

The Odyssey

a play by John Murrell
based on the epic poem by “Homer”
a coproduction by
the National Arts Centre
and the Alcatel Ottawa International Children’s Festival

Study Guide

THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE ENGLISH THEATRE
PROGRAMMES FOR STUDENT AUDIENCES
2004-2005 SEASON

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This Study Guide was written and researched by **Jim McNabb** for the National Arts Centre English Theatre, April 2005.

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About this Study Guide

This Study Guide is formatted in easy-to-copy single pages. They may be used separately or in any combination that works for your classes. The colour page is intended for classroom display, but may also be photocopied for students. Here is an outline of the contents of each page with suggestions as to its use.

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About the Play - (page 1 of 3)

Cast of Characters in *The Odyssey*

Characters	Pronunciation	Who They Are
Odysseus.....	oh-DEE-see-us.....	King of Ithaca, hero of the Trojan War, and very wise. He is unable to get home after the War.
Poseidon.....	pus-EYE-dun.....	God of the Sea or the Waters; has a long-lasting grudge against Odysseus; often called Earthshaker.
Athena.....	a-THEEN-a.....	Goddess of Wisdom and Odysseus' helper. She is the daughter of Zeus and niece of Poseidon.
Poseidon's Helpers.....		Creatures of the Sea.
Odysseus' Sailors		Four sailors, referred to as Young, First, Second and Third.
Polyphemus.....	pah-LEE-fee-moos...	The most powerful Cyclops (one-eyed giant), brutish and cannibalistic, and the son of Poseidon; speaks a very weird language.
Polyphemus' Sheep.....		Sheep (belonging to Polyphemus).
Penelope	pen-ELL-oh-pee.....	Odysseus' faithful wife.
Telemachus.....	tel-EMM-a-kus.....	Odysseus' son, approximately 20 years old.
Argos	AR-gus.....	Odysseus' old hunting dog.
Aeolus (Æolus)....	EE-oh-lus.....	Lord of the Winds.
The Winds		Aeolus' children, North, South, East and West.
Circe	SIR-see.....	Terrible demi-goddess and Poseidon's granddaughter.
Several Pigs		Pigs under the power of Circe.
Scylla	SIL-uh.....	Sea monster with many heads.
Charybdis	ka-RIB-dis.....	Devouring whirlpool beast.
Penelope's Suitors.....		Three suitors, referred to as One, Two, and Three.

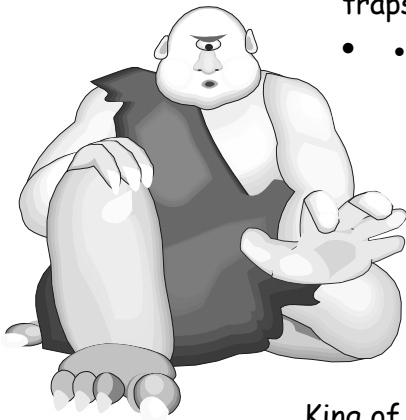
Time and Location:

Approximately 3 thousand years ago or more, in the Aegean Sea, (the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea between Turkey and Greece).

About the Play - (page 2 of 3)

Plot Synopsis - Get set; this is a long and exciting story!

- There is a great storm at sea and Poseidon (God of the Sea) is trying to sink Odysseus' ship. Poseidon is very angry with Odysseus and you'll find out why.
- Athena (Goddess of Wisdom) appears in the nick of time to save Odysseus by dragging him onto the beach on what seems to be a deserted island.
- Athena and Poseidon have a big argument about Odysseus, and Poseidon backs off, vowing to return.
- Odysseus complains to Athena that since she is his protector she should have been helping out over the last 20 years when he was having so many unfortunate adventures.
- Athena argues that she was around to inspire him (- but how was he to know, since she was always in disguise?), and she suggests that he tell his tale.
- Odysseus starts by telling of his army's 10 year siege of Troy and eventual victory when he tricked the Trojans with a gift of a large horse (remember the Brad Pitt movie?).
- We see in a flashback: Odysseus (who is a king when he's at home) and his men setting sail for their homeland, Ithaca, an island off the west coast of Greece, but they get in trouble with cranky Poseidon who tosses them around, then strands them on a foreign island.
 - Odysseus and his sailors take refuge in a cave but it turns out to be the home of a very bad-tempered Cyclops, Polyphemus, who speaks a weird gibberish language. The Cyclops traps them in the cave and starts to eat some of them.
 - • When Odysseus is almost ready to give up, his wife Penelope, his young son Telemachus, and his old dog Argos appear in a vision (supplied by Athena), and he learns that they too are in big trouble back home.
 - • With the help of some sheep (and Athena), Odysseus manages to lead his men in escape.
 - • Back at sea, the men find themselves with no wind to power their ship.
 - But wait: an island floats by! It's the home of Æolus, King of the Winds, and his four children (East, West, etc.) who are all home for a holiday. Since the ship isn't going anywhere, Odysseus goes ashore for a visit.
- Athena secretly bribes Æolus to help Odysseus sail away home. Æolus gives Odysseus a big bag of wind, (four winds to be exact).



