

Odyssey Test

Multiple Choice

Identify the letter of the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

Critical Reading

- _____ 1. Part 1 of the *Odyssey* is mainly about Odysseus’
- a. influence with the gods.
 - b. love of travel.
 - c. heroic deeds.
 - d. loyalty to Helios.
- _____ 2. Which of the following quotations contains a description of an epic hero?
- a. “Now I let go with hands and feet, plunging / straight into the foam beside the timbers, / pulled astride, and rowed hard with my hands / to pass by Scylla.”
 - b. “I rather dwelt on this part of the forecast, / while our good ship made time, bound outward down / the wind for the strange island of Sirens.”
 - c. “In the next land we found were Cyclopes, / giants, louts, without a law to bless them.”
 - d. “So one day I withdrew to the interior / to pray the gods in solitude, for hope / that one might show me some way of salvation.”
- _____ 3. The epithet “Laertes’ son,” frequently applied to Odysseus, emphasizes
- a. Laertes’ high standards for Odysseus.
 - b. Laertes’ trust in Ulysses.
 - c. Odysseus’ lack of maturity.
 - d. Odysseus’ loyalty to his family.
- _____ 4. Which statement most accurately describes the role of Zeus in Odysseus’ adventures?
- a. Zeus encourages Odysseus’ crew.
 - b. Zeus controls the weather by which Odysseus sails.
 - c. Zeus strengthens Odysseus’ enemies.
 - d. Zeus protects Odysseus’ crew from harm.
- _____ 5. Which aspect of Odysseus’ character keeps him from giving his heart to Calypso or to Circe?
- a. He is self-centered.
 - b. He is eager to get back to Ithaca.
 - c. He is incapable of love.
 - d. He prefers the sea to the land.
- _____ 6. While Odysseus’ men want to steal the Cyclops’ cheeses and animals and depart immediately, Odysseus wishes to see what “the cave man ... had to offer.” Considering Odysseus’ character, what might he be hoping the Cyclops will offer?
- a. An exciting challenge
 - b. A faster ship
 - c. A place to stay
 - d. A good meal
- _____ 7. Which is the best rephrasing of the following lines?
- When the young Dawn with fingertips of rose
lit up the world, the Cyclops built a fire
- a. When dawn first broke / the Cyclops built a fire.
 - b. At daybreak, the Cyclops built a fire.
 - c. When Dawn touched the world with her rosy fingertips, the Cyclops built a fire.
 - d. Sun rises. Cyclops builds fire.

- _____ 8. Which trait does Odysseus demonstrate by lying about his name to the Cyclops?
- a. Ruthlessness
 - b. Loyalty
 - c. Creativity
 - d. Stubbornness
- _____ 9. What is the meaning of Polyphemus' words in the following lines?
'Let him lose all companions, and return
under strange sail to bitter days at home.'
- a. Let Odysseus return home without his companions.
 - b. Odysseus will sail home under a strange sail.
 - c. Let Odysseus return home, alone and troubled.
 - d. Curse Odysseus with a difficult journey home.
- _____ 10. Odysseus demonstrates the realistic, human side of his character when he
- a. resists the temptations of Calypso and Circe.
 - b. refuses to taste the honeyed Lotus plant.
 - c. ties his men beneath the Cyclops' rams.
 - d. weeps upon meeting Elpenor's ghost in Hades.
- _____ 11. Which character trait does Odysseus display when he listens to the Sirens' song?
- a. Laziness
 - b. Loyalty to Zeus
 - c. Selfishness
 - d. Self-sacrifice
- _____ 12. If written out in prose, how many sentences do the following lines equal?
I clambered
fore and aft my hulk until a comber
split her, keel from ribs, and the big timber
floated free; the mast, too, broke away.
- a. One
 - b. Two
 - c. Three
 - d. Four
- _____ 13. What is demonstrated by Odysseus' failure to wake up and prevent his men from slaughtering the sun god's cattle?
- a. Eurylochus' skills as a leader
 - b. Odysseus' exhaustion
 - c. The power of the gods
 - d. The disloyalty of the crew
- _____ 14. Odysseus' comment to Telemachus, "This is not princely, to be swept / away by wonder at your father's presence," means that ancient Greek princes:
- a. were easily amazed.
 - b. believed in miracles.
 - c. honored their fathers.
 - d. showed little emotion.
- _____ 15. Which of the following is an example of a *simile*?
- a. Odysseus in one motion strung the bow.
 - b. Odysseus stood watching the unruly suitors like a captain surveying a rough sea.
 - c. The suitors, both strong and weak, tried and failed to string the bow.
 - d. The setting of the epic is the Greek isles.

