

**Karns High School**  
**Honors English 9**  
**Summer reading list 2019-2020**  
**Ms. Kerwin**



Summer is the perfect time to relax with a good book. This summer reading guide is to prepare students for their freshmen year in high school, as well as to ensure that valuable reading skills are not lost or dulled over the summer months. Students are responsible for obtaining their own copies of these works either from a bookstore, local library, Amazon, or can use an electronic copy.

Students are to complete two assignments that are due of the first day of class (August 5<sup>th</sup>/January 7<sup>th</sup>).

1. All students will read *The Odyssey* by Homer (Robert Fagles' translation) and complete the attached reading guide. The study guide provides important notes, summaries, concepts, and focus questions which are intended to help the students know what to look for in the text and to aid their understanding of important themes and passages. Written responses to the focus questions can be in note form or in bullet points; they do not need to be written out in complete sentences. Please note that the students' reading begins with Book 1 on p. 77 (students are not responsible for reading Fagles' Introduction). **\*Please note that Books 4,7,13,15,17-18, and 20 are summarized in the reading guide and do not have to be read independently.**
2. Students will read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho and write a five paragraph essay answering the question, "How do struggles and triumphs affect people's ability to achieve their destiny?" When writing your essay, consider the ideas of fate vs. free will, as well as the idea of personal identity. Evidence from **both texts** must be used in the essay to answer this question. The answer should analyze how characters in each texts dealt with answering this question, and how this question shaped the development of both novels.

\*\* Any questions or concerns should be addressed in email to [julia.kerwin@knoxschools.org](mailto:julia.kerwin@knoxschools.org) please allow 48 hours to reply

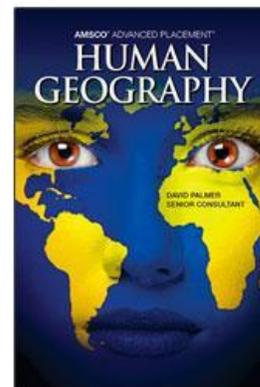
\*\*\*For those students who are taking AP Human Geography in addition to Honors English 9

**AP Human Geography Required Text**

You will need to purchase AMSCO Advanced Placement Human Geography. There will be readings out of this book on top of your textbook as well as it is one of the better study guides for the exam.

<https://www.perfectionlearning.com/social-studies/advanced-placement/human-geography-ap-exam-prep.html>

The above link has the least expensive price. It can also be found on Amazon



**INTRODUCTION:** As the epic opens, Odysseus has been gone from his home in Ithaca for twenty years. For the first ten years, he was fighting in the Trojan War, a conflict between the Greeks and the Trojans that began when Helen, a Spartan queen married to King Menelaus, was kidnapped by a young Trojan prince named Paris. The Greeks set sail for Troy in an effort to bring Helen back, and a ten-year war ensued. Odysseus is credited with ending the war by coming up with a plan to build a giant wooden horse which was brought to the gates of Troy as a peace offering. The Trojans brought the horse into their city and, at night, while the Trojans slept, Greek soldiers, hidden in the hollow belly of the horse, emerged and sacked the city, securing victory for the Greeks. After the war, Odysseus' homecoming was fraught with difficulty because he foolishly insulted the god of the sea, Poseidon. For three years, Odysseus struggled to overcome the obstacles Poseidon put in his path and tried to make it back to Ithaca, and finally he washes up on the island of Ogygia where the goddess Calypso has held him captive for the past seven years. This is where our epic begins.

#### **BOOK 1: ATHENA INSPIRES THE PRINCE**

**\*\*\*NOTE:** Look at the first three lines of the epic on p. 77. The Bard, or story-teller, is asking the Muse (one of the goddesses of the creative arts) to fill him with inspiration so he can tell Odysseus' story to the audience that is now listening. Before Homer recorded The Odyssey in written form, around 700 BC, these stories were passed down orally from generation to generation through skilled story-tellers. We refer to this as **THE ORAL TRADITION**.

1. Why has Odysseus' homecoming been delayed so long, and what is Athena now asking of her father, Zeus? What does this opening scene reveal about the relationship between the gods and men? What do you notice about the behavior of the gods?