About the Play - (page 3 of 3)

Plot Synopsis continued

- Odysseus uses the West wind to blow them in sight of their homeland, but then feels the need for a nap.



- The sailors, thinking that some treasures or loot must be in the big bag, decide to open it. The crazy winds burst out and blow them in every direction for three solid years.
 - Back in the present on the desert island, Athena shows Odysseus a vision of Penelope who is being pestered by a bunch of pesky suitors wanting to marry her. She is still being faithful and rejects them all; but how long can she hold out? Telemachus is trying to protect his mother but things are looking grim. Will Odysseus get home in time?
- Back in the flashback, Odysseus and crew encounter a strange foggy island inhabited by very unusual pigs who can talk.
 - They squeal to the men that they are really fellow sailors who have been turned into pigs by the sorceress Circe, granddaughter of old Poseidon. She intends to play with them for a while and then eat them. They warn Odysseus and his men how to avoid the spell.
 - When Circe appears she is beautiful and seductive and Odysseus almost gives in to her charms. However, just in time Athena slyly reminds him of his faithful wife Penelope, and he escapes the clutches of the witch and somehow breaks the spell on the pigs.
 - As soon as the ship is on its way again, Poseidon shows up even more furious than before. He forces them off course and into the range of Scylla, a vicious many-headed 'hydra' who chomps men up, and Charybdis, a whirlpool that swallows ships whole. What next?!
 - In the midst of all this chaos, Athena appears and snatches Odysseus out of the hands of Poseidon and drags him onto the beach. We realize we are where the play began.
 - Just then a young man strolls by and Odysseus recognizes him as his grown-up son Telemachus. (The beach was actually near Ithaca and Odysseus was home all the time.) They are joyously reunited after 20 years.
 - But is Odysseus clever enough to save Penelope from the clutches of those persistent suitors? Has she forgotten her long-absent husband? Will she believe his story about being lost, or kick him out for being ten years late for dinner? Or will Odysseus be restored to his throne after all these years?

Who Helped Put this Production Together?

The Odyssey is an NAC English Theatre/Alcatel Ottawa International Children's Festival coproduction presented at the Museum of Science and Technology.

Production Team

Playwright: John Murrell

Director: Kim Selody

Set and Costume Designer: Arthur Penson

Original Music and Music Direction: Cathy Nosaty

Movement Director: Jo Leslie

Assistant Music Director: Amir Amiri

Stage Manager: Matthew Byrne

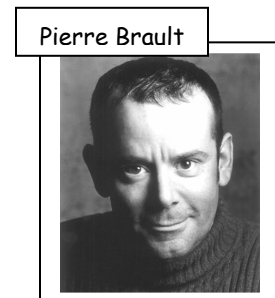
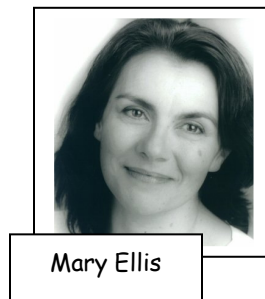
Cast

Actor's name
Abebe Addis
Amir Amiri
Pierre Brault
Nicky Brodie
D. Michael Dobbin
Mary Ellis
John Koensgen
Jeff Lawson
Alix Sideris
Dustin Vye

