

## Book IX of the Odyssey by Homer

### The Odyssey 1

My name is Odysseus and I am the ruler of Ithaca, a small and rugged island on the western coast of Greece. One of the advantages of being the chief here is that I am very wealthy and everyone on the island has to obey me. One of the disadvantages is that I have to help the King of all our lands, called King Agamemnon, whenever he wants to fight a war, even if I do not want to. The King informed me that he wanted me to help him in an important war to win back a stolen queen who was not even his own, but his brother's. She was called Helen and had been taken to Troy, so now she was called Helen of Troy and was very famous. I was told by the King that I had to take my ships and men and weapons and go and join his army to attack Troy in order to win back Helen of Troy. I tried to get out of this task, as it did not seem so important to me as it was to the King or to his brother, but in the end the king insisted that I join him in the Trojan War.

In the end the war took even longer than any of us had first thought - ten years. But the clever trickery I used in this war helped us to win it and also brought me glory, which made me very famous. You might have heard of the Trojan Horse, which was the best of all my ideas in that war. So, at last we had won and I could go home with my men and my ships.

Unfortunately, the trip home after the war took another ten years because of a certain event on the way home when I could not keep silent. Instead of holding my tongue and showing restraint, I jeered at a one-eyed giant, even though all my men were imploring me to be quiet and not to antagonise him. I will now relate the story of how it was that I came to anger the giant, and how that caused our ten year delay.

#### Questions

- 1 What was the objective of the Trojan Wars?
- 2 Who forced Odysseus to join in the war?
- 3 The word brother's has an apostrophe to indicate possession, such as is used for the girl's dress or the boy's football. The girl's dress can be rewritten as the dress of the girl. Rewrite brother's, which occurs in the first paragraph above, in a similar way.
- 4 How long did the Trojan War last?
- 5 What made Odysseus famous during the Trojan War?
- 6 What fault about himself does Odysseus tell us about?
- 7 How long did the trip home after the Trojan Wars take?

## The Odyssey 2

I started for home with my twelve ships and all my men who were left after the Trojan War. I think we can all agree that there is nothing dearer to a man than his own country and his parents, and however splendid a home that he may have in a foreign country, if it is far from his mother and father, he will never love it as much as his native abode where his parents are. This is what I was thinking as we started on the homeward journey to the isles of Ithaca, and little did I know at the time how long and perilous the journey would be.

We were feeling relaxed as we were sailing on our homeward voyage, when we noticed the clouds began to gather, and eventually they became like a curtain. Then Zeus called the north wind to blow them against us. The howling wind and the dark clouds made a terrible storm and soon it seemed that both the sky and the sea were covered with clouds, and soon after the night fell quickly from heaven.

Our ships were driven headlong in the dark by the gale so we could not even steer them. It all happened so quickly that our sails were soon torn to shreds by the might of the wind as we tried to lower them, but at last, whilst fearing death, we managed to get them down before we were shipwrecked.

### Questions

1. What does Odysseus value most now that the wars are over?
2. What does 'perilous' mean?
3. In what way were the clouds like a curtain?
4. Who sent the north wind?
5. In the last sentence of the second paragraph, find three adjectives.
6. In the last sentence of the second paragraph, find an example of assonance.
7. In the last sentence of the second paragraph, find the onomatopoeia
8. What does 'headlong' mean?

### The Odyssey 3

When the tattered cloth was at last stored safely in the hold, we rowed the ships with all our might landwards so we could reach calmer waters. There we stayed and endured the fierce storm, toiling strenuously for two nights and two days, which made us very weary and sorrowful.

At last, when the dawn brought us light on the third day, the storm abated and the danger passed, so we hoisted the white sails and unfurled them before sitting down, exhausted.

The favourable winds carried us back towards our homeland of Greece, which we could see in the distance and made us very joyful. As we steered the ships in a westerly direction towards our destination, we were elated as we thought that our troubles were at an end.

But we were to be disappointed, for just as we got very close to the shore of our beloved country, a cruel north wind rose up again and drove us from our course. For nine days the devious wind and currents carried us far out into the deep sea and further away from our homeland.

#### Questions

- 1 Why did the sailors put the cloth in the hold?
- 2 What does 'abated' mean?
- 3 Why did the sailors unfurl the sails?
- 4 What adjective to describe the winds meant that they were blown towards home?
- 5 When the wind was not blowing in the desired direction, how did the sailors make the ship travel?
- 6 What made the sailors think their troubles were at an end?
- 7 The north wind was cruel to blow the ship into the deep sea. What did the wind wait for to make this act even more cruel?
- 8 Can you guess what will happen next in the story?

## The Odyssey 4

On the tenth day the storm subsided and we spotted an unfamiliar land, so we sailed towards it so we could repair the ships and fill our barrels with fresh water. When we reached the land I sent two of my men to see if anyone lived in this country, and I assigned to them a third person who could run back with any messages.

Unfortunately, when the three of them returned they were like different people. They told us that they had met some friendly strangers who were not hostile at all, but were very hospitable, and had given them some wonderful flowers to eat called lotus flowers. They informed us that after tasting the sweet honey of the lotus plant they had decided to stay where they were and to spend all the rest of their lives being lotus-eaters, and they were fully resolved to do nothing else except feed off the fruit all day long. They said they would never come back to the ship ever again, and they even forgot all about their families and their children. All they could think of was munching those plants.

So we tied them up and dragged them back to the ships weeping bitterly, and very much against their will. We put them in the hold of my ship, still tied up, and then I commanded all my men to get on board the ships with great haste, lest any more of them were tempted to taste the lotus flowers.

As soon as we had all embarked and had stowed the water barrels away, all those who were not tied up took their places on the benches in an orderly fashion, and we pulled hard on the oars until they bent, and the grey waves were soon white as we beat them.

We sailed and rowed onwards in unknown seas for many days with the tied-up men complaining loudly and making us feel quite downhearted, until at last the effects of the lotus plant wore off and we could untie them.

