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The Iliad—A Practical Approach

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Why study the *Iliad* ? It is often thought that today's students are not receptive to ancient literature, and since there are more immediately appealing, modern, narrative poems, why subject one's self as an instructor and one's students to the difficulties inherent in reading such a piece?

Three important, practical reasons, I believe, for students to study this long, complex poem are: students will learn a little about an ancient world whose ideas have greatly influenced our own world; students will become familiar with the first piece of literature the western world has to offer, and students will discover an eventful, exciting war story. Additionally, with a little luck, some students will gain insight into the minds of men in the desperate circumstances of war.

Goals

The objectives of this unit are to help students:

(1) Gain an understanding of the nature of epic poetry and the art of story-telling.
(2) Become familiar with the events and characters of the *Iliad* , a foundation block of western literature, and explore the idea of the hero.
(3) Examine the effects of war on individuals and gain insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the human heart.

What is the Iliad ?

The *Iliad* is a long narrative poem in dactylic hexameter. The story combines the history, legends, and religion of the ancient Greeks with the imagination, invention, and lively story-telling abilities of a great poet. The events in the Iliad were as well known to the ancient Greeks as the story of Noah's ark or the song lyrics of Michael Jackson are known to today's young people. And, like a favorite story or song, the ancient Greeks wanted to hear this story, the Iliad, told again and again.

The poem begins with a dispute between the Greek king, Agamemnon, and the great soldier and Greek

prince, Achilles. After a recent battle, each Greek hero has received spoils as his reward for victory. The king has received the most wealth and a beautiful woman, Chryseis, and each warrior has received his share of the spoils according to his rank and heroism.

Chryses, a priest of Apollo and Chryseis' father, comes to Agamemnon with gifts and offerings to ransom his daughter. Against the advice of the army, however, Agamemnon refuses to let Chryseis go and Chryses prays to Apollo for revenge. Apollo sends a plague into the Greek army and many men die.

Achilles realizes that this scourge may be divine retribution and asks Calchas, a prophet, why they are suffering. Chalchas, after extracting a promise of protection from Achilles, explains that Agamemnon has offended Apollo by refusing to return Chryseis.

Achilles confronts Agamemnon who grudgingly agrees to return Chryseis, but who then takes Achilles' woman, Briseis, as a reminder that he, Agamemnon, is king. Achilles is inconsolable and asks his mother Thetis, a goddess of the sea, to persuade Zeus to punish Agamemnon by aiding the Trojans until his, Achilles', honor is restored.

Thetis does as her son bids, and Zeus agrees with the result that the gods, already divided in their loyalties, enter the fray, each god fighting for or protecting his or her own: Athena and Hera supporting the Greeks while Apollo and Aphrodite support Troy. This expansion of hostilities further complicates the relationships among the Trojans, the Greeks, and their gods, and the resulting disputes form the basis of this epic poem.

But why are the Greeks and Trojans fighting? Why are the gods displaying so much love or hatred for one or the other side?

The answers lie in the events of Greek myths and legends which occur before this poem begins, and in the relationship the ancient Greeks had with their gods and goddesses.

The Story Before the Story

Before students begin to read the Iliad, they need to learn about the legend of Paris and Helen. This can be done by film or filmstrip, by reading the story or simply by the instructor telling students the story.

There was much feasting at the wedding of Peleus, king of Phthia, and Thetis, a sea goddess who would bear a son, Achilles. Everyone was happy and celebrating. Athena, Hera and Aphrodite were at the feast and amicably conversing when a golden apple rolled at their feet. Peleus picked it up and was embarrassed to find that it was inscribed "to the fairest." No one knew for which goddess the apple was intended.

The golden apple had actually been tossed by Eris ("strife"), who was angry that she had not been invited to the feast. Zeus was asked to award the apple to the "fairest" goddess, but he tactfully declined and assigned Paris, one of the Princes of Troy (Priam's second son) the unwelcome task.

Each goddess desired to be known as the most beautiful, and competed aggressively for the apple. Each goddess willingly disrobed so that Paris could see that she was "fairest." Paris first examined Hera who promised him all of Asia and great wealth if he would choose her. Paris refused the bribe.

He next examined Athena who promised to make Paris victorious in all battles. She also promised to make him the most handsome and wise man in the world. Paris also refused this offer.

