

THE ODYSSEY // VOCABULARY SET 1

EPIC FOUNDATIONS // STUDENT REFERENCE + PRACTICE

TERM	WORKING DEFINITION
EPIC	A long narrative centered on a hero whose journey matters to a larger culture or society.
EPIC HERO	A larger-than-life central figure with unusual ability, a major quest, high stakes, and human flaws.
IN MEDIAS RES	Beginning a story in the middle of the action instead of at the chronological beginning.
XENIA	The ancient Greek expectation of hospitality and mutual respect between host and guest.
HUBRIS	Dangerous or excessive pride that can cause a character to ignore limits, warnings, or consequences.
NOSTOS	Homecoming - especially the struggle or desire to return home after a long journey.
EPIC SIMILE	A long, detailed comparison that develops an image beyond a brief simile.
DIVINE INTERVENTION	Direct involvement by a god or supernatural power in human events.

QUICK PRACTICE

1. Which term best describes a hero's dangerous pride? Explain in one sentence.
2. Why might an author choose to begin a story in medias res?
3. Give one example of good xenia a traveler would hope to receive.
4. What is the difference between an epic hero's ability and an epic hero's flaw?
5. Why is nostos more than simply traveling from one location to another?
6. Write a one-sentence example of divine intervention in an imaginary story.

7. Which two terms do you predict will create the most conflict for Odysseus? Explain.

8. Draw a small symbol beside each vocabulary term that will help you remember it.