### Questions

- 1) How many days did the storm last for?
- 2) Why did the men need to fill barrels with water?
- 3) What does 'hostile' mean?
- 4) What metaphor is used to describe the taste of the flowers?
- 5) Why did the three sailors resolve never to return to the ships again?
- 6) Explain why Odysseus was right to tie his men up against their will.
- 7) Why was Odysseus in such a hurry to leave?
- 8) What might be the consequence of more men eating the lotus plants?
- 9) List all the verbs in the penultimate paragraph
- 10) Do you think the three men who had been tied up were angry with Odysseus for tying them up when they were finally untied

## The Odyssey 5

After a few days we spotted land again, a wooded country with a vast mountain near the shore that reached the clouds. About a mile from the mainland was an island covered in woods, and, as it was getting dark, I decided to head for the island with the help of a gentle breeze rather than head for the mainland, as we could reach it sooner, and before dark if possible.

Unfortunately it was already dark by the time we arrived, and there was a thick mist lying about us. Furthermore, no moon shone from heaven to guide us as it was hidden by clouds. Also, the wind was low so we could not hear or see any breakers to tell us where the shore was, so in the end we did not even see the island at all until our ships actually ran ashore onto the sandy beach.

We were very fortunate to land on the sand and not on rocks. It was so safe and sheltered that we did not even need to lash the hawser of any ship to the shore or to drop the anchor; we just pulled the ships further up the beach, took down the sails and camped on the shore until daybreak.

We slept soundly until daylight appeared and when we awoke we looked around with wonder at the beauty of the island. We were in a natural harbour surrounded by tall trees that served to shelter and hide our ships. A spring of delicious clear water sprang out from under a rock, and there were meadows with luscious grass growing in fertile soil that came right down to the shore. We agreed that it would be an excellent place to grow grapes and would always yield a large crop at harvest time.

While we were exploring we startled some wild goats. So we went back to fetch our bows and arrows and spears and we divided into three parties to hunt the goats. We had plenty of prey. There were twelve ships in my command, and each ship had nine goats for its share, and my portion was ten.

### Questions

- 1) Do you think the mountain really did reach the clouds?
- 2) Why was it safer to land on the island rather than the mainland?
- 3) If any one of four events had not occurred, the landing would have been safer. Name the four events a) ...b) ... c) ... d) ...
- 4) As well as being sandy, there was another feature of the landing place that made it safe. What was this feature?
- 5) What makes you realise the ships were quite small?
- 6) What is a 'harbour'?
- 7) What other kind of harbour is there other than a natural one?
- 8) List eight adjectives in the penultimate paragraph.
- 9) Why did the sailors use bows and arrows instead of guns to shoot the goats?
- 10) Why do you think Odysseus took ten goats when the other ships had only nine?

## The Odyssey 6

All day long we sat and feasted, drinking sweet red wine which we had taken from the city of Cicones. We had a very large number of jars, and it went very well with the delicious meat so we just helped ourselves without any danger of it running out. As we ate and drank we looked across to the mainland where we saw smoke, which made us realise it was inhabited. We also heard voices even though the mainland was about a mile away. This meant they talked very loudly for normal human beings, or that they were giants.

“We will probably find out tomorrow,” I said, “when we go and explore the mainland. But for now we are safe here and tonight we can relax again.” So when the sun had set and darkness came over the land, we lay down on the seashore and slept.

The next morning I gathered my men together for a meeting. "Stay here on the island, brave fellows," I said, "whilst I take my own ship and my crew to the mainland to find out if the inhabitants are hostile and wild and unjust, or whether they are well-disposed to strangers and hospitable people."

So the men of my ship and I embarked and we took our places, and the men who were still on shore loosened the ropes as we pulled our oars against the foamy sea.

When we had rowed the short journey of about a mile, we found ourselves very close to the mainland and we heard the sound of voices that were so loud and deep they surely must have belonged to giants. There was a cliff near the shore with caves in it, and we guessed these must be deep caverns where the giants dwelt. From the ship we could see the nearest one quite clearly. There was a yard in front, which was surrounded by a wall built of stones, and there were tall pine and oak trees for shade. We realised this must be the abode of a huge giant who was probably away from home shepherding his flocks.

### Questions

1. What is the first indication in the story that there might be giants on the mainland?
2. Why do you think the men ate and drank on the first day, instead of going straight to the mainland?
3. What does 'well-disposed' mean?
4. What does 'hospitable' mean?
5. What adjective is used to describe the sea when the sailors rowed away?
6. What event confirmed the initial theory that giants dwelt on the island?
7. What does 'abode' mean?

## The Odyssey 7

I decided to go ashore and to take a gift from my ship in case I needed one to give to the inhabitants. I had several splendid ones to choose from which Maron, son of Euanthes, had given me in return for sparing him and his wife and children when we were at war with his country. The gifts he had given me consisted of seven bars of gold, a mixing bowl made of pure silver, and twelve jars of exquisite deep purple wine.

The wine was as sweet as honey and it was so strong and rich that when Maron poured it he would dilute it with twenty parts of water, and even then it gave forth such a sweet and pleasant aroma from the cup that he had to keep it a secret as anyone who knew about it would not be able to refrain from drinking it. Not even his servants knew that he had this precious wine. None in his household knew about it except for himself and his wife. So I filled a large goatskin with this luscious juice and took it with me in case I needed to present a gift, and I took a bag of corn too.

When we reached the shallows, I chose twelve men, the best of my company, to accompany me ashore and I commanded the rest of my men to stay with the ship near the shore and to guard it, and to be always ready in case we came back in a hurry and needed to make a swift getaway. After giving these orders, I climbed out of the ship with my small party and we went ashore.

Soon we came to the cave. We found there was no giant there so we went inside, and we gazed around in wonder at the huge cavern in which he dwelt. There were shelves with neat rows of baskets laden with delicious cheeses, and there were pens full of lambs and kids, all divided according to their age, and the pens were so full that there were even more lambs outside the pens.

### Questions

- 1) Why do you think Odysseus might need to give the inhabitants a gift?
- 2) What was the reason that Maron gave the wine to Odysseus?
- 3) Give three adjectives in the third sentence used to describe the wine.
- 4) What is another word for 'aroma'?
- 5) Why did Maron not tell the servants about his wine?
- 6) Why did Odysseus transfer the wine from the jars into a goatskin?
- 7) What alternative word is used in place of 'wine' in the second paragraph?
- 8) What do you think the bag of corn was for?
- 9) What is the name for (a) a baby sheep and (b) a baby goat?
- 10) Give two examples which show the owner of the cave was neat and organised.

Essay storm choose 12 things to run home with

## The Odyssey 8

We concluded that it must be the dwelling of some rich and skilful shepherd. In his dairy he had milk churns and milking bowls and small pails hanging from the walls, which were full of curds and whey.

