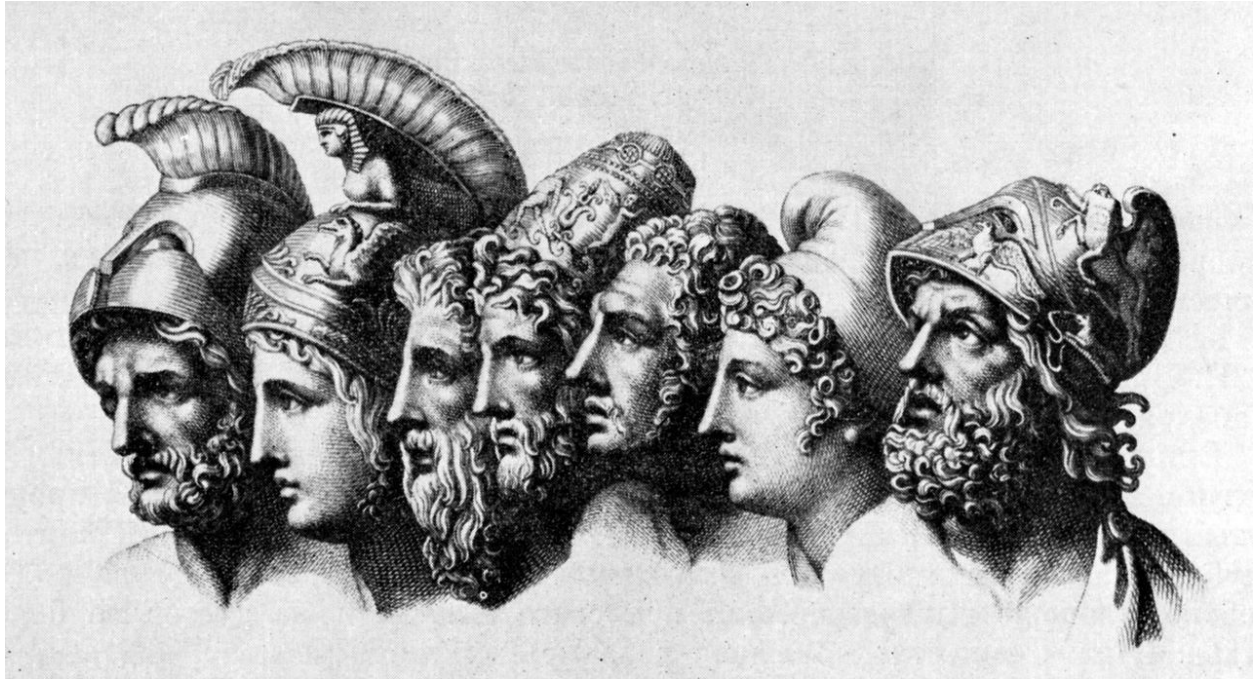


THE ILIAD



Author: Homer (c. 8th Century BC)

Translator: Robert Fagles

*Why so much grief for me?
No man will hurl me down to Death, against my fate.
And fate? No one alive has ever escaped it,
neither brave man nor coward, I tell you—
it's born with us the day that we are born.*
(7.580-584)

Recommended Audio Version (abridged): Fagles translation, read by Derek Jacobi
http://www.audible.com/pd/Classics/The-Iliad-Audiobook/B002V1CFUO/ref=a_search_c4_1_2_srTtl?qid=1433367854&sr=1-2

Introduction

Great literature tends to mirror life. A book becomes a classic because it creates an honest and true picture of life and accurately depicts the consequences of various worldviews. In reading *The Iliad*, you will be reading one of the greats. This story has been read, discussed, and written about for centuries. You will soon find out why. As you are reading *The Iliad* in your English class, you will be reading Plato's *Republic* in Political Philosophy. They may not seem related, but here is what the English classicist, Bernard Knox, had to say about the connection between Socrates and *The Iliad*'s hero, Achilles:

But it seems at first surprising that one of the most famous citizens of that democracy [Ancient Greece], a man whose life and thought would seem to place him at the extreme opposite pole from the Homeric hero, who was so far removed from Achilles' blind instinctive reactions that he could declare the unexamined life unlivable, that Socrates, on trial for his life, should invoke the name of Achilles. Explaining to his judges why he feels no shame or regret for a course of action that has brought him face-to-face with a death sentence, and rejecting all thought of a compromise that might save his life (and which his fellow citizens would have been glad to offer), he cites as his example Achilles, the Achilles who, told by his mother that his own death would come soon after Hector's, replied: "Then let me die at once -" rather than "sit by the ships... / a useless, dead weight on the good green earth" (18.113-23).