2. What is the situation that Penelope and Telemachus face at the palace? Why do you think it has gotten so out of hand?

3. Look at lines 138-146 on p. 81. What do you notice about the way Telemachus greets his guest? Who is his guest, and why has he (she) come? Throughout the epic, pay close attention to the way guests are treated by their hosts. What distinguishes a good host from a bad one?

**\*\*\*\*NOTE:** The Greeks showed great respect for Xenia (a Greek term referring to a stranger and the Code of Hospitality that a civilized host extends to that stranger).

4. The first four books of The Odyssey are collectively called **THE TELEMACHY** because they focus on Odysseus' son, Telemachus, and his journey, which is a clear parallel to his father's larger journey. What is the nature of Telemachus' journey (pay close attention to lines 341-342 on p. 87)? What is Athena's role in this journey?

## BOOK 2: TELEMACHUS SETS SAIL

1. What is the relationship like between Telemachus and the suitors? Does Telemachus have control of the situation? Why or why not? Is there a moment in the chapter that best shows this?
2. Why are the suitors there? Is there a certain suitor who seems to have emerged as a leader (look closely at p. 96)?
3. How has Penelope attempted to keep the suitors at bay over the years? Does she want to remarry?
4. What does Athena (disguised as Mentor) urge Telemachus to do? Why do you think she wants him to do this? Why do you think she maintains her disguise?

\*\*\*NOTE: Pay close attention to the use of DISGUISES AND TRICKS throughout the epic, especially as a means of hiding one's strengths or weaknesses and as a means of testing the loyalty of others. This is an important theme.

## BOOK 3: KING NESTOR REMEMBERS

\*\*\*NOTE: It is very important to show thanks and respect to the gods in all aspects of Greek life. Notice the animal sacrifices that are made at the beginning of Book 3 to thank the gods for safe passage.

1. On p. 108, how is Telemachus' lack of confidence shown?
2. How does Nestor greet his guest? What does this tell us about him? When and how does Nestor recognize Telemachus? What qualities does Nestor see in him, and what impact do you think this has on Telemachus? Is Athena's plan working?
3. Is Nestor able to give Telemachus any information about his father? What is able to tell Telemachus about the homecomings of other Greek heroes from Troy, most notably Agamemnon?
4. Agamemnon's story is told again and again throughout the epic. Why do you think there is so much emphasis on this story?

## BOOK 4: THE KING AND QUEEN OF SPARTA

SUMMARY: In Sparta, Telemachus is welcomed by King Menelaus and Queen Helen who show their royal, civilized, and refined nature in the way that they abide by Xenia, the Code of Hospitality. Note that they welcome, feed, and take care of their guests BEFORE asking their names or asking any questions about the purpose of their journey. Menelaus and Helen recognize Telemachus at once, since the

resemblance to his father is clear, but through their respect for Telemachus and for xenia, they wait for him to reveal his identity when ready. Certainly, Helen chooses to tell the story of Odysseus and the Trojan Horse in order to test Telemachus' reaction and confirm her suspicion that this is Odysseus' son. NOTE: Notice how often both Odysseus and Telemachus hide their identity until the proper time, as they believed that one's identity is one's power. Furthermore, Menelaus and Helen display another important Greek quality: humility. When Telemachus compares King Menelaus' palace to Zeus' court, Menelaus immediately replies, "No man alive could rival Zeus..." showing his immense respect for the gods. From Menelaus, Telemachus learns about Menelaus' own challenging homecoming, about the drowning of the Greek hero Ajax, about the deadly homecoming of Agamemnon, and finally about his father who was once, years ago, seen being held by force on Calypso's island but Menelaus is not able to offer any more help than that regarding Odysseus' fate or whereabouts. Telemachus, with the help of Athena, has certainly gained confidence from his journey, as both Nestor and Menelaus recognize in him elements of Odysseus' greatness. As the suitors back in Ithaca learn about Telemachus' journey, they are shocked and nervous and plan to ambush and kill him on his way home and kill him so that he doesn't continue to get in their way. Meanwhile, Athena brings sleep to Penelope to soothe her in her time of sadness, worry, and grief.