Character(s) played

Sailor and others
Zeus and Assistant Music Director
Sailor and others
Circe and others
Poseidon and others
Penelope and others
Odysseus
Telemachus and others
Athena and others
Sailor and others

Some Actors to Watch For

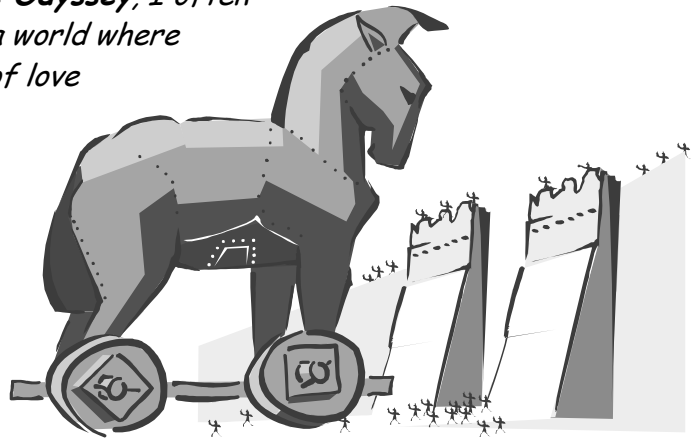


Comments from Playwright John Murrell

We know almost nothing for sure about 'Homer', the ancient Greek poet who collected these tales of the ancient Greek hero Odysseus. Yet, almost all the legends agree on one point: 'Homer' was blind from birth. I love this part of the legend. I love the idea that those people who may be unsuited to, or uninterested in actively taking part in life's great dangers, may still dream about them, make up stories about them - stories which may actually improve on reality, improve on 'the truth.'

*When I was dreaming up this version of **The Odyssey**, I often closed my eyes and took imaginary journeys into a world where mysteries and monsters, miracles of escape and of love were everyday events.*

*For me, **The Odyssey** is about this world of imagination in which we are all travelers, both when we are young and when we are not so young. There is a deep wisdom in our imaginary worlds. This play is meant to be a journey in which all of us can enter into those remote, mysterious, thrilling, and yet, somehow, familiar worlds.*



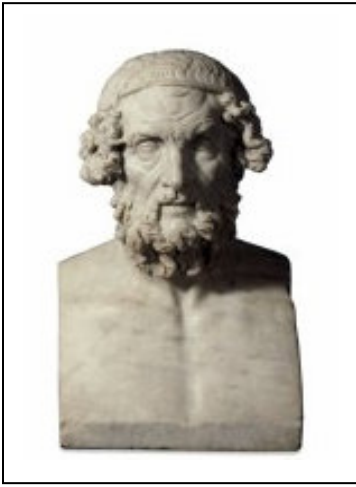
Director's Notes - Kim Selody

*When I was twelve years old, I read Robert Graves' version of **The Odyssey**. It was my first meeting with Greek Mythology and has been my reference point to this day. John Murrell and I hope that this new version of **The Odyssey** will become the first introduction to the worlds of Greek Mythology for many of our younger audience members. There was an important insight I had while creating this production. Many scholars speculated that Odysseus had all of his adventures in the Mediterranean Sea. I felt, like some recent writers, that Homer knew the world better than we give him credit for. I believe he sent Odysseus on a voyage that covered the seven seas of the world. Our production reflects the far reaching islands that Odysseus may have visited. We by no means tell the whole tale of where Odysseus' wanderings took him, but our purpose is to spark enough interest in young minds so that they might look further into the lost world of the Greeks.*

Oh, and did you know that the Greeks were the first to use microphones? Well, not exactly, but while preparing for this production, I discovered that one of the main reasons the Greeks used masks was to support a small megaphone over the mouth of the actor so that they could be better heard outside by a large number of people. By using the technology available in their day, they solved a practical problem in the theatre. In our production we are doing the same thing - using today's technology to solve the practical problem of hearing the words. I am sure Homer would approve if he were alive today.

