



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2017 Volume I: Adapting Literature

Anime and the Art of Storytelling

Guide for Curriculum Unit 17.01.03
by Richard Cuminale

This unit is a joint exploration of the genre of Japanese animation (“anime”) and Homer’s epic poem, *The Odyssey*. The unit begins by questioning how stories work in general and what makes a narrative “epic” in particular. After establishing the foundations of narrative analysis and a set of concrete expectations for reading epic stories, the unit dives into the story of Odysseus, pairing it with similar anime narratives. Odysseus is a man who faces extraordinary obstacles, and this theme occurs in many anime series and movies, including *Attack on Titan*, *Evangelion*, *Spirited Away*, and many others. Students will study the content, looking at how the same kind of story is told in different ways with different implications, and they will also look at form: how Homer’s poetry and anime work in their own ways to achieve distinct aesthetic goals. Just as Homer’s poet shines with brilliance, there is also an enormous amount of creativity to bring to the drawn and moving image. By the end of this unit, students will have performed many exercises in close reading and analysis, culminating in their own experiment in the anime form and epic genre.

(Developed for English 3, grade 11; recommended for English 2 and English 4, grades 10 and 12)

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