My men begged me to let them steal as much cheese as they could carry and make off with them to the ship, and then maybe return and drive some of the lambs and kids to the shore and put them on board our swift ships and depart before the owner returned.

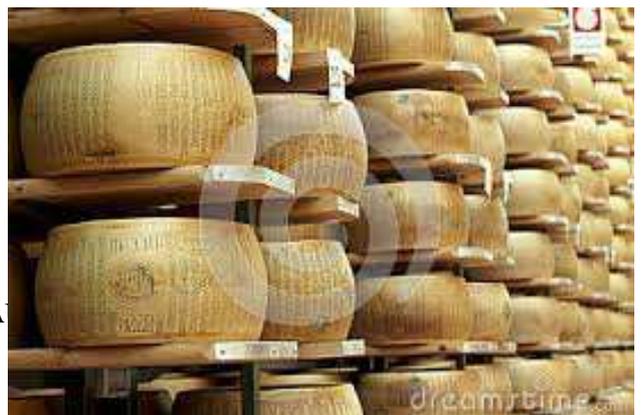
It would have been better if we had done so, but I would not listen to them, for I was curious to see what kind of shepherd the owner himself was, and also in the hope that he would show me hospitality and give me a present. It is the custom to give valuable gifts to visitors from far off places. In the end, his arrival was not to bring us any joy.

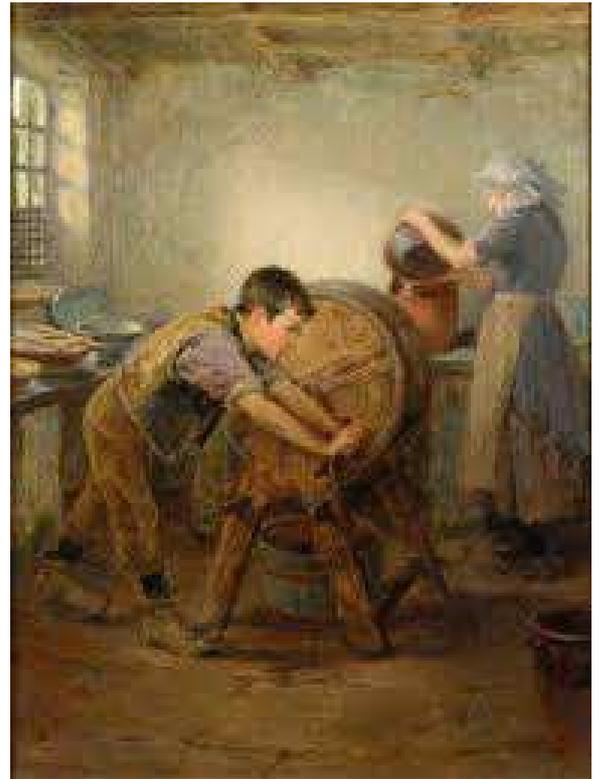
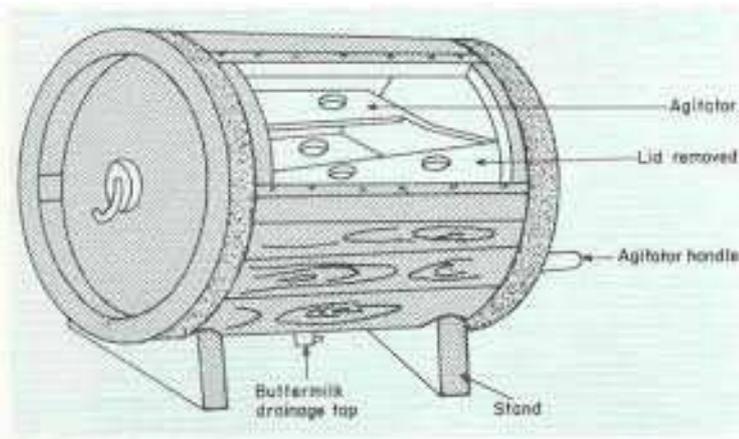
We lit a fire, and ate some of his cheese, and then sat waiting patiently in his cave for his return.

Eventually we heard the bleating of his sheep outside the cave getting louder and louder, and we were very apprehensive as we realised he was approaching the cave with his flock. We waited in anticipation, wondering if he would be hospitable or hostile. Then he suddenly appeared and stood alone just inside the doorway of the spacious cave.

### Questions

- 1) When milk is churned, or mixed, it separates into two components. What are they called?
- 2) What makes us realise that the men were scared?
- 3) Give ten verbs in the second paragraph.
- 4) Give two reasons Odysseus did not steal some cheese and run away.
- 5) Give eight nouns from the second paragraph (not including 'on board').
- 6) What two things did the men do without permission that might annoy the owner of the cave upon his return?
- 7) How did the men know the owner had returned before they saw him?
- 8) What does 'apprehensive' mean?
- 9) What does 'anticipation' mean?
- 10) How do you know that the cave is large, apart from the fact that it is described as 'spacious'?





*Little Miss Muffet,  
Sat on a tuffet,  
Eating some curds and whey;  
There came a great spider,  
Who sat down beside her,  
And frightened Miss Muffet away.*



### Little Miss Muffet

Folk song

Em A7 D G Em A7 D

U - to Miss Muf - fet sat on a tuf - fet, Eat - ing her curds and whey — A -

Em A7 D G Em A7 D

long came a spi - der who sat down be - side her, And fright - ened Miss Muf - fet a - way.



## The Odyssey 9

The owner was a mighty giant, hideous in form, and reminding me more of a mountain crag and wood than a human being. He had a sullen and savage face, with one eye in the centre of his forehead. In his mighty arms, which were like tree trunks, he carried an enormous load of dry pine logs to light the fire for his supper, and this he threw down with such a din onto the floor of his cave that we were filled with fear and fled to the darkness to hide in the nooks and crannies at the back.

Then the giant went back outside and drove his fat ewes inside the wide cavern, and also the she-goats to be milked, leaving the males, both rams and he-goats, outside in the yard. After this he lifted a huge boulder and thrust it into the mouth of the cave. It was such an immense rock that two and twenty wagon-horses could not budge it from its position blocking the doorway.

