# Table of Contents: *The Odyssey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Page #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Unit</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Template with Learning Plan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Progress Monitoring</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Vocabulary</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-assessment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Journal of Odysseus</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Voice</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Imagery and Figurative Language</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigorous Verbs</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue Punctuation</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostrophes</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culminating Assessment: Writing a Story from Another Point of View</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources (found in original materials)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the majority of the lesson plans and activities are found in the original curriculum packet, which appears at the end of this unit guide. See the Learning Plan for suggested activities.
Introduction

You probably remember reading *The Odyssey* when you were in school, and your grandparents and their parents most likely read it as well. Can an epic poem that is over two thousand years old still have relevance for our classrooms today? The answer, according to a recent survey of PPS Language Arts teachers, is a resounding “yes,” since it is one of the most widely taught texts in the ninth grade across the district. The text, however, because of its length and poetic form, can be daunting to teachers and students alike.

Fortunately, there are a great deal of resources available to PPS teachers to assist them in planning and differentiating their approach to *The Odyssey*. In addition to the text itself which is available to all teachers through the multimedia library and the materials found here in this unit guide, we also have access to the outstanding original curriculum packet developed several years ago by district teachers (and is located at the end of this unit guide); additionally, in the Holt *Elements of Literature*, Third Course, contains significant sections of the poem, translated by Robert Fitzgerald, paired with many contemporary poems and nonfiction texts. Essential support found in the Holt materials are a retold version – still in poetic form – of *The Odyssey*, at a lower reading level and an introduction to Odysseus Journey, called “Where in the World Did Odysseus Go?” found in the Visual Connections packet.

A note on the revision:

The materials found here are not expected to replace the novel’s earlier exceptional materials, but rather to complement them; the page numbers found on the Stage 3 Learning Plan refer to the page numbers of the original materials. The activities highlighted here are those that most closely relate to the unit’s identified priority standards and lead most directly to the culminating assessment that asks students to write their own version of a conflict in *The Odyssey*, but from a different point of view.

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The Odyssey Unit Template

Stage 1: Desired Outcomes

Priority Standards:
9.04. Predict future outcomes supported by the text, using contextual clues.
9.06. Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose.
9.07. Analyze characterization
9.08. Describe the function and effect upon a literary work of common literary devices.
9.09. Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry.
9.11. Use variety of facts/descriptive words to paint an image in the mind of reader.
9.13. Use dialogue, interior monologue, suspense, and the naming of specific narrative actions, including movement, gestures, and expressions.
9.13. Establish a situation, point of view, conflict, and setting.

Understandings:
Students will understand that:
- Storytelling can be simple yet complex
- What is said is important, but how it is said is equally important
- Good stories must be crafted, using various literary devices, tone, and correct conventions.

Essential Questions:
- What elements of a story make it a good story?
- How does a story change when a different character tells the story?

Students will know:
- The plot and characters of The Odyssey
- To be able to write from another character's point of view
- Various literary devices and figurative language to be able to craft a story

Students will be able to:
- Write an effective story that transforms a scene from The Odyssey to another point of view.
- Recognize the elements that contribute to a story’s point of view.

Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

Culminating Assessment (learning task)
Students will rewrite an episode from The Odyssey told from another character's point of view and include the elements of an effective story, including setting, characterizations, dialogue, etc.

Other Evidence
- Odyssey Journal
- Various Handouts on particular craft lessons throughout the unit
- Reading aloud in class
- Participation in various group tasks
Stage 3: Learning Plan