Finally, Aphrodite promised that she could offer Paris Helen, the wife of Menalaos (King of Sparta and Agamemnon's brother) and the most beautiful mortal woman in the world, to become Paris' bride. After Aphrodite swore that she could make Helen fall in love with him, Paris awarded her the apple. This decision so angered Hera and Athena that they plotted the destruction of Troy.

Aphrodite, long before this event, had doomed Helen and her sisters because their father, Tyndareus, had sacrificed to the other gods but had forgotten to offer a sacrifice to her. Aphrodite, therefore, swore to make his daughters known for adultery. Of course, Aphrodite approved Paris' decision.

Later Paris, following Aphrodites' instruction, visited Menalaos as a friend but eloped with Helen. The Greeks came to Troy to regain Helen and Menalaos' honor.

Gods, Greeks and the Iliad

The ancient Greeks viewed the cause of the Trojan war not only as a dispute among men but also as a desire of the gods. In effect, one is led to believe upon reading the *Iliad* that if the gods had not involved themselves men might have settled their differences with much less bloodshed. In this story, men are in a moral sense better than gods.

This view of the relationship between man and the divine is very different from the ordinary view of things in our present primarily Judeo-Christian society. Most of our students and ourselves think of the divinity as one being who has the ability to control everything (though he may not choose to do so) and who understands everything.

In the *Iliad* there are multiple gods, each having his own specialty and all loosely controlled by a leader, Zeus, in the same way men are often governed by a king or other dictator.

The Judeo-Christian god in addition to being all-powerful and all knowing is also thought of today as a just being who has the care and protection of mankind as goals.

The gods of the *Iliad* are physically more powerful than men, but they have their own weaknesses and desires which are also greater than the weaknesses and desires of mankind, and which are often hostile to the well-being of mankind. Additionally, the gods' relationship with one another sometimes places man at risk. For example, it is Hera's and Athena's rivalry with Aphrodite as well as their hostility toward Paris which causes and extends the bloodshed of the Trojan war.

It also seems true in this story that in some ways men understand their gods better than their gods understand them. For while men often petition their gods for favor, few mortals actually confidently expect their gods' beneficence. A man is happy to receive the kindness or protection of the gods, but is not surprised if the gods do not respond, or indeed if those same gods choose deliberately to harm him. Hector prays for his deliverance from death and Troy's deliverance from destruction, but does not really expect it. Before returning to battle, Hector visits his wife, Andromache, and their baby son, Astyanax. Andromache expresses her fears and pleads with Hector not to return to battle. Hector replies:

> Lady, these many things beset my mind no less than yours. But I should die of shame before our Trojan men and noblewomen if like a coward I avoided battle, nor am I moved to. Long ago I learned how to be brave, how to go forward always and to contend for honor, Father's and mine. Honor—for in my heart and soul I know a day will come when ancient Ilion [Troy] falls, when Priam and the folk of Priam perish.

(6.439-449 trans. Fitzgerald)

Andromache, Hector's wife, mourns her husband long before his actual death.

> He Hector stooped now to recover his plumed helm as she, his dear wife [Andromache], drew away, her head
> turned and her eyes upon him, brimming tears. She made her way in haste then to the ordered house of Hector
> and rejoined her maids, moving them all to weep at sight of her. In Hector's home they mourned him, living still
> but not, they feared, again to leave the war or be delivered from Akhaian Greek fury.

> (6.466-474 trans. Fitzgerald)

It is important, I believe, that students understand that the ancient Greeks' perception of the divine and ours are not the same. For example, another difference between the ancient Greeks and ourselves is that the Greeks believed that some inanimate objects were also gods and that the gods could choose to change from the object to the form of a human and back at will. Achilles, for instance, battles a river that is also a god.

> Now Xanthos [a river and god]

> surged in turbulence upon Akhilleus, tossing his crest, roaring with spume and blood and corpses rolling, and a dark
> wave towering out of the river fed by heaven swept downward to overwhelm the son of Peleus.

> (21.321-326 trans. Fitzgerald)

In the Iliad also, horses speak, the four winds are goddesses, and fire is a god, Haephaestos, who fights at one point with the river, Xanthos. These are only a few examples of the manner in which the ancient Greeks personified objects.

Therefore, in a real sense, we cannot fully understand the ancient Greeks' perception of their gods nor, therefore, their world. However, by discussing noted differences in outlook as displayed in the Iliad, students can at least glimpse some of the gap in our understanding of the ancient world.

