

May 14, 2019

Parents and Scholars of CMA,

As spring semester draws to a close, the English Department has already begun preparations for Fall 2019. In order for you to be prepared for Eng. 1, 2 or 3, we ask that you obtain a copy of the following text:

***The Odyssey, by Gareth Hinds.***

It is our expectation that students will have read the novel prior to August 6, 2019. We have selected the graphic version of this classic story to aid with comprehension. In addition to reading, students will need to compile a journal (see attachment). These activities are essential for essay writing that will occur very early in the semester. These journals can be completed in either notebook **OR** digital form.

Our expectation for the CMA scholar is that they will see each assignment as a chance to learn new things and expand their thinking. The self-motivated student who can manage time and produce a quality product will be very successful at Career Magnet Academy.

We look forward to working with each of you. Have a wonderful summer, and we will see you next fall!

Sincerely,

CMA English Department

## Epic Hero

**Traditional definition:** a brave and noble character in an epic poem, admired for great achievements or affected by grand events.

**Contemporary definition:** a main character in an epic whose legendary or heroic actions are central to his/her culture, race, or nation

In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is often referred to as an epic hero. There are eleven characteristics that must be met, in order for that to be true.

- 1.** The hero is introduced in the midst of turmoil, at a point well into the story; antecedent action will be recounted in flashbacks.
- 2.** The hero is not only a warrior and a leader but also a polished speaker who can address councils of chieftains or elders with eloquence and confidence.
- 3.** The hero, often a demi-god or of a royal family, possesses distinctive weapons of great size and power, often heirlooms or presents from the gods.
- 4.** The hero must undertake a long, perilous journey, often involving a descent into the Underworld, which tests his endurance, courage, and cunning.
- 5.** Although his fellows may be great warriors (like Achilles and Beowulf, he may have a *comitatus* or group of noble followers with whom he grew up), he undertakes a task that no one else dares attempt.
- 6.** Whatever virtues his race most prizes, these the epic hero as a cultural exemplar possesses in abundance. His key quality is often emphasized by his stock epithet: "*Resourceful* Odysseus," "*swift-footed* Achilles," "*pious* Aeneas."
- 7.** The concept of bringing virtue to perfection is crucial to understanding the epic protagonist.
- 8.** The hero establishes his nobility through single combat in honor coming from being vanquished by a superior foe. That

is, a hero gains little honor by slaying a lesser mortal, but only by challenging heroes like himself or adversaries of superhuman power.

**9.** The two great epic adversaries, the hero and his antagonist, meet at the climax, which must be delayed as long as possible to sustain maximum interest. One such device for delaying this confrontation is the nephelistic rescue (utilized by Homer to rescue Paris from almost certain death and defeat at the hands of Menelaus in the Iliad).

**10.** The hero's epic adversary is often a "god-despiser," one who has more respect for his own mental and physical abilities than for the power of the gods. The adversary might also be a good man sponsored by lesser deities, or one whom the gods desert at a crucial moment.

**11.** The hero may encounter a numinous phenomenon (a place or person having a divine or supernatural force) such as a haunted wood or enchanting sorceress that he must use strength, cunning, and divine assistance to overcome.

### **Journal Assignment:**

As you read the novel, identify examples from the text that either prove or disprove his reputation as an epic hero. This journal should consist of 8 entries; each a paragraph in length (approx. 200 words). Each paragraph should address one of the 8 selected attributes.

\*Be sure to include page # citations with each piece of evidence gathered.

Digital Journals can be created in Google Drive and turned in via Canvas the first full day of school. A handwritten notebook can also be turned in that day.

**This assignment is due for all sophomores on this day, regardless of schedule.**

