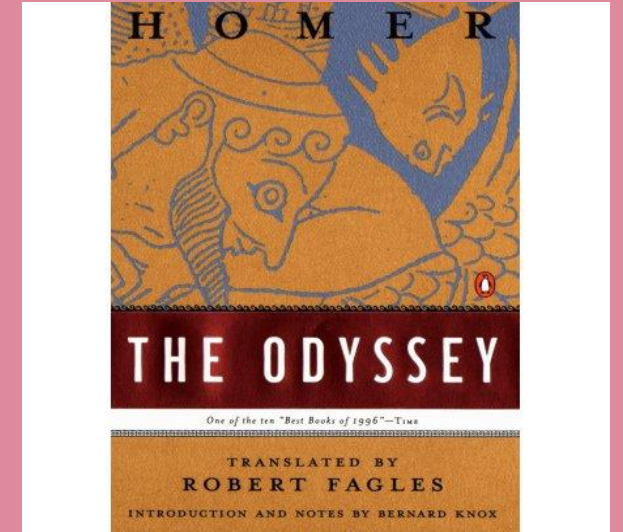
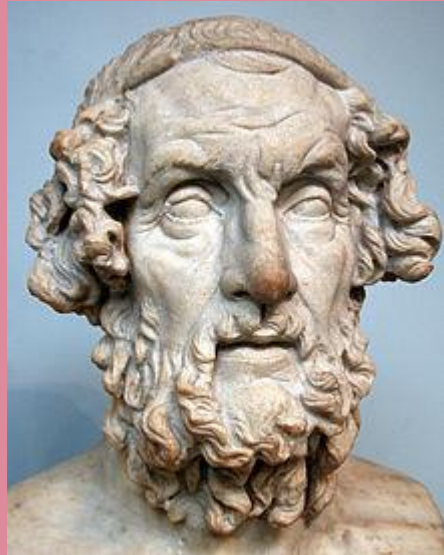


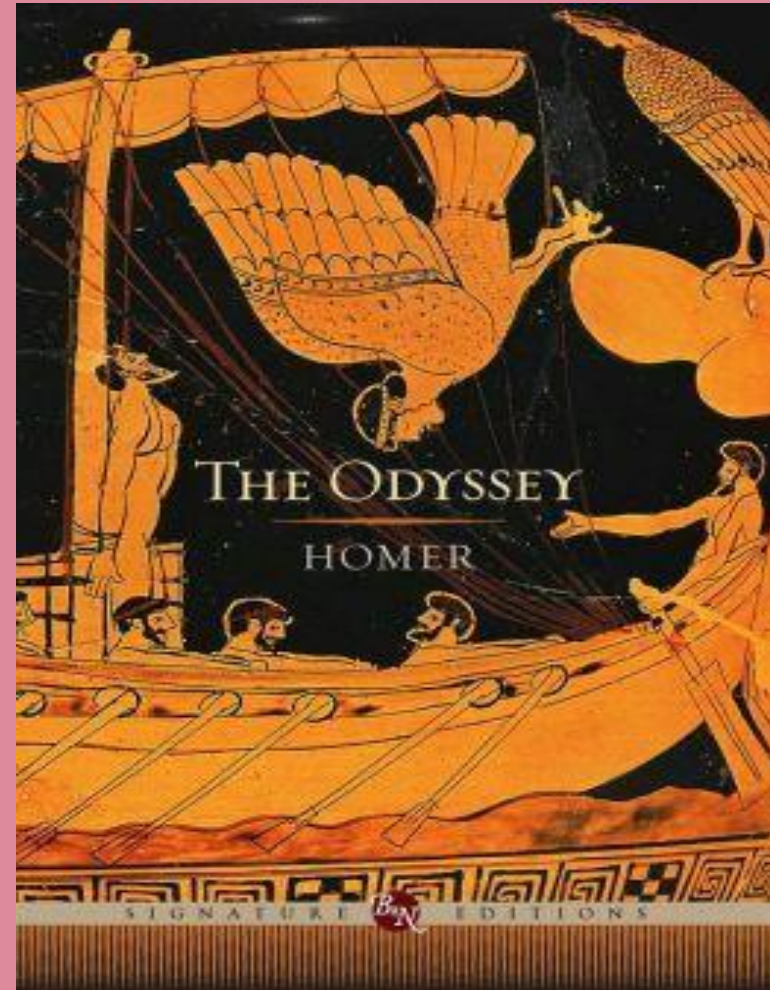
Heroes and Quests: Intro To the Epic Poem, Homer and *The Odyssey*