Then he sat down and milked the ewes and bleating goats, and beneath each ewe he placed her young. Then he curdled half of the white milk, and put the solids into wicker strainer baskets, and the liquid half he poured into bowls so that he could drink it for his supper. When he had finished all his work busily, he lit the fire with the pine logs. The flames lit up the cave and enabled the giant to see us for the first time, cowering in the shadows. His face came closer, and he stared at us with his one eye, and this made us even more terrified.

The monster frowned. "Arrgh!" he cried in a growl, "Strangers! Strangers in my cave. Who are you and where did you come from? The land or the sea? And are you traders, adventures or robbers wandering the seas?"

### Questions

- 1) Give two adjectives in the first sentence.
- 2) Give an example of alliteration in the second sentence.
- 3) Give a simile in the third sentence.
- 4) What word in the first paragraph means to run away fast?
- 5) What is the name for a female sheep?
- 6) What are sheep kept for and what are goats kept for?  
(Choose from: wool, milk for cheese, meat called mutton, and meat called lamb)
- 7) What are wagon-horses used for?
- 8) What noise do the goats make?
- 9) What word means to make solid bits appear in milk?
- 10) What made the light that enabled the giant to see the men?

## The Odyssey 10

We were full of terror, and shuddered at his loud voice and his monstrous size and his uncouth appearance, but I remained brave and managed to answer him. “We are from Greece, mighty sir,” I began, “and we were driven here by many winds sent by the Gods for their amusement, and by fierce storms over the vast deep sea. We were seeking our homes, but we ended up far away and off course, and finally reached your lands by chance. We stand before your knees, and beg that you will give us a gift, as it is the custom to give presents to strangers. And we are under the protection of Zeus, the avenger of all respectable travellers who ask for gifts and who are treated badly, and the protector of all adventurers on long journeys.”

“Stranger,” replied the giant, “either you are a fool, or you really have come from very far away if you did not know that Cyclopes pay no heed to your god Zeus, for we are much stronger than he is, and we do not fear his wrath. I would not spare you because I fear the enmity of Zeus, I would only abstain from harming you if the fancy took me to make such a choice, and it pleased me to do so because I was in the mood.” Then he thought for a moment and continued. “But tell me, where did you tie your ship that you came in? Is it nearby or round the headland? I am just interested to know which one it is.”

### Questions

- 1) Pick five verbs in the first sentence.
- 2) Give two adjectives used to describe the sea in the first paragraph.
- 3) What polite term does the author use to address the giant?
- 4) The author refers to the giant as having ‘monstrous size’ and he refers to him as a ‘giant’.  
Give one other indication in the passage that the Cyclops is a giant.
- 5) Give two ways that Zeus helps travellers.
- 6) What does ‘enmity’ mean?
- 7) What does ‘abstain’ mean?
- 8) What do you think is the ulterior (hidden) motive for asking where the ships were?
- 9) What is another way of saying ‘if the fancy took me’?
- 10) What is the word for land that juts out into the sea?
- 11) What did the giant say that was probably a lie?

## The Odyssey 11

I knew the giant's ulterior motive was to destroy our ship so that we had no chance of escape, and he was giving me two choices in an attempt to trick me into giving him information about its whereabouts, but I was too cunning to be caught out in this way and I answered craftily with a lie. "Neptune," I answered him, "the shaker of the earth and shores, dashed it to pieces, for he cast it upon the rocks and wrecked it, and a wind blew the pieces out to sea so you will not find them. Only I and those whom you now see, escaped from the jaws of death and utter doom."

The cruel and pitiless creature did not speak one word in reply, but he suddenly sprang forwards and with a quick snatch he grabbed two of my men in one of his huge hands. He clutched them together and dashed them to the floor, so their brains splattered upon the ground, and the earth was wet with their blood.

Then he tore them into pieces, limb from limb, and ate them raw for his supper. He ate like a mountain lion, without stopping, and devouring entrails and flesh and bones with their marrow, leaving nothing uneaten, not one single morsel. We wept and raised our hands to Zeus as we watched the dreadful deed, and we were at our wits' end what to do, feeling our courage and hope had gone, as we did not know which one of us he would grab to eat next. Fortunately, he stopped after eating only two, for when the Cyclops had filled his huge stomach with human flesh and had drunk several gallons of milk, he lay down within the cave, stretching his immense body out at full length on the ground amongst his sheep, and went to sleep.

### Questions

- 1) What does 'ulterior' mean?
- 2) Which god caused storms?
- 3) Give all the alternative names for the giant used in the passage.  
(a) giant (b) ... (c) ...
- 4) Why did Odysseus pretend that his ship was shipwrecked?
- 5) Give the two adjectives, (a) and (b), that are used in the first line of the second paragraph to describe the giant.
- 6) Give two characteristics of a mountain lion eating his meal.
- 7) What is the tasty part in the middle of a bone called?
- 8) Whom did the sailors ask for help?
- 9) How do we know the giant did not fear the men in the slightest?
- 10) What does 'immense' mean in the last sentence?
- 11) List the verbs in the following sentence:  
Neptune dashed it to pieces, for he cast it upon the rocks and wrecked it, and a wind blew the pieces out to sea so you will not find them.

## The Odyssey 12

I knew I had to think hard. My courage made me want to creep near to the monster and draw my sharp sword from its sheath, and to slay him by stabbing him in the chest where his heart is, after feeling for the best place with my hand. My caution made me want to stay where I was. When I reflected on my plan, my caution won, for I realised that we too would have perished in the cave even if I had slain the giant, for we would never have been able to roll away the rocky mass that closed the mouth of the cavern. So we just sat there, sighing and moaning and groaning as we waited for the morning.

As soon as dawn appeared, the monster woke and he rose and rekindled the fire and milked his goats and ewes, and then let each one have her own kid or lamb, all in an orderly fashion. We kept quite still, thinking perhaps he had forgotten about us, but as soon as he had completed his tasks, again he suddenly made a grab and seized two more of my men, and munched them for his midday meal, together with huge draughts of milk.

Presently, and with ease, he rolled the great stone barrier away from the lofty door, and drove his fat flocks out from the cave. He then followed them out, and, whilst keeping a keen lookout with his eye in case we ran out, he at once rolled it back again from the outside, as easily as one might close the lid of a quiver full of arrows, or put a stopper in a jar. Then with a loud whoop, the Cyclops turned his fat flocks towards the hills and drove them away from the cave leaving us trapped inside.

