologically, as a semester of greatest hits from antiquity, plus a few more. All six of the oldest works included are poems: the world's four main epic poems, a play, and a shorter epic poem.

Similar themes, similar ideas, come up in literature, even though separated by thousands of years. *Oedipus Tyrannus*, written by a Greek playwright more than 400 years before Christ (and told for unknown years before that) exemplifies the tragic flaw. In the Twentieth Century novel by an African author, *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo also has a tragic flaw.

From the mostly chronological first half, the second half centers on two themes: first, Journey, and second, War. These are fluid categories, though, and a journey might be to oneself or around the world, and war might be between nations, between people, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness.

\* \* \*

A note on the poetry anthology this year. Please read the introduction for a general understanding of the collection. The editor says, "The poems in this anthology are drawn from all over the world, and from every era of history. How could it be otherwise, since there is no time or place where love and revelation have not informed and inspired human existence?"

Of all the collections of poetry I have read (and I have read quite a few), this is, I think, the most understandable, with the most number of poems that make me think, "Yes! I know that feeling!"

I hope you like it. Welcome to world lit!

## Further Assistance

We trust you will heartily enjoy your homeschool journey with your children. If we can be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us or visit our Sonlight Connections Community ([sonlight.com/connections](https://sonlight.com/connections)). This community of Sonlighter's provides a place for you to interact with other homeschoolers, seek advice, offer your insights, give words of encouragement and more.

We also recommend that you visit [sonlight.com/subscribe](https://sonlight.com/subscribe) to sign up for our free email newsletter. When you sign up, you'll receive regular homeschool encouragement, news, announcements and be the first to know about Sonlight's special offers. ■

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## **Section Two**

Schedule and Notes



# How to Use the Schedule

Write in the week's date for your records.

The 🗺️ symbol indicates you will find a map assignment in the notes for that day.

The 📅 symbol indicates there is a timeline suggestion in the notes for that day.

Additional space for your record keeping.

**130 Parent Guide** Days 1–5  
Literature / Language Arts Date: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 1**

Date:	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<b>Literature</b>					
<i>Peace Child</i>	chaps. 1–2 🗺️📅	chaps. 3–4	chap. 5 📅	chaps. 6–7 🗺️📅	chaps. 8–9
<i>A Treasury of Poetry for Young People</i>	pp. 9–13	p. 14	p. 15	pp. 16–17	
<b>Language Arts</b>					
<b>Creative Expression</b>	Literary Analysis Overview & Two Perspectives 📖				
<b>Spelling</b>					
<b>Alternative Spelling</b>	Pretest	Write	Write	Sentences	Posttest
<b>Optional: Wordly Wise 3000 Book 8</b>	Lesson 1A		Lesson 1B		Lesson 1C
<b>Other Notes</b>					

**Peace Child**

Day 1 Chapters 1–2

**Initial Comments**

**Note to Mom or Dad:** Please be aware that the people group in this book, the Savi of New Guinea, engage in killing, cannibalism, and horrible acts with corpses. These acts are described to share the experiences of the author. Why include a book with such incredible darkness? Because the light of God shines brighter, and He can completely change a culture.

**Overview**

Although chronologically this book takes place near the end of American history studies (in the 1960s), the people group the Richardsons went to lived a primitive life, a Stone Age existence, probably similar to how some of the original inhabitants of America lived. Hence, we include this in the beginning of the course to correspond to readings on the first settlers on the North American continent. The power of the Gospel transforms. Prepare to be amazed.

When Don Richardson and his wife and growing family go to live among a cannibal tribe in New Guinea, they need to find a connection to the people, a “redemptive analogy.” The Savi valued treachery above all other “virtues,” so in their view, Judas was the hero. But when Don demanded peace, or he (and his axes) would leave, the enemy peoples each took a child and exchanged them. As long as these adopted children lived,





📖 Note to Mom or Dad   🗺️ Map Point   📅 Timeline Suggestion

American Historical Literature | Parent Guide | Section Two | Week 1 | 1

## More notes with important information about specific books.

The 📖 symbol on the Schedule provides you with a heads-up about difficult content. We tell you within the notes what to expect and often suggest how to talk about it with your kids.

**Week 1**

Date:	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<b>Literature</b>					
<i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i>	Introduction, Tablets 1–4  	Tablets 5–9	Tablets 10–12		
<i>Lively Art of Writing</i>				Note & chap. 1	
<i>The Essential Iliad</i>					Book 1 
<i>Risking Everything</i>	“When Death Comes” pp. 3–4 		“Love After Love” p. 5		“Wild Geese” p. 6
<b>Writing</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other Notes</b>					

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*Epic of Gilgamesh*

Day **1** Introduction, Tablets 1–4

**Note to Mom or Dad:** This text describes a sexual encounter on p. 8. This is, I believe, the most explicit sexuality in any Sonlight program. I’m sorry it’s the first day of reading.

**Introduction**

This Babylonian text, written around 2000 B.C., is the oldest surviving narrative poem in the world. Gilgamesh, king of the Sumerian city-state Uruk around 2700 B.C., stars as the first hero.

The story vanished from memory for thousands of years, from the time of the Greeks until the Victorians. Unlike the Greek literature that survived, at least in fragments, over the years, Babylonian cuneiform remained unknown and unreadable until the 1800s. When archaeologists discovered Nineveh and the great destroyed library of Assurbanipal, they also discovered *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. The Standard Version contains twelve tablets (chapters) of six columns

each. Much of the story remains missing. Archaeologists continue to find more fragments as time goes by. (For an extremely academic version, you might try the Norton edition. That translator uses ellipses for all missing words. It is quite precise, though not nearly as pleasant to read.)

A few notes on this specific translation. The smaller divisions are not meant to be the different columns on the twelve tablets, but simply breaks to enhance the meaning.

Most of the text is unrhymed iambic pentameter, so lines of ten syllables with a beat that sounds thus: duh DA duh DA duh DA duh DA duh DA. (A few lines are not, but as strictly as possible.)

Modern scholars question whether the twelfth tablet actually fits with the rest of the story. The translator opted to separate it from the rest of the text, to make it a separate story.

And, finally, there are excellent notes for each Tablet, beginning on p. 95. Please take advantage of that scholarship.

### To Discuss After You Read

1. In literature, a **foil** is a person or thing that contrasts with, and so emphasizes and enhances the qualities of, another. Cain's foil is Abel: one did right, the other didn't. Who is Gilgamesh's foil? ➔ *Enkidu*
2. Use specific examples to explain how you know this. ➔ *Gilgamesh and Enkidu provide much similarity and contrast: the people asked Aruru to "Create his double and let the two contend. / Let stormy heart contend with stormy heart / that peace may come to Uruk once again" (5), and Aruru created "the double, / the stormy-hearted other" (5); Gilgamesh is "the shepherd of his people" (4), while Enkidu lives with the creatures (5)*
3. When the hunter sees Enkidu, this translation says, "His face was as one estranged from what he knows" (6). The Jackson translation says, his face "looks / as if it expects to doubt for a long, long time." The notes say that another translation says, "His face was like that of a wayfarer from afar" (95). What does this mean? Can you make your features show this look? ➔ *unbelieving, seeing something incomprehensible*

**Note:** One edition mentions that although Shamhat is called a "temple prostitute," she is, surprisingly, a force for positive change. There isn't really a similar type person in our society today.

4. How does Shamhat civilize Enkidu? ➔ *first, she lures him out of his wild, animal life; she awakens a hunger for friendship within him, as well as, less obviously, a hunger for religion (Anu and Ishtar both have temples in Uruk), and culture (processions, music, dancing); she clothes him with her own garments; she teaches him what to eat as a human; he learns to use weapons to protect the two of them—in many ways, this is the world's first "Beauty and the Beast" story*

**Note:** "Enkidu always said they were fortunate" (24): the interpretation of dreams is a tricky thing.

### Timeline and Map Points

- 📍 *Babylon* ①, *Euphrates River* ② (map 1)

Day 2 | Tablets 5–9

### To Discuss After You Read

5. Why does Gilgamesh refuse Ishtar's advances? ➔ *things haven't worked out well for her previous lovers, and he is content with his life without her*
6. When Enkidu and Gilgamesh fought the Bull, they cried, "Two people, companions, / they can prevail together" (34). Where have we seen this before? ➔ *when they fought Huwawa, they said it twice (26, 26–27)*
7. We come to the third use of "The life of man is short" when Enkidu challenges Gilgamesh to fight the bull (34). It's a rousing, "Let's live to the fullest and seek glory" statement. Gilgamesh had said this to Enkidu earlier, in a similar situation, rousing Enkidu to fight Huwawa

(16). How is the use on p. 26 different in meaning? ➔ *as the men enter the Cedar Forest, they hear horrible things meant to distress them, including the ominous reminder, "The life of man is short"*

8. Gilgamesh wonders, "Why am I left to live while my brother dies? / Why should he die and I be spared to live?" (38). Who do you think is worse off, Enkidu or Gilgamesh, and why?
9. Enkidu curses the hunter and Shamhat (39–40), until Shamash corrects him. The gist of what she says is, "Stop, Enkidu, you were better off because of these two than you would have been had you remained in the wild." Do you agree that Enkidu was better off? Why? ➔ *I agree—I am all for richer, varied experiences and his life was more rich: he tried new and wonderful foods, only available to the civilized (like bread, stew, beer); he dressed and slept well, and, most importantly, he had a dear friend, instead of being just part of a pack of animals*
10. As he nears the end, "Enkidu lay suffering on the bed of terror / another day and another day and another, / and the long night between, and day after day / the suffering of Enkidu grew worse" (43). Do you know any terminally ill people? Have you talked with your family about living wills, or other issues related to the end of life? Talk about end of life care. What stories have you lived, or do you know? What is right and good?

Read the following poem by W. H. Auden, titled "Funeral Blues."

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,  
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead  
Scribbling on the sky the message He is Dead.  
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,  
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,  
My working week and my Sunday rest,  
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;  
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods;  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

I like the comparison between the ancient and modern lament, as both tell the departed friend how much the friend meant to the living, such as, "He was the festal garment of the feast" and so on (44). The language of Gilgamesh and of Auden each fit the person and the situation—one cannot easily imagine Auden speaking of shields and weapons to explain how much the departed meant to him, but this makes sense for Gilgamesh. Write a few similar lines, using imagery from your life. (A few examples: you were my "Good morning" when I greeted the day; you were the rock under my feet when I was sinking down.)

