



“the Odyssey”: A Deeper Appreciation

Guide for Curriculum Unit 83.02.01

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Because “The Odyssey” and its companion epic, “The Iliad,” are the oldest extant literary pieces in western civilization, and because students seem naturally interested in mythology—what might and might not have been—I should like to offer this unit, “The Odyssey: A Deeper Appreciation,” to teachers of high school, college bound students.

The primary objective is reading this epic poem and understanding its narrative element. This objective is the same for all levels of students. And, although this unit relates to the teaching of the poem to upper level classes, one may note the Globe translations of the classics for students reading below grade level.

The secondary objective, total immersion in the spirit of the Homeric age, is no less important and gives the student a deeper appreciation. To achieve this “total immersion” I believe one needs several activities to supplement the text. An outline map of the Mediterranean is one thing I have for each student to learn the geography of this region by plotting Odysseus’ conjectural landfalls. Another activity is the designation of a topic, chosen at random by the students, from a list I have compiled. This list includes artifacts, sites, allusions, and references, both ancient and contemporary, relevant to the Homeric epic.

With enthusiasm and organization on the teacher’s part and a modicum of cooperation on the part of the students, I believe the reading of “The Odyssey” will offer pleasure and enrichment to all.

(Recommended for High School English classes)

Key Words

Homer Literature Ancient Greek Mythology

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