### Questions

- 1) What word in the first paragraph means 'kill'?
- 2) What would have happened to the men if Odysseus had slain the giant?
- 3) Give one example of assonance in the final sentence of the first paragraph.
- 4) A lamb is a baby sheep. What is the term for a baby goat used in the passage above?
- 5) What words mean (a) lit and (b) relit a fire.
- 6) What is a draught of milk?
- 7) What does the adjective 'lofty' mean?
- 8) What tells us in the penultimate sentence that the giant was very strong?
- 9) What adjective in the last sentence tells us that the giant was a successful shepherd?
- 10) What noise did the giant make as he departed?

### The Odyssey 13

I was left to scheme and devise plans all day long. I evaluated every idea I could think of, no matter how terrible, to enable me to take my revenge and also if possible to attain glory and renown and honour.

After much thought I eventually settled on the plan I thought was the best. It involved the use of a great club hewn from an olive tree, still green, and which was lying by one of the sheep pens. The Cyclops had cut it and saved it so that when it had dried out completely it would serve as a staff to herd his sheep and to help him climb up hills. It was so huge in weight and length that we compared it to the mast of a ship with twenty oars and easily able to venture out into open sea.

I cut from this staff a piece which was about a fathom's length (about six feet), and gave it to my men, and told them to use their swords to make it thinner at one end, which they proceeded to do, and when this was done, I myself finished it off and made the end into a very sharp point.

After this I took it and charred the sharpened tip in the bright fire to make it harder. Then I laid it in a place the Cyclops would not find it, hidden beneath the straw and dung, which was scattered in great heaps in the depths of the cave.

When this was done, I revealed my plan to my men, which was to heat the stake in the fire, and then to lift the stake whilst burning and to thrust it in the Cyclops' eye while he was asleep. I told them to cast lots to see which of them would take the risk of helping me in my venture. Luckily, the four chosen were the same ones who I myself would have selected, and I appointed myself to be the fifth one among them.

#### Questions

- 1) For what was Odysseus seeking revenge? Give two things.
- 2) What does 'hewn' mean?
- 3) What was happening to the club before Odysseus took it for his plan?
- 4) Give two ways in which a staff is used by shepherds.
- 5) How did the sailors sometimes indicate the size of a ship?
- 6) Give three verbs in the first sentence of the penultimate paragraph.
- 7) What process made the sharpened tip harder?
- 8) What does 'cast lots' mean?
- 9) What was lucky about the four men chosen by chance?
- 10) What does 'venture' mean?

## The Odyssey 14

In the evening we heard the ogre coming back with his fat flocks, and presently he removed the stone from the lofty door and drove them into the cave, but this time he brought them all in and did not leave the males outside. Whether this was because the fancy took him, or because of some foreboding, or because the gods prompted him to do so, we did not know.

Thereafter he lifted the huge door-stone and set it back in its place in the mouth of the cave, and, sitting down, he milked the ewes and bleating goats, all in an orderly fashion, and then beneath each ewe he placed her young. When he had completed all his tasks busily, again he seized another two of my men and ate them for his supper.

While he was enjoying his meal of human meat, and before his drink of milk, I went up to him and stood next to him with a bowl held in my hands, made of ivy wood and full of the exquisite purple wine, which had not been diluted with any parts of water.

“Cyclops,” I said, trying to sound friendly as I addressed the monster, “take and drink this sweet wine after your feast of man's meat, so that you might taste what manner of drink we carried on board my ship, which has sunk. I was originally planning to bring it to you as a gift if you had happened to take pity on us and sent us on our way home, but now I see that your mad rage against us will never diminish. Oh, hard of heart, how can you expect any friendly visitors henceforth, when you just kill your guests in your lawless ways?”

### Questions

- 1) The giant varied his routine. What did he do this time that was different from usual?
- 2) Why did the giant place each ewe beneath her young?
- 3) Give an adverb in the last sentence of the second paragraph.
- 4) What made the wine as strong as possible?
- 5) Can you guess what will happen to the giant if he drinks the wine?
- 6) Why was Odysseus trying to sound friendly?
- 7) What does Odysseus say is one disadvantage of killing and eating all his guests?
- 8) Can you think of a fault in the logic of Odysseus's argument?
- 9) What does Odysseus call the Cyclops for eating his men?
- 10) Give two terms used as alternatives to 'giant' in the passage above.

## The Odyssey 15

As I finished speaking the Cyclops took the cup and drank it all, and found such great delight in drinking the sweet draught that he was very pleased.

"How delicious is your wine," he declared. "The rich earth bears for the Cyclopes mighty clusters of grapes, and the rain and sun give them wonderful size, but this drink of yours, this is a rare liquor, and must indeed have been made in the heavens above for the gods themselves to drink, for it is truly divine and is the taste of nectar itself. Give me some more of your fine liquor, and tell me your name, for, after drinking your splendid beverage, I now feel inclined to give you a gift such as a host is expected to give, and which you have asked for, and I am sure my gift is one which you will be very glad to receive."

So I handed him some more dark wine, undiluted. Three times I carried the cup to him, and three times he drank it greedily and foolishly. When I observed that the strong wine had gone to his head and had weakened his mind, I spoke to the Cyclops with friendly words, trying to sound plausible.

"Cyclops," I said softly, "you ask me my name, and I will tell it to you, and then you will perhaps grant me the gift for strangers which you have promised. 'Noman' is my name, and 'Noman' they call me, both my father and my mother and everyone else who knows me, at home and also when I travel abroad."

"Yes," replied the cruel Cyclops, "as I promised, I will grant you a gift. My gift shall be that I will eat you last of all after eating all your comrades. That will be the gift that I will make to you. Ha ha!"

After he had spoken these words, the giant reeled backwards and fell so that he was sprawled on the ground with his face upwards, and there he lay with his great head bent backwards, and sleep, that state which conquers all men, overcame him too.

### Questions

- 1) What is a 'draught'?
- 2) Give four alternative single words used in place of 'wine' in the second paragraph.
- 3) What is wine made from?
- 4) Where is nectar found?
- 5) Why did Odysseus not dilute the wine?
- 6) Pick two adverbs from the third paragraph.
- 7) What lie does Odysseus tell in the passage above?
- 8) What was the giant's gift to Odysseus?
- 9) What does 'reeled' mean?
- 10) Explain how sleep conquers all men
- 11) What happened to the giant when he was overcome, as described in the last paragraph?