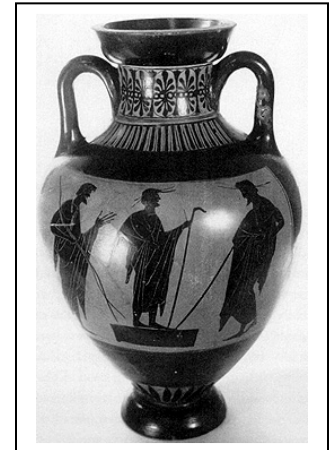
The material on this page originally appeared in the Manitoba Theatre for Young People's study guide for *The Odyssey*.

Who (or What) is Homer?



This is a marble portrait bust of Homer which is now on display in the British Museum in London, England. It was carved in Italy during the first century AD as a copy of a Greek bust which was probably created during the second century BCE but is now lost. Homer is thought to have lived in Greece around 750 to 700 BCE, before the age of realistic portraits, which is why we don't have some-thing done while he actually lived. Because this bust was done about 800 years afterwards, you may question whether it really does look like him, but it's the best we have.

Two epic poems are supposed to have been created by Homer, the *Illiad* (the story of the battle between Greece and Troy) and the *Odyssey* (the story of the long journey home by one of the Greek warriors). Since Homer lived centuries before writing in Greece was invented, these poems must have been handed down orally for generations. This calls into question the authorship of them. Could they possibly be the same as originally conceived? Certainly the events related are legendary and some occur in legends from many other cultures, so even they are not original. Some people think that Homer didn't really exist at all but the name was simply given to the group of entertainers who originally recited or sang the ancient legends. Some think that there were several authors responsible for the works. Whoever wrote them down unquestionably recorded masterpieces. They rank among the great works of all Western literature. Not only were they required reading for all scholars in antiquity, they continue to be read in schools to this day about 2500 years later. The Greek poems were composed in lines of poetry called "dactylic hexameter", which is a very fancy way of saying that the beat went "DA-de-de, DA-de-de" six times in a row. This probably made it easier for the singers to remember the piece - sort of like a rap. In fact, the performers of these epic narratives were called "rhapsodes", and the picture to the right shows a vase with the figure of a rhapsode standing on a platform holding a stick. A listener stands on each side of him.



If Homer really did exist, there were numerous legends about him in ancient times. He was said to be blind. His birthplace may have been Chios (a Greek island) or Smyrna (now called Izmir, Turkey). However, because most of the stories about him arose long after he lived, most of his life is hard to verify and is really a mystery.

Epic - What is it?

An epic poem is a long narrative poem. An epic is not something that can be told in one sitting. These tales are complex, revolving around several main characters and spanning many years. Homer's epics tell of the adventures of heroes. Some translations retain the format of a poem, while some are in prose story form.

An epic hero is a man who seems to conquer most problems he encounters, although he does not possess any 'super' powers. He is faithful to his family, his country, and his god. He is brave; although he often feels fear, he overcomes his fears because he knows he has responsibilities, which are mainly to defeat evil and allow goodness to prevail. The epic hero is intelligent. Because he has no special powers, he must rely on his brain to get him out of difficult situations. Sometimes, however, a higher force or being will guide him on his quest. This greater force does not do things for him, rather the force helps him do things for himself.

www.penguinclassics.com



Poseidon threatening Odysseus' ship during his epic journey

Life in Ancient Greece

The earliest Greek civilizations thrived nearly 4,000 years ago. Yet, their culture still impacts our lives today, in the arts, in philosophy, and in science, math, literature and politics. The ancient Greeks were great builders, thinkers, philosophers and military strategists.

Some of the gifts the ancient Greeks gave to the world are: Trial by Jury, Greek Myths, Democracy, Tragedy and Comedy, Theatres and the Olympics.

The ancient Greeks did not have one king or queen. They lived in city-states and each city-state was a separate political unit, each with its own ruler who was either elected or inherited the position. Daily life was somewhat different in the Greek city-state of Athens, for example, than it was in the city-state of Sparta.

Men ran the government, and spent a great deal of their time away from home. When not involved in politics, the men spent time in the fields, overseeing or working the crops, sailing, hunting, manufacturing or in trading. For fun, in addition to drinking parties, the men enjoyed wrestling, horsemanship, and the famous Olympic Games. When the men entertained their male friends, at the popular drinking parties, their wives and daughters were not allowed to attend.