The Hero and the Epic

An epic is a long, complex story, often told in poetic form. The events in an epic are usually proclaimed to be true or divinely inspired, and often derive from the myths, legends, and religions of the civilization from which the epic comes.

Although length and complexity are hallmarks of the epic poem, the most important element is the hero. The hero of an epic is a human being with characteristics a society admires and often wishes to emulate. The hero is male, attractive, and unusually strong and able. He is a trained soldier or warrior and believes in and follows a code of honor for which he is willing to sacrifice his life. He fights for the noble cause: those who cannot defend themselves, usually women and children, the preservation of a society, honor and the noble way of life. The hero is considered better in most respects than the common man.

However, the hero is also in many ways the same as the ordinary man. He has the same longings and desires as any man might have: the desire to be beloved and respected by his own, the desire for some degree of wealth or material comfort, the desire for a family with children, especially sons like himself, the desire to

stand out above his fellow human beings in some way, the desire not to bring shame to himself or his family in any way. The hero also hopes that the divine will favor him and his cause.

The hero becomes tragic when some error or fault, often inborn, of his own making, brings about his own death and usually the destruction of others. Often the hero has insight and realizes before anyone else what his fate will be. However, for reasons of his own, he forges ahead. The hero is mortal and vulnerable.

James M. Redfield in *Nature and Culture in the Iliad* describes the hero as having a "social task." When he is successful the hero is rewarded most generously but failure brings destruction.

Achilles, in the Iliad, does the "right" thing but must therefore isolate himself because of it. His rage at his loss of honor brings greater destruction to the Greeks and loss of Patroclus, his closest companion. Only these disasters enable Achilles to reenter his society and the war and thus regain his honor.

Hector remains intimately bound to his family and society and must at all costs defend them. He does not want to fight a war which his brother has provoked. Hector clearly sees his ultimate defeat and the destruction of his city. However, he cannot do anything that will bring disgrace to himself and his family.

There are many articles and books which analyze in great depth Achilles and Hector as hero. The instructor will find a few of these texts in the bibliography of this paper. An important aspect of this section is that students should learn something about the nature of a hero in epic literature. Having students describe what they think is heroic and comparing contrasting their ideas with those of the poet is an effective way to help them understand why Achilles and Hector, as the heroes, behave as they do.

The "Homeric" Question

Most high school texts containing the lliad describe Homer as a specific individual who authored the *Iliad* . The fact is that no one really knows for certain who wrote the poem. The lliad was probably written in the eighth century B.C. when alphabetic writing was introduced to Greece, but the events described in the story took place in the 13th century B.C. or approximately 500 years before the story was written down.

Most Hellenists, at least in America, believe that the story was passed along in the oral tradition by story-tellers who received food and shelter, and later money, for their talents. Before the written word the stories were not memorized per se. The poet knew the folk legends and myths of his people. He also knew the meter in which his poem was to be spoken, and he had a ready supply of stock phrases tailored to specific characters and events. With this knowledge the poet was able to convey thousands of stories to his audience. Each story was a little different each time the poet told it because he wove a little bit of his own invention into the telling of the story. There were many papyrus versions of the *Iliad* , each a little different from the other. Imagine the great variety of oral renditions of this story there must have been!

It is the inconsistencies in narrative of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* which have been and still are the cause of controversy among scholars concerning the authorship of these two epics. An example of one kind of inconsistency which puzzles scholars is the following. In book five of the *lliad* Pylaimenes, king of the Paphlagonians, is slain. However, in book thirteen, Pylaimenes reappears mourning the death of his son Harpalion.

Another kind of difficulty which fans the controversy are the varying interpretations given to particular passages of the *Iliad* . Albin Lesky in *History of Greek Literature* uses as an example of this the wall that the Greeks built to protect their ships. Some theorists claim that there is no plausible reason for the wall building,

others say it is an integral part of the plot, and still others feel that the wall is symbolic or that it was an invention of the poet.

The results of these inconsistencies are several theories about how the poem was written. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were first analyzed by the Alexandrians, some of whom theorized that the two epics were written by different poets but who did not pull apart the individual epics. Starting in the eighteenth century there came analytic theorists who thought there were many poems which had been combined into one. The unitarian theory states that one poet created entirely both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* , or at least each epic was written by one individual. The expansion theory maintains there was an original core to which other episodes are attached. Though there is little objective data to decisively favor one theory over another, modern theorists tend to support the idea that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* developed from the oral tradition and that the poet who wrote them down was probably one man who gathered material from many sources and in addition added new material of his own. Some scholars propose that the composer was illiterate and dictated the work to a scribe; others contend that he wrote his own manuscript.