11. Earlier, when Gilgamesh and Enkidu go to fight Humbaba, Gilgamesh proves he knows about mortality: “Who is the mortal / able to enter heaven? Only the gods / can live forever. The life of man is short. / What he accomplishes is but the wind” (16). Now, though, Gilgamesh wanders the wilderness weeping, saying, “Enkidu has died. Must I die, too? Must Gilgamesh be like that?” (48). He used to know the answer—why do you think he wonders now? ➔ *he has experienced death, in its painfulness, its unexpectedness, and its inevitability; the head knowledge has transformed into experience, and Gilgamesh wants to avoid it in any way possible*
12. Gilgamesh travels through the dark. What comes after the dark? ➔ *light, the garden, and enlightenment*

Day  
3

Tablets 10–12

**To Discuss After You Read**

**Note:** I have heard of a group of monks who, every day for three minutes, stood silently around an empty grave, to remind themselves that death comes to us all. Also, in Renaissance art, artists frequently included a skull, as a Memento Mori or “Remember Death.” Gilgamesh struggles with his mortality through the last section of this book. I think a reminder that we will die and come before judgment is healthy, but Gilgamesh’s reaction, as he leaves his duties and lets his appearance go, is not healthy. How should we, as Christians, remember death, and live with that knowledge on a daily basis? (Or should we?)

13. At the end of Tablet 11, how does this story return full-circle? ➔ *the epic begins with the walls of a city; at the start of the story, Gilgamesh is a good-for-nothing ruler; he fights and then becomes friends with Enkidu, they enjoy each others company until Enkidu dies; Gilgamesh again becomes a good-for-nothing ruler, he fights against mortality, and damages Urshanabi’s holy place; Urshanabi then follows Gilgamesh, and they join company, and end with the walls of a city*
14. In the separate story in Tablet XII, Enkidu goes to the Nether World and remains until Gilgamesh pleads long enough. Do you think it is good for Gilgamesh that Enkidu returns? ➔ *personally, I see no benefit to Enkidu’s return; Gilgamesh gains nothing except a bit of information, none of which is useful to him*

**Summary and Analysis**

15. What is the setting? ➔ *Uruk and the wilds around the city, Humbaba’s hill, various stops on a journey, and the Underworld*
16. Summarize the plot. ➔ *after Gilgamesh and Enkidu become friends, they kill Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven before Enkidu dies; horrified, Gilgamesh journeys to seek immortality but, failing, realizes that this life is all we have*

17. Remember that there are a few basic **conflicts**: man vs. man, man vs. self, man vs. God/fate, man vs. nature, man vs. society. What main conflict do you see here? ➔ *although there is a man vs. god conflict, I think of the main conflict as man vs. self, but, interestingly, it’s almost man vs. his body, instead of man vs. his self-destructive tendencies (a more typical man vs. self conflict)*
18. The **mood** of a work is the atmosphere or **tone** of a work of art. How would you describe the mood, or tone, here? ➔ *contemplative and happy, but also serious*
19. A **theme** is an idea that recurs in or pervades a work of art or literature. What do you think the theme is in this work? ➔ *civilization is better than none, but in the end, death comes to us all*

**Lively Art of Writing**Day  
4

Note &amp; Chapter 1

**Introduction**

As you read and work through this book, you will need to think. Thinking isn’t easy! But this book will help guide you both learning what you have to say, and how to say it well.

It is over 50 years old now, so the examples, such as drag racing (!) are dated. But the information that the examples intend to illustrate remains valid, even if our issues today are different.

Each chapter ends with questions, and assignment, and vocabulary work. I give my answers to the questions and vocabulary in the notes below. Please do the assignments, too. Realistically, the assignment is more important than regurgitating the reading. You might find it most profitable to simply read through the questions in the book and the answers below, and spend most of your time on the assignment. The Vocabulary sections, especially, are a bit silly for Sonlight students. I suspect few of the words will be new to you.

Please do not assume that the due date for each assignment should be the same day as the reading. I offer suggestions for due dates, based on the length and difficulty of the assignments, for each chapter.

**Questions #1–7 (p. 23)**

1. *A fact is an indisputable truth. An opinion is defined as “A belief not based on absolute certainty or positive knowledge but on what seems true, valid, or probable to one’s own mind; what one thinks; judgment.*
2. *Facts should not be an essay topic, which should be an opinion. However, to prove your opinion, you might need to back your position with facts.*
3. *Explain your answer. Obviously, not all opinions are of equal validity. Some are based on fact, some based on delusion. Some opinions have considered opposing ideas and figured out arguments against them; some opinions are based solely on life experience.*

4. "American foreign policy" is not, in itself, an opinion, and therefore not a good topic for a paper. Even a topic like, "America has a great foreign policy" would be quite broad and difficult to prove conclusively.

5. A–D

"Clothes You Make Yourself": a and d are descriptive, and c is either a fact or an error, while this one could go either way (bad: too expensive; good: fitted to your own body, creative expression of style)

E–H

"Driver-Training Programs Cost Too Much" is actually an opinion

I–L

"Moby Dick, America's Greatest Novel" expresses an opinion that could be easily argued against

M–P

Both "Why Should Students Study Literature" and "High Points in American Literature" are opinions; personally, I would prefer to read the latter, because I have my own strong opinions on what the high points are, but perhaps the former is a better essay topic

Q–T

"The Student Council is Outmoded" is the only opinion

6. *I am not sure what the author means by a "typical term paper," but if she means a paper that simply synthesizes various bits of information into a narrative or summary, that is not an essay, which is a written expression of an opinion.*
7. *a. fact; b. self-evident; c. obvious; d. both self-evident and vague (who should do the encouraging?); e. nothing to argue: this sounds like a list*

#### Assignment (p. 24)

Choose one writing prompt, and write an essay. This assignment might be due in 24–48 hours.

#### Vocabulary #1–3 (p. 24)

- adequate:** enough, sufficient; **altercation:** fight, peace; **antagonism:** hostility, friendship; **apathy:** indifference, interest; **platitude:** cliché, originality; **valid:** reasonable, indefensible
- A value judgment is assessing something as good or bad based on one's standards or priorities. For example: "I doubt the efficacy of short-term missions."*

3. **Mendacity:** untruthfulness. *The Scylla was a female sea monster who devoured sailors when they tried to navigate the narrow channel between her cave and the whirlpool Charybdis.*

*"An essay based on a dishonest opinion will always carry with it Big Daddy's 'odor of mendacity,' and nothing can disguise that particular smell." Revised: If you write an essay about something you don't actually think, it will smell false, and you won't be able to get rid of the stench.*

*"But once you have done this, you can be secure in your belief, and it will help guide you between the Scylla of dullness and the Charybdis of mendacity."*

**Revised:** *After you have figured out your opinion and thought of opposing views, you know what you think and will avoid the dual dangers of dullness and dishonesty.*

### The Essential Iliad

Day  
5

Book 1

**Note to Mom or Dad:** This translation includes about ten mild expletives, sprinkled throughout. To me, that is less troubling than the rage and violence that runs through the text itself, so if you are concerned, please pre-read.

#### Introduction

"All men owe honor to the poets—honor / and awe, for they are dearest to the Muse / who puts upon their lips the ways of life" (*The Odyssey*, VIII. 478–80).

Of all poets, Homer especially deserves honor and awe. The two works attributed to him, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are two of the greatest epics of western civilization, the former one of the greatest war stories of all time, the latter one of the greatest adventure stories. The poems initially were meant to be heard, not read, and, as the *Norton Anthology* points out, the poems "may have been fixed in something like their present form before the art of writing was in general use in Greece" (116). These stories are almost three thousand years old! This translation was actually done as an oral performance piece initially (xliii).

The background of the epics begins with Helen of Troy, who, if you remember, runs away from her Greek husband Menelaus (or Menelaos, depending on the translation) with her Trojan lover Paris. Menelaus' brother Agamemnon summons all the Greek kings, and they sail against Troy (thus, Helen's beauty is known as "the face that launched a thousand ships"). For ten years the Greeks besiege the strong Trojan fortress, and *The Iliad* begins its action near the end. It covers less than two months of the battle, but



gives us a taste of several characters who show up again in *The Odyssey*: wise Nestor, hot-headed and fighter extraordinaire Achilles (Akhilleus), beautiful Helen, bumbling Menelaus and, of course, shrewd schemer Odysseus, with a devious plot or a way out of every situation.

Just so you know up front: *The Iliad* does not tell the story of the Trojan Horse, that most wily of methods of bursting through a city's walls. It does not cover the death of Achilles, made mostly immortal by his mother Thetis, who dipped him in the river Styx to grant him immunity from injury. She held his heel when she dipped him, his single point of vulnerability, which Paris exploits after the events of this book, when his arrow pierces Achilles' heel and kills him. Although these events loom on the horizon, the action is much more limited: tempers run hot, spite runs long, and battles and funerals result. This is a book about war, not a retelling of interesting myths.

Critics repeatedly emphasize the timeless quality of Homer's stories, and I like how even the cover of this edition portrays D-Day, the decisive day of battle in World War II—this Twentieth Century photo fits as cover of an ancient Greek epic.

This version is an abridgement. In general, I am such a book purist that I read every word of every book, including prefaces and introductions. It pains me to offer an abridgement here. So why not the whole thing? A few reasons. In part because I don't want to focus too much on ancient Greece (which, with *The Odyssey* and *Oedipus Tyrannus* already gets a heavier concentration than other nations and times). In part because this is a war book. And in war there are often battles that end in a draw, so that, at the end of the battle, neither side has gained anything, though both sides have lost much. Homer does an admirable job depicting that in the complete version: "darkness fell before the eyes" of many heroes. Yet lists of fallen men and the violent ways they died, especially when the plot is not materially changed at the end of the lengthy battle scene ... it makes this an epic that can hold together even with two-thirds eliminated.

Mostly, I would rather share this part of the story with you, in this amazing translation, than not share any of it. Better a small, excellent taste than none at all.

If this is your first introduction to Homer, welcome. Please find a list of characters at the back of the book (see p. 7).

### Vocabulary

**Achaens:** Mycenaean-Greeks. (90)

**Myrmidans:** legendary people, brave warriors trained by Achilles. (90)

**Sintians:** pirates and raiders. (626)

### To Discuss After You Read

**Note:** Such an unusual beginning! In *The Odyssey*, Homer begins, "Sing in me, Muse," a lovely invocation. Sing! Here, by contrast, we begin, "Rage: Sing, Goddess, Achilles' rage," which is so violent a beginning, so stark, it makes me catch my breath. It also sets the tone for this work. Rage all through.

20. Initially, who acts the most kingly? ➔ *not Agamemnon, who speaks roughly to a priest and apparently ignores the plague that comes on the Greeks; I think Achilles—he calls the meeting that Agamemnon, the high king should have called (62), he pursues the truth that can save the Greeks*

**Note:** This entire book shows tension from beginning to end. At the first, Achilles speaks sarcastically to Agamemnon: "it looks as if we'd better give up / And sail home—assuming any of us are left alive— / If we have to fight both the war and this plague" (67–69). Then seer Calchas pops up and addresses Achilles, rather than the king, asking for his protection. If you were in a room with the President and his Cabinet, wouldn't it be odd to ask for protection from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, for example, rather than protection from the President? Calchas clearly demonstrates who is in control.