#### BOOK 5: ODYSSEUS---NYMPH AND SHIPWRECK

1. The first image we have of Odysseus in Book 5 is him weeping for home as he is held captive on the island of Ogygia. What is particularly surprising about our first glimpse of Odysseus? Is this what you expected, based on all we have heard about him in Books 1-4?
2. Why is the goddess Calypso holding Odysseus captive on her island? What has she promised him if he will stay? Ultimately, why must she let him go?
3. What does Poseidon do when he learns of Athena, Zeus, and Hermes' plan to bring Odysseus home?
4. How and by whom is Odysseus saved at the end of the chapter?

\*\*\*\* NOTE: Notice throughout the epic that each character often has a certain descriptive phrase attached to his or her name: Calypso = the lustrous goddess OR the nymph with lovely braids; Menelaus = the red-haired king; Nestor = the old charioteer; Odysseus = Raider of cities; Athena = the grey-eyed goddess, etc. These descriptive phrases are called EPITHETS. Not only do these epithets highlight certain characteristics that the Greeks valued, but they also preserve a certain meter in each line of verse, which was important to the BARD (or story-teller) who would be singing, from memory, the epic poem to his audience.

## BOOK 6: THE PRINCESS AND THE STRANGER

\*\*\*\*NOTE: Since the Ancient Greeks believed that the gods controlled man/woman's lives and destiny, it is quite natural that the gods act as puppeteers in *The Odyssey*. This launches the theme of predestination vs. free will. Notice throughout the epic whether the gods are always "pulling all the strings" or does man/woman have some wiggle room for his/her own self-determination (choices).

1. When Nausicaa, the Phaeacian princess, is manipulated by Athena to go down to the beach to wash clothes, what women's role is portrayed here? Consider the Queen Arete's activity that is occurring simultaneously at the palace (lines 57-58). What clear difference seems to exist between a modern-day princess/queen's role and that of the royal women of Ancient Greece?

2. What do we learn are the important – perhaps, special – characteristics of the Phaeacian people and nation?

3. What advice does Nausicaa offer Odysseus in terms of his entering the city and who should be his advocate once he reaches the palace? Remember, that when Odysseus first speaks to the princess, he considers what would be the most beneficial way to address, and talk to, her (lines 156-162). Thus, do Odysseus and Nausicaa seem more similar or different to you? Explain why and how.

\*\*\*NOTE: As depicted in *The Illiad*, Homer's epic about the Trojan War, which is a prequel to *The Odyssey*, Odysseus is counted on by the Greeks always to make the wisest judgments and to take them down the most constructive paths.

## BOOK 7: PHAEACIA'S HALLS AND GARDENS

\*\*\*NOTE: In Ancient Greek times, voyages were fraught with danger. Thus, to come to port meant to come safely to a place that would offer a traveler its protection and security.

King Alcinous and Queen Arete welcome their guest in accordance with *xenia*. Odysseus heeds Nausicaa's advice to appeal to her mother for help getting home (NOTE: In Greek, Arete means virtue, excellence, greatness, and Queen Arete certainly reflects those qualities). Again, notice how long Odysseus withholds his identity, waiting for the proper time to reveal himself. Above all, notice Odysseus' response when Alcinous compares him to a god on p. 186. Odysseus says, "Alcinous!...cross that thought from your mind. I'm nothing like the immortal gods who rule the skies, either in build or breeding. I'm just a mortal man." At this point in his journey, Odysseus has clearly learned the importance of humility and respect to the gods. Even before confirming Odysseus' identity, Alcinous recognizes greatness in Odysseus and offers him Nausicaa's hand in marriage. Note that Nausicaa's coming-of-age story parallels Telemachus' coming-of-age story.

\*\*\*NOTE: The Ancient Greek hearer – just as the modern reader – would have already heard this story, along with Calypso's freeing of Odysseus and the latter's voyage to the Phaeacians. Was this an error on Homer's part, or do you see some reason why parts of the story might be repeated, e.g., Agamemnon's homecoming and murder? Think in terms of practical considerations, but also think of which PARALLELS Homer might be drawing.

## BOOK 8: A DAY FOR SONGS AND CONTESTS

1. Give more proof of Alcinous's benevolence as a host in terms of his actions towards, and words to, Odysseus. Consider his speech contained in lines 269-272.