With the exception of ancient Sparta, Greek women had very limited freedom outside the home. They could attend weddings, funerals, some religious festivals, and could visit female neighbors for brief periods of time. In their home, Greek women were in charge! Their job was to run the house and to bear children. Most Greek women did not do housework themselves because most Greek households had slaves. Female slaves cooked, cleaned, and worked in the fields while male slaves guarded the house and acted as tutors to the young male children. Wives and daughters were not allowed to watch the Olympic Games, as the athletes did not wear clothes.

In Athens, as in most Greek city-states with the exception of Sparta, girls stayed at home until they were married. Their job was to help their mother, and to work in the fields, if necessary.

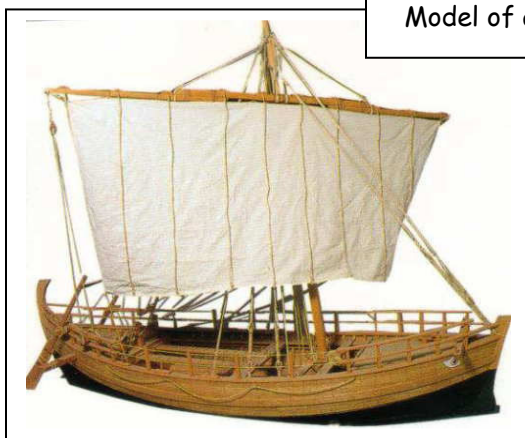
In most Greek city-states, when young, the boys stayed at home, helping in the fields, sailing, and fishing. At age 6 or 7, they went to primary school or a private school where they were taught by male tutors. They studied the works of Homer, music (lyre and flute), government, public speaking, mathematics and art. Following that, the boys attended a higher school until they turned 18, at which time they entered military school for two additional years.

This information came from <http://members.aol.com/Donnclass/Greeklife.html> and there's a lot more material there, such as what homes were like, what it was like at the early Olympic games, Greek weddings (not the big, fat kind) and so on.

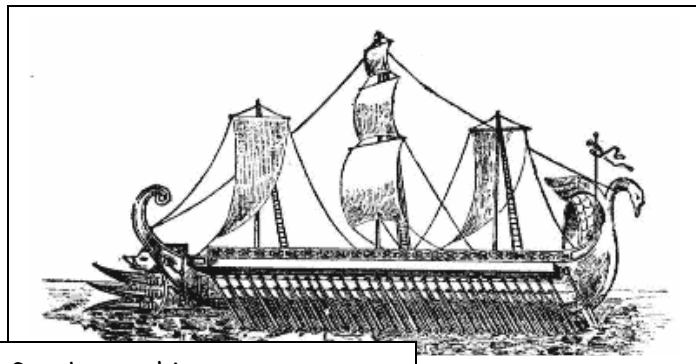
Life on the Sea in Ancient Greece

Because Greece has so many islands and a long convoluted coastline and its countryside is mountainous making land travel difficult, traveling by sea was developed and perfected very early. Greece therefore became a rich and powerful influence over the Eastern Mediterranean. Greece exported large quantities of olive oil, wine and beautiful pottery, and imported grain and other necessities. The wooden cargo ships (shown in the picture below left) were often about 20 metres long, had deep, broad hulls making them quite stable in the water, and had one or two masts for sails. In early times, when Achilles and Odysseus were at war, these ships would also have been used for troop transport. Because they did not use oarsmen, the mariners relied on the winds to give them power. However, navigation was tricky at times. If the winds were too strong the sails would have to be rolled up for fear the masts would break. When the wind wasn't blowing from behind they had to travel in a zigzag fashion which took a long time to cover distances.

Nevertheless, these small ships successfully crisscrossed the Mediterranean to places like Tunisia, Egypt and Syria on regular trade routes. If you want to learn more about sea travel, see website: <http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/7/kenny.html>



Model of a 4th century Greek Merchant ship



Greek war ship.