Incredibly, then, Achilles swears to protect him, even from Agamemnon "who boasts he is the best of the Achaeans" (97). Achilles doesn't think the king is the best of the Achaeans (and it's not too hard to figure out who he thinks is).

This book seethes with fury. After the opening, we have fury first from Apollo, defending his priest (53). Then Agamemnon, "Furious, anger like twin black thunderheads seething / In his lungs" (108–9) turns on Calchas. Oddly, Achilles points out that there aren't extra women hanging around, and insults Agamemnon ("greedy glory-hound" (131)). As we'll see later, there are plenty of women around.

Overall, Achilles comes across like a rebellious teen, trying to push Agamemnon's buttons: "shameless, profiteering excuse for a commander" (159), "dogface" (167), "bloated drunk, / With a dog's eyes and a rabbit's heart" (236–237). In *The Aeneid*, Achilles' son (who makes no appearance here) is a formidable fighting man, so Achilles is in his thirties or forties. Old enough to know better.

Agamemnon does not stoop to name-calling (and, indeed, calls Achilles "our most formidable hero" (156), though I read that quite sarcastically). Agamemnon seems ready to drop the topic with his "But we can think about that later" (150). Achilles, though, takes the vague threat as a personal affront, specific only to him (although Ajax and Odysseus are also threatened by name, but they say nothing).

21. Faced with the threat of the loss of his girl, what do you think of Achilles' arguments for leaving? ➔ *makes sense to me; if you're not at enmity with the enemy, and you don't share the grievance of your leader, and you don't even like the leader, why stick with the battle?*

**Note:** There is a tension between whom Zeus favors the most. Calchas calls Achilles "beloved of Zeus" (82). A bit later, Agamemnon boasts that he is honored of Zeus the Counselor (185). In a fight between the two, who will Zeus side with?

22. Two characters in this book threaten or use force to show their power. Who are they? ➔ *Agamemnon, who takes Achilles' girl so that no one else will think of being insubordinate (195–197) and Zeus, who threatens Hera (599–600, 613–614)*

**Note:** As Achilles prepares to kill Agamemnon, I find it fascinating that Athena comes to protest, as Hera loves both men. "Tell him off instead" (221), and be happy that you'll end up better off in the end. No suggestion to act in a manner helpful to all: be rude and look forward to the material benefits!

**Note:** The argument between Agamemnon and Achilles always seemed immensely petty to me. Why must the two heroes fight over the one girl? She's not even Helen, nor the only girl either man has (9.270 makes that clear)! Sheila Murnaghan, in her introduction to this translation, points out why this is a big deal. The conquering army divides the captive girls, as well as other spoils of war, as marks of honor. Agamemnon, as high king, feels he must not be without this appropriate honor, but Achilles, as top fighter, feels that since he willingly puts his life on the line (and thus risks the highest price of all for his prize), his prize should not be taken from him. Also, the fact that Agamemnon humiliates him in the assembly thwarts Achilles' sense of appropriate status, in front of all the men! This really is no petty spat. (From ix-x.)

This also sheds light on the larger conflict, the Trojan War. Menelaus summons Greeks from many islands to take back his errant wife, then keeps them there for ten years. Why? Because it wasn't just about the loss of his wife. It was about the shame of being cuckolded and the loss of face, and, as Menelaus mentions, because hospitality is now mocked (see 3.375–377). And if something as basic to society as hospitality becomes an excuse for infidelity, how can anyone welcome a traveler again?

23. Wise peacemaker Nestor suggests a way to peace for the angry men. What? ➔ *Agamemnon should leave Achilles' prize to him and leave his anger, and Achilles should stop picking a fight and keep his temper—since although he is stronger, Agamemnon is more powerful; I like that the point is that neither is behaving well: they both need to change; for his advice to work, though, I think both men would need to agree to his suggestion*

24. Why does Agamemnon not agree? ➔ *Achilles supposedly wants to order everyone, perhaps referring to the assembly that Agamemnon should have called; besides, Achilles was rude*

25. Why does Achilles not agree? ➔ *he refuses to make peace, because he thinks that would be groveling to the king, which he won't do; he states he will give up the girl without a fight, but leave him and his stuff alone*

26. Why does Achilles weep after Briseis leaves? ➔ *not out of love for the girl, but because he has been publicly dishonored (370)*

27. Thetis cries with Achilles: "You should be / Spending your time here by your ships / Happily and untroubled by tears, / Since life is short for you, all too brief" (434–436). This reminds me of one of Rousseau's statements, as he wrote about education. He believed that children should not start school or have any ethical training either before they turned twelve, since many of them would die before that age anyway (mortality rates were high in his day). Do you think Thetis and Rousseau are correct, that if a person's life will be short they should have no discipline or unhappiness? ➔ *absolutely not—an early death does not make discipline unnecessary, and tears and sorrow are part of every person's lot*

**Note:** The vindictiveness of Achilles chills me. He asks Zeus to kill a lot of his companions so that Agamemnon will see that he's a fool for insulting Achilles (425–431). Disgusting.

28. Compare the conflict between the mortals Achilles and Agamemnon and the immortals Zeus and Hera. Why might Homer include both conflicts in the same chapter? ➔ *Zeus and Hera constantly fight; Zeus threatens Hera, who is cowed by his power and sits quietly (unlikely upstart Achilles, who remains unabashed in Agamemnon's presence); an intermediary asks Zeus and Hera not to fight for the trivial reason that feasts will not be as fun if they are angry, then he makes the entire company laugh, while Nestor, who tries to play peacemaker on earth, solves nothing; the men go to bed angry and with the fight unresolved, while Zeus and Hera go to bed together; perhaps Homer juxtaposes the two fights to show how, in the grand perspective of eternity and the universe, a fight is unimportant, however, for two men constrained by time and unpleasant circumstances, a fight looms large; the way Homer projects this, with the human fight portrayed first, in great detail, with its sordid, sorry words, then zooming back to the fight between the gods, enhances this panoramic view*

29. Do you think the speaker approves of Achilles' rage? ➔ *no, based on the initial description: "Black and murderous, that cost the Greeks / Incalculable pain, pitched countless souls / Of heroes into Hades' dark, / And left their bodies to rot as feasts / For dogs and birds" (3–7); no positive description here, only the devastating effects of Achilles' extreme anger*



A note on the writing assignments. The first semester we work through the writing manual. The second semester we have writing prompts for papers. The first semester will help you organize your thoughts and improve your craft. The second semester will allow you to put the instruction into practice.

Let me encourage you, though, that daily writing is one of the best ways, perhaps the only way, to become a confident writer. And so we have daily check boxes all year to remind you to write. Perhaps you journal or blog (and if you don't blog, it is easy to set one up using templates

available online. Remember to check the privacy settings!). Perhaps you decide to simply write a single memory, from start to finish, every day. Perhaps you write each day the most significant event of the last 24 hours (or maybe that is a weekly reflection). Perhaps you would like to use the prompts in **Section Three: Instructor's Guide Resources**. Perhaps you write already for outside classes like science or history, and so you can check off the "daily writing" box without additional effort. Perhaps the writing assignments for this course take you significant time. That is all fine.

But please do spend at least five to ten minutes a day writing, even on days when you have no official assignment in this course. ■

**Week 2**

Date:	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
<b>Literature</b>					
<i>The Essential Iliad</i>	Books 2 and 3	Book 6	Books 9 and 12	Book 16	Books 18 and 19
<i>Risking Everything</i>	"Today I Was Happy, So I Made This Poem" p. 7		"Poetry" pp. 8–9		"The Gate" p. 10
<b>Writing</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Other Notes**

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*The Essential Iliad*

Day 6 Books 2 and 3

**Vocabulary**  
They gave their **skirling** cry ... (*a shrill sound, especially that of bagpipes*) [Book 2]  
\* \* \*

**aegis:** goatskin shield. (478)

**To Discuss After You Read**

- After the Greeks do not flee, "blathering fool" Thersites mocks Agamemnon. Any comments on this minor character? [Book 2] ➔ *he takes the side of Achilles, who "especially hated him" (240); mostly, though, I am shocked by Odysseus, who "whaled the staff down / On Thersites' back" (286–287), using corporal punishment, person-to-person violence (which ups the ante from what we've seen so far); and the troops laugh at this violence; to me, the whole scene is disgusting, rather than funny; to say, too, that Odysseus's stroke was the top of all his actions and strategies, a petty blow against a weaker opponent—shocking*

**Note:** The throngs of Greeks are compared to the flies buzzing during milking. This is a vivid image. Cows poop; flies come to the cow pies. Flies also find something attractive about the cows themselves, and so they can

coat a cow. I was milking one day and a drop splashed out of my bucket and landed on my leg. A fly came and sucked up that drop, then walked a few steps and slurped up another drop. A comparison between the unwanted, disgusting flies and the Greeks who maintained their intent to destroy seems quite apt. [Book 2]

**Note:** "Lord Agamemnon / Moved among them like Zeus himself" (514–515). Have you noticed how much larger than life the heroes appear? They aren't just pretty strong guys, but comparable to the gods. Homer includes such mentions throughout the epic. [Book 2]

- Within the Trojan camp, who is at enmity? [Book 3] ➔ *pretty boy Paris, who started the war, and his brother Hector, who has spent ten years defending his city because of his brother's adultery; also the entire Trojan troops, who "hated Paris as they hated death itself" (480)*
- Has Helen found joy in her adultery? [Book 3] ➔ *none shows here: she has "a sweet mist of desire" for Menelaus, her parents, and her city (142–144); she claims to be ashamed (181); she has no desire to go to be with Paris, only going when threatened with personal destruction by Aphrodite (427–445); she mocks Paris before he orders her to bed, in a disturbing scene to end this book*

**Note:** Remember how Achilles accused Agamemnon of always hanging back? Here we find Priam wondering who the man is: "I've never laid eyes on such / A fine figure

of a man. He looks like a king" (176–177). I think Achilles' accusation was true, since the watchful Priam had no idea who the man was. [Book 3]

**Note:** Helen mentions her brothers, Castor and Polydeuces, or Pollux (254–255), and the narrator explains that they have been buried long (260–261). You may have heard of the constellation Gemini, the Twins, which comes from a myth of these brothers. Pollux was an immortal, and when his brother died, he went to his father, Zeus, and asked that Castor be made an immortal, at which point Zeus turned them into the constellation. The narrator's mention of their burial is an unusual variant on their story. [Book 3]

4. How does the one-on-one combat between Menelaus and Paris end? [Book 3] ➔ *although Menelaus proves the better fighter, as he drags Paris by his helmet back towards the Greeks, Aphrodite breaks Paris's chinstrap and whisks her favorite away*

Day  
7

Book 6

#### Vocabulary

... and the **ferrule** gold ... (*a ring or cap, typically a metal one, that strengthens the end of a handle, stick, or tube and prevents it from splitting or wearing*) (336)

\* \* \*

**Lycurgus:** Spartan lawgiver who preached equality, military finesse, and austerity. (131)

**Cronion:** Zeus. (279)

#### To Discuss After You Read

**Note:** Did you see the similarity between the story of Bellerophon and Joseph and Potiphar's wife (163–172)? I read a book once, *Athena and Eden*, that theorized that the Greek myths were actually Bible stories, but told from the serpent's perspective. It was an interesting line of thought!