Students should understand that because of our limited knowledge there is no way of knowing definitively whether Homer was one man or many or whether he wrote the entire *Iliad* or parts of it. Another question, only to be mentioned here, which still puzzles scholars is whether the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were written down by the same individual. Indeed, we don't really know if the poet's name really was "Homer." One supposed characteristic of "Homer" which probably was not true was blindness. If the composer was the same man as the scribe (as seems probable to me) he could not have been blind.

Some students may be interested enough in this question to do some research themselves. The bibliography at the end of this paper, while intended primarily for teachers, is a good starting point.

Strategies

The intent of this unit is to make the *Iliad* accessible to most students. The goal of this section is to provide suggestions to make study of the *Iliad* more enjoyable. The instructor should choose those ideas most adaptable to his or her way of teaching.

> (1) Although the *Iliad* is an exciting war story, it is also a poem which is twenty-four books (chapters) and about 600 pages long in the Fitzgerald translation. Time is important in presenting any material, and I think in the classroom four to six weeks is the maximum allowable time for presentation of any unit.

It is not necessary for students to read the entire poem in order for them to gain the benefits of it. There are some chapters which are more important to read than others. The instructor should select those which he or she feels is more important and summarize for students the chapters in between. Below are chapters I think are crucial to understanding the piece along with brief summaries. The instructor can find more complete summaries in Lesky's *A History of Greek Literature* , Wilcock's *A Companion to the Iliad* , and Owen's *The Story of the Iliad* . Consider these brief summaries a base from which to expand depending upon the time available and the abilities of the students involved.

Book 1—Book one was outlined earlier in this paper. It is basic to the understanding of the *Iliad* . It tells that the poem is about the anger of Achilles and it details the dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles. It is also

an easy chapter to read, understand and enjoy.

Book 2—Shows the armies gearing for war. The first half tells of a dream Zeus sends predicting early victory. The second half of the chapter is a catalog of the troops. I recommend reading the first half including the introduction of the troop catalog, which explains that the Muses were conceived as actual sources of information.

Interestingly enough this chapter shows the bias of the poet toward the aristocrats. Note that only men of the warrior class are listed along with a brief family history. The ordinary soldier did not count. The only common man to appear by name in the *Iliad* appears in this chapter. He is Thersites. He opposes the war and is promptly beaten and scapegoated. Malcolm Wilcock in *A Companion to the Iliad* points out that he is the only man in the *Iliad* described as ugly. The Greeks enjoyed listening to these catalogs of men and ships as they seem to have had some real historical value. It was an honor to be able to trace one's heritage to one of the noble warriors.

Book 3—This book introduces Paris (Alexandros) who has provoked the war, Helen, and Menalaos, Helen's first husband and Agamemnon's brother, and the people of Troy. For the first time we get a glimmer of the reason the Greeks and Trojans are fighting.

Book 6—In book 4 the Trojans with divine help break the truce and for the rest of books 4 and 5 the battles continue with the Greeks carrying the day. Book 6 is a personal favorite because it includes one of the more humane scenes, a meeting between Hector and his wife, Andromache. Additionally, the plight of the women (Helen, Hekabe [Hector's mother], and Andromache), which is calamitous, is clearly delineated. In this chapter also Hector shames Paris into returning to battle.

Book 9—In books 7 and 8 the battles continue. The Greeks have fortified their position and both armies take time to bury their dead. In book 8 Zeus turns the tide of battle towards Troy. Book 9 presents the Greeks sending three envoys—Odysseus, Phoinix and Aias—to plead with Achilles to help them after their terrible defeat. Achilles refuses their offer and says he will not fight unless the Greeks attack his ships.

Book 11—Book 10 shows Agamemnon and Menalaos passing into the Trojan camp to spy. They find a Trojan spy and obtain information about the Trojan positions. In book 11 the major Greek heroes are wounded and Patroclus' heart is moved to enter the war.

Book 16—The battle continues in books 12 through 15. The Trojans are first victorious, then because Zeus, who is fulfilling his promise to Thetis is tricked, the Greeks rally. Finally Zeus regains control and Troy breaks through to the Greek ships. In book 16 Patroclus, Achilles' closest companion, pleads with Achilles who is still angry, but who allows Patroclus to enter the fray. Patroclus is killed.