- _____ 16. Which of the following sentences best summarizes the Argus episode?
- Odysseus fails to recognize his faithful dog Argus who then dies of neglect.
 - A dog named Argus is near death and lies unnoticed by his former master, Odysseus.
 - Odysseus' faithful dog Argus, weak through neglect and abuse, wags his tail at the sound of Odysseus' voice, and then he dies.
 - Before Odysseus can wean his dog Argus back to health, the neglected animal dies.
- _____ 17. The episode about Argus, Odysseus' dog, is important to the overall plot of Part 2 because it emphasizes
- the length of Odysseus' absence from home.
 - Eumaeus' awareness of Odysseus' disguise.
 - Argus' undying loyalty to his master.
 - the qualities that people and animals have in their youth.
- _____ 18. Which of Telemachus' actions best demonstrates his obedience to his father?
- His journey through Pylos and Sparta in search of Odysseus
 - His suspicion that the beggar is a god
 - The tears he sheds when Odysseus reveals his true identity
 - His silence when Antinous confronts Odysseus
- _____ 19. What is one result of Odysseus' initial exchange with the suitor Antinous?
- Telemachus removes all the shields and weapons from the hall.
 - Penelope summons the "beggar" Odysseus and questions him.
 - The swineherd Eumaeus discovers Odysseus' identity.
 - Argus is killed.
- _____ 20. The episode in which Penelope invites the old beggar to her room is important because it _____.
- allows suspense to build
 - explains Penelope's sadness
 - foreshadows the ending
 - reveals Odysseus' identity
- _____ 21. Why does the disguised Odysseus make up a story and tell Penelope that her husband will be home soon?
- To give himself a few days to figure out what to do
 - To see whether her reaction to the news is one of joy or disappointment
 - To prepare Penelope emotionally for recognizing and welcoming her husband
 - To make the surprise of his true identity all the greater
- _____ 22. Which character traits does Penelope reveal in Part 2 of the *Odyssey*?
- Stubbornness and fear
 - Weakness and longing
 - Prudence and loyalty
 - Indecision and panic
- _____ 23. Which of Odysseus' traits allows his triumph in the bow-and-arrow challenge that Penelope sets for her suitors?
- His love for Penelope
 - His loyalty to the gods
 - His pride in his bow
 - His skill as a marksman

Critical Reading

The questions below are based on the following selection.

The Greek kingdom of Calydon is being laid waste by a monstrous boar. The hero Meleager summons other heroes of Greece to help him hunt and destroy the boar. This version of the ancient Greek myth “Meleager and Atalanta” was written by Thomas Bullfinch in the 1900’s.

With them came Atalanta, the daughter of Iasius, king of Arcadia. A buckle of polished gold confined her vest, an ivory quiver hung on her left shoulder, and her left hand bore the bow. Her face blent¹ feminine beauty with the best graces of martial² youth. Meleager saw and loved.

But now already they were near the monster’s lair. They stretched strong nets from tree to tree; they uncoupled their dogs, they tried to find the footprints of their quarry in the grass. From the wood was a descent to marshy ground. Here the boar, as he lay among the reeds, heard the shouts of his pursuers, and rushed forth against them. One and another is thrown down and slain. Jason throws his spear, with a prayer to Diana for success; and the favoring goddess allows the weapon to touch, but not to wound, removing the steel point of the spear in its flight. Nestor, assailed, seeks and finds safety in the branches of a tree. Telamon rushes on, but stumbling at a projecting root, falls prone. But an arrow from Atalanta at length for the first time tastes the monster’s blood. It is a slight wound, but Meleager sees and joyfully proclaims it. Anceus, excited to envy by the praise given to a female, loudly proclaims his own valor, and defies alike the boar and the goddess who had sent it; but as he rushes on, the infuriated beast lays him low with a mortal wound. Theseus throws his lance, but it is turned aside by a projecting bough. The dart of Jason misses its object, and kills instead one of their own dogs. But Meleager, after one unsuccessful stroke, drives his spear into the monster’s side, then rushes on and despatches him with repeated blows.

¹**blent** *v.*: Combined.

²**martial** (mä’r sh əl) *adj.*: Like a warrior.

- ___ 49. How is Atalanta different from the others humans who come to hunt the boar of Calydon?
- Atalanta is the cleverest of all.
 - Atalanta is the strongest of those who come to hunt the boar.
 - Atalanta is the only one who uses a spear.
 - Atalanta is the only woman.
- ___ 50. What characteristic does Meleager share with other epic heroes, such as Odysseus?
- He wanders all over the world.
 - He kills a destructive monster.
 - He has many heroes to help him.
 - He defies the gods to accomplish his ends.
- ___ 51. What can you infer about Greek values from the statement that Anceus “excited to envy by the praise given to a female, proclaims his own valor”?
- Greeks believed valor was the highest virtue.
 - Greeks felt women were worth special praise.
 - Greeks considered women to be of less value than men.
 - Greeks valued women above all others.
- ___ 52. Why does Meleager “joyfully proclaim” the wound Atalanta deals the boar?
- The wound kills the boar.
 - He is in love with Atalanta.
 - The wound is too slight to hurt the boar.
 - The wound slows the boar down.

