STUDY GUIDE FOR THE ODYSSEY

Book I
1. What is the purpose of the first ten lines of the poem?
2. Why had Odysseus not yet return home from the Trojan war?
3. What does Athena do during a meeting on Mount Olympus?
4. At Odysseus’ house in Ithaka, we are introduced to the suitors. What are they doing in the house?
5. What words are used to describe the suitors?
6. How does Athena present herself to Telemakhos?
7. Athena tells Telemakhos to seek information about his father Odysseus from which men?
8. Athena gives Telemakhos one piece of information about his father. What is it?
9. To whom does Athena refer when she says: “They all would find death was quick, and marriage a painful matter?”
10. What does Athena counsel Telemakhos to do to the suitors?
11. How has Telemakhos changed since the beginning of Book 1, and how does Penelope react?

Book II
12. Why does Telemakhos call the men to assembly?
13. How has Penelope managed to hold off the suitors' demands for the past four years?
14. What sign does Zeus send to the assembly, and what is its meaning?
15. What does Telemakhos plan to do now?

Book III
NOTICE when Nestor is telling Telemakhos what he knows of the return of the Akhaians) he describes a quarrel between "the two sons of Arreus." These are Agamemnon and Menelaus. The quarrel had to do with some sacrifice to the gods which was evidently not satisfactory, causing Athena to get mad and causing some of the Akhaians to have troublesome homecomings. Notice Agamemnon is also called Atreides (line 193). Nestor also makes clear to Telemakhos that a son's duty is to preserve the honor of a father's house. He also holds up the example of Orestes as has Athena.

16. Where does the action in Book III take place?
17. Where is Athena during this part of the story?
18. Describe Nestor.
19. What happens at the homecoming of Agamemnon?
20. What does Orestes do?
NOTICE (lines 309-310) Klytaimnestra has been killed, yet her death is not described. Nor is Elektra (sister of Orestes) ever mentioned. Who, according to myth, encouraged Orestes to commit the murders.

21. How does Nestor help Telemakhos?
22. Who accompanies Telemakhos to Sparta to the house of Menelaus?

Book IV
23. What is the setting of Book IV?
24. How is Telemakhos' identity revealed to Menelaus?
25. Menelaus describes his stay in Egypt to Telemakhos. During his stay there, who told Menelaus where Odysseus was detained?
26. According to Menelaus' informant, where was Odysseus?
27. Why is Menelaus to go to the Elysian Field instead of dying as other mortals do?
28. The scene shifts to the home of Odysseus. What plan do the suitors devise against Telemakhos?
29. Identify the leading men of the suitors.
30. Who comforts Penelope after she learns of the suitors' plan and the journey of Telemakhos?

**Book V**
31. What is Zeus' command to Kalypso?
32. Which god or goddess brings Zeus' command to Kalypso?
33. What happens to Odysseus on the eighteenth day, just as he sights the shores of Skheria?
34. What help does Ino give to Odysseus?
35. What happens to Odysseus at the end of Book V?

**Book VI**
36. Who discovers Odysseus on the shore?
37. Why was this person near the river?
38. What does Odysseus' discoverer do for him?
39. Why doesn't his benefactor bring Odysseus to the palace in person?

**Book VII**
40. Whom does Odysseus approach for assistance when he enters the palace?
41. What does Alkinoos offer to Odysseus so he could stay with the Phaiakians?

**Book VIII**
42. Odysseus is insulted by Seareach. What does he accuse Odysseus of being? Why?
43. With Athena's help, what athletic feat does Odysseus accomplish?
44. Odysseus brags that he is an accomplished athlete but allows one test where the Phaiakians would likely win. To which test does he refer? Why?
45. Why do you think Homer interrupts the narrative to have Demodokos sing about the love of Ares and Aphrodite?

**Book IX**
NOTE: In books IX through XII Homer provides us with a flashback to supply background information. He has Odysseus identify himself and tell the Phaiakians of his wanderings since he left Troy.