## The Odyssey 16

Presently some of the wine and the chunks of human flesh on which the ogre had been gorging on came gushing from his mouth in a pool on the ground, but he remained in a deep slumber because of the effects of the strong wine. And neither did he wake up when I thrust the stake far into the embers, nor when I spoke encouraging words to my men lest any of them should turn faint-hearted and lose the courage to play their part in my scheme out of fear.

When the stake of olive wood was just about to catch fire in the flame, although it was mainly green, I withdrew it from the coals radiant and glowing with much heat, and my men gathered about me with great courage and seized hold of the bar of olive wood, that was sharpened at the point, and we thrust it into the horrific monster's eye which was in the middle of his forehead.

I, from my superior position at the top bore all my weight down upon it, whilst my men ran round and round, twirling the stake just as if they were carpenters boring a hole in a ship's beam with a drill by spinning it with a strap and a wimble, which they hold as they run round to spin the drill continuously for as long as they choose.

Whilst we turned it round and round in his eye, the blood boiled and bubbled and flowed about the heated beam. The flame from the burning eyeball burned his eyelids away and singed his eyebrows, and the roots of the eyeball crackled and spluttered in the flame. There was a great hissing noise coming from his eye socket such as that made when a blacksmith dips a hot bar into cold water.

The Cyclops leapt up with a great and terrible cry, and his hideous yells echoed around the cave, and we fled in fear, whilst he plucked the beam from his burnt eye socket, with the tip all covered in blood and gore.

### Questions

1. What is another name for a giant mentioned in the first paragraph?
2. Which word in the first paragraph means 'pieces of wood which are glowing with heat'?
3. Rewrite **ship's beam** using 'of'
4. What power was used when the men of ancient Greece drilled holes, bearing in mind that there was no electricity?
5. What caused the blood to boil?
6. What causes the hissing noise when a blacksmith dips a hot bar into cold water?
7. Give four verbs in the last sentence.
8. Give eight common nouns in the last sentence.
9. Why would their plan not have worked if Cyclopes had two eyes?



## The Odyssey 17

The howling monster, maddened with pain, cast the spike far away with his hands, and shouted in a frenzy of rage and anguish to the other Cyclopes who dwelt about him in other caves in the wind-swept mountain side. They heard his cries from far away, and they all rushed out and came over and circled his den.

“What is the matter, Polyphemus?” they bellowed through the closed door of the cave. “What is all this commotion? Who has hurt you to make you cry out and break the stillness of the night and disturb our slumber? Surely no-one has driven your flocks away? Surely no-one is trying to kill you with his cunning trickery or by force?”

“Oh friends!” shouted the strong Cyclops from inside his cave, “Noman is killing me with his cunning. Noman is killing me with force.”

“Well,” they said from outside the Cyclops’s cave, “if no man is attacking you with cunning tricks and guile, and no man is killing you with force, we will leave you alone, for you must be ill. The sickness that ails you must be the will of your father Neptune, so you must bear it or ask him to help you.” And with those wise words they all departed and left Polyphemus groaning in an agony of pain and fury.

I laughed inwardly that by the use of a single fictitious name I had deceived them all, but the Cyclops, groaning and complaining, groped and fumbled with his hands and made his way towards the entrance of the cave until he found the stone, and he moved it away from cave’s mouth. When this was done, he sat down in the exit to block it, with arms outstretched to check the sheep and goats with his hands before letting them go past him, and in this way he thought he could catch any of us who was trying to escape by going out with the sheep.

### Questions

1. Why did the other Cyclopes rush over?
2. Give the two ways mentioned by which Polyphemus’s enemies might kill him?
3. Explain how the use of the pretend name ‘Noman’ saved the lives of Odysseus and his men.
4. Explain how Odysseus used both methods mentioned in question 2 above.
5. What was the Cyclops’s name?
6. Who was the Cyclops’s father?
7. What does ‘fictitious’ mean?
8. Pick seven verbs from the penultimate sentence (not ending in ‘ing’).
9. What alternative word is used for the entrance to the cave in the last paragraph, in addition to ‘entrance’?

10. Why did the Cyclops sit in the entrance?

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## The Odyssey 18

But rather than run out in a panic, I kept my men back and schemed and planned, in the hope that I might find a way of escaping from death for my companions and myself. I thought of all sorts of strategies and ideas, as all men do when their life is at stake or when great catastrophe is imminent. Finally, after much serious meditation, I chose the plan that appeared to be the best, and I thanked Zeus that on the last evening the giant had decided to drive the rams with the other sheep into the cave, contrary to his usual habits. Before I tell you my idea, I will describe the rams in more detail.

They were all well fed and big and strong with thick heavy fleeces, with luxuriant wool as dark as violet. Quietly I lashed them together three at a time with long flexible willow twigs of which the giant made his bed.

Only six of my men were left out of the twelve who had ventured with me from the ship. I fastened each of my remaining comrades to the middle one of the three rams, each one under the belly of the middle beast, with the outer two strong rams served to keep him concealed. Thus every man was borne by three sheep apart from myself, as I was last and there was no-one left to tie me on. So for myself I had reserved the ram which was by far the strongest of them all, and I held on underneath his shaggy belly, facing upwards and keeping a firm hold all the time as I lay supine.

### Questions

1. What is a 'catastrophe'?
2. What does 'imminent' mean?
3. What were two wise actions of Odysseus in response to the imminent catastrophe?
4. What usual routine did the giant not follow the previous evening?
5. Pick out an adverb from the second paragraph.
6. Why could the men not have hung under sheep instead of rams?
7. Why could Odysseus not ride under three rams like the other men did?
8. What was special about Odysseus's ram?
9. What does 'supine' mean?
10. How do we know that Odysseus was very strong?

Essay : the flowers are dropped

## The Odyssey 19

When I had practised my hold, I let go and we all waited for dawn. At last the morning came and I took my position under the belly of the strongest ram and clung on again to the exuberant fleece, grasping tightly with both my hands. The rams rushed to the door to be let out to find fresh pastures to feed on, whilst the ewes and goats remained further behind in the cave, bleating as they waited to be milked. Meanwhile their master, in spite of all the intolerable pain, sat in the entrance and felt the rams before letting them go out past him.

But he only felt their backs, and was not sharp enough to realise that my men's bodies were bound beneath his thick-fleeced flock.

