

THE ODYSSEY // BOOKS 4-6

TEACHER KEY // BETWEEN CLASSES

1. How does Menelaus demonstrate xenia when Telemachus arrives in Sparta?

Suggested answer: He welcomes, feeds, and houses the travelers before requiring a complete explanation of who they are.

2. Why does Menelaus say his wealth does not make his life completely happy?

Suggested answer: He has gained wealth but also experienced war, separation, suffering, and the deaths of people he cared about.

3. What qualities of Odysseus are emphasized by Helen and Menelaus?

Suggested answer: The stories emphasize Odysseus's intelligence, endurance, disguise, planning, courage, and self-control.

4. Who is Proteus, and why does Menelaus need him?

Suggested answer: Proteus is a shape-shifting sea god who possesses knowledge Menelaus needs about the Greek warriors' fates and the route home.

5. What important information does Proteus provide about Odysseus?

Suggested answer: He says Odysseus is alive but being held on Calypso's island.

6. Why do the suitors plan to ambush Telemachus?

Suggested answer: They see Telemachus's growing independence as a threat and want to prevent him from returning to challenge them.

7. How does Athena help Penelope after she learns of the plot?

Suggested answer: Athena sends reassurance through a dream.

8. What does Calypso offer Odysseus that he still rejects?

Suggested answer: She offers comfort and immortality, but he still chooses the possibility of returning to Ithaca.

9. How does Odysseus's decision to leave Calypso demonstrate nostos?

Suggested answer: His desire to return to his mortal home and family is stronger than the safety and immortality Calypso offers.

10. Why does Hermes visit Calypso?

Suggested answer: Hermes delivers Zeus's command that Calypso release Odysseus.

11. What new obstacle does Poseidon create for Odysseus?

Suggested answer: Poseidon creates a violent storm that destroys or nearly destroys Odysseus's raft.

12. Name two forms of divine intervention that help Odysseus survive the storm.

Suggested answer: Ino gives him a protective veil, and Athena helps calm/control the winds so he can reach land.

13. In what condition does Odysseus reach the Phaeacian land?

Suggested answer: He arrives exhausted, isolated, dirty, vulnerable, and in need of help.

14. Why is Nausicaa near the river when Odysseus wakes?

Suggested answer: Athena sends Nausicaa a dream that motivates her to go wash clothing there.

15. How do Nausicaa's attendants react when Odysseus appears?

Suggested answer: Most run away in fear.

16. Why does Odysseus choose to speak from a distance rather than physically approach Nausicaa?

Suggested answer: He recognizes that approaching physically could frighten her, so he uses restraint and persuasive speech.

17. What does Nausicaa provide for Odysseus?

Suggested answer: She provides clothing, food, oil, guidance, and directions toward the palace.

18. Why does Nausicaa tell Odysseus to appeal to Queen Arete?

Suggested answer: Arete is influential and respected; gaining her sympathy can help Odysseus receive assistance from the royal household.

19. How do Books 4-6 show that hospitality can determine whether a traveler survives?

Suggested answer: Menelaus's hospitality gives Telemachus information and safety; Nausicaa's hospitality gives Odysseus food, clothing, directions, and a path toward transportation home.

20. Compare Telemachus and Odysseus in Books 4-6. How is each character moving toward home or family even though their journeys look different?

Suggested answer: Answers vary. Telemachus moves outward from Ithaca to learn about and recover his father; Odysseus moves physically toward Ithaca. Both depend on hospitality, divine help, judgment, and persistence.