

Book I

1. Discuss the opening lines (1-12). Which central themes are introduced in this short opening passage? And how does this passage establish the genre of the text as that of the epic tale?
2. In line 35-36, Zeus refers to Agamemnon, Orestes, and Aeghistus. What could be the deeper significance of this reference for the story of Odysseus?
3. Describe Athena's arrival at Ithaca and her conversation with Telemachus. Which themes are central in this encounter?
4. Discuss the role and position of the female characters in this first book.

Book V

5. Discuss the character of Calypso. How does she relate to the other gods and to Odysseus?
6. In this book we first encounter Odysseus. In Book I he was introduced as a “cunning hero”. How does Odysseus present himself as a hero in Book V? What is it that defines him as a hero?

Book IX

7. The second place where Odysseus lands is the land of the Lotus Eaters. What is the significance of this short passage?
8. In the original Greek text, Odysseus is described as a hero who is “polytropos”. This is translated in this version as “cunning”, but it actually has a broader meaning, literally signifying “many turns” or “many forms”. How are these different meanings of “polytropos” exemplified in Odysseus’ encounter with the Cyclops?

Book X

9. Discuss the character of Circe. How does she relate to the other characters Odysseus encounters on his travels? And what, ultimately, is her power over Odysseus?

Book XI

10. Discuss what you would consider the most important encounters Odysseus has in Hades, the Land of the Dead. What knowledge does he gain from these encounters?

Book XII

11. On the island of Thrinacia, the crew members defy Tiresias' prophecy and disobey Odysseus' orders by eating Hyperion's cattle. As is indicated by the reference to this event in the opening lines of the *Odyssey* (see Book I), this is a central occurrence in the story. What, according to you, does this event signify? And why is it so central to the story?