5. Glaucus and Diomedes have a lengthy, and friendly, interaction. How does the story change, right at the end, to one of nastiness? ➔ *the exchange of armor, which sounds so cheery, is actually a sneaky way to cheat one party, as Glaucus "exchanged his golden armor for bronze, / The worth of one hundred oxen for nine" (244–245)*

**Note:** Do you remember the back story of why Athena ignores the prayers of the Trojans? Shepherd Paris was made to decide which goddess was the loveliest. The bribes of Hera and Athena did not tempt him as much as Aphrodite's promise of the most beautiful woman in the world (Helen), and so he chose Aphrodite. No matter who he chose, he would have ended up with two goddess enemies. In his case, Hera and Athena side with the Greeks.

**Note:** The battles, thus far, have been primarily sword and spear battles. Interesting that Paris sat, "Fondling his curved bow" (338), a weapon that would allow him

to remain further away from the enemy. In some ways, a weapon for cowards, or at least those less skilled in battle.

**Note:** "For Hector alone could save Ilion now" (423): the Greeks have heroes in spades. Yes, Achilles nurses his anger, but they have Ajax, Odysseus, Diomedes, Agamemnon, Menelaus. While the Greeks have: Hector. When Hector goes, this line points out, the city goes.

6. Compare Helen's conversation with Paris with Andromache's conversation with Hector. ➔ *Helen berates Paris for not going out fighting, and shows no affection for him at all, wishing he would die; Andromache, by contrast, wants Hector to stay home and stop fighting*

**Note:** Hector believes he must fight, for his father's honor (honor again!) and his own (469). Even though he loves Andromache, his society has made him a warrior. He stays the course of heroic values, seeking glory, and so embodies the blindness and self-destructiveness that goes along with that pursuit.

**Note:** Although the text is omitted from this edition, again the warriors fight for two books without victory or defeat. The fighting ends in a draw, with plenty of dead.

Day  
8

Books 9 and 12

#### Vocabulary

**parricide:** to kill one's father. (476)

#### To Discuss After You Read

**Note:** So comes to pass, as Achilles had predicted, that the battle goes badly with the Greeks. Did you notice that he is playing a lyre that he took when he ransacked "Eetion's town"—Andromache's father's town, Thebes. He sings of battle glories on an instrument ransacked from hero Hector's wife's family. [Book 9]

7. Odysseus, renowned for his brilliant tongue (3.226ff), speaks to Achilles first. Summarize his argument. [Book 9] ➔ *Thank you for your hospitality, though we did not come for food. Without your help, we fear the ships are lost. Hector, encouraged by Zeus, intends to destroy us at dawn. If you return now, there is no permanent harm, but if you delay, there may be, which would be a bummer for the Greeks, but especially for you, who will deal with regret. Remember your father's final advice to you: control your proud spirit and have a friendly heart. Avoid scheming strife, and you will be honored by all Greeks. It's not too late to follow your father's instructions! Let me sweeten the pot. Agamemnon is offering many wonderful gifts to you, including Briseus' daughter, whom he has not touched since taking her. And you will get many more gifts when Troy falls. But if the gifts are not important, at least think of the Greeks, and how much honor they will give you. And, consummate warrior, remember that you will get to fight Hector, the one you've waited to fight for so long*

**Note:** The most poignant of lines: “Up with you, then, / If you intend at all, even at this late hour, / To save our army from these howling Trojans. / Think of yourself, of the regret you will feel / For harm that will prove irreparable. / This is the last chance to save your countrymen” (249–253). This is foreshadowing of the strongest sort. [Book 9]

**Note:** Achilles claims, “I hate it like I hate hell / The man who says one thing and thinks another” (317–318). Strong words from a man who has declared multiple times that he is done with the Greeks, that no Greek could persuade him, that he intends to sail home. But of course he doesn’t. He says one thing but thinks another. [Book 9]

8. Summarize Achilles’ response to Odysseus. [Book 9] ➔ *After he finishes reviewing the reasons why he was angry, he declares he wants no reward from Agamemnon, and, in a stunning statement for a warrior bent on destruction, claims, “Nothing is worth my life, not all the riches/ They say Troy held before the Greeks came” (415–416). He knows he will either return home to a long life, or stay and fight for glory and an early death, and at this point, the long life sounds better. He ignores all pleas to look to the larger society of Greeks, ignores all possibility of grief or regret*

**Note:** Odysseus’ forceful, succinct speech contrasts sharply with the rambling stories of Phoenix. Phoenix reminds Achilles of the training Achilles had from the old man. He reminds him that even the gods do not hold on to implacable anger forever, but bend when asked and offered sacrifices. He warns Achilles not to reject the Prayers, lest they “have / Folly plague you, so you will pay in pain” (526–527). The heroes of old, like the gods, were willing to forsake their anger; why should Achilles assume to be better than they? After a long story about some Curetes, he again warns Achilles not to delay. “Come while there are gifts, while the Achaeans / Will still honor you as if you were a god. / But if you go into battle without any gifts, / Your honor will be less, save us or not” (619–622). [Book 9]

Achilles again ignores any elegant argument, any future warning, merely saying, “I hate Agamemnon, and you should, too, because I do.” [Book 9]

**Note:** Ajax, who sees how the argument is going, and who is not known for his smooth tongue, initially ignores Achilles entirely. Achilles is cruel, has no regard for his friends. Even the family of a murdered man accepts blood money and moves on, but Achilles does not. “Show some generosity / And some respect” (662–663). [Book 9]

But Achilles again ignores the substance of the argument, focusing entirely on his dislike for Agamemnon. He plans to protect his ships, but nothing else. [Book 9]

**Note:** When “The sky god was giving the glory to the Trojans / And to Hector” (262–263), by extension, he is giving glory to Achilles. [Book 12]

**Note:** Sarpedon tells Glaucus how they take more risks and so get greater honor and material rewards. This makes the increased likelihood of death more acceptable, and so they face death boldly. However, *The Iliad* points out just how flawed such a system is. Nine years into battle both sides are exhausted and depleted. Should Troy survive, they have lost wealth and men. The Greeks have been away from their homeland, their fields and family. So why are they fighting? [Book 12]

Day  
9

Book 16

**To Discuss After You Read**

9. Patroclus accuses Achilles of loving honor too much (34–38). Based on Achilles’ interaction with the emissaries in Book 9, do you agree with Patroclus? ➔ *I think Achilles is primarily driven by spite; after all, Phoenix made the point that the honor would be greater without waiting until the ships were burning, and I agree with him*

**Note:** Achilles claims, “I never meant / To hold my grudge forever” (62–63). But in speaking with Odysseus earlier he says, “I cannot imagine Agamemnon, / Or any other Greek, persuading me” (320–321). I don’t think he knows himself.

10. Achilles shows one weakness, one affection in this book. What is it? ➔ *his love for Patroclus; he wouldn’t care if all the Greeks and Trojans were dead, so long as he and Patroclus were left to destroy Troy (102–107)*
11. What does Patroclus leave behind when he puts on his battle gear? Why? ➔ *“the massive battle pike” or spear (143–148); that heroic weapon, there for offense, he cannot wield; a bit of foreshadowing: he leaves the key weapon of aggression*

**Note:** Hector’s horses, pursued by Patroclus, have an interesting comparison with a rain storm during harvest (413–423). Rain during harvest is an absolute disaster, especially when harvesting grain. The grain needs to dry to a certain percentage in the field (15 to 18%, generally). If it dries that much, then is wet again, it reduces the quality of the grain. Mold can be a problem. So harvest is best done in dry weather, and the storm described, where the earth hydrates to capacity and still the water falls, shows complete destruction. Harvest destroyed, fields ruined.

How does this relate to Hector’s fleeing horses? Is it absolute destruction? The end of Zeus’s favor?

**Note:** Zeus doesn’t want his son Sarpedon to die, but die he does, despite the love of Zeus. He dies fighting another man’s war, far from home. He leaves behind wife and child. In some ways, his death foreshadows that of both Hector and Achilles.

**Note:** Book 2.505–507 had the image of spring flies hovering over milk, a picture of the Greeks facing the Trojans for war. Again now, we have flies, clustering around the milk pail. The season has shifted to summer (more biting flies in summer), and the flies hover over the body of Sarpedon.

**Note:** I found it interesting that Hector assumes that Patroclus came out to kill him specifically, that Achilles ordered his friend to go and not return until Hector was dead. We know that Achilles actually ordered the opposite, to drive the Trojans a little away and then return, but Patroclus, in the thrill of battle, ignored those instructions. Vain Hector, assuming everything is about him.

Patroclus does a good job taking him down a notch: you were third in line to kill me, and you're as good as dead yourself.

