Learning Objectives
The goal of this lesson is to provide students an opportunity to explore targeted passages of complex text. Through teacher Read Alouds, audio listening, student independent reading and rereading, and scaffolded and collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led), students will understand characteristics of epic poetry. Vocabulary is learned from context and writing fosters deeper understanding of text. The lesson culminates in an evidentiary writing activity which integrates literary response and analysis reading standards with persuasive writing standards. Teachers may scaffold activities to address individual students’ needs and skills, depending on the intent of the lesson.

Rationale: This lesson guides students through activities that focus on analyzing characters in Homer’s Odyssey. It culminates in the generation of a persuasive essay arguing who is the more heroic character in the epic—Odysseus or Penelope. In doing so, students will demonstrate their ability to understand and appreciate the epic as narrative, poetry, and a reflection of its time.

Text Title: from the Odyssey – Homer, Translated by Robert Fitzgerald
McDougal Littell Literature, pp. 1086-1183
Genre/Text Structure: Epic Poem

Targeted Text Selections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Core State Standards (CCSS)</th>
<th>Pages 1104-1165</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RL.9–10; RI.9–10; W.9–10; SL.9–10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.corestandards.org">http://www.corestandards.org</a></td>
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Lesson Sequence

PERFORMANCE TASK/CULMINATING INDEPENDENT WRITING ASSESSMENT:

● Write a well-supported two-page persuasive essay in which you define the qualities of a hero and make argue whether Odysseus or Penelope is more heroic according to your definition. Use textual evidence to support your answer. Log into classzone.com to access the following Carol Booth Olson Reading-Writing lesson:

Activity 1:

GUIDING QUESTION(S):

● Why has the Odyssey remained one of the most influential writings?
● How are the character traits of Penelope and Odysseus a reflection of the values of Ancient Greece?
● How do heroic traits from Homer’s Age, as embodied by Odysseus, compare to heroic qualities valued in today’s society?

1. Use Communication, Information and Media connections at www.classzone.com, www.discoveryeducation.com, or other online resources to help students gain a perspective of the Age of Homer/Ancient Greece.
2. Teacher-led discussion on the importance of Homer (as expressed in online resources and in text p. 1088-1094) and characteristics of an epic:

   **EPIC**
   
   An epic is a long adventure story. Most epics share these features:
   ● a plot that covers many years and involves a long journey. Events in the epic often involve supernatural beings, multiple conflicts, and larger-than-life heroes.
   ● a variety of settings that span great distances and foreign lands.
   ● themes that reflect timeless values and concerns, such as courage, honor, love, friendship, life, and death.
   ● archetypes, or patterns found in works across different cultures and time periods. Some archetypes in the Odyssey include the epic hero, floods and storms, and brave battles against terrible monsters or evil men.

Activities 2, 3, 4:

GUIDING QUESTION(S):

● Where in the text do Odysseus and Penelope exhibit traits of heroic nature?
● How do these heroic traits exhibited by Odysseus and Penelope compare/contrast?

1. Text will be read by teacher, via audio at www.classzone.com, in small groups, pairs and independently. The teacher will lead students through a set of text-dependent questions that compel closer rereading and analysis. The targeted text should be in front of the students as they engage in their discussions.
2. The use of graphic organizers and small group and class discussions are essential in organizing and collecting thoughts for the culminating
writing activity.

Activity 5:

GUIDING QUESTION(S):

- Who is the more heroic character in the epic—Odysseus or Penelope? Why? Cite textual support for your answer.

1. Students respond in writing by crafting an evidentiary persuasive essay stating and supporting their position on the above question.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeted Text Selection</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book 1, p. 1104, lines 1-15</strong></td>
<td>underlined words: insufficient contextual clues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing in me, Muse, and through me tell the story of that man skilled in all ways of contending, the wanderer, harried for years on end, after he plundered the stronghold on the proud height of Troy. He saw the townlands and learned the minds of many distant men, and weathered many bitter nights and days in his deep heart at sea, while he fought only to save his life, to bring his shipmates home. But not by will nor valor could he save them, for their own recklessness destroyed them all—children and fools, they killed and feasted on the cattle of Lord Helios, the Sun, and he who moves all day through heaven took from their eyes the dawn of their return.</td>
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<td><strong>Book 5, p. 1108, lines 43-54.</strong></td>
<td><strong>BOLD words:</strong> Tier Two words</td>
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<td>The strong god glittering left her as he spoke, and now her ladyship, having given heed to Zeus’s mandate, went to find Odysseus in his stone seat to seaward—tear on tear brimming in his eyes. The sweet days of his life time were running out in anguish over his exile, for long ago the nymph had ceased to please. Though he fought shy of her and her desire, he lay with her each night, for she compelled him. But when day came he sat on the rocky shore and broke his own heart groaning, with eyes wet scanning the bare horizon of the sea.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Book 21, page 1150, lines 16–21</strong></td>
<td><strong>Muse:</strong> daughter of Zeus, credited with divine inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ardor</strong> — passion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>travail</strong> — painful effort</td>
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Teacher Activities and Techniques

Text-Dependent Questions

Return to the text, and ask students a small set of guiding questions about the targeted section.