Notice the vicious battering ram on the front of the ship

These pictures of ancient Greek ships are from: <http://www.showgate.com/medea/ships/grkship1.html>

With the invention around 800 BCE of the bsyrtomh ram on the front of a ship, the Greeks came up with a formidable weapon of war. The ships were built longer and narrower and a double row of oarsmen powered the vessel to considerable speed. When they realized that they could have two and then three tiers of rowers on each side, the speed and maneuverability was increased still more. These "triremes" (shown in the picture above right) would either slide along the side of the enemy vessel and break off all their oars or ram their sides with enough force to puncture or capsize them. To read more about the construction of these ships, what it would have been like to work onboard, and the naval battle strategies of the Greek fleet, see the website: <http://www.inisfail.com/~ancients/greek-naval.html>.

To read an article about marine archeologists and their discoveries of sunken Greek vessels go to <http://www.nauticos.com/press/newyorktimes.htm>.

Activities Before and After Viewing the Play - (page 1 of 2)

Pre-performance Activities

1. Have the students create a series of tableaux to illustrate a section of the plot of the play. See pages 2-4 ("About the Play") and the Activity Sheet #1 on page 13 of this Study Guide.
2. Have the students improvise a scene based on an event in the plot of the play. This could then develop into a writing assignment to create a written version of the event if time allows. See pages 2-4 ("About the Play") and the Activity Sheet #2 on page 14 of this Study Guide.
4. Using the following website: <http://www.mythweb.com/odyssey/index.html> which summarizes Homer's *Odyssey* in a youth-friendly version as well as the map found on colour page 17, have students try to chart the complicated wanderings of Odysseus and his sailors throughout the Mediterranean Sea. Some of Homer's stops have not been included in the play version of the story. Black and white photocopies of the map could be distributed to students. A larger and more detailed map of the area can be found at <http://www.europe-atlas.com/mediterranean-sea.htm>.
5. Students could be given the page "Videos and Websites of Interest" (page 15) and allowed to access some of the websites listed there to learn more about one or more of the following topics:
 - a. Homer's *Odyssey*
 - b. Homer himself (see page 7)
 - c. the ancient Greek period in which the epic is set (see pages 9 or 10)
 - d. Greek mythology - gods/goddesses/heroes/storiesIf plenty of time is available, a movie of Homer's *Odyssey* could be shown.
6. The "Classics Game Page" at <http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~loxias/classics-quiz.htm> has a fun game involving roleplaying on its "The Odyssey Game" page.

Any trip to the theatre should also involve the students being made aware of proper theatre etiquette while at the performance. A handout is available on page 16.

Activities Before and After Viewing the Play - (page 2 of 2)

Post-performance Activities

1. Have the students discuss in class the production of *The Odyssey* in terms of the acting (characterization, use of voice/movement), the costumes, set, special effects. Then have them write a formal report or review of the play. A suggested outline for writing a review can be found online on page 12 of http://www.nac-cna.ca/en/allaboutthenac/publications/chekhov_guide.pdf.
2. While the students are inspired by their trip to live theatre, they should be encouraged to visit the NAC's *ArtsAlive* website for English Theatre: <http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/index.html>. There is a host of pages describing jobs in the theatre, terms, theatre lore, lists of Canadian plays to be read, and a wide variety of activities.
3. *The Odyssey* is a NAC English Theatre / Alcatel Ottawa International Children's Festival coproduction. A visit to their website at <http://www.ottawachildrensfestival.ca/en/2005/> will fill interested students in on what else is happening around Ottawa in the way of music and performances.
4. *The Odyssey* is an example of a great epic with its epic hero. Distribute copies of page 8 "Epic - What is it?" and have them discuss in class if Odysseus falls into this category. Have them come up with other examples of modern epics and epic heroes from books or movies. (Examples are Luke Skywalker from *Star Wars*, Indiana Jones, and Maximus from *Gladiator*). Many of the ones who come to mind are fictional but are there any real life people who could be described as epic heroes?
5. Odysseus was captured by the Cyclops Polyphemos, imprisoned by Calypso, and seduced into idleness (laziness) by Circe. His men were devoured and swallowed by Charybdis. He was betrayed by his men when they opened the bag of wind, disobeyed by his men when they ate Helios' cattle, and violently attacked by Scylla. Odysseus was proud and arrogant and proclaimed to the gods that he defeated Troy all on his own and that he had conceived of all his schemes and escapes without help. Have the students write a short essay in which they consider the concepts of: temptation, betrayal, idleness, pride, destruction, disobedience, and violence. Are they acted out in our modern cultures? How?