Book 18—The Greeks fight for and finally retrieve the body of Patroclus in book 17. In book 18, Achilles learns of his friend's death and the army mourns Patroclus. At the end of the book a special shield is made for Achilles.

Book 19—Achilles makes peace with Agamemnon and will join the fight. Achilles' own death is forecast. The tide of battle turns toward the Greeks.

Book 22—Books 20 and 21 show the turnabout once Achilles has joined the battle. The Greeks come up to the very walls of Troy. Book 22 is the climax of the story. Hector and Achilles meet and Hector is slain. Achilles

drags the body around Troy and the Trojans display their grief.

Book 24—Book 23 contains the funeral rites of Patroclus and also the funeral games. In book 24 Priam, King of Troy, comes to ransom his son's, Hector's, body, and Achilles is finally able to assuage his anger in a touching scene between the two men. Achilles agrees to return Hector's body to Troy.

I have whittled the 24 books to ten, but if more time is needed I think books 6, 11, and 18 can be summarized with little loss of understanding.

(2) Read as much of the poetry aloud as possible. The first chapter should certainly be read together in the classroom.

(3) Introduce the story of Paris and Helen before the *Iliad* is begun. It can be read or viewed as a motion picture or given to students to present to the class or simply told by the instructor.

(4) One of the difficulties I have encountered is keeping the characters straight. Who is a Greek? Who is Trojan? Who are gods and what side does each god support? One of the difficulties is that there is no difference between the Greeks and Trojans culturally. One idea is to set up chess figures with the names of the characters and their sides represented, one board for mortals and the other for gods. Another possibility is to assign each student a character which he or she will design in cut out form according to the information they can obtain about them. These figures can then be displayed on a bulletin board or along a wall with each figure's name and legend.

(5) Divide the classroom into four groups: Greeks, Trojans, gods who support the Greeks and gods who support Troy. Each student's job would be to keep track of his character. The instructor may wish each student to write and present a report on his character or characters. This would be a good way of integrating the study of Greek myths into the study of the *Iliad* .

(6) Write and present or perhaps improvise small dramatic presentations between two or among three or four characters. Good possibilities might be:

    (1) the conversation between Chryses and Agamemnon in book 1.

    (2) the confrontation between Agamemnon and Achilles in book 1.

    (3) the family scene between Hector and Andromache in book 6.

    (4) the meeting of the three envoys, Phoinix, Aias, and Odysseus with Achilles in book 9.

        There are many other possibilities. These are just a few suggestions.

(7) Each student can design his own hero. The hero must have the superior qualities as well as the human qualities of the epic hero.

(8) Once the hero is designed from exercise seven, build a story around him. The story should contain some of the same qualities the epic has.

(9) Write part of the epic created in number 8 in poetic form.

(10) Have students come to class in Greek outfit as their own character. Hold a contest and pick the most authentic and most imaginative costumes.

(11) Select a short passage from the *Iliad* and have students tell it in their own way or have students write the lead paragraph of a newspaper or magazine article from the passage.

(12) Have students design a cartoon either funny, satirical, or political from an event in the *Iliad* .

(13) Students can keep a journal for a particular character. The events in the diary will be told from that character's point of view.

(14) Set up a news conference in which one student plays the role of a major character and the other students are reporters. Students question the character who must answer in kind. Students then either write articles or record a new report on cassette or video tape. The results are

displayed.

(15) Many of the characters have epithets, for example ox-eyed Hera, or Athena with the grey eyes, or Thetis, silvery-footed daughter of the Old One of the Sea. Students will design symbols for each character, e.g., running shoes for Achilles.

(16) Students can put one of the events in the form of a rap or in some other poetic form. Since these poems were first sung or intoned rather than spoken, this will give students some idea of how the stories were originally presented.

(17) Present a game show, "What's My Line," in which a panel tries to discover what character another student is by asking questions.

(18) The translation I am using is by R. Fitzgerald, because of its readability and the beauty of its language. Another popular translation is by R. Lattimore. This translation is more literal. The instructor should experiment in order to find a translation he or she prefers.

Study Questions— *The Iliad*

Books 1-10

(1) Why are the Greeks and Trojans fighting?
(2) Why does Chryses come to Agamemnon?
(3) What is the cause of the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles?

(4) What does Achilles ask Thetis, his mother, to do for him? Why?