Note that many activities refer to pages numbers in the original curriculum materials for *The Odyssey*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Title</th>
<th>Priority Standards</th>
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</table>
| Pre-Assessment                  | 9.11. Use variety of facts/descriptive words to paint an image in the mind of reader.  
9.13. Use dialogue, interior monologue, suspense, and the naming of specific narrative actions, including movement, gestures, and expressions.  
9.13. Establish a situation, point of view, conflict, and setting.                                                                                       |            | 10            |
| Tea Party                       | 9.04. Predict future outcomes supported by the text, using contextual clues.                                                                                                                                      |            | 6             |
| Homeric Epithets                | 9.08. Describe the function and effect upon a literary work of common literary devices,  
9.09. Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry.                                                                                                    |            | 12            |
| Homeric Similes                 | 9.08. Describe the function and effect upon a literary work of common literary devices,  
9.09. Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry.                                                                                                    |            | 32            |
| The Journal of Odysseus         | 9.06. Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose.  
9.07. Analyze characterization  
9.08. Describe the function and effect upon a literary work of common literary devices,                                                                 |            | 13            |
| Point of View and Tone          | 9.11. Use variety of facts/descriptive words to paint an image in the mind of reader.  
9.13. Use dialogue, interior monologue, suspense, and the naming of specific narrative actions, including movement, gestures, and expressions.  
9.13. Establish a situation, point of view, conflict, and setting.                                                                                       |            | 41            |
| Using Imagery and Figurative Language | 9.08. Describe the function and effect upon a literary work of common literary devices,  
9.09. Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry.                                                                                                    |            | 16            |
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| Developing Voice                                  | 9.07. Analyze characterization  
9.08. Describe the function and effect upon a literary work of common literary devices,                                                                                                                      |            | 14             |
| Vigorous Verbs                                    | 9.08. Describe the function and effect upon a literary work of common literary devices, 9.09. Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry.                                                                                                       |            | 17             |
| Apostrophes                                       | 9.12. Contractions and apostrophe usage                                                                                                                                                                                  |            | 18             |
| Dialogue Punctuation                              | 9.13. Use dialogue                                                                                                                                                                                                     |            | 19             |
| Culminating Assessment: Creating a Short Story from a New Point of View | 9.11. Use variety of facts/descriptive words to paint an image in the mind of reader. 9.13. Use dialogue, interior monologue, suspense, and the naming of specific narrative actions, including movement, gestures, and expressions. 9.13. Establish a situation, point of view, conflict, and setting. |            | 20             |
**Student Progress Monitoring: The Odyssey**

<table>
<thead>
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7
9.08. Describe the function and effect upon a literary work of common literary devices, 9.09. Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry.

9.11. Use variety of facts/descriptive words to paint an image in the mind of reader.

9.13. Use dialogue, interior monologue, suspense, and the naming of specific narrative actions, including movement, gestures, and expressions.

9.13. Establish a situation, point of view, conflict, and setting.
Academic Vocabulary

The vocabulary used extensively in this unit:

Audience
Characterization
Connotation
Conventions
Denotation
Dialogue
Direct Quotation
Antecedents
Editing
Epic
Epithets
Figurative Language
Simile
Allusion
Flashback
imagery
Narration
Plot
Omniscient Point of View
Revision
Setting
Thesis
Tone
Pre-Assessment: The Odyssey Unit

Student learning: the purpose of this pre-assessment is to determine your students’ present abilities to demonstrate the features of an effective storytelling and how point of view affects the narrative, as well as their knowledge of Greek mythology.

Materials: blank paper and mythology sheet that follows

Time: 90 minutes

Steps:
1. As a class, ask students to brainstorm a list of fairy tales and fables they know well: Little Red Riding Hood, Goldilocks, Cinderella, etc.
2. Ask them to discuss with a partner or small group about the perspective or point of view from which each of the stories is told (generally, it is the protagonist’s point of view). Then, ask them to consider the points of view of other characters in the story.

Note: There are a lot of examples of this kind of activity, including Fractured Fairy Tales and The Real Story of the Three Little Pigs (from the wolf’s perspective).

3. Next, ask students to choose one of the fairy tales or fables and to re-tell the story from a different character’s point of view. Direct them that they should assume that their reader is unfamiliar with the original story and that they should make it interesting and compelling to read with all the elements they can think of that make a good story: details, dialogue, setting, flashbacks, conflict, etc.
4. Once they finish writing their story, ask them to complete the Greek mythology identification sheet. Be sure to remind them that they are not expected to know all of the names and places on the sheet; it is only a pre-assessment.

Note: it is essential that students receive feedback on their pre-assessment (through the scoring guide or other means) so that they know where they stand in relation to the topics and priority standards addressed in this unit.
Greek Mythology: Names and Places

Identify or describe as many of the following as possible. These are names that we will encounter in our study of The Odyssey. You are not expected to be able to identify them all.

