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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1998 Volume II: Cultures and Their Myths

Writing Through Myths

Guide for Curriculum Unit 98.02.09
by John Macauley Oliver

This curriculum unit focuses on Homer's *Odyssey* in order to teach many levels of reading with little more than one book. I argue that Homer has an essential relevance to basic lessons in reading, writing and speaking. This curriculum unit is a rigorous writing course. Students will be engaged in many forms of composition, including essay, imitation, paraphrase, and parody. Aspects of the epic genre are discussed in detail, as well as the history of Homer in English translation.

Together with this emphasis on technical training, an integrated lesson plan must call the attention of students to philosophical and moral issues found in Homer's text. The extended relevance of Homer to Greek mythology and culture is the relevance of Greek culture to our own. There are lessons in humanity woven into this complex, rhythmical, prolonged poetic work.

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