2. What other side to Odysseus do we observe when he lets the young athlete bait him into participating in the games?

\*\*\*NOTE: HUBRIS, or excessive (negative) pride, figures prominently in Greek literature and, especially, it is the primary flaw that causes a main character's (protagonist's) decline and fall (reverse of fortune) in Greek tragedies.

3. Consider that the Phaeacians also display hubris when they characterize themselves as "favored of the gods." Is there a clue in this chapter about what might happen to them?

4. When the Bard sings his two songs of the Trojan War that involve Odysseus, the latter cries. How can one reconcile (make consistent or compatible) Odysseus's sensitive side wherein he weeps over his hard days at Troy and his "alpha male" side wherein he's got to put Broadsea in his place?

\*\*\*NOTE: DUALITY is a literary and psychological concept whereby contradictory traits co-exist in one person.

## BOOK 9: IN THE ONE-EYED GIANT'S CAVE

\*\*\*NOTE: Narrative Voice means that the author selects the voice from whose point of view he/she wants to tell his/her tale, e.g., first person, third person, etc. The selection of the voice is crucial for the most effective narration of the story.

1. The poet switches narrative voice at the beginning of the chapter so that Odysseus can tell his own tale. It is a tale whereby he fills in his own backstory (exposition). What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of Odysseus's telling his own story?

\*\*\*NOTE: Exposition refers to what happened before the story starts. Thus, the reader is filled in with the events that transpired involving the protagonist and/or other characters.

2. What is your favorite part of the Polyphemus (Cyclops) sequence? Explain why? Also, what motif (running theme) is continued here when Odysseus shouts out his name defiantly when escaping from

Polyphemus? (Remember that Odysseus, very wisely, had kept himself anonymous before that: “I am Nobody.”)

3. This chapter is one of the most exciting in the epic poem. However, it is riddled with contradictions. For example, the usually rational Odysseus, who cautiously warns his men not to embark on risky adventure, plunges headlong into the Cyclops’ cave. Find another contradiction in this or previous chapters. Try to explain your choice. Can you reconcile the contradiction?

#### BOOK 10: THE BEWITCHING QUEEN OF AEAEA

1. Explain the way the motif of “disobeying orders” figures in, in Book Ten?

2. Explain the way the motif of “godly intervention” figures in, in Book Ten?

3. What do you make of the fact that Odysseus readily commits adultery, once again? Think of Penelope back home. What seems to be their respective attitudes about adultery? Can you explain this from an Ancient Greek man’s perspective vs. an Ancient Greek woman’s?

\*\*\*NOTE: In Ancient Greece, women were pretty much tied to their households. Even trips to the agora (market) were made by male servants/slaves only. Thus, only men were allowed to walk and roam about “the great wide world.”

4. What is your favorite exploit in this book, and why?

#### BOOK 11: THE KINGDOM OF THE DEAD

In Book 11, Odysseus continues to tell the story of his travels after leaving Troy. In this book, Circe has told Odysseus that he must visit the underworld. Only the greatest heroes have visited the Underworld and returned, so this is a significant achievement for Odysseus. While in the Underworld, he visits with many of the fallen heroes of the Trojan War and he learns what has been happening in Ithaca in his absence.

1) In lines 111-169, Odysseus hears a prophecy from Teresias. What does Teresias advise Odysseus to do? How does this prophecy set up the second half of the epic?

2) Who else does Odysseus see in the Underworld, and what does he learn from each?

#### BOOK 12: THE CATTLE OF THE SUN

Book 12 is the final 'chapter' in Odysseus' narration of his adventures. In this book, the audience hears several well-known stories of Odysseus' adventures with the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, and the Cattle of the Sun. They also learn of the fate of Odysseus' crew and why he has arrived in Phaeacia alone.

1) Why is it important that Odysseus is asleep when his men eat the cattle?

2) Why does Odysseus want to tell these stories? How do these stories impact the Phaeacians' impression of Odysseus?