Day  
**10** Books 18 and 19

**To Discuss After You Read**

12. Achilles got what his heart desired. What was the problem? [Book 18] ➔ *he got the begging repentance of Agamemnon, got the honor due him as a fighter, but he lost his best friend; his wish turned out to be harmful to him*

**Note:** Notice “the parallels between episodes in *The Iliad* and many Near Eastern myths, such as the story told in the Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which also concerns a hero who is the son of a goddess and who causes the death of his dearest companion, for whom he passionately grieves” (xxxviii). [Book 18]

**Note:** Achilles finally recognizes that the warnings of Odysseus and the others came to pass. But what an interesting speech to his mother: “I wish all strife could stop, among gods / And among men, and anger too” (112–113). And just a few lines later, “But I’m going now to find the man who destroyed / My beloved” (120–121). So despite his wish that fighting could stop, his anger has just turned to another, and he prepares for more destruction. He makes his motivation more chilling, though, in that he doesn’t just wish to punish Hector, but he almost gleefully mentions how the women will sob and groan (130–133). It’s not enough to revenge himself on the man; he wants to make the women hurt, too. Jerk. [Book 18]

**Note:** The action of the book stops for a long time in order to describe in detail the shield Hephaestus makes for Achilles. There are illustrations available online, and plenty more interpretations of the meaning, but as a start, think of concentric circles: the cosmos in the center, the city at war and the city at peace (though with antagonists going to the mediator—there is never really an absence of conflict), a plowed field, a harvest reaped, a vineyard, a herd of cattle, a sheep farm, dancing, and, around all, the ocean. [Book 18]

This could simply be a picture of the entire world, with various contrasts (plowed field and reaped field, food from plant and animal). Because the fighting ceases during the creation of the shield, a calm before the storm, the orderliness on the shield may emphasize the chaos and destruction of battle, another reminder of how much will be destroyed when Troy falls. [Book 18]

**Note:** One of my favorite poets, W.H. Auden, wrote a poem entitled, “The Shield of Achilles.” It’s not terribly long, and available online. The poem takes the vibrant descriptions of Homer and transforms them into modern warfare, with barbed wire and soldiers marching, obeying their commander though they come to grief. The last stanza reads, “The thin-lipped armorer, / Hephaestus, hobbled away, / Thetis of the shining breasts / Cried out in dismay / At what the god had wrought / To please her son, the strong / Iron-hearted man-slaying Achilles / Who would not live long.” [Book 18]

Whether the shield has something lovely or something ugly depicted, war offers only ugliness and death. [Book 18]

13. What does Briseis tell of Patroclus’s character? [Book 19] ➔ *he was dear to her because when she came to Achilles, a war prize, having watched Achilles kill her husband and three brothers, Patroclus advised her to be a silent bride to Achilles; does she cry for Patroclus, or for her dead husband? “the women mourned with her, / For Patroclus, yes, but each woman also / For her own private sorrows” (320–322); Patroclus allows them to grieve in a safe way; the men do the same, “remembering what he had left at home” (361)*

**Note:** The coming doom presses in, as mother Thetis, Achilles’ own knowledge, and even his horses predict his approaching death. [Book 18] ■



**Week 3**

Date:	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14	Day 15
<b>Literature</b>					
<i>The Essential Iliad</i>	Book 22	Books 23 and 24			
<i>Lively Art of Writing</i>			chaps. 2–3		
<i>The Odyssey</i>				Book I	Book II
<i>Risking Everything</i>	“Shoveling Snow with Buddha” pp. 11–12		“We Shall Not Cease” p. 13		“On Angels” p. 14
<b>Writing</b>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<b>Other Notes</b>					

*The Essential Iliad*

Day 11 Book 22

**To Discuss After You Read**

- Although Priam and Hecuba plead with Hector to enter safety, why does Hector refuse? ➔ *in a bizarre bit of psychology, he reasons that he is to blame for the Trojan’s defeat, since he did not order a defensive war when he had a chance; rather than face the Trojan men and women, he decides it’s better to either kill Achilles or be killed*
- Hector thinks, “Now I’ve destroyed / Half the army through my recklessness” (118–119). The same could be said of Achilles. Are they equally to blame? ➔ *although, in retrospect, it would have been more prudent for Hector to call a retreat, he could not have known that beforehand, and there is a part for him, having survived a nine year siege, the idea of destroying the Greek ships and ending the war with victory that would be attractive; just because the offensive didn’t work doesn’t mean it was a bad decision at the time; however, Achilles, who seems to suffer not at all on account of the Greek deaths, but only for his single loss of Patroclus, appears to have no guilt, even though many men were killed through his spite*

- Zeus earlier wanted to save a mortal, and was answered with, “what a thing to say, to save a mortal man, / With his fate already fixed, from a rattling death! / Do it. But don’t expect us to approve” (203–205). How did this come up before? ➔ *Zeus here wants to save faithful Hector, who has sacrificed often; earlier, Hera chided him for his wish to save his son Sarpedon, using almost identical words (16.478–480)*
- How does Hector die? ➔ *after both he and Achilles threw their spears, he rushes Achilles to fight with swords, not knowing that Athena had given Achilles his spear, so that Achilles had a longer reach*

**Note:** Hector pleads with Achilles to preserve his body. Of course, Hector had tried to desecrate the body of Patroclus, so his pleading seems more than bit hypocritical. But his treatment of Patroclus was beneath him, and Achilles’ treatment of Hector disgusts the reader (rightfully), especially as he wishes “my stomach would let me / Cut off your flesh in strips and eat it raw” (384–385). He wishes he were an animal. He went from being a spiteful child to wishing he were an animal. He has fallen far in his anger.

**Vocabulary**

... piled up earth to form a **tumulus** over it ...  
(an ancient burial mound; a barrow) [Book 23]

**To Discuss After You Read**

**Note:** After Achilles returns to camp, "His heart raged for his friend" (43). Even though Patroclus' killer was dead, even though he had defiled Hector's corpse to the extent he could, and dragged the body behind his chariot for Hector's wife to see, the rage Achilles feels is not dissipated. There is no satisfaction in revenge. What was destroyed will not return again. [Book 23]

**Note:** The high-crowned oaks come crashing down (128–129). Rather than just mention the funeral pyre, instead we read about the continued destruction that death causes. Here, even the landscape is destroyed. [Book 23]

**Note:** This is one of the most extraordinary scenes in all of literature: old Priam kisses the hands that killed his sons, and gives a moving speech about his desolation. Remember how this text began? Chryses came to plead with the man who had his child. He was denied at first, and horrible things happened as a result. Here, the father's request is granted, and more than granted, with Achilles even offering an unasked-for boon, an armistice for grief. [Book 24]

**Note:** As a woman, though it strikes me that Briseis not only had to kiss the hands of the man who killed her husband and brothers, but share his bed, without weeping. So while Priam's journey is astonishing, I think Briseis also had a hard life. [Book 24]

5. In speaking with Priam, why do you think Achilles cries for his father? [Book 24] ➔ *Achilles knows that he will never return to his father, and that his father will suffer similarly to how Priam suffers, grieving for his son killed by an enemy; at last Achilles comes into his humanity, feeling empathy and grief for someone other than himself, extending compassion rather than rage; it's a shocking, beautiful change, a welcome change of heart, since Hector died without hope of proper burial (22.383)*

6. Hector told Achilles as he died that Achilles' "heart is a lump / Of iron" (22.396–397). Achilles says something to Priam: "You have a heart of iron" (560). How is this description different? [Book 24] ➔ *Achilles' heart was unfeeling, cold, brutal; Priam's heart was strong*

**Note:** Remember the words of Thetis: "As long as he lives and sees the sunlight / He will be in pain, and I cannot help him" (18.64–65). And yet, Achilles ends asleep with Briseis. Sad, but, in some way, cleansed, his horrible pain eased for a time. [Book 24]

**Note:** The Greeks, as an entity, grieve Patroclus as they take their leave in the epic. Achilles, specifically, grieves Patroclus, though his final scene is sleeping next to Briseis, a return, for him, to the beginning, though with much

loss. And the Trojans end with grieving, also, not only their beloved protector, but their entire city, which they know will soon fall. [Book 24]

**Note:** I was once asked what I thought was the best ending line of a book. My Dad's favorite is the end of *Little Britches*, which I agree is outstanding. However, the last line of this text is what came to mind first: "Thus was the end of Hector, breaker of horses," in a different translation. Or, "That was the funeral of Hector, breaker of horses." [Book 24]

**Wrapping Up**

7. What is most memorable to you in this text? ➔ *the last chapter, with Priam's journey to ask his son's killer for the body; the rage*
8. Which of the characters, if any, did you like? ➔ *personally, I've always had a soft spot for Hector, even though he is defeated and I don't approve of all his actions; I like his relationship with his parents, wife and son, Helen*
9. What is the setting? ➔ *Troy, and the plains in front of it, including the Greek camp by the sea*
10. What is the basic plot? ➔ *after nine years of fighting the Trojans, Greek hero Achilles and Greek king Agamemnon have a fight over a girl. Achilles refuses to fight, and the Greeks begin to lose badly. To turn the tide, Achilles' best friend Patroclus goes to fight, and is killed by Trojan hero Hector. Achilles then kills Hector and tries to desecrate the body. Hector's father bravely enters the enemy camp to retrieve his son, and, in the end, Achilles' rage ends. The Greeks lost many, and the Trojans will lose many more*
11. What is the conflict? ➔ *although there is certainly person vs. person conflict throughout the story, whether Agamemnon and Achilles, or Hector and Patroclus, or Achilles and Hector, I think the primary conflict is person vs. self, as Achilles' rage makes him incapable of rational decisions until his rage dissipates in the end*
12. What is the theme? ➔ *Sparknotes claims "the glory of war," which seems reasonable except that everyone dies and the story is dark and depressing; I prefer either "rage is unproductive" or "the transitoriness of life," and I like this quote: "Great son of Tydeus, why ask about my lineage? / Human generations are like leaves in their seasons. / The wind blows them to the ground, but the tree / Sprouts new ones when spring comes again. / Men too. Their generations come and go" (6.148–152)*
13. What is the mood of this work? ➔ *dark, brooding, angry*
14. What is the tone, the author's attitude towards the subject? ➔ *I see it as a cautionary tale*

To close, I leave you with another favorite poet, John Keats, as he describes the wonder of his first experience reading Homer, translated by Chapman. I hope your first experience was even a little bit as amazing as Keats'.



Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,  
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
 Round many western islands have I been  
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told  
 That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:  
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:  
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
 When a new planet swims into his ken;  
 Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes  
 He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—  
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

## Lively Art of Writing

### Day 13 Chapters 2–3

#### Chapter 2 Questions #1–4 (p. 32)

1. *An opinion is a broad term. A thesis is more narrow: “The thesis of your essay is your opinion boiled down to one arguable statement.”*
2. 1) Take inventory. 2) Ask questions. 3) Look for relationships. 4) Ask the yes-or-no question. 5) Qualify.
3. *It allows you to consider both sides. It ensures that what you are asking is actually a thesis.*
4. *Qualification limits your thesis to what you can defend. As a statement is qualified, it becomes more accurate.*

#### Assignment (p. 32)

Choose one writing prompt and write an essay.  
 This assignment might be due in 24 hours.

#### Vocabulary #1–3 (p. 32)

1. **antithesis:** opposite; **arbitrary:** capricious; **arguable:** tenable; **formidable:** intimidating; **impassioned:** ardent; **indulgent:** dotting; **unpromising:** discouraging
2. *The principal of a school could be your pal (or maybe not).*
3. *A status symbol is “a possession that is taken to indicate a person’s wealth or high social or professional status.” Name brand clothes often have their name or logo on the outside. Some people wear expensive jewelry to demonstrate their wealth.*

#### Chapter 3 Questions #1–4 (p. 39)

1. *A full thesis has 1) the thesis, or point you are trying to prove; 2) points against your thesis (cons, for points you concede); 3) points in favor of your thesis (pros, for points you propound).*

2. *The goal of any argument is to persuade, and all three of the points of a full thesis are present in a successful argument.*
3. *If you have the full thesis in front of you, you can tell easily what points you want to make, and can easily put them into order in ascending importance.*
4. *The full thesis is a guide. Add to it, or adjust it, as you see fit and as you think of additional points. But do check each new point against the thesis statement, to see how it fits.*

#### Assignment

This assignment might be due in two or three days.

