

Introduction		Key Mortals	
<b>The Odyssey</b> Is an epic poem written nearly 3000 years ago. It tells the tale of the hero Odysseus’ 10-year journey back from the Trojan war.	Odysseus	Cunning Greek Hero. King of Ithaca. After fighting in the Trojan War, Odysseus spent 10 eventful years trying to get home. Protagonist.	
	Telemachus	Odysseus’ son who grows in confidence throughout the epic.	
<b>The author: Homer</b> Homer is the author of The Iliad and The Odyssey (some of the oldest surviving works of literature). He is usually described as a blind poet from Ancient Greece. However, modern scholars debate whether he really existed at all.	Penelope	Odysseus’ loyal wife and Telemachus’ mother. Waits 20 years for the final return of her husband.	
	The suitors	A large group of arrogant Greek men who invade Odysseus’ house. They all hope that Penelope will choose to marry them. They are cruel, arrogant and believe that Odysseus is dead.	
<b>Key Terms</b>		Menelaus and Agamemnon	Brothers and famous Greek heroes who fought with Odysseus at Troy. Telemachus visits Menelaus for news about his father. Agamemnon was murdered by his disloyal wife after the Trojan war.
<b>Hospitality (xenia):</b> Welcome and helping strangers. Especially important to Ancient Greeks who travelled across the Mediterranean.		<b>Key Gods</b>	
<b>Leadership:</b> Odysseus displays strengths and weaknesses as a leader. Ideas about what makes a good leader have changed over time.	Athene/a	Zeus’ daughter. Goddess of wisdom and military victory. Supports Odysseus in his journey home.	
<b>Fate:</b> An unstoppable power that many ancient Greeks believed controlled everything that happened.	Zeus	Olympian King of all other Gods and men. Often depicted with a scepter, thunderbolt, eagle or shield – symbols of authority. Athene’s father and Poseidon’s brother.	
<b>Divine Intervention:</b> When Gods interfere in the lives of mortals.	Poseidon	God of the Sea. Sibling of Zeus and Hades. Constantly obstructs Odysseus’ journey home.	
<b>Tragic hero:</b> A person who experiences hardship or shows courage in the face of danger, but also has a downfall. Considered a character of misfortune and one the audience may pity.	Circe	Witch who turns Odysseus’ men into pigs. He lives with her for a year.	
	<b>Key Monsters</b>		
<b>Hamartia:</b> A character’s flaw which leads to their downfall.	Polyphemus	Cyclopes blinded by Odysseus. Son of Poseidon.	
	Circe	A goddess who holds Odysseus captive for 7 years.	
<b>Hubris:</b> Excessive pride or self-confidence. Arrogance.	Scylla	A creature with 6 heads on long, snake-like necks.	
	Charybdis	Huge and dangerous whirlpool which sucked ships under the water.	
<b>Epic poem:</b> A lengthy poem which involves extraordinary events and characters. Often involves Gods and supernatural forces.	Sirens	Beautiful women who caused ships to crash with the power of their song.	