Guided Questions for *The Odyssey*

The Odyssey notes and questions p. 647-658

**“Tell the Story” (651)**

1. What does the word invocation mean? What is the purpose of an invocation?
2. Who is speaking in the invocation? To whom is he speaking?
3. What information and facts about Odysseus are given in the invocation? Provided 3 examples.
4. Which god does not favor Odysseus and makes his journey home even more difficult?
5. Using your notes, which characteristics of an epic poem does this section exhibit?

**“Calypso, The Sweet Nymph” (652-654)**

1. Who is speaking in this section?
2. How long is Odysseus with Calypso? Where does he want to go and why can he not go there?
3. Who orders his release and why? Why brings news of his release?
4. What is Odysseus doing the first time the reader meets him? Why is that surprising?
5. Why does Calypso act as though freeing Odysseus is her idea?
6. What does she offer him if he should decide to stay?

**“I am Laertes’s son” and “The Lotus Eaters” p 656-658**

1. Odysseus lands in Phaecia with King Alcinous. He tells Alcinous and his people who he is, where he has been and what he has been doing for ten years. The rest of the story of Odysseus’s wanderings is narrated by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and told as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. These wanderings cover pages 656-686 in the textbook.
2. To whom is Odysseus speaking?
3. What information does he relay about himself?
4. According to Odysseus, where was the first stop on his journey and what happened there?

“**The Cyclops” p. 660-670**

1. Who is Polyphemus and to whom is he related? What is his job?
2. Describe the personality of Polyphemus.
3. Explain the ancient Greek value regarding guests. What is its role in this section?
4. What is Polyphemus’s attitude toward the gods?
5. Why don’t Odysseus and his men simply kill Polyphemus in the cave?
6. How do they injure the Cyclops?
7. How do they finally escape from the cave? Describe the plan.
8. Explain the name trick Odysseus plays on the Cyclops. How does that trick help them escape?
9. As a result of this encounter with the Cyclops, how many men are killed?
10. At this time, which god is helping Odysseus?
11. What FLAWS does Odysseus present to the audience?
12. What is the curse of the Cyclops? Identify it and give five provisions of the curse.
13. Give one example of dramatic irony in this section.

**“Circe and the Land of the Dead”p. 673-677**

1. Why do the men decide to enter Circe’s house? Why doesn’t Eurylochus go?
2. What happens once the men go in?
3. Which god helps Odysseus “overpower” Circe?
4. Where does Circe send Odysseus? Who is he supposed to see?
5. What power does Tiresias possess?
6. Who goes to the Underworld and why?

**\*\*Not in book: Who does Odysseus see in the Underworld that he doesn’t expect to see?**

1. Which god plans the evil that will hurt Odysseus?
2. What animals are Odysseus and his men to avoid? Who do they belong to? What will happen if they do harm them? What does this remind you of?
3. According to Tiresias, what should Odysseus do about the suitors?
4. Make a chart comparing the curse of the Cyclops and the prophecy given to Odysseus in this section

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| **Curse of the Cyclops** | **Tiresias’s prophecy** |
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**The Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis (pp. 678-684)**

1. In the first section, Odysseus is summarizing for Alcinous and his people what \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ had told him about the rest of his journey.
2. What is the power of the Sirens?
3. How is Odysseus supposed to save his crew from the Sirens?
4. What is he supposed to do at the Sirens’ island?
5. What do the Sirens SYMBOLIZE?
6. What is Scylla? How many legs does she have? How many heads? How many men can Odysseus expect to lose?
7. What is Charybdis? How many times a day does she spout and spew?
8. What is Circe’s advice regarding Scylla and Charybdis?
9. Circe cautions Odysseus AGAIN about the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ belonging to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**\*\*The actual adventure pages 680-683**

1. What is Circe’s prophecy regarding who will survive? Why doesn’t Odysseus tell his men about it?
2. Summarize how Odysseus and his men get through the Sirens.
3. Why doesn’t Odysseus tell them about Scylla?
4. Where do Odysseus and his men go next?

**The Cattle of the Sun god (pp. 684-686)**

1. Odysseus urges his crew to bypass the island where the cattle are. Why do they stop?

\* What promise does Odysseus force his men to make?

1. How much time passes before the men actually touch the cattle?

\* Why?

\*Who do you think sent the storms? Why?

1. Where is Odysseus when the men touch the cattle?
2. Who talks the men into killing the cattle? How does he do it?
3. What argument does Helios make to Zeus regarding what to do to the ship’s crew?
4. How do Odysseus’s men die?
5. Where does Odysseus end up? What happens there?

**Coming Home (Yellow Box p.690)**

1. How does Odysseus return to Ithaca? Who gave him this transportation?
2. What does Athena advise Odysseus to do? Why?
3. Who is the person that Odysseus visits? What does this person symbolize?
4. What are three things Athena tells Telemachus in Book 15?

**Father and Son p.691-694**

1. Is it wise for Athena to give Odysseus such advice? Explain
2. Who arrives home at the beginning of this section (besides Odysseus)? Why has this person come to see Eumaeus?
3. Why does Odysseus’s son NOT want the beggar to go to the castle?
4. How does Athena alter Odysseus’s appearance? What is Telemachus’s reaction? What does he believe is the real reason for the recent occurrences?

**“The Beggar and the Faithful Dog/Summary section” p.694-696**

1. Who recognizes Odysseus when he returns home? What happens? Explain the symbolism here.
2. How does the Greek concept of treating a guest come to play and show irony in this section?
3. What story does the beggar tell Penelope? What information does he give Penelope? Why? How is this scene an example of dramatic irony?
4. At the end of the summary, Odysseus wants something but fears something else? Name both if these things.

“**The Test of the Great Bow’ p. 698-702**

1. Define suitor.
2. What impossible task does Penelope set for the suitors?
3. What does Odysseus reveal to the cowherd and the swineherd? Why is it notable that he tells these “servants” this information?
4. Why don’t the suitors want the beggar to try the bow challenge? Who intercedes on his behalf?
5. Why don’t the suitors have enough weapons? Where are Penelope and the other women?
6. How does Odysseus reveal himself to the suitors? What does he plan to do next and why?

**“Death at the Palace” p. 703-705 \*\*This section is the climax, or high point, of the epic.**

1. How many suitors will Odysseus have to face? Who does he eliminate first and why?
2. What arguments do the suitors make in an effort to saves themselves from Odysseus’s wrath?

**Odysseus and Penelope p.706-709**

1. Odysseus has yet to reveal himself to his wife. Why has he waited so long to do so?
2. What does Penelope believe is occurring? How does she test Odysseus?