



9th Grade Ancient Literature Summer Reading Assignment

Your summer reading is the Robert Fagles translation of *The Odyssey* by Homer.

This is an epic poem, and it is easy to read and not comprehend. How can you avoid wasting your precious summer hours and actually understand what you are reading? You need tools. You should always read with a pen or pencil ready to capture important details and be in active dialogue with the text. You will be annotating (underlining and taking short notes in the margins of the book) for certain themes. You must annotate for: character, divine nature, and epic conventions.

- Character - What motivates this character? Is it an important character? If so, why is the character important? Is there a word that is repeatedly used to describe the character?
- Divine nature - What are the Ancient Greek gods like? What are their powers? What is their hierarchy? How are they like or unlike the Christian God?
- Epic conventions - Here we were looking for things such as high elevated speech, invocation of the muse, epic simile (comparing a character or event to something else in a long, drawn out picture), beginning in media res (in the middle of the story), epithets (short words/phrases used to repeatedly characterize something/someone for example, "Bright-eyed Achilles")

When the school year begins, you will be graded both on your annotations and comprehension of the book. You will have a test and/or paper on *The Odyssey* during the first month of school. This incredible story is one of the main cornerstones upon which Western literature rests. Grab a lemonade or popsicle and follow Odysseus through the many twists and turns he takes trying to get back home to Ithaca.