GUIDING QUESTION(S):

(Q1) What traits is Odysseus shown to have in these lines?

Possible answer.

Odysseus is shown to have toughness, aggressiveness, bravery, talent, and determination. He is a survivor.

(Q2) Which of Odysseus’ qualities is emphasized in these lines?

Possible answer.

These lines emphasize Odysseus’ loyalty and determination. Although he is the captive of the beautiful Calypso, he still longs for home and looks to the horizon.

(Q3) Consider Odysseus’s behavior in lines 108-179. Do you think he is a good leader? Explain your opinion in small groups and share out to class.

Possible answer. Odysseus is an excellent leader. When the men falter in turbulent waters, Odysseus keeps his head and cajoles them into going back to their duties. He uses Circe’s information judiciously. He tells them what they need to know but holds back unhelpful, disturbing information. Thus, he acts as a good role model, displaying wisdom, composure, patience, and bravery.
Now Penelope sank down, holding the weapon on her knees, and drew her husband’s great bow out, and sobbed and bit her lip and let the salt tears flow. Then back she went to face the crowded hall, tremendous bow in hand, and on her shoulder hung the quiver spiked with coughing death. Behind her maids bore a basket full of axeheads, bronze and iron implements for the master’s game. Thus in her beauty she approached the suitors, and near a pillar of the solid roof

Book 23, page 1165, lines 58-80

“Do not rage at me, Odysseus! No one ever matched your caution! Think what difficulty the gods gave: they denied us life together in our prime and flowering years, kept us from crossing into age together. Forgive me, don’t be angry. I could not welcome you with love on sight! I armed myself long ago against the frauds of men, impostors who might come—and all those many whose underhanded ways bring evil on! Helen of Argos, daughter of Zeus and Leda, would she have joined the stranger, lain with him, if she had known her destiny? known the Achaeans in arms would bring her back to her own country? Surely a goddess moved her to adultery, her blood unchilled by war and evil coming, the years, the desolation; ours, too. But here and now, what sign could be so clear as this of our own bed? No other man has ever laid eyes on it—only my own slave, Actoris, that my father sent with me as a gift—she kept our door. You make my stiff heart know that I am yours.”

(Q4) What character traits do Penelope’s actions in these lines reveal?

Possible answer. After taking down Odysseus’ bow, Penelope sobs in the storeroom and then returns to the hall to face the suitors. These lines show that she is loyal and sensitive, that she is physically and emotionally strong, and that she is resolute and determined.

(Q5) What traits of Penelope’s does this speech reveal?

Possible answer: This speech reveals Penelope’s thoughtfulness, her self-awareness, loyalty, strength, and underlying tenderness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative Assessment/Rubrics</th>
<th>Summative Assessment/Culminating Independent Writing Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class discussion(s) on text-dependent comprehension questions and written responses (paraphrasing, summarizing, reader response journals, or prewriting activities) serve as formative assessments.</td>
<td>Writing Situation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In Homer’s *Odyssey* both Odysseus and Penelope endure 20 years of uncertainty, hardship and danger during which they each demonstrate the qualities of a hero.

Writing Directions
Write a persuasive essay in which you define the qualities of a hero and argue whether Odysseus or Penelope is more heroic according to your definition.

Use Graphic Organizers (see below) as prewriting tools. After completion of Graphic Organizers, teacher facilitates a prewriting class discussion on the following:

**CHARTING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES**

Odysseus faced many challenges during his wanderings. For the most part, his trials involved physical danger. By contrast, Penelope’s trials were subtler and posed fewer physical challenges, but challenged her mental strength. Divide the class into two groups, one to consider Penelope’s plight, the other Odysseus’. Each group should develop ideas and examples to illustrate the trials and tribulations of their character. Point out that some of their conclusions, especially about Penelope, will be speculative. After the groups have worked together, hold a discussion. Ask a volunteer to chart the similarities and differences on the board.
ART CRITICISM AND CREATION

The *Odyssey* has inspired many artists over the centuries to create paintings, sculptures, vases, murals, and other artwork. This selection contains a variety of examples. Ask students to tell why they like or dislike each one. Does it illustrate a character or an episode effectively? How well does the style fit the subject? What mood does it convey?