Activity Sheet #1

Creating Tableaux to Tell the Story of *The Odyssey*

Objective: To become familiar with the plot of *The Odyssey* and to create a set of tableaux to illustrate a portion of the play.

Curriculum Connections:

- The Arts: Drama and Dance, Ontario Curriculum, Gr. 1-8.
- Overall Expectation: Gr. 6 and Gr. 7 - "interpret and communicate the meaning of ... scripts, legends, historical fiction and other material from a range of sources and cultures, using a variety of drama and dance techniques."
- Creative Expectation: Gr. 8 - "produce work as a member of an ensemble."

Time: The class before the Fieldtrip (or two days before the Fieldtrip if Activity #2 is planned).
- 45 minutes

Materials: A copy of the three-page handout titled "About the Play" (pages 2-4 of this Study Guide) for each student. Chairs as needed.

Organization: Divide the class into teams of 3, 4, 5 or 6 students.

Space Requirements: Enough open space for the whole class to work simultaneously in developing tableaux.

Method:

1. Distribute the three-page handout and have them examine the first page outlining the cast of characters. Have individuals read aloud the series of bullets giving the plot outline.
2. Explain the task will be to create a series of three tableaux to illustrate a chosen bullet or excerpt of the plot. Each tableau should be a freeze-frame picture of an action or event in the bullet so that when the three tableaux are performed one after the other they tell the story. Each tableau should show who the various characters are and their emotions, how they relate to each other, and what they are doing. Props can be mimed but chairs should be available if the characters need to be seated. Each tableau should have interesting composition, balance and a centre of focus. Divide the class into teams and have them choose a section of the plot to illustrate. Teams should spend about 15 minutes organizing their tableaux and practicing transforming quickly from one to another. One team member could be assigned to read the bullet slowly but with exciting expression as the tableaux are performed.
3. When the teams are all ready, the various groups can perform them; the teacher can decide upon the order, corresponding to the order they occur in the plot summary. If more than one team has chosen a particular bullet it will be interesting to see how the teams differ in telling the story.
4. For older groups who wish to work on the project following the viewing of the play, the series of tableaux could be the basis for an abstract dance or movement piece which might also include recorded or created music, costumes and lighting effects.

Activity Sheet #2

Develop a Portion of the Script Through Improvisation

Objective: To become familiar with the plot of *The Odyssey* and develop a script for a short section of it through improvisation.

Curriculum Connections:

- The Arts: Drama and Dance, Ontario Curriculum, Gr. 1-8.
- Overall Expectation: Gr. 7 - "interpret and communicate the meaning of ... historical fiction ... drawn from a wide variety of sources and cultures, using a variety of drama ... techniques."
- Creative Expectation: Gr. 8 - "organize and carry out a group improvisation", "write in role, analyzing the subtext of a script and the attitudes and points of view of the characters portrayed."

Time: The class before the Fieldtrip - 45 minutes.

Materials: A copy of the three-page handout titled "About the Play" (pages 2-4 of this Study Guide) for each student. Chairs as needed.

Organization: Divide the class into teams of 3, 4, 5 or 6 students. If this activity is done following Activity #1, then the same teams as before should be used.

Space Requirements: Enough open space for the whole class to work simultaneously in developing their improvised scenes.

- Method:**
1. If the class has already completed Activity #1 (creating tableaux), they should use the same section of the plot with which they are familiar. If not, carry out part 1 of Activity #1, then explain that the task is to create a two-three minute scene with dialogue and action which illustrates a particular section or bullet of the plot.
 2. Divide the class into teams and allow them to choose a section of the plot and assign characters for the scene. One member of each team could take on the job of director to help guide the creation of the improv and its actions. The scene should be improvised several times, each time adding more details which enhance the plot and make the action more exciting. The director can encourage appropriate focus and use of emotion. Students should develop their characters clearly so we know if they are the heroic Odysseus, the furious Poseidon, the sexy Circe, the stupid Cyclops, the terrified sailors, etc. Props can be mimed but chairs should be available if characters need to sit.
 3. When the teams are ready, they can perform them for the class, preferably in the order they occur in the plot of the play.
 4. For an additional writing assignment, students could individually write down the dialogue that they remember from their own presentation and develop it further as they see fit.

