

THE ODYSSEY // BOOKS 7-9

TEACHER KEY // BETWEEN CLASSES

1. Why does Nausicaa avoid entering the city beside Odysseus?

Suggested answer: She wants to avoid gossip or assumptions that the unknown man is connected romantically to her.

2. How does Athena protect and assist Odysseus as he approaches the Phaeacian palace?

Suggested answer: Athena hides him in a mist and, disguised as a young girl, guides him to the palace.

3. Why is Queen Arete especially important to Odysseus's chances of returning home?

Suggested answer: Arete is deeply respected in the royal household, and Athena tells Odysseus that earning her favor will improve his chance of receiving help.

4. Give two examples of xenia shown by Alcinous in Book 7.

Suggested answer: Answers may include feeding him before questioning him, giving him a place of honor, offering protection, promising transportation home, and offering gifts.

5. Why does Arete become curious about Odysseus's clothing?

Suggested answer: She recognizes that the clothes he is wearing came from her household, so she wants to know how a stranger obtained them.

6. What does Alcinous promise Odysseus at the end of Book 7?

Suggested answer: He promises that the Phaeacians will provide a ship and crew to carry Odysseus home.

7. Why does the first song by Demodocus affect Odysseus so strongly?

Suggested answer: The Trojan War is part of Odysseus's own past, so the song forces him to relive painful experiences and losses.

8. What causes Odysseus to participate in the athletic games?

Suggested answer: Euryalus insults him and questions whether he is truly an athlete, provoking Odysseus to prove himself.

9. What does Odysseus's discus throw reveal about him?

Suggested answer: It reveals his exceptional physical ability, competitiveness, pride, and concern for his reputation.

10. Why does Alcinous finally ask Odysseus to reveal his identity?

Suggested answer: Odysseus repeatedly cries during songs about Troy, convincing Alcinous that the stranger has a personal connection to the events being sung.

11. What mistake do Odysseus's men make after attacking the Cicones?

Suggested answer: They stay too long after the victory instead of leaving when they have the chance; Cicones reinforcements arrive and kill many Greeks.

12. Why are the Lotus-Eaters dangerous even though they are not violent?

Suggested answer: The lotus makes people forget their goal of returning home and removes their desire to leave.

13. How does the Lotus-Eater episode connect to the idea of nostos?

Suggested answer: It threatens nostos by replacing the desire for home with comfort, forgetfulness, and the desire to remain.

14. Why does Odysseus choose to remain in Polyphemus's cave instead of leaving immediately?

Suggested answer: He wants to meet the cave's owner and expects to receive hospitality and a guest-gift.

15. How does Polyphemus violate xenia?

Suggested answer: Polyphemus traps the guests, mocks the gods' rules, and murders and eats men who should be under a host's protection.

16. Why can't Odysseus simply kill Polyphemus while the Cyclops is asleep?

Suggested answer: The surviving men would remain trapped because only Polyphemus is strong enough to move the enormous stone covering the cave entrance.

17. Explain how the name 'Nobody' becomes part of Odysseus's escape plan.

Suggested answer: Odysseus tells the Cyclops his name is Nobody, so when Polyphemus cries that Nobody is hurting him, the other Cyclopes believe no attacker is present.

18. How do Odysseus and his surviving men escape from the cave?

Suggested answer: They tie themselves beneath Polyphemus's sheep and pass underneath his hands when he lets the flock out.

19. What act of hubris does Odysseus commit after escaping?

Suggested answer: He boasts and reveals his real name to Polyphemus even after the crew has escaped.

20. How does Odysseus show both heroic intelligence and a serious flaw in Book 9? Use at least two specific details.

Suggested answer: Intelligence: the wine, false name, sharpened stake, and sheep escape. Flaw: his pride makes him reveal his identity, allowing Polyphemus to call

on Poseidon for revenge.