#### Vocabulary #1–2 (p. 40)

1. **adolescent:** teenager; **analogy:** likeness; **belligerent:** antagonistic; **concede:** grant; **flourish:** thrive; **groveling:** cringing; **incoherent:** unintelligible; **irrelevancy:** immaterial; **modify:** adjust; **preamble:** introduction; **propound:** put forward; **relevance:** applicability
2. *Answers will vary.*

## The Odyssey

### Day 14 Book I

#### Introduction

European literature begins with Homer. Only a handful of great epic poems exist; it seems an extended story in poetry, both interesting and beautiful, remains a challenge to both writer and reader. Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*. And then there’s Homer. Homer wrote two of the world’s great epics. Now I’m not sure if the book’s short list was accurate: Wikipedia lists a couple hundred epics throughout history, though undoubtedly some of those are shorter, or perhaps would not count as top-notch literature, or perhaps have had only fragments survive.

Wikipedia defines an epic poem thus:

a lengthy narrative poem, ordinarily concerning a serious subject containing details of heroic deeds and events significant to a culture or nation. Milman Parry and Albert Lord have argued that the Homeric epics, the earliest works of Western literature, were fundamentally an oral poetic form. These works form the basis of the epic genre in Western literature. Nearly every Western epic (including Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Dante’s *Divine Comedy*) self-consciously presents itself as a continuation of the tradition begun by these poems. Classical epic employs dactylic hexameter and recounts a journey, either physical (as typified by Odysseus in the *Odyssey*) or mental (as typified by Achilles in the *Iliad*) or both. Epics also tend to highlight cultural norms and to define or call into question cultural values, particularly as they pertain to heroism.

A bit later, Wikipedia continues:

An attempt to delineate ten main characteristics of an epic:

1. Begins in medias res [in the middle of things, starting at the lowest point, with flashbacks later to fill in the reader].
2. The setting is vast, covering many nations, the world or the universe.
3. Begins with an invocation to a muse (epic invocation). [Restricted to European Classics; the Epic of Gilgamesh, for example, did not have this.]
4. Begins with a statement of the theme.
5. Includes the use of epithets [a short description that accompanies a name, like Alexander the Great].
6. Contains long lists, called an epic catalogue [the lists place the finite action within a broader, universal context].
7. Features long and formal speeches.
8. Shows divine intervention on human affairs.
9. Features heroes that embody the values of the civilization.
10. Often features the tragic hero's descent into the Underworld or hell.

The hero generally participates in a cyclical journey or quest, faces adversaries that try to defeat him in his journey and returns home significantly transformed by his journey. The epic hero illustrates traits, performs deeds, and exemplifies certain morals that are valued by the society the epic originates from. Many epic heroes are recurring characters in the legends of their native culture.

Now that you have read parts of both *Gilgamesh* and *The Iliad*, you probably recognize at least some of these elements. They will all show up again here.

*The Odyssey* is one of the perennial “must-reads,” described as “first of all realistic novels, as it is the first of adventure stories, and still perhaps the best.” Odysseus the trickster surmounts challenges from immortals and mortals to reach his home again.

After a decade away from Homer, I returned to *The Odyssey* and opened it at random. Within a few lines, I found myself in tears. So glorious! So powerful! Homer’s language, his pacing, his hero, his plot!

Was there actually a man named Homer who wrote both epics? Scholars debate his existence. Perhaps instead of a brilliant mind, there was a gradual distilling of oral tradition until the poems were set in some amorphous fashion. Some experts think it unlikely that a single man could have completed both epics, while others argue that the stylistic similarities are too consistent to allow for multiple authors.

If there was a single man (named Homer or something else), no one knows any facts of his life. Tradition holds that he was blind, based on a particular way of translating the name “Homer.”

The dates of the epics, too, are up for debate. The 8th Century B.C., or the 6th Century B.C.? Or some other time?

The debates over time and author are unlikely to be resolved. But, happily, the epics remain.

British poet and literary critic Matthew Arnold said that Homer had four qualities: “that he is eminently rapid; that he is eminently plain and direct, both in the evolution of his thought and in the expression of it, that is, both in his syntax and in his words; that he is eminently plain and direct in the substance of his thought, that is, in his matter and ideas; and finally, that he is eminently noble.”

There are a couple dozen English translations. I feel the Fitzgerald fits Matthew Arnold’s description the best: rapid, easy to understand, clear in thought, noble. Can you think of a better list for a storyteller, or a translator?

If this is your first introduction to Homer, welcome.

\* \* \*

The Postscript of this text claims that about 500 lines could be spoken or performed per hour. If you take the first four books, that comes to about 2000 lines, or about four hours of performance. Thus, the whole story could be told over six nights.

My six divisions, at any rate, will help us to see the entire poem in outline. In the first performance (I through IV) the last is of course foreshadowed if not determined, Olympian decisions are taken, we are introduced on the scene to the situation that is to be remedied, the conflict to be decided, and we are prepared to meet the famous man who has it all to cope with. In the second (V-VIII) we find him in a distant setting and see him in action, facing other situations, other challenges, making his way back toward the big one that awaits him. In the third (IX-XII) he himself takes over the narration and interests us directly in his past adventures, as though he were now the poet before us. In the fourth or “slow movement” as I call it (XIII-XVI) we see him at last near to his home and battleground, gathering information, testing a likely helper, and reunited with his son. In the fifth (XVII-XX) he enters the scene itself, comes to grips with his situation, suffers it, and sizes up the persons involved in it at close hand. In the sixth (XXI-XXIV) he fights and wins, remedies and recomposes everything (497).

\* \* \*

The action begins, as the best books do, in medias res, or into the middle of things.

For a bit of background, in the time between *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, Troy has fallen and almost all its nobles and warriors die (the epic poem *The Aeneid* is the story of Aeneas, one Trojan who survives). Since Troy’s fall, almost ten years have passed before the actual action of *The Odyssey* begins.

Odysseus dominates this text. Leland Ryken in *Realms of Gold* summarizes the many-sided Odysseus: “The density or ‘thickness’ of his character can be attributed partly to the complex qualities that he exhibits—physical prowess and courage, intelligence and wit, faithfulness in personal relations, and piety to the gods. He is a paradoxical character, capable of both strong emotions and remarkable self-control, of both fixed purpose to get home and self-defeating curiosity to explore everything along the way. He displays both warmth and hardness toward his friends and family. We also see Odysseus in a range of roles: leader,

father, husband, son, king, worshiper of the gods, victim, victor” (31). You may not always find him likable, but he remains an interesting and engrossing protagonist.

Throughout this text, Homer uses a variety of epithets to refer to Odysseus, starting with, “that man skilled in all ways of contending” (line 2). Keep a list of the various titles for a better grasp of Odysseus’s versatility.

**Note:** The map of Odysseus’ wanderings comes right before the text begins.

**Note:** References in the notes below refer to line numbers in each book (also called “chapter”), not page numbers. For example, when reading Book 1, if a note ends with (260–262), that refers to lines 260–262. When a line is referenced from a different book than the current notes pertain to, the book number shows up in Roman numerals. When reading Book 10, if (II.260–262) ends a note, it refers to Book 2, lines 260–262.

### Vocabulary

... this is **rapine** ... (the violent seizure of someone’s property)

### To Discuss After You Read

- Describe Homer’s hook, how he draws the reader into the action. ➔ *Homer begins with broad, captivating strokes: Odysseus wants to get himself and his men home, but his men die through stupidity (what? how did that happen?); Odysseus remains trapped with a beautiful nymph, Poseidon angrily thwarts Odysseus’ plans, but Poseidon is on vacation when the story begins; this broad painting of events as a prelude to the action reminds me of the opening of Star Wars, with a quick description so the audience understands the initial action*
- In the first speech in the book, Zeus claims that mortals complain that the gods cause all their afflictions. How does he respond? ➔ *the failings of mortals make their lives worse—“Greed and folly / double the suffering in the lot of man” (50–51)*
- Pay attention throughout the text to Zeus’s claim—what do the mortals bring on themselves? How much are the gods to blame?

**Note:** To prove that people rush to their own ruin, Zeus uses an example of Aigisthos. The story, told by Greek playwright Aeschylus in his trilogy *The Oresteia*, is as follows. When Helen first goes with lover Paris to Troy, Helen’s husband Menelaus demands of the various Greek fiefdoms in his alliance that they join him in the fight against Troy. Menelaus’s brother, Agamemnon found the winds constantly against him, so he kills his daughter so the gods will allow favorable winds to sail his fleet against Troy. His furious wife Klytaimnestra (also spelled Clytemnestra) takes Aigisthos, Agamemnon’s cousin, as a lover during Agamemnon’s ten-year absence (Agamemnon also certainly is not chaste in his absence, but this is of less concern to the playwright). Aigisthos hates the line of Atreus, his uncle (and Agamemnon’s father), since Atreus made his brother

(Aigisthos’ father), eat his sons (Aigisthos’ older brothers), before Aigisthos and his father go into exile.

When Agamemnon returns, Klytaimnestra kills him the first day, and Aigisthos rejoices. Such a horrible homecoming! The gods require revenge, so Orestes, son of Agamemnon and Klytaimnestra now kills his mother and her lover to revenge his father.

It’s a sordid story.

And do note that, since the focus of this book is on a homecoming, this opening will contrast with what is to come.

- What is Athena’s plan to bring Odysseus home? ➔ *Hermes must tell the nymph to let Odysseus go home; Athena will go to Ithaka to encourage the son to warn off the suitors (remember Zeus’s claim? “We gods / had warned him” (55–56), and so, with destruction coming, now the gods warn the suitors); then the son must go to seek news of his father, “and win his own renown about the world” (122)*
- What do you think of this plan? ➔ *odd—Odysseus does not act, only those around him: the nymph who must let him go, his son who must seek for him; Athena who wants his son to gain glory, not by finding his father, but merely traveling to find news of his father*
- How does Telemakhos look initially? ➔ *unhappy, daydreaming, imagining his father will come back; then realizes he is rude to a guest and chastises himself while he welcomes Athena—he seems a boy of thought, well-trained in hospitality, but not a man of action*
- As the suitors eat, they think of nothing but food. “Not till desire / for food and drink had left them were they mindful / of dance and song, that are the grace of feasting” (186–188). What observations can you draw from these lines? ➔ *the suitors eat as if they are starving, entirely focused on food alone (which, if they were starving would make sense; however, they sit on hides from meat they have killed, and have no excuse); culturally it seems, in Ithaka, dance and song grace meals, and a well-bred person should appreciate those while also eating a meal*

**Note:** Fitzgerald’s poetry is so perfect, it almost seems prose. That is, until you compare it to prose. Fitzgerald gives a short description of Laertes, Odysseus’s father. “I hear the old man comes to town no longer, / stays up country, ailing, with only one / old woman to prepare his meat and drink” (232–234). Beautiful. Now consider the same passage translated by Rieu into prose: “For I gather that he no longer comes to town, but lives a hard and lonely life on his farm with an old servant-woman, who puts his food and drink before him” (Ixiix–Ixix).

