

THE ODYSSEY // BOOKS 1-3

TEACHER KEY // BETWEEN CLASSES

1. What problem has taken over Odysseus's household at the beginning of Book 1?

Suggested answer: The suitors have occupied the palace, consumed the family's resources, and pressured Penelope to remarry.

2. Why is Poseidon important to Odysseus's situation?

Suggested answer: Poseidon is angry with Odysseus and is a major divine obstacle preventing an easy homecoming.

3. How does Telemachus demonstrate xenia when Athena arrives disguised as Mentos?

Suggested answer: He welcomes the stranger, offers food and a seat, and treats the guest respectfully before demanding information.

4. What three actions does Athena encourage Telemachus to take?

Suggested answer: Call an assembly, confront the suitors, and travel to Pylos and Sparta for information about Odysseus.

5. What change in Telemachus becomes visible by the end of Book 1?

Suggested answer: He begins speaking and acting with more authority instead of remaining passive.

6. Why does Telemachus call an assembly in Book 2?

Suggested answer: He wants to publicly challenge the suitors' abuse of his household and demand that they leave.

7. Explain Penelope's weaving trick and what it reveals about her.

Suggested answer: She weaves by day and secretly unravels the shroud at night to delay choosing a husband; it shows intelligence, loyalty, and resistance.

8. What warning is connected to the appearance of the two eagles?

Suggested answer: The omen is interpreted as a warning that Odysseus may return and punish the suitors.

9. How does Athena help Telemachus begin his journey?

Suggested answer: She encourages him, disguises herself as Mentor, helps arrange a ship and crew, and supports the secret departure.

10. Why is Telemachus's departure from Ithaca an important character moment?

Suggested answer: He leaves the safety of home and begins acting independently in pursuit of knowledge and responsibility.

11. How does Nestor demonstrate xenia in Book 3?

Suggested answer: He feeds and welcomes the travelers before questioning them.

12. Why can't Nestor simply tell Telemachus where Odysseus is?

Suggested answer: Nestor lost track of some Greek leaders after divisions and difficult homeward journeys following Troy.

13. What happened to Agamemnon after the Trojan War?

Suggested answer: Agamemnon returned home and was murdered by Aegisthus.

14. Why is the story of Orestes especially meaningful for Telemachus?

Suggested answer: Orestes avenged his father and protected his family's honor, making him a model of decisive action for a son in a threatened household.

15. What does Nestor realize when Athena reveals herself?

Suggested answer: He recognizes that Telemachus is being directly supported by a goddess.

16. Why does Nestor send Telemachus to Sparta?

Suggested answer: Menelaus may have more useful information about Odysseus's fate and journey.

17. Across Books 1-3, how does Athena influence Telemachus without simply solving every problem for him?

Suggested answer: She gives advice, confidence, opportunities, and protection, but Telemachus still has to speak, travel, ask questions, and make decisions himself.

18. Give one example of good xenia and one example of bad xenia from Books 1-3.

Suggested answer: Good examples include Telemachus welcoming Mentos or Nestor welcoming Telemachus. Bad xenia is the suitors consuming Odysseus's household while disrespecting the family.

19. How is Telemachus different at the end of Book 3 than he was at the beginning of Book 1?

Suggested answer: He is more confident, experienced, willing to speak publicly, and capable of traveling and questioning powerful adults.

20. Which matters more to Telemachus's growth so far: information about Odysseus or the experience of searching for it? Explain with two details.

Suggested answer: Answers vary. Strong responses explain that the search itself forces Telemachus to practice courage, independence, public speaking, judgment, and responsibility.