- _____ 53. Which of the following is the best summary of this myth?
- Meleager, with the help of a band of heroes that includes a woman he loves, slays a destructive boar.
 - Meleager meets a woman, falls in love with her, and kills a boar for her.
 - Several important Greek heroes are made fools of or actually killed by a boar.
 - Atalanta wounds a monstrous boar, and some Greeks are envious.
- _____ 54. Which of the following statements can *not* be inferred about Greek divinities from this quotation:
Jason throws his spear, with a prayer to Diana for success: and the favoring goddess allows the weapon to touch, but not to wound, removing the steel point of the spear in its flight.
- Goddesses are powerful divinities.
 - Gods and goddesses respond to prayers from humans.
 - Divinities can interfere in human matters.
 - Divinities will not stand for challenges from humans.
- _____ 55. Which of the following best describes Thomas Bullfinch’s retelling of this myth in relation to his nineteenth-century audience?
- It is a fairy tale.
 - It is an epic.
 - It is a summary.
 - It is a contemporary interpretation.
- _____ 56. When the author says of Atalanta “Her face blent feminine beauty with the best graces of martial youth,” he means that
- she was graceful and beautiful, but too youthful for battle.
 - her face was warlike and strong, rather than beautiful.
 - her face combined the features of a pretty woman with those of handsome warlike young man.
 - her feminine beauty was lessened by her warlike mannish expression.
- _____ 57. What is the effect of the scene describing the heroes’ attempts to overcome the boar?
- It makes the boar seem more dangerous and Meleager’s victory more heroic.
 - It convinces the reader that Atalanta is outmatched by the male hunters.
 - It reminds the reader of how unconquerable Greek heroes were believed to be.
 - It proves that Meleager could never have slain the boar without help from others.
- _____ 58. Using the actions of Meleager as evidence, what is one quality that the Greeks valued in their heroes?
- Their love of strong, beautiful women
 - Their high degree of physical prowess
 - Their reverence for the gods
 - Their ability to lead their people

Essay

Rubric for Evaluating Essays

0	1	2	3	4
Blank paper	Incorrect purpose, mode, audience	Correct purpose, mode, audience	Correct purpose, mode, audience	Correct purpose, mode, audience
Foreign language	Brief, vague	Some elaboration	Moderately well elaborated	Effective elaboration
Illegible, incoherent	Unelaborated	Some details	Clear, effective language	Consistent organization
Not enough content to score	Rambling	Gaps in organization	Organized (perhaps with brief digressions)	Sense of completeness, fluency
	Lack of language control	Limited language control		
	Poor organization			

Choose 3 of the following to answer, each in a paragraph.

61. How do the men of Odysseus' crew feel about him? Do you think they regard him as a hero? Why or why not? In a brief essay, state your opinion and support it with evidence from the story.
62. An epic hero possesses the character traits most valued by the society in which the epic originated. Based on this portion of the *Odyssey*, write a brief essay describing the character traits most admired in ancient Greece.
63. In general, does Odysseus control his own destiny, or is his fate determined by the gods? Explore this question in a brief essay, supporting your conclusions with evidence from the selection.
64. Consider Part 2 of the *Odyssey* as a set of problems and solutions. After being gone for twenty years, Odysseus has a number of problems to deal with when he returns to Ithaca. In an essay, identify three problems Odysseus faces. Explain how he solved each problem and describe the consequences of his actions.
65. In literature, as in life, people must decide from among alternative courses of action. Select an example from the *Odyssey* in which the story might have ended differently if a character had acted differently. Cite examples to support your speculation.
66. Homer's *Odyssey* has been described as a timeless success because of its profound expression of the triumph and frustration of human life. It is not only a story of a heroic battle but also of people's advice, questions, requests, hopes, and desires. In an essay, discuss how Part 2 expresses the "triumph and frustration of human life."
67. Imagine that you are about to create a screenplay for a film of the *Odyssey*. Write an essay in which you choose two or three events to focus on, explaining why these will be the best ones to film. Explain why they will appeal to the audience, how they illustrate Odysseus' character traits, and how they develop the themes of the epic.
68. Epic heroes are figures of larger-than-life stature who exemplify character traits valued by their societies. It has been said that although Odysseus is one of the greatest of Greek epic heroes, he is not perfect; he has flaws and makes mistakes. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? In an essay, explain your position, supporting it with examples from the selection.