Invite students to make their own *Odyssey* artworks. Encourage them to be creative in selecting the form, style, and subject of their art. Display the works for everyone to enjoy.

ANCIENT GREECE: LASTING INFLUENCES

Classical Greek culture has had an enormous influence on western civilization. In addition to Homer’s *Odyssey*, other Greek literature, as well as art, sculpture, philosophy, language, government, medicine, math, and science have all had an impact on our world. Have partners or small groups work together to research these topics. Have each group make a presentation to the class that includes visual materials.

Bob Marzano’s Power Thinking Activities:

http://www.classzone.com/cz/books/ml_lit_gr09/resources/pdfs/power_thinking/9_odyssey.pdf

The *Odyssey* is peopled with a fascinating cast of Greek gods and goddesses. This pantheon, or collection of deities, is not limited to Homer’s epic; it is an indispensable part of the culture of Ancient Greece. Knowing about their lives outside of the *Odyssey* can add to your appreciation of their roles in the poem.

Use the Internet and library books to research the gods and goddesses who appear in the *Odyssey*. Who are their parents? What is each deity’s role in Greek mythology? What claim to fame does he or she have beyond the *Odyssey*? Share your findings with your classmates in an oral presentation.

Choose a modern day Odyssey as expressed in novel, film, fine arts and/or visual media, i.e. *Ulysses* (1922) by James Joyce, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000) or *Troy* (2004). Compare/contrast the ideals of heroism depicted in this work compared to the *Odyssey*. Why is the journey motif still compelling in today’s world?

**Extension Activities/Further Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Odysseus</td>
<td>shows loyalty in his desire to reach home</td>
<td>pride, ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penelope</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Technology:**

www.discoveryeducation.com – (see links embedded in pacing guide)

http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/weaving-into-pairing-odyssey-1041.html


http://www.metmuseum.org/learn/for-educators/publications-for-educators/~/media/Files/Learn/For%20Educators/Publications%20For%20Educators/greek.ashx

**Graphic Organizers at www.classzone.com:**

**Venn-Diagram** - Students find evidence from the text to complete a Venn-Diagram comparing qualities of heroism exhibited by Odysseus and Penelope. How are they similar/different in terms of their heroism?

Students use a **Two-Column Chart** p. 1138 of text and or **Character Traits and Textual Evidence Transparency** p. D of Best Practices Toolkit-- Students complete the chart as they answer the guiding questions and add to the chart where they find instances in
the text where Odysseus demonstrated qualities of heroism.

Students use the above graphic organizers as prewriting tools to organize their ideas prior to writing the persuasive essay.

English Language Learner (ELL) Resources and Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Academic Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Have students use McDougal Littell Best Practices Toolkit Word Questioning Transparency E9 or New Word Analysis Transparency E24 to study the following academic vocabulary from the selection: **contending** (line 2); **plundered** (line 4); **bitter** (line 7); **recklessness** (line 11); **glittering** (line 43); **heed** (line 43); **brimming** (line 47); **compelled** (line 51); **briskly** (line 109); **furl** (line 109); **stow** (line 109); **scudding** (line 111); **crave** (line 124); **dwindled** (line 131); **dire** (line 175); **cauldron** (line 177); **seething** (line 178); **implements** (line 23). The graphic organizers can be found at [www.classzone.com](http://www.classzone.com) or *McDougal Littell EASY Planner.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple Meaning Words</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Remind students to use context clues to figure out the meaning of words used in an unfamiliar way. Make sure they understand how these words are used in the story:

- **weathered** ("...weathered many bitter nights."): Often used to mean worn out or weary, here it refers to surviving or enduring.
- **lashed** ("...lashed to the mast."): Usually means to strike or attack, here it means to tie up
- **smartly** ("...we came smartly within hailing distance,"): Often used to mean in an intelligent manner, here it refers to quickly.
- **underhanded** ("...whose underhanded ways bring evil on!"); Commonly referred to doing something with the hands kept lower than the elbows or shoulders, here it refers to being dishonest).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language: Conversational Patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Help students understand the formal and antiquated language used in the story by explaining the following sentences:

- "..took from their eyes the dawn of their return." (Odysseus is saying that all his men have died.)
- "..her ladyship." (This refers to a woman of high rank.)
- "..having given heed.." (It means having paid attention to.)
- "Though he fought shy of her and her desire," (Odysseus tries to avoid Calypso’s advances.)
- "..scanning the bare horizon of the sea." (Odysseus is looking towards the sea’s horizon.)
- "..quiver spiked with coughing death." (Penelope is referring to the case that holds the arrows that can pierce someone’s lungs.)
- "Did I not keep my nerve, and use my wits." (Odysseus is saying to his crew that he maintained his equanimity when he outwitted the Cyclops.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have students use McDougal Littell Best Practices Toolkit “Character Traits and Textual Evidence” Transparency D51 and “Compare – Contrast (by subject)” Transparency C26 to complete a comparison and contrast character analysis of Penelope and Odysseus. Guide students in using McDougal Littell Best Practices Toolkit “Persuasive Essay” Transparency C34 to write a persuasive essay arguing on whether Odysseus or Penelope possesses the greater heroic qualities. These graphic organizers can be found at: <a href="http://www.classzone.com">www.classzone.com</a> or <em>McDougal Littell EASY Planner.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Targeted Text Selections
**Pages 1104-1165**

### Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
RL.9–10; W.9-10; SL.9-10

http://www.corestandards.org

### Lesson Sequence

**PERFORMANCE TASK/CULMINATING INDEPENDENT WRITING ASSESSMENT:**

- Write a well-supported two-page persuasive essay in which you define the qualities of a hero and make argue whether Odysseus or Penelope is more heroic according to your definition. Use textual evidence to support your answer.

### Activity 1:
**GUIDING QUESTION(S):**

- Why has the Odyssey remained one of the most influential writings?
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   **EPIC**
   
   - An epic is a long adventure story. Most epics share these features:
   - a plot that covers many years and involves a long journey. Events in the epic often involve supernatural beings, multiple conflicts, and larger-than-life heroes.
   - a variety of settings that span great distances and foreign lands.
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   - archetypes, or patterns found in works across different cultures and time periods. Some archetypes in the Odyssey include the epic hero, floods and storms, and brave battles against terrible monsters or evil men.

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   **GUIDING QUESTION(S):**
   - Where in the text do Odysseus and Penelope exhibit traits of heroic nature?
   - How do these heroic traits exhibited by Odysseus and Penelope compare/contrast?

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3. The use of graphic organizers and small group and class discussions are essential in organizing and collecting thoughts for the culminating writing activity.

### Activity 5:
**GUIDING QUESTION(S):**

- Who is the more heroic character in the epic—Odysseus or Penelope? Why? Cite textual support for your answer.

1. Students respond in writing by crafting an evidentiary persuasive essay stating and supporting their position on the above question.
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after he plundered the stronghold
on the proud height of Troy.

He saw the townlands and learned the minds of many distant men,
and weathered many bitter nights and days
in his deep heart at sea, while he fought only
to save his life, to bring his shipmates home.
But not by will nor valor could he save them,
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**Book 5, p. 1108, lines 43-54.**
The strong god glittering left her as he spoke,
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Now Penelope sank down, holding the weapon on her knees,
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Thus in her beauty she approached the suitors,
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**Muse:** daughter of Zeus, credited with
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**(Q2)** Which of Odysseus’ qualities is emphasized in these lines?

**(Q3)** Consider Odysseus’s behavior in lines 108-179. Do you think he is a good leader? Explain your opinion in small groups and share out to class.

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(Q5) What traits of Penelope’s does this speech reveal?

Formative Assessment/Rubrics

Class discussion(s) on text-dependent comprehension questions and written responses (paraphrasing, summarizing, reader response journals, or prewriting activities) serve as formative assessments.

Summative Assessment/Culminating Independent Writing Task

Writing Situation
In Homer’s Odyssey both Odysseus and Penelope endure 20 years of uncertainty, hardship and danger during which they each demonstrate the qualities of a hero.

Writing Directions
Write a persuasive essay in which you define the qualities of a hero and argue whether Odysseus or Penelope is more heroic according to your definition.

Use Graphic Organizers (below) as prewriting tools. After completion of Graphic Organizers, teacher facilitates a prewriting class discussion on the following:

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In your group, consider either the plight of Penelope or that of Odysseus. Develop ideas and examples to illustrate the trials and tribulations of your character. Participate in a class discussion on the similarities and differences of the two characters.

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The Odyssey has inspired many artists over the centuries to create paintings, sculptures, vases, murals, and other artwork. This selection contains a variety of examples. Decide what you like or dislike about each one. Does it illustrate a character or an episode effectively? How well does the style fit the subject? What mood does it convey?

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