### BOOK 13: ITHACA AT LAST

In Book 13, the story returns to the present day, and the Bard returns as the narrator. In the rest of the poem, the pace of the story slows. In the first half of the epic, the audience heard about events that took place over a period of ten years. Now, the story becomes more detailed as the audience hears about Odysseus' return to Ithaca and the days it takes him to reclaim his kingdom. The audience hears more about Odysseus' thoughts and emotions as he returns home after his long journey. When leaving Phaeacia, Odysseus's ship is loaded with King Alcinous's gifts. When he arrives home, at last, the Phaeacians unload the ship and bid Odysseus farewell. Poseidon, up till now the Phaeacians' protector, turns against them for helping his enemy. He takes vengeance upon them by waiting for the returning home ship to arrive in Scheria's port, sinking it to the bottom of the harbor, and thus ruining their perfect port. The Phaeacians recall a now-haunting prophecy that had warned them against helping strangers. Odysseus awakens and finds himself in a strange land. Though it is Ithaca and his long voyage is over, Athena keeps the truth hidden from him. When he becomes angry with the Phaeacian sailors for leaving him in the wrong place, Athena arrives in the disguise of a shepherd who informs him that he is in his homeland. Athena relays that he must use his intelligence to punish the suitors, who have been misusing his home, wife, and son. She tells him to seek out Eumaeus, his loyal and trustworthy swineherd, and to take refuge in his hut. She also relays news of Telemachus and disguises Odysseus as an old beggar to keep his identity, and his return to Ithaca, a secret.

### BOOK 14: THE LOYAL SWINEHERD

In Book 14, Odysseus goes to visit one of his former servants, Eumaeus, who is loyal and trustworthy. Still, Odysseus remains in disguise (as an old beggar), and through his conversation with the loyal swineherd, he gathers valuable information about life in Ithaca.

1) In this chapter, there are many examples of good xenia. List two or three that you think are significant. Why is it significant that Eumaeus shows good xenia?

2) What important news of Ithaca does Odysseus learn?

### BOOK 15: THE PRINCE SETS SAIL FOR HOME

In Sparta, Athena arrives to find Telemachus asleep in the palace of Menelaus. She relays to Telemachus that he must hurry home to deal with the suitors and warns him of the plot to assassinate Telemachus when he returns and how to avoid it. She tells him to seek out Eumaeus when he returns, a clear effort to bring Telemachus and Odysseus together in one place. When Telemachus is preparing to leave the following day, an eagle appears with a goose in its claws, a sign that Helen interprets as the return and triumph of Odysseus. Telemachus arrives back in Pylos and immediately returns to his ship, stating that he has no time to spend with Nestor. The descendent of a prophet, Theoclymenus, who is pursued by the law for a crime committed in Argos, arrives and requests passage with Telemachus, who offers him ample hospitality. Back in Ithaca, Eumaeus refuses to allow Odysseus to leave and seek employment with the suitors, fearing that they will abuse him, and instead offers his own further hospitality and confirms his loyal, good nature. Odysseus and Eumaeus continue to share stories, but Eumaeus still does not realize he is talking to Odysseus. Eumaeus describes how he first arrived in Ithaca. He describes how he was kidnapped by pirates and sold to Laertes and eventually raised by Odysseus's mother as one of her own. When Telemachus finally arrives the next day and successfully avoids the suitors' ambush, he disembarks and sends his crew ahead to the city. Theoclymenus sees a hawk fly above with a dove in hand that he interprets as a good sign for Odysseus and his family line.

#### BOOK 16: FATHER AND SON

1. Describe the reunion: what details do you remember and what do you think about them? What simile is used to describe their crying – why might Homer have chosen this?
2. What is Odysseus' plan for him and Telemachus? What three important things does he tell Telemachus to do?