Websites and Videos of Interest

Websites of Interest



<http://www.online-literature.com/homer/odyssey> The entire text of Homer's epic poem as well as useful summaries of each of the 24 books.

<http://www.mythweb.com/odyssey/index.html> A youth-friendly summary of *The Odyssey* with notes, definitions and drawings.

<http://www.enl.umassd.edu/InteractiveCourse/Homer/odyssey.html> Another excellent summary of Homer's epic poem with a useful list of all the characters.

<http://members.aol.com/Donnclass/Greeklife.html> a fun website outlining what it would be like to be an Athenian or Spartan living in 480 BCE; description of education, cultural and sporting activities.

<http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~loxias/classics-quiz.htm> The classics game page which includes a role-playing game for *The Odyssey*.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ancientgreece/index.shtml> An excellent website for teachers to introduce the study of ancient Greece to their primary classes; kid-friendly information, lesson plans for activities.

<http://www.greekmythology.com/> An excellent site giving bios of all the Greek gods, titans, heroes, myths and even ancient Greek recipes!

Movies and Videos of Interest



The Odyssey (1997) - 120min. 2-part TV miniseries with a huge cast of stars. It tells the story of Odysseus' attempts to get home after the battle of Troy. Because he forgot to pray to the gods for safe passage, they make his life miserable by forcing him to make numerous detours that add years to his trip throwing him into conflict with Circe, the Cyclops, Poseidon and others. Meanwhile his wife Penelope is trying to hold off suitors who want to claim his property thinking that Odysseus has died. Available at Video Mondo, 117 Beechwood, 749-6829.

The Animated Odyssey (2000) TV miniseries. The *Odyssey* is wonderfully animated with incredible detail. All episodes stay very true to the book. The musical accompaniment is also beautiful and original. This animated series is both educational and entertaining, fun for all ages. Highly entertaining. Several parts available at the Ottawa Public Library.

O Brother, Where Art Thou (2000) Very entertaining Coen Brothers film loosely based on Homer's *Odyssey* detailing the travels of an escaped convict and his friends trying to get home to Ithaca, NY where his faithful wife Penny lives. They meet the sirens, a one-eyed bible salesman and other weird characters along the way. Recommended for home viewing. Available in most video stores.

Troy (2004). The Hollywood version of Homer's *Illiad*, the epic poem that precedes *The Odyssey* and tells the story of Achilles fight to rescue Helen from the city of Troy. Odysseus makes an appearance in this movie starring Brad Pitt. Recommended for home viewing. Available in most video stores.

Theatre Etiquette

Please take a moment to prepare the students for their visit to see a play by explaining good **Theatre Etiquette** which will enhance the enjoyment of the play by all audience members:

1. *The Odyssey* will be performed in a tent at the Museum of Science and Technology. Unlike movies, the actors in live theatre can hear disturbances in the audience and will give their best performances when they feel the positive involvement of the audience members. The appropriate way of showing approval for the actors' performances is through laughter and applause. It is important to focus attention on the performance instead of talking to neighbours, throwing things, or otherwise interrupting the attention of the actors or other audience members. For the enjoyment of all, people who disturb others during the show may be asked to leave.

2. *The Odyssey* is set several thousand years ago before phones and pagers. It is important that there be no electronic devices used while the play is taking place so that the atmosphere of the play is not interrupted. Cell phones, pagers and anything that beeps must be turned off. Cameras and all other recording devices are also not permitted.

3. There will be general seating on bleachers inside the tent. Students will be shown to their seats by ushers and their teachers.

4. The play is approximately 90-minutes long and is performed without an intermission. There will be a 5-minute Question and Answer period immediately following the play. A trip to the washroom before the play starts is therefore a good idea.

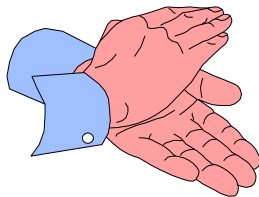




Chart the mysterious wanderings of Odysseus and his sailors.



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