Achilles

Apollo

Athena

Calypso

Circe

Cyclops

Hades

Helios

Heracles

Hermes

Ithaca

Odysseus

Penelope

Poseidon

Sirens

Teiresias

Telemachus

Trojan Horse

Troy

Zeus

How would you describe your interest in Greek and Roman mythology?
## Pre-Assessment Scoring Guide: *The Odyssey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Standard</th>
<th>6-5 Exceeds</th>
<th>4-3 Meets</th>
<th>2-1 Does not yet meet</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>9.11.</strong> Use variety of facts/descriptive words to paint an image in the mind of reader.</td>
<td>The narrative includes a wide variety of sensory details and concrete language that is extremely effective in communicating plot and character to the reader.</td>
<td>The narrative includes some sensory details and concrete language that attempts to communicate plot and character to the reader.</td>
<td>The narrative does not include many sensory details and or concrete language.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>9.13.</strong> Use dialogue, interior monologue, suspense, and the naming of specific narrative actions, including movement, gestures, and expressions.</td>
<td>Even in this draft form, the story includes successful use of several key elements of an effective narrative: suspense, dialogue, and blocking.</td>
<td>The story includes some use of the elements of an effective narrative: suspense, dialogue, and blocking.</td>
<td>Aspects of an effective narrative – dialogue, suspense, or blocking – are not present at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9.13.</strong> Establish a situation, point of view, conflict, and setting.</td>
<td>The story has an clearly established point of view and has demonstrated how point of view affects the story.</td>
<td>The story has an established point of view that is distinct from the original story.</td>
<td>The point of view may be difficult to determine at this point.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Background knowledge of Greek mythology

- **Extensive background**
  - Demonstrates a deep and thorough knowledge of names and places associated with Greek mythology
- **Some background**
  - Demonstrates some background knowledge of the major Greek gods and goddesses.
- **Little background**
  - Demonstrates limited current background knowledge of Greek mythology


**Reading Response-The Journal of Odysseus**

**Student Learning:** Students will demonstrate their literal and inferential comprehension of a difficult text while improving their narrative writing skills by re-telling a tale. Students will focus on the writing skills of word choice, sentence fluency, voice, point of view, and tone.

**Materials Needed:**

**Handouts:**
- *The Odyssey* Journal Assignment
- *Odyssey* Journal: Student Models
- *Odyssey* Journal Peer Response

**Approximate Time:** Ongoing assignment throughout the reading go the text. You will want to schedule interim deadlines and occasional peer responses.

**Steps:**

1. Ask students: How many of you regularly write in a journal or diary? What are the benefits of keeping a journal? To you? To posterity?

2. If you like, you can have students actually write a journal entry from their own perspective. What are the kinds of things that are worth recording in a journal?

3. Distribute assignment sheet and read it with students. Be sure to read the student samples and stress that there is room for creativity and VOICE in this assignment. Students should develop a distinctive voice for Odysseus: it doesn't have not sound like fake Homer.

4. Create intermediate due dates throughout your unit so students can get peer response to their work before finalizing it.
Developing Voice
(adapted from Kirby and Liner's Inside Out)

Student Learning: Students will create examples of emotive tone of voice. Students will transfer examples of voice to the culminating POV written assignment.

Materials Needed: Journal or paper and pen

Approximate Time: One class period

Steps:
1. List situations where an angry voice might be used:
   - Car accident
   - Lost directions or late to an event
   -
   -
Reflect to one particular time where you used "angry talk" and write a paragraph in that voice. Here is a short example based on number two.

   "What do you mean you wrote the directions down and left them on the counter?"
   "That's what I'm saying; I wrote them down but I was in a hurry."
   "Good job, way to go, that's really going to help now. Thanks to you we are going to be the last ones to the surprise party. Surprise!"
   "It's not my fault you kept saying, get in the car, get in the car, and got me out of my rhythm."
This would be an example of angry voice although you and I know the tone becomes emotional, fast-paced, and testy.

2. Now think of an opposite voice, the soft or cooing tone of soft talk. When does one use soft talk in situations?
   - Asking a favor
   - Explaining a complicated task
   - Romantic situation
   -
   -
Here is an example when asking a favor or number one from the list:

   "Dad, please may I have the car tonight? I promise I will leave the gas tank full."
   "I don't know Alex, I might need the car to run an errand."
   "C'mon old sport, you can do that tomorrow. Let me have the car tonight and you can take care of business another time."