- How do the suitors put constant pressure on Odysseus’s wife to marry one of them? ➔ *they eat the substance of the house, drink the wine, live in the house rent-free while they play, lazily; Penelope is caught in a dilemma: she cannot easily kick them out without choosing one, lest they rise up in rage and kill her household; to*



choose one is disgusting, as they are arrogant gluttons, and since there is no word of her husband for about ten of the nineteen or so years he has been away (ten fighting at Troy, and almost ten traveling), and he is presumed dead, she has no defender: she either marries one and keeps a bit of the wealth Odysseus gathered, or continues to watch her estate devoured by these louts, knowing that eventually they will turn on Telemakhos

23. How does Athena's visit immediately change Telemakhos? ➔ *she first encourages him: "You need not bear this insolence of theirs, / you are a child no longer. Have you heard / what glory young Orestes won / when he cut down that two-faced man, Aigisthos, / for killing his illustrious father?" (343–347); as a young man grown to age 21 without a father to advise or guide, to have some wise counsel must fall like a balm on his soul; then, "as she went she put new spirit in him, / a new dream of his father, clearer now, / so that he marvelled to himself / divining that a god had been his guest. / Then godlike in his turn he joined the suitors" (370–374)*
24. Like Zeus, Athena also mentions Orestes, in this case mentioning the glory he won when he killed Aigisthos. How is Telemakhos' situation similar to Orestes? How does Athena expect him to act? Is this a fair comparison? ➔ *Telemakhos lives with injustice, even as Orestes did (to my mind, Telemakhos suffers greater injustice); Athena expects Telemakhos to kill his mother's suitors, since they mock Odysseus' great name, and spoil his property; Orestes revenges death, but Telemakhos will revenge theft and cruelty to women; Telemakhos must kill many men, while Orestes had to kill only one man and his mother*

**Note:** The allure of Penelope, "this beautiful lady" (382), is perhaps that of Sarai, Abraham's wife, who, though elderly by today's standards, was such a desirable woman that two kings took her from Abraham. On the other hand, Penelope, assuming she married at about age 15 and delivered as soon as possible, could be as young as 36. Today it's hard to imagine a house of young bucks vying for the hand of a woman approaching middle age (at best), and yet there are classic movie stars who retain their beauty much longer than a fairly youthful 36.

25. Telemakhos speaks to his mother so that "The lady gazed in wonder and withdrew" (408). What did he say that surprised her? ➔ *he orders her to let the minstrel sing; since Odysseus was not the only hero not to return home, she is not the only one who feels sorrow, and the minstrel is not to blame for her sorrow, but Zeus; let the suitors listen, and perhaps they will feel ashamed; such wisdom and leadership are new, very different from his daydreaming of a few hours before*
26. How does Telemakhos change in his interaction with the suitors? ➔ *when they all behave like jocks in the locker room, boasting of what they intend to do to the queen, her son demands they be quiet for the song, rather than shout, and he warns them that they will be evicted the next day*

27. When Antinoos insults Telemakhos, "Zeus forbid you should be king in Ithaka" (436), paraphrase the soft answer Telemakhos gives to turn away wrath. ➔ *I would be glad to be king if Zeus should let me, since a king is respected; I know, though, that there are plenty of other worthy men who might become king once King Odysseus dies, in which case, I just want to be left alone to rule my household, the house my father provided for me*

**Note:** When Athena visits, Telemakhos confesses his belief that "unknown death and silence are the fate" (263) of his father. Athena gave him such hope that his father would return that his responses after that, though on the surface they sound as if he still believes that, underneath it shows that he has renewed hope. For example, "Odysseus was not the only one at Troy / never to know the day of his homecoming. / Others, how many others, lost their lives!" (405–407). This sounds like "Odysseus and other all died." But, reading more carefully, the first two lines are true: Odysseus hasn't known his homecoming. The last line, too, is true: others lost their lives (but Odysseus didn't).

Then, when Telemakhos speaks to Eurymakhos, he claims, "I would not trust a message, if one came" (466), even though he is trusting Athena's words. Literally, though, what Telemakhos says is true: he has had no news of his father, he has no real hope, other than his firm belief that he has been visited by an immortal.

28. The title of Book One is "A Goddess Intervenes." How is this title appropriate? ➔ *the action of the story appears to be stagnant at the opening: Odysseus stuck on an island, the substance of his house devoured by suitors. Goddess Athena approaches Zeus when enemy Poseidon is away, and starts the action moving, specifically intervening in the life of son Telemakhos. I tried to think of a better title, and could not*

**Note:** Here are the titles of Odysseus in this book, excluding the obvious ones such as husband, father, son: the wanderer (3), Lord Odysseus (31), the master mind of war (68), poor mournful man (76), that kingly man (87), one incomparable (394).

Day  
15

Book II

#### Vocabulary

... **soughing** from the north-west ... (make a moaning, whistling, or rushing sound)

#### To Discuss After You Read

29. How does Telemakhos continue his change from timid boy to brave man? ➔ *for the first time ever, he calls an assembly: "No meeting has been held here since our king, / Odysseus, left port in the decked ships" (27–28); he declares his grievances in public, as a man among men*

30. Telemakhos says that the suitors know they are not worthy to marry Penelope, and that they have come as predators, not suitors. How does he figure? ➔ *“lads with no stomach for an introduction / to Ikarios, her father across the sea; / he would require a wedding gift, and give her / to someone who found favor in her eyes” (55–58); these boys don’t want to offer a gift, and know they haven’t found favor with the lady; as suitors, though, they can carouse without redress*
31. How does Antinoos, worst of the suitors, defend his actions? ➔ *the suitors aren’t to blame, but Penelope is, who offers us hope for almost four years now; Telemakhos, if you dislike this, turn your mother out or make her marry; “we’ll never go anywhere else, / until she takes an Akhaian to her liking” (135–136)*
32. How has Penelope held her own in the midst of enemies in her house? ➔ *she claimed to need to weave a burial shroud for her father-in-law; she wove during the day, and took out her work each night, thus forestalling the day of decision; this worked until she was betrayed by a maid; she has also relied on “Athena’s gifts— / talent in handicraft and a clever mind; / so cunning—history cannot show the like” (124–126)*
33. If the suitors die in Odysseus’ house, can they blame the gods for their misfortune? ➔ *as Zeus says, man’s greed and folly increases man’s sorrow; the suitors gorge at their own risk, staking their lives that Odysseus will not return; Zeus also sends the eagles as a warning, even as he sent Hermes to Klytaimnestra’s lover Aigisthos, and the Ithakan prophet accurately foretells the future, so the suitors have no way to blame any but themselves for their coming demise*
34. Paraphrase the rebuke Mentor gives the Ithakans (240–253). ➔ *the next ruler might as well be cruel and evil. Odysseus was a fatherly ruler, thoughtful, mild, kind, virtuous, but you don’t care enough to help his family. The suitors disgust me, but they risk their lives. The Ithakans are worse, not to rise up against this small number of pillagers*
35. How do different people try to dissuade Telemakhos from his intended journey? ➔ *Leokritos doubts the boy will actually leave (267–269), the suitors both mock his cause and threaten to divide up his possessions; his dear nurse wants him to avoid dangers lest he meet a similar fate to his father*
- Note:** The three times Telemakhos mentions his father, he keeps up the dissimulation: “My distinguished father is lost” (49), which is true, but lost as in “not sure of the way home,” not lost as in “dead.”
- Next, “Let me lament in peace / my private loss” (75–76): his loss is private, a loss of a father during his formative years, and yet not a permanent loss.
- “My father is either dead or far away” (140): initially, he assumed only that his father was dead, not far away.
36. Book Two is titled “A Hero’s Son Awakens.” How is this an appropriate title? ➔ *literally, when dawn comes, Telemakhos awakens, and does not sleep again through the action of this story. Antinoos reminds Telemakhos of how he has eaten with the suitors, but Telemakhos has woken to the true nature of the suitors’ behavior, and he cannot return to cowardly consumption again. In this chapter, Telemakhos joins the men, showing a bit of his heroic nature*
- Note:** The new titles of Odysseus in this book: the great Odysseus (17), my distinguished father (49), strong Odysseus (63), the great tactician (182), the prince Odysseus (236), worn by hardships (365), royal Odysseus (375), the hero Odysseus (418). ■