**BOOK 17 AND BOOK 18: STRANGER AT THE GATES AND THE BEGGAR KING OF ITHACA**  
On p. 356, note Telemachus' confidence. His journey and the return of his father have changed him. As Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, arrives at the palace, notice how he is treated by the suitors who clearly do not obey the laws of *xenia*. Remember that *xenia* distinguishes the civilized from the savage. We see the suitors brazenly feasting – drinking- wooing women and mistreating Odysseus, Telemachus and Penelope. Antinous hurls a stool at Odysseus, and Melanthius mocks and insults him. Through it all, Odysseus displays the importance of self-control and patience (and teaches this to Telemachus as well). The most moving part of Book 17 is when Odysseus' old, faithful dog, Argos, who has loyally waited for twenty years for his master to return and who has been neglected over the years, recognizes Odysseus and, with his master finally home, closes his eyes and dies. This highlights the important theme of **LOYALTY** in the text. Agamemnon's wife was disloyal, and Odysseus wonders whether Penelope has remained loyal. In addition, Odysseus will need to determine which servants have been loyal and disloyal. At the end of Book 17, Penelope asks to meet the old beggar (Odysseus) privately, in hopes that he might have heard something about Odysseus during his travels. The beggar sends a message that he will meet with her later that night. Think about why Odysseus might be putting off his meeting with Penelope. In Book 18, the suitors, for the sake of their own amusement, urge Odysseus to fight with another old beggar (Irus). With the help of Athena, Odysseus shocks the suitors as he reveals the impressive muscles under his rags and easily defeats Irus and hurls him out the door. The suitors grow uneasy, as they realize this is no ordinary beggar. Penelope appears before the suitors and shames them for the way they have treated

her guest and for the coarse way they have tried to woo her. She demands that they bring her gifts. Again, Penelope shows her cleverness here (a good match for Odysseus' cleverness), as she finds a way to stall the suitors and avoid having to choose one of them for her new husband.

#### BOOK 19: PENELOPE AND HER GUEST

1. What preparations do Odysseus and Telemachus make at the beginning of Book 19?
2. Do you think that Penelope knows that the beggar is Odysseus? Why, or why not? An argument can be made for both sides.
3. How does the beggar convince Penelope that he did indeed see Odysseus years ago on the day that he set sail for Troy? What details does he confirm for Penelope? How does he give Penelope hope that her husband will return?
4. Who is Eurycleia and what role does she play in the family? Why does Odysseus indirectly request that she be the only one to wash his feet? How does Eurycleia come to recognize Odysseus? What does Odysseus ask of her?

#### BOOK 20: PORTENTS GATHER

There is much feasting, celebrating, and plotting as the suitors plan Telemachus' death. The tension and anticipation increase, as Athena heightens Odysseus' and Telemachus' rage and fills the suitors with laughter and disrespectful rants. Despite the warnings from prophets and the omens that have appeared, the suitors refuse to back down.

#### BOOK 21: ODYSSEUS STRINGS HIS BOW

In this book, Odysseus' plan for his full "return" begins to unfold. Penelope has a dinner with the suitors and Odysseus, still disguised as the beggar, is present. Penelope decides that there will be a contest: she will wed the first person to string Odysseus' bow and shoot an arrow through a row of axe-heads.

1. Describe Odysseus' bow and the contest in general. How can you shoot an arrow through a row of axe-heads? Try sketching what this might look like.
2. Do you think Penelope would really marry the winner of this event? Does she think there will be a winner? Why has she cleverly designed this particular contest?
3. To open the contest, Telemachus decides that he will try to string the bow. Look at lines 139-150 on p. 428. Is he successful? Why or why not?

4. How does this book build suspense? Look at the imagery at the end.

#### BOOK 22: SLAUGHTER IN THE HALL

In this book, Odysseus and Telemachus begin exacting revenge upon the suitors.

1. Who is killed first? Do you think this is appropriate?
2. Eurymachus tries to save himself. Why does he think he deserves mercy? Do you think he deserves it?
3. What mistake does Telemachus make?
4. How does Odysseus choose to punish the various people he thinks have wronged him? Do you think Odysseus' actions are just?

#### BOOK 23: THE GREAT ROOTED BED

This book tells of the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope.

1. How does Penelope test Odysseus to verify his identity? Do you think she is correct to have such skepticism? Why is this such an appropriate test?
2. On p. 464, Odysseus explains to Penelope that, according to Teiresias, there is still one trial that he must undertake. What must he still do before Poseidon will be appeased?

#### BOOK 24: PEACE

This book follows the suitors to the underworld, where we once again encounter many famous heroes of Greek lore. Odysseus is left to broker peace with the angry families of the fallen suitors.

1. In the underworld, how do the suitors describe what has happened to them and what response do they receive?
2. Odysseus goes to visit his father, Laertes. Describe their interaction.
3. How is the conflict between Odysseus and the suitors' families ultimately resolved? Do you think this is a fitting conclusion to the epic poem? How does this further highlight the role of the gods in men's lives?