Last of all the large ram came out, carrying the weight of his wondrous fleece plus the burden of myself clinging on, plus the weight of my cunning, which must have made the load very heavy indeed.

Just as I thought he was going to let my ram go past him, the strong Polyphemus laid his hands on him and stopped him, and stroked his back.

"My dear ram, why are you the last of all the rams to leave the cave this morning? You do not usually let the ewes out before yourself, your usual habit is to lead the herd with a run, and to be the first out to crop the tender grass of the pasture, and, taking long strides, you are usually the first to the bubbling clear fountain for a drink, and also the first to seek my home in the evening." I listened and kept a firm grip on the ram's fleece as he continued, "But this morning, I find you are lagging behind. How can this be?"

I held tight, and did not make any noise.

### Questions

- 1) What adjective in the first paragraph tells us that the fleece was very fancy and flowing?
- 2) Pick eight verbs from the penultimate sentence of the first paragraph
- 3) Describe one aspect of the giant's character revealed in the last sentence of the first paragraph.
- 4) Explain the joke in the third paragraph.
- 5) Where do the Cyclops's sheep drink?
- 6) What does the ram use to 'crop the grass of the pasture'?
- 7) What is the name for a female sheep, which the ram never let out before himself?
- 8) How do you know the ram was pushing to the front of the others on the way home each day?
- 9) What does 'lagging behind' mean?
- 10) What did Odysseus fear might happen which led him to keep quiet?

## The Odyssey 20

I listened and kept a firm grip on the ram's fleece as the Cyclops continued, "But this morning, I find you are lagging behind. How can this be?"

I held tight, and did not make any noise.

"I suppose," he continued, "you must be full of sorrow for the loss of the eye of your master, whom a vile wretch has blinded with his crew of vagabonds by boring out his eye after he had first made him drunk with wine. But Noman and the rest will not escape from death today, for they have not yet escaped from me. Ah, if you could only talk you would tell me where he is lurking to hide from my furious wrath, and I would dash his brains upon the ground until they flew here and there all about the cave. Then my heart would be lightened of the sorrows which Noman, worthless man, has brought upon me!"

After these words, he let go of the big ram and it walked out of the cave to catch up with the flock. When it had gone a little way from the entrance, I let go and I dropped onto the grass, several paces from the cave. I quickly freed my comrades and we hastened to the ship. As we did so we swiftly but silently drove on the bleating rams with us, which were very plump, although we often turned around to look behind us.

### Questions

- 1) Explain in your own words why the Cyclops thinks the ram is last out this morning?
- 2) What does 'sorrow' mean?
- 3) What phrase does the Cyclops use to describe Odysseus whilst talking to his ram (two words)?
- 4) What word does the Cyclops use to describe Odysseus's men whilst talking to his ram?
- 5) If the ram in the giant's grasp could speak, what would he tell his master of the whereabouts of Odysseus?
- 6) Even though he was sorrowful, there is something that would make the Cyclops feel happier. What is it?
- 7) What phrase means 'feel happier' (eight words)?
- 8) Usually the ram would run out of the cave. What effect did a heavy man hanging on underneath have on his speed of locomotion?
- 9) Give (a) two verbs, (b) one adverb and (c) two nouns in the penultimate sentence.
- 10) Give three adverbs in the last sentence.

## The Odyssey 21

The sailors who had remained with the ship were overjoyed to see us return and rejoiced greatly that we had escaped from death, and they would have shed tears to mourn for our dead friends, but I forbade them to weep and used a stern frown to tell them to be silent and hush their crying lest the noise should betray our position to the Cyclops. I gesticulated to indicate that we should quickly lift all the fat sheep on board with their rich fleeces and then at once sail away over the salty water. When the sheep were boarded, the men quietly took their places upon the benches in the ship, and dipped their long oars carefully into the foamy sea.

When we had reached a distance such that a man's shout could only just reach the shore, about a hundred yards, I decided to stand up and taunt the Cyclops, although later I wished I had not done so.

"Cyclops," I shouted, "when you slayed and devoured my followers in your cave, you thought you could beat me with your brute force and your mighty strength. But my men are not followers of a timid weakling chief. You misjudged the nature of the man you were dealing with. You cruel beast, who feels no shame in consuming the guests who visit his house. You atrocious monster! I warned you that our gods would avenge us of this terrible deed and punish you."

### Questions

- 1) How do you know that Odysseus feared that the blind Cyclops might have had superb powers of hearing?
- 2) What did Odysseus do instead of using words to silence his men, which some teachers do also?
- 3) What word means to indicate using hand signals and pointing?
- 4) Even though Odysseus did not even whisper, can you think of any other sounds which might betray their location?
- 5) Pick out from the penultimate sentence of the first paragraph (a) four verbs (b) an adverb (one word) (c) three adjectives.
- 6) What does 'taunt' mean?
- 7) Describe one aspect of Odysseus's character which we learn about from the penultimate paragraph?
- 8) In what way did Polyphemus mistreat his guests?
- 9) What insulting two names did Odysseus call the Cyclops?
- 10) Make a suggestion for what the giant will do next when further enraged by Odysseus's words?

## The Odyssey 22

When he heard me, the Cyclops became even more enraged than before, and he broke off the peak of a small hill and hurled it at us with great precision so that it fell just in front of the bow of the ship with a huge splash. The ocean heaved beneath the fall of the huge rock, and the backward flow of the wave bore the ship back to the land, which we were powerless to resist, and would have driven us up onto the shore if I had not snatched the longest pole on board, and thrust the ship from off the land.

I directed my crew in complete silence, for I could not speak lest the Cyclops should hear me and know where we were. Using only nods and signs I instructed them to get their oars back in the water quickly and to row as fast as they could for their lives. So they obeyed me and pulled as hard as they could on the oars and rowed back out to open sea.

When we had made twice the distance from the shore as before, I wanted to jeer at the Cyclops again, but my men surrounded me and begged me with pleading words to refrain and to hold my tongue.

"It is very foolhardy," they exclaimed in whispers, "to provoke a wild man with further taunts which will only enrage him more, and it is especially rash to antagonise one who has just flung so mighty a rock towards the deep that it has already once brought our ship back to the land. If we had not been so silent it would surely have been the death of us, as he would have known where we were and would have heaved more rocks at us which would have crushed our heads as well as the ship's timbers." They continued to plead with me. "If he hears any of us utter any sound or speech he will cast another huge stone to bring us back to the shore again, so mightily he hurls and so vast is the power in his arms."