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## **Section Three**

Instructor's Guide Resources

## Writing Prompts

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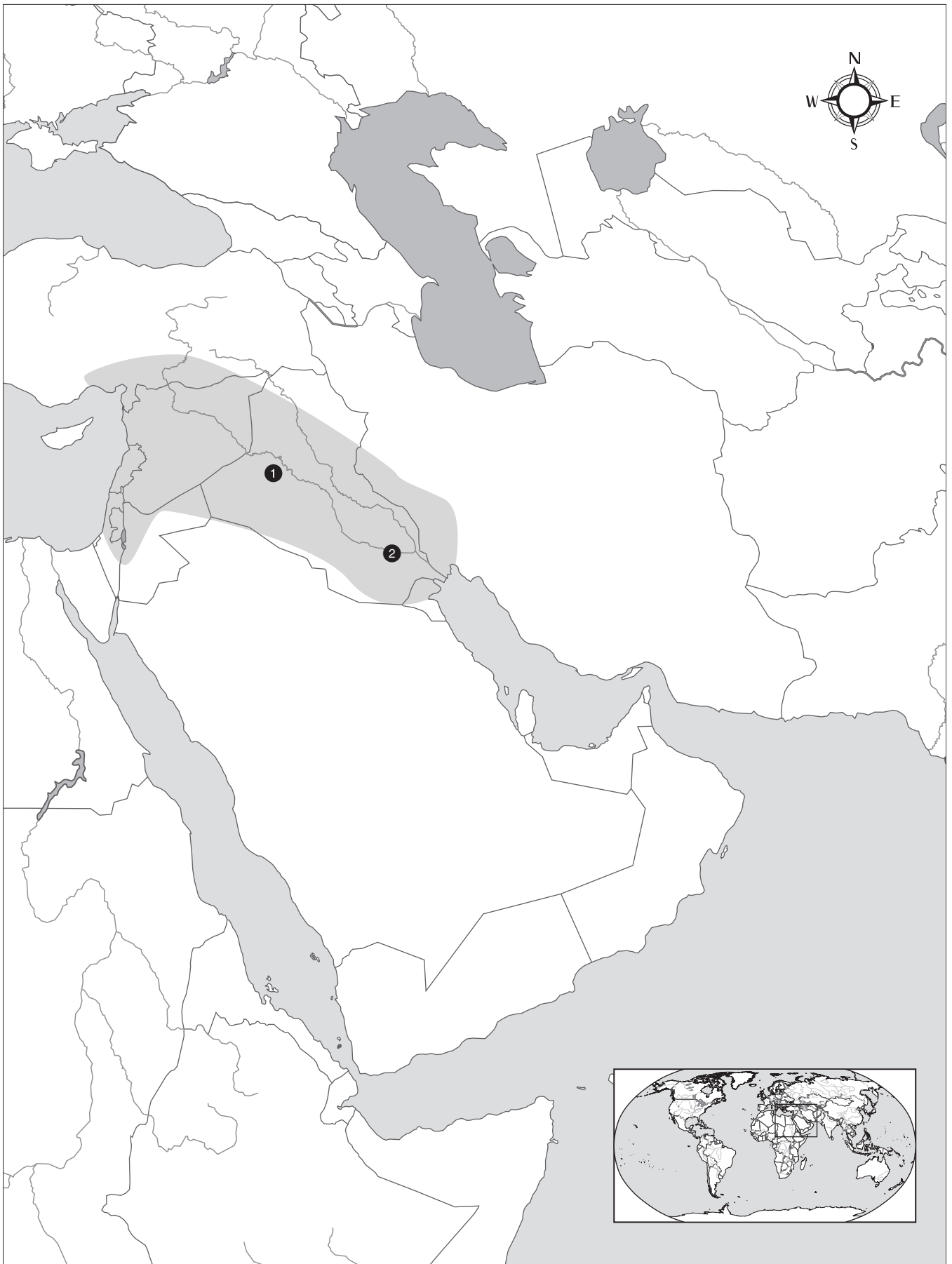
1. Tell an event during your summer vacation.
2. What is your first memory?
3. Record the details of a vivid dream you had. What do you think it means?
4. Tell about a memorable meal.
5. Perhaps all your birthdays have been excellent (in which case, congratulations). What special memory do you carry with you?
6. What is a memorable gift you have received?
7. What traditions do you enjoy around Christmas? How do you celebrate?
8. Record the process of how you make something.
9. When you were a child, what was something that made you cry?
10. What do you like about a close friend?
11. Describe your favorite pet. Or, lacking a pet, your favorite stuffed animal or other companion, real or imaginary.
12. Write a persuasive paper for your friend to take up the same hobby you enjoy.
13. A pint of ice cream that you bought for a night out with friends turned out to be bad. Write a letter to the company to complain and seek restitution. (They say that you can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar.)
14. What is your favorite month of the year, and what do you like about it? Describe it, in detail.
15. Write a short poem about some standout event in your last week. Delete unneeded words. Make each line break meaningful.
16. Make a list of things you would like to try while you are still a teenager, a bucket list of sorts.
17. Describe a time on a vacation that went awry.
18. When you and a friend had a fight, how did you resolve it?
19. What was your favorite childhood toy? Write about it.
20. What happened during one of the best days of your life?
21. What made one of the worst days of your life so terrible?
22. Have you experienced grief yet? Write about it. If not, talk to your parents about a grief they dealt with. How did it affect them?
23. When were you the most frightened?
24. Have you seen very well behaved children? How did their parents train them? Interview the parents and find out some of their methods.
25. Who is one of your heroes? Why?
26. Think of a moment that changed your life. What was it? Describe it.
27. Did you have a meaningful experience in nature? What happened?
28. Who is your favorite character from a book? What do you like about that character?
29. Summarize the plot of your favorite novel.
30. What is your favorite poem? Why?
31. If you could see any play, musical, opera, performance, which would you go see? What do you like about it? (Or which one have you most enjoyed?)
32. Write a list of 50 things you enjoy.
33. Someone gives you \$50 and tells you to design a staycation (vacation at your house) for yourself with the money. What would you do?
34. What historical figure would you like to meet? Write some interview questions to ask.
35. If cost was no object, where would you like to travel most?
36. What is your most interesting story about sports, either sports you have played or have watched?
37. Think about yourself as a child. What words would you use to describe yourself. How about now? Compare and contrast the lists. (You might need your parents' help for this one.)
38. What makes you angry?
39. Summarize the plot of a movie you like.
40. What is a favorite memory of your dad?
41. What is a favorite memory of your mom?
42. What is a favorite memory of another family member (sibling, grandparent)?
43. Describe the best ad you have ever seen.
44. Interview your parents about one of the new technologies that has come about in their lifetime. How has it made life better? Or worse?
45. Of the clothing styles you see, what do you particularly dislike? Why?
46. Think of three buildings you have seen in your life that stand out as unique. What makes them special?



47. Write a resume for a job. What have you accomplished in your life?
48. What hobby or sport do you think you'd enjoy?
49. What habit or characteristic about yourself do you like?
50. What is the most valuable machine in your life? Why?
51. Did you ever have an enemy who became a friend?
52. If you could go out to eat, where would you go and what would you order? Describe it.
53. What is your favorite restaurant memory?
54. What was your favorite game as a child?
55. What purchase or present were you excited about ... until it arrived?
56. What difficult decision did you have to make?
57. Tell about a time you or a family member was lost.
58. Did you ever have to wear something you hated?
59. Tell about a time you took unusual transportation: helicopter, submarine, limousine, racecar, hot-air balloon, carriage, sleigh, etc.
60. What is the most important thing that you forgot or lost?
61. Tell about a hospital experience.
62. What is the worst natural disaster you've been in?
63. What is the best concert you've attended?
64. Think of three things you've done with a friend, or three things you would like to do.
65. Tell a memory of a tree: climbing, seeing, picking, milling; anything!
66. Who is the most famous person you've met?
67. Write about a move you made, and how you knew you were now at home in the new place.
68. When have you been a misfit?
69. Write about a day in another country. Or another city, another place. How was it to be outside of your home space?
70. Have you ever given good advice? Have you ever received good advice?
71. What is a funny thing that happened to you?
72. If your house was threatened with fire, what would you grab in five minutes? What would you most want to save?
73. What are the benefits of being whatever number child you are (the oldest, the middle, the youngest)?
74. Write a short biography of your mother.
75. Write a short biography of your father.
76. What three things would you wish for (and you're not allowed to ask for more wishes)? How would your life change, should those wishes come true?
77. What is unique about you?
78. What is something your family has taught you?
79. Do a brain dump of everything that comes to mind. Can you figure out how to accomplish the tasks?
80. Retell a happy memory with your family.
81. How can you tell if someone loves you, even if they don't say it?
82. What thing gives you comfort?
83. If you had to work in a retail store, what store would you want to work in? Why?
84. What subject do you enjoy the most? Why?
85. Do you agree with the saying, "Money can't buy happiness"? Why or why not?
86. If your life was a television show, what snippets of the past would you need in order to catch the viewer up to speed quickly?
87. On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend this year to a friend?
88. Write a persuasive paper on how far we are from animals, really.
89. What is a treasured memory with a grandparent?
90. What do you find challenging, but rewarding? ■

# Epic of Gilgamesh—Map 1

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## “World Literature with Language Arts”—Scope and Sequence: Schedule for Topics and Skills

<b>Week</b>		<b>Genre</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Author’s Birthplace</b>
1		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Mesopotamia</i>
2		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Homer</i>	<i>Ancient Greece</i>
3		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Homer</i>	<i>Ancient Greece</i>
4		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Homer</i>	<i>Ancient Greece</i>
5		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Homer</i>	<i>Ancient Greece</i>
6		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Homer</i>	<i>Ancient Greece</i>
7		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Homer</i>	<i>Ancient Greece</i>
8		<i>Classic Tragedy (Play)</i>	<i>Sophocles</i>	<i>Ancient Greece</i>
9		<i>Novel</i>	<i>Chinua Achebe</i>	<i>Nigeria</i>
10		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Virgil</i>	<i>Ancient Rome</i>
11		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Virgil</i>	<i>Ancient Rome</i>
12		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Virgil</i>	<i>Ancient Rome</i>
13		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Virgil</i>	<i>Ancient Rome</i>
14		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Dante</i>	<i>Italy</i>
15		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Dante</i>	<i>Italy</i>
16		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Dante</i>	<i>Italy</i>
17		<i>Epic Poem</i>	<i>Dante</i>	<i>Italy</i>
18		<i>Tragedy (Play)</i>	<i>Shakespeare</i>	<i>England</i>
19		<i>Comedy (Play)</i>	<i>Moliere</i>	<i>France</i>
20		<i>Epic Poem (this edition in Prose)</i>	<i>Valmiki/Narayan</i>	<i>India</i>
21		<i>Novel</i>	<i>Cervantes</i>	<i>Spain</i>
22		<i>Novel</i>	<i>Cervantes</i>	<i>Spain</i>
23		<i>Novel</i>	<i>Cervantes</i>	<i>Spain</i>
24		<i>Satire</i>	<i>Voltaire</i>	<i>France</i>
25		<i>Novel</i>	<i>Gabriel Garcia Marquez</i>	<i>Colombia</i>
26		<i>Novel</i>	<i>Dostoevsky</i>	<i>Russia</i>
27		<i>Novel</i>	<i>Dostoevsky</i>	<i>Russia</i>
28		<i>Novel</i>	<i>Dostoevsky</i>	<i>Russia</i>
29		<i>Novel</i>	<i>Dostoevsky</i>	<i>Russia</i>
30		<i>Memoir</i>	<i>Elie Wiesel</i>	<i>Romania</i>
31		<i>Novel</i>	<i>Albert Camus</i>	<i>Algeria</i>
32		<i>Short Story</i>	<i>Various</i>	<i>China<sup>1</sup></i>
33		<i>Graphic Novel</i>	<i>Marjane Satrapi</i>	<i>Iran</i>
34		<i>Missionary Biography</i>	<i>Nik Ripken</i>	<i>America</i>
35		<i>Missionary Biography</i>	<i>Nik Ripken</i>	<i>America</i>
36		<i>Drama (Play)</i>	<i>Michael Frayn</i>	<i>England</i>

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1. Course also includes short stories from Africa, Japan, India, Latin America.



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