Essential Question: What elements are important in understanding and analyzing an epic poem?

What is an epic poem?

- A long, serious, poetic, narrative poem
- Recounts the adventures of the epic hero
- Before writing, epic poems were memorized and helped keep record of the great deeds and history of a culture
- Examples: Gilgamesh, The Odyssey, Beowulf



The Epic Hero

- Possesses superhuman strength, craftiness, and confidence
- Helped or harmed by gods or fate
- Embodies qualities valued by the culture
- Overcomes perilous situations
- Has extraordinary abilities but also human frailties
- Examples: Odysseus, King Arthur, Harry Potter



The Epic Plot

- Depicts a long, strange journey filled with such complications as:
 - Strange creatures
 - Treacherous weather
 - Divine intervention- Gods/goddesses often intercede on behalf of the hero
 - Large-scale events
 - Other supernatural challenges
- Centers around the epic hero
- Has an outcome that greatly affects the destiny of a nation or group of people



Epic Setting



- Includes fantastic or exotic lands
- Involves more than one nation or culture
- The action spans not only geographical but also often cosmological space: across land, sea, into the underworld, or thru space or time etc.

Archetypes



- Characters and situations recognizable across times and cultures
 - Brave hero
 - Sea monster
 - Suitor's contest
 - Evil temptress
 - Loyal servant
 - Buried treasure

Epic themes:

- Reflect universal concerns, such as:
 - Courage
 - Loyalty
 - Beauty
 - The fate of a nation
 - Life and death
 - A homecoming
- Expect more than one theme to be developed in an epic



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Other “Epic” Elements:

- Similes: an epic simile is more elaborate than in a short poem. It does more than make a comparison, it conveys an idea about what is being described.
- Epithets: renames a person or thing with a descriptive phrase, often used to correctly complete the rhythm or meter in a line of poetry. (Ex: Odysseus= “son of laertes” or “raider of cities.”)
- Allusion: Reference to a literary or historical person, place, event, or composition. (Ex: “This is the way the court of Zeus must be”)

Other “Epic” Elements:

- Alliteration: alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds throughout a phrase or sentence and usually at the beginning of each word. (Ex: “Sailing the seven seas”)
- Rhyme: Pretty sure I don’t need to explain this one (Ex: “Night of fright”).
- Imagery: Using sensory words (any words that describe how something sounds, looks, feels, smells, and tastes) to evoke an image (Ex: “The sea exploded into the rocky shore”)

The Trojan War

- Conflict between Greece (Achaea) and Troy- 1200 BC
- A Trojan prince kidnapped Helen of Troy, wife to the King of Sparta.
- Sparta recruited armies of surrounding kingdom to attack Troy to reclaim his wife. The Greek forces held Troy under siege for 10 years but could not break its walls.
- Until Odysseus, King of Ithaca came up with the Trojan Horse plan.
- The Greeks hid in a wooden horse outside the gates of Troy. When the Trojans brought it into their gates, the Greeks attacked, ending the war.

Homer's *The Odyssey*

- Homer lived sometime between 900 and 800 BC but many historians argue whether he ever lived at all.
- Homer is credited for writing *The Odyssey*
- *The Odyssey* is often the greatest Epic Poem of all time.
- The *Odyssey* takes place somewhere around the Mediterranean Sea. The Trojan War was said to take place in the regions of modern day Greece and Turkey.
- *The Odyssey* recalls the long and difficult journey that the king Odysseus took home following the Trojan War.