(5) How does Priam (Alexandros) behave in the following situations:

    1. When the Greeks and Trojans met in battle?

    2. When Menalaos accepts his offer?

    3. When he sees Helen?

    4. When Hector shames him?

(6) What kind of person is Paris?

(7) Which gods fight for the Greeks? Which fight for Troy? Why?

(8) During the first battle Hector visits home. Why?

(9) Briefly describe Hector's visit with his wife and child. Why is it hard for him to return to battle? Why does he go?

(10) How do the Greeks try to protect their ships? What is their fear?

(11) Why do the three envoys visit Achilles? What arguments do they present? How does Achilles respond to them?

Books 11-24

(1) Briefly describe how Agamemnon, Diomedes, and Odysseus become wounded. Who is winning at the end of this day's battle?

(2) How do the day's events affect Patroclus?

(3) Why does Patroclus want to enter the war? What is Achilles' reaction?

(4) What is Achilles' reaction after Patroclus' death?

(5) Why is it important for Achilles and Agamemnon to reconcile publicly?

(6) What hardships have resulted from Achilles' anger?

(7) How does the tide of war change after Achilles enters the war?

(8) What is to be Achilles' own future?

(9) How does Achilles honor Patroclus and dishonor Hector?

(10) Why do the gods interfere with Achilles' plans for Hector's body?

(11) What are the results of Priam's meeting with Achilles? Why?

(12) The *Iliad* ends without total victory for the Greeks. Why?

(13) Suppose the Greeks had come to regain Helen, but Achilles and Agamemnon had not quarreled. How would the story have changed?

(14) In what ways do the Greek gods behave differently from our own divinity?

(15) Contrast Hector and Achilles. Which do you like better? Why?

(16) In your opinion, is Achilles any different at the end of the story than he was at the beginning? Explain.

Lesson Plans—Day One and Two

Time 50 minute period

Objectives

(1) To give students information about the civilization and culture of the ancient Greeks.

(2) To help students establish a time frame for the Greek culture and for the *Iliad* .

Materials

Motion Picture—The Golden Age of Greece (Winchester) (30 minutes)

White shelf paper or butcher paper

Magic Markers

Procedure

(1) Explain that students are going to read a story about the ancient Greeks, and that the events of the story took place nearly 2500 years ago. This is the earliest piece of literature from Western civilization that we will study.

(2) Points to look for in film:

1. Nature of polis
2. Difference between Athens and Sparta
3. How did justice come to Athens according to legend?
4. What purpose did the panhellenic games serve?
5. What was the nature of Greek art?
6. What do we learn about Greek civilization from their poetry?
7. Would you have liked to have lived during that time? Why or why not?

(3) After showing the film—discussion.

Day Two

Procedure

(1) Review previous day's film.

(2) Tack up shelf paper across front of room. Draw line horizontally across center of shelf paper. Mark center to represent year Christ was born. Mark forward and backward in 1000 year blocks. Explain to students why this is the twentieth century although the years are marked 1900 and that B.C. works the same way in reverse.

(3) Have students mark off important dates they know with different colored markers. Example: the year Columbus discovered America, the year the airplane was invented, Edison discovers light bulb, the Declaration of Independence was signed, students' own birthdays.

(4) Give students events and dates of happenings in ancient Greece and mark dates. Example: approximate date Mycenean empire fell, date of events in *Iliad* , approximate date poem written down, approximate date of first panhellenic games.

(5) When sheet has been marked, put up permanently above blackboard for reference and use later.

Follow-up Plan trip to Yale Art gallery to look at ancient Greek artifacts.

Day Three

Time Approximately 50 minutes

Objectives:

(1) Begin reading of epic poem
(2) Facilitate understanding of poem

Materials
Textbook—The Iliad of Homer, R. Fitzgerald, tr.

Procedure

(1) Distribute text.
(2) Let students examine text, show how poem is divided into 24 books.
(3) Instructor begins first reading of text: lines 1-10.
(4) Brief discussion about meaning of poem. What is the poem to be about? Who are the Akhaians? Zeus? Agamemnon?
(5) Allow students to continue reading poem in rotation.
(6) Assign the rest of book 1 as homework assignment.
(7) Assign each student the name of a Greek god who appears in the *Iliad* . Each student is to find out as much about each god or goddess as they can and return in one week with a drawing of the god as they conceive him or her and a short exposition about each god's exploits.

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