46. Which encounter does Odysseus and his men have before Polyphemos?
47. Why is it necessary for Odysseus to take some of his men by force away from the land of the Lotos-Eaters?
48. What kind of creature does Odysseus encounter in the next land?
49. Why does Odysseus lead his men into Polyphemos' cave?
50. What happens when Polyphemos finds Odysseus and his men in the cave?
51. How is Odysseus able to wound Polyphemos?
52. How do Odysseus and his remaining men escape from the cave?
53. How is the craftiness and cunning of Odysseus revealed in this escape?
54. Why does Odysseus reveal his name to Polyphemos after he has escaped?

**Book X**
55. What natural phenomenon is controlled by Aeolus?
56. How does Aeolus show his goodwill when Odysseus is about to leave?
57. Odysseus and his men come within sight of Ithaka. Why do they not land?
58. Odysseus asks for further help from Aeolus. What is his reply?
59. Describe the Laestrygonians.
60. Who helps Odysseus outwit Kirke?
61. Why must Odysseus visit the house of Hades?

**Book XI**
62. How does Odysseus gain access to the underworld?
63. What does Odysseus promise Elpenor?
64. Why does Odysseus not let his mother come near the blood?
65. What does Teiresias tell Odysseus?
66. Who comes to speak to Odysseus after all the souls of the women have departed?
67. What does this person tell Odysseus?
68. Many other heroes speak to Odysseus, and he learns of their fates. What happens to Tantalos?
69. What punishment is Sisyphos enduring?

**Book XII**
70. How do the Seirines destroy men, and how do Odysseus and his men avoid destruction?
71. What are Skylla and Kharybdis?
72. What happens to Odysseus' companions?
73. What happens to Odysseus?

**Book XIII**
74. How does Poseidon react when he discovers that the Phaiakians have aided Odysseus in reaching Ithaka?
75. How does Odysseus react when he awakens on land?
76. Why does Athena now reveal herself to Odysseus?
77. Where does Athena send Odysseus first?
78. What task does Athena first set out to do?

**Book XIV**
79. Who is Eumaeus?
80. Why does Odysseus hide his identity from Eumaeus?
81. Does Eumaeus believe Odysseus' tale?

**Book XV**
82. Telemakhos receives an omen as he is about to depart. What is it, and what does it mean?
83. Who journeys to Ithaka with Telemakhos and his companions?
84. Odysseus has a plan that he shares with Eumaeus. What is it?
85. What is Eumaeus' reaction to Odysseus' idea?
86. How did Eumaeus come to be swineherd for Odysseus?
87. Which are the two signs that the gods send to Telemakhos and Odysseus?

**Book XVI**
88. What action does Odysseus take?
89. What instructions does Odysseus give to Telemakhos?
Book XVII
90. Penelope greets Telemakhos when he arrives home and asks to hear his news. Telemakhos' version and that of Theoklymenos differ. How are they different?
91. Identify the speaker: "See now how the rascal comes on leading a rascal about: like guides what is like itself, just as a god does."
92. What two physical assaults does Odysseus endure?
93. Who is Argus, and what happens to him?

Book XVIII
94. What occurs between Odysseus and Iros? Why?
95. What reward does Odysseus (still disguised) give to Amphinomos for helping him?
96. What does Penelope do that makes Odysseus happy?
97. How does Odysseus come to be a target for the foot stool again?

Book XIX
98. What action does Odysseus take now?
99. How does Eurykleia discover the identity of Odysseus?
100. What contest does Penelope devise to test the suitors?

Book XX
101. Who tells Odysseus (the beggar) that if Odysseus were to return he would help to destroy the suitors?
102. While the suitors are plotting Telemakhos' death they see an omen. What is it, and what does it mean?
103. Who warns that evil will come to the suitors before he leaves the house?

Book XXI
104. Who, other than Odysseus, has the strength and power to string the bow?
105. To what men does Odysseus reveal his identity?
106. What is Odysseus' plan.

Book XXII
107. Which men does Odysseus spare from the slaughter?
108. What happens to the disloyal serving women?

Book XXIII
109. Why is Penelope so hesitant to greet her husband?
110. How does Penelope test Odysseus?

Book XXIV
111. Where does Odysseus go next?
112. Why does Laertes wear rags and not bathe?
113. What does Athena do when the families of the dead suitors attack Odysseus?
114. In the oral epic there is a lot of repetition. List some lines that have been used by the poet repeatedly.