3. Another type of voice used in situations is "fast talk." Fast talk is when the speaker is sharing an event in an animated or excited tone. Fast talk may occur in:
   - argument
   - accident
Let's go with number 2 as an example of fast talk but there are others as well.

"Dad, don't get mad but something happened to the car. Sit down, get comfortable, keep an open mind, and try to remember when you were driving your dad's car. Also, remember those virtues of patience and logic that you will always try to teach me."

"I'm listening, Alex..."

Angry, slow, and fast talk comprise many of our oral speech patterns that may be transferred to written expression. Let's review a book from The Odyssey, Book 9, where Odysseus and his crew inhabit the giant's cave and Odysseus ultimately tricks the one-eyed giant and blinds him by poking him in the eye. A short example of angry talk from the point of view of the giant might be as he retells events of the story:

Those little humans invaded my space and took advantage of me. I can't believe that I was fooled by the sheep trick. They really "pulled the wool over my eye." Drat, and they would have been so tasty!

Reflect on voice in writing and the text as you read and prepare for the culminating writing.
Using Imagery and Figurative Language

**Student Learning:** Students will closely observe a familiar object and use imagery and figurative language to describe it.

**Materials Needed:**
- Student journals or paper for writing
- Crayons or colored pencils for illustrating
- One Samsuta orange (or tangerine or...) per student
- Paper towels and spray bottle for clean up

**Approximate Time:** 45 to 60 minutes

**Steps:**

1. Quick write: Carefully and thoroughly describe an orange WITHOUT using the words "round" or "orange."
2. Students exchange descriptions with a partner. Each student carefully reads partner's description, then accurately draws the object exactly as his/her partner has described it. Have students label the drawings with direct quotes from their partners; descriptions (to keep them honest).
3. Ask students to share their partner's description (not their own) if they found it especially insightful, creative, ridiculous, or impossible to draw.
4. Explain: Many of you did a good job describing an orange, but you can do better. Instead of working from memory, you are now going to write from close observation. I'm going to give each of you an orange to describe in such incredible detail that someone who has never encountered an orange will be able to mentally see, smell, taste, touch—and maybe even hear—one by reading your description. You will be spending the rest of this class period observing and describing your orange, so take your time. Be thorough. Be original. Be amazing.
Vigorous Verbs and Active Voice

Student Learning: Students will practice using active voice and strong verbs.

Materials Needed:
- Student Journals or paper for pre-writing activity
- Index cards with stage directions for volunteers
- One handout per student

Approximate Time: About 45 minutes (or you can assign handout as a homework)

Steps:
1. Ask for four volunteers (this is a good chance for the class clown to contribute positively to class). Give each volunteer an index card with directions on how to enter the room. (Possibilities include: Enter a stranger's house in order to elude a killer. Enter a fancy restaurant to meet your blind date. Enter a classroom without being noticed by the teacher. Enter your house in the middle of the night (after your curfew) without waking your family.)

2. Instruct volunteers to read their instructions but NOT share them aloud. Send volunteers into the hall and ask them to enter (as directed) one at a time when called. (Not all at once.)

3. Instruct remaining students to carefully observe how each volunteer enters, then describe it writing.

4. Ask the first volunteer to enter. Have remaining students write, then share. Drew attention to their use of strong, specific verbs. Repeat with remaining volunteers.

5. Distribute the student handout and read instructions together. Review definition of passive/active voice if necessary.
Apostrophes

Student Learning: Students will learn how to use apostrophes in sentences in their writing.

Materials Needed: Write Source (blue), The Odyssey, paper, pen

Approximate Time: 45-50 minutes

Steps:
1. Review the rules for using apostrophes on pages 628 and 630. (You may want to have students practice with the exercises on page 629 and 631 or you can work through them together as a class.)
2. Students will create examples and identify and connect with ideas from The Odyssey. It's considered one of the greatest stories of all time. They'd do share the food wit the rest of the crew.

Student created examples:

Also, students should note where apostrophes denote the possessive case. Penelope’s loom, Poseidon’s trident are examples of the singular possessive case.
Dialogue Punctuation

**Student Learning:** Students will understand how to use quotation marks in sentences and how to note different speakers in narrative writing.