But I remained foolhardy.

### Questions

- 1) Which part of a hill is the peak?
- 2) What was the Cyclops planning to do with the peak of the hill?
- 3) Why did the ship go back to the shore?
- 4) Who saved the ship from being stranded on the shore?
- 5) Why did Odysseus not speak?
- 6) Why did Odysseus wait this time until the sailors had rowed further out to sea before shouting?
- 7) Who was wiser, the men or Odysseus?
- 8) What had the men done which saved their lives when their ship went close to the shore?
- 9) What does 'plead' mean?
- 10) If Odysseus remained foolhardy, does this mean he will be quiet, or that he will taunt the giant again?

## The Odyssey 23

But my men were unable to persuade me to be quiet. My bold nature remained unmoved, so I stood up to insult him further. "Cyclops!" I shouted angrily and loudly, "if any man asks you who caused your disfigurement and poked your eye out, tell them it was Odysseus, son of Laertes, the valiant warrior, who comes from Ithaca."

On hearing these words, the Cyclops groaned. "So now the prophecies have been fulfilled and come true," he cried with a moan, "There lived here a prophet, an excellent fortune-teller called Telemus, son of Eurymus, who surpassed all other men in fortune-telling. No-one else could rival him and he did the fortune telling for all the Cyclopes until he grew too old. He foretold all the things that have just happened. He warned me that one day a man called Odysseus would rob me of my sight. That is why I asked you your name in the cave before drinking your strong wine, as a precaution, although mainly I have been keeping a lookout for some tall and mighty man with an imposing presence and superhuman strength who would do the deed, a wondrous man like myself. But now the one who has blinded me in my eye after subduing me with wine turns out to be a dwarf, a puny and insignificant feeble weakling. Come back, Odysseus, my guest, so that I may give you some hospitality and with a friendly goodbye I will wish you a safe voyage and urge Neptune, the earth-shaker and wave-maker to protect you on your journey and give you prosperity, for I am his son, and he is proud to be my father, and he, if he pleases, will also heal my eye, for there is none other who can, in heaven or on earth."

### Questions

- 1) What two foolish things did Odysseus do?
- 2) Pick out two adverbs from the first paragraph.
- 3) What does 'surpassed' mean?
- 4) Give two reasons why the Cyclops did not suspect Odysseus as the man who would blind him.
- 5) Why did Telemus retire from fortune-telling?
- 6) What does 'subdue' mean?
- 7) Why do you think the Cyclops invites Odysseus back for hospitality after what Odysseus has done?
- 8) What adjectives are used for the noun 'weakling' in the passage above?
- 9) Who does Polyphemus believe is his father?
- 10) What does Polyphemus hope his father will do for him?

## The Odyssey 24

“No,” I replied, “he can heal you no more than I can send you down to Hades if I wished to. It will take more than the earth-shaker Neptune, with his azure hair, to heal that eye of yours!”

“Then hear me, great Neptune, my father,” shouted the Cyclops as he stretched forth his hands to the starry heavens. “Hear me, Neptune, god of the seas, and if indeed I am your son, grant my wish that Odysseus, who vanquishes giants, may never again see his home, or, if fate already has decreed that he will reach it, may he be very late, and all his crew lost, and when he finally arrives, may he be running away from dangers, and not even in his own ship, but in one he has borrowed and made him indebted to foreigners. And may he also find sorrows and troubles and afflictions to meet him at his door. Instead of order, may he find turmoil.”

And with these words, he lifted up another stone, far greater than the first, raised it aloft, and with one swing of immeasurable force he hurled it at us. Although he exerted such tremendous strength, it was not quite enough, so this time the rock missed us and landed just behind our ship instead of in front of it, and almost struck the rudder.

The sea heaved beneath the fall of the huge mass of rock, but instead of being driven back to the shore by the huge wave as before, because it was behind the boat, this time we were driven further out to sea towards the small island where our companions were waiting for us.

### Questions

- 1) What colour is ‘azure’?
- 2) Polyphemus seems to accept that Neptune cannot heal his eye. What does he ask for instead?
- 3) In case Neptune cannot grant his second request either, he asks for a third list and includes several details. Which do you think is the worst of these?
- 4) Give two more words similar in meaning to ‘sorrows’ in the passage above.
- 5) Pick out the three verbs used to describe what the giant did with the rock.
- 6) What does ‘aloft’ mean?
- 7) What verb in the last paragraph described the movement of the sea?
- 8) What do you think happened to the blind Cyclops after Odysseus escaped?

## The Odyssey 25

Soon we reached the island, where all our other ships were sheltering, and my men were gathered, anxiously awaiting our return as they had just witnessed the massive rocks landing in the sea and the great waves which had been raised.

We ran our ship ashore upon the sand, and stepped out onto the beach. Next we landed the Cyclops' sheep from the hold of the ship, and divided them equitably between all the men, each one getting his proper share, except that I kept the large ram as my extra share.

I sacrificed the large ram to the god Zeus, who dwells in the dark clouds, but I do not think he was listening, as all the things the Cyclops wished for came true, and in the end we wandered for another ten years before I finally reached my home, to find my house in turmoil.

For the rest of the day we sat on the beach and feasted merrily on the abundant bounty and drank the remainder of the special purple sweet wine, which we diluted with twenty parts of water. And when the sun had sunk and darkness came, we laid down our tired heads where we were on the beach and rested. As soon as early dawn began to shine with rosy colours, I called to my company, and commanded them to climb into the ships and untie the hawsers.

So they embarked and took their places, and, sitting in an orderly fashion, they smote the grey sea with their oars. And so we sailed away, glad and rejoicing to have narrowly escaped death, although, as our crews were diminished, with sorrow and grief in our hearts that we had lost our dear companions.

### Questions

- 1) What is the adverb for the verb 'reached' in the first sentence?
- 2) What word in the passage means 'fairly'?
- 3) There was one aspect of the division that was not fair. What was it?
- 4) What ended up happening to the large Ram which Odysseus used to escape from the Cyclops?
- 5) The Cyclops had wished that Odysseus would never reach home first of all. Did this part of the wish come true?
- 6) Give three adjectives used to describe the wine.
- 7) What does 'diluted with twenty parts of water' mean?
- 8) Explain how the men experienced gladness and sorrow at the same time.