**Materials Needed:** Write Source (blue), *The Odyssey*, paper or journal and pen

**Approximate Time:** 45-50 minutes

**Steps:**
1. Students will review pages 632 and 634 and review the rules of placement of quotation marks.
2. Students will look to the following example and identify another example of dialogue from *The Odyssey*
   
   'Why not take these cheeses, get them stowed, come back, throw open all the pens and make a run for it? We'll drive the kids and lambs aboard. We say put out again on good salt water!' Students should note that single quotation marks are used because one is quoting a quotation.
   
   Example from *The Odyssey*:

3. Also students should note that a new paragraph is started each time a new speaker is introduced in the writing. An example of made up dialogue might be:
   
   "Get out of my cave you ungrateful Greeks!"
   
   "We'd better lie low because Polyphemus sounds mad."
Culminating Assessment: Short Story with a New Point of View

Assignment: You will write a short story using the plot of one of the episodes of *The Odyssey*, but from a different character's point of view. Your story will need to demonstrate an awareness of effective storytelling – details, characterization, setting, blocking, etc. – as well as an understanding of how point of view affects language choices in the storytelling. Your story must be adapted from an actual event from the original story, but you are not limited to the events as they are recounted by Odysseus: you can add, delete, or modify as determined by your character’s point of view.

Steps:

1. Review Journal and handouts from throughout the unit to remind yourself of the key conflicts and characters in the text. Meet with a group or a partner and review your lists.

2. Use the brainstorming form to narrow down the possible scenes.

3. Once you select your scene and characters, complete the prewriting form to help you consider the plot and characterization for your story.

4. Begin drafting your story and share with a partner or small group. Ask them to look carefully at your use of narrative elements: setting, details, blocking, etc.

5. Revise your story by returning to your draft and marking all the words and/or phrases that truly reflect your character’s unique voice and point of view. Be sure that what you marked are consistent with each other and see where you can revise your draft to be more reflective of your character’s voice.

6. Prepare your final copy.
### Brainstorming for *The Odyssey* short story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memorable scene/plot</th>
<th>Characters involved</th>
<th>Why scene would be an effective POV switch</th>
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</table>
**Prewriting for *The Odyssey* short story**

Scene: ____________________________  New main character: __________________

Part One: Character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical descriptions: age, height, weight, etc</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background information:</strong> family history, life, home, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional description:</strong> overall, describe his her personality and emotions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Main Desires:</strong> what does he/she want out of life?</td>
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</table>

Complete the following for the specific scene you have chosen to adapt:

| Emotions |  |
| Key Actions |  |
| Desires |  |
| Practice Dialogue |  |
Part Two: Plot

1. Summarize the main action of the portion of the text you have selected. What will change?

2. What is the main source of conflict in this text you selected? How will it change?

3. What will be the most significant changes in the language as you adapt this to the new POV?

4. What will be the first actions in your story? Why will you start here?

5. Where will you end your story? Why here?
### Culminating Assessment Scoring Guide

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<tr>
<td><strong>9.13.</strong> Use dialogue, interior monologue, suspense, and the naming of specific narrative actions, including movement, gestures, and expressions.</td>
<td>The story includes successful use of several key elements of an effective narrative: suspense, dialogue, and blocking.</td>
<td>The story includes some use of the elements of an effective narrative: suspense, dialogue, and blocking.</td>
<td>Aspects of an effective narrative – dialogue, suspense, or blocking – are not present at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9.13.</strong> Establish a situation, point of view, conflict, and setting.</td>
<td>The story has an clearly established point of view and has demonstrated how point of view affects the story. The language choices, in particular, are extraordinarily effective at communicating the new point of view.</td>
<td>The story has an established point of view that is distinct from the original story and is well demonstrated in some places through specific language choices.</td>
<td>The point of view may be difficult to determine at this point and/or there are few significant changes in the language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Differentiation

More than many texts students will encounter in English 1-2, *The Odyssey* is one where the reading differences are made readily apparent. Some students will glide naturally through the text, seemingly unaware that they are even reading a poem, while others will struggle from beginning to end. If you have not yet made much use the Holt Adapted Reader, this could be the unit to begin trying to see how the text differentiates based on reading level. The Adapted Reader has all of the same sections from the main text, but written in a less daunting style and vocabulary. For your higher end readers, be sure to look closely at the activities found in the original curriculum materials where students are asked to compare the effects of the different translations of *The Odyssey*. 