And yet, on consideration, it is not so surprising. Like Achilles, he was defying the community, hewing to a solitary line, in loyalty to a private ideal of conduct, of honor. In the last analysis, the bloodstained warrior and the gentle philosopher live and die in the same heroic, and tragic, pattern.

Socrates and Achilles might be unlikely compatriots, and yet, in the Western tradition, these are the two great souls we first encounter when beginning our study of philosophy and literature.

But you may be wondering, "Why read old books?" There are many answers to this question, one of which is given by author and apologist C.S. Lewis. He suggests that it is necessary to "keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds" in order to escape the "characteristic blindness of the twentieth century."

Every age has its own outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. And that means the old books. All contemporary writers share to some extent the contemporary outlook - even those, like myself, who seem most opposed to it...The only palliative is to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books...Two heads are better than one, not because either is infallible, but because they are unlikely to go wrong in the same direction. (From an introduction by C.S. Lewis to a translation of *Athanasius: On the Incarnation*.)

In another good essay on this topic, Professor Dominic Manganiello, D.Phil., explains to his students, “We will read old books, then, because in the past lie the foundations of our present and future hope. We will discover that the writings of the masters deal with ‘primal and conventional things...the hunger for bread, the love of woman, the love of children, the desire for immortal life.” (http://www.augustinecollege.org/papers/DM_7Sept98.htm)

Finally, in perhaps the most compelling reason of all, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn pointed out that “literature conveys irrefutable condensed experience in yet another invaluable direction; namely, from generation to generation. Thus it becomes the living memory of the nation. Thus it preserves and kindles within itself the flame of her spent history, in a form which is safe from deformation and slander. In this way literature, together with language, protects the soul of the nation.” (http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1970/solzhenitsyn-lecture.html) Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* have done this for Ancient Greece.

Reading challenging literature such as we will encounter this year is hard work, but also very rewarding. There are different ways to read a book. In this class, we will read analytically which means annotating as we go. You will understand and enjoy these texts more deeply than if you simply skim them. Your annotations will also help you quickly locate important scenes in the book as you are completing each writing assignment.

Following this introduction is an article written by Mortimer Adler on “How to Mark a Book.” Please read it to see what is expected in your annotations. A rubric is also attached to help you earn full points for your annotations. A reading/annotating rate of 20 pages per hour is the benchmark used when assigning daily reading. If you read/annotate slower than this, then be prepared to spend more time on your reading assignments.

I look forward to reading this great classic with you. This was the first book I read in college and the essay that I wrote for it was the first that I had written that wasn’t a regurgitation of someone else’s ideas. I have a special love for it and I hope that through your study of *The Iliad* in conjunction with *The Republic*, you will come to a deeper understanding of all that we owe to the great civilization of Ancient Greece.

So, read with an open mind and with humility. Ask Homer why these characters are doing what they do. What motivates them? Study Guide Questions will be posted in Google Classroom. Go to this link: <https://classroom.google.com/> and join my Classroom with this code: **ylrezb**. Study Guide Questions for Books I - VIII will be due the first day of school. We will complete the rest of the 24 Books over the next four weeks.

Literary Genre: Epic Poetry

Characteristics of the Epic:

- Long narrative poem (tells a story)
- Vast setting
- Develops episodes important to history of a nation, state, people
- Didactic, giving lessons on appropriate action for the audience
- Great deeds by a hero of mythical, legendary, or historical significance; a person of heroic proportions, high position
- Supernatural forces intervene
- Elevated style, reflected in formal speeches by main characters

Epic Conventions

- Poet states theme at opening
- Invokes muse
- Begins *in medias res* - exposition comes later
- Catalogues of warriors, ships, armies, weapons
- Extended formal speeches
- Frequent use of epic similes - formal and sustained; an epic simile is an extended comparison using figurative language

Reading Schedule

Reading/Annotating Assignment	# of Pages	Due Date
Bk I - VIII	172	Aug. 24th, 2015
Bk. IX - XIII*	117	Aug. 31, 2015
Bk. XIV - XVII*	97	Sept. 7, 2015
Bk. XVIII - XXI*	73	Sept. 14, 2015
Bk. XXII - XXIV*	73	Sept. 21, 2015

* These will be further subdivided once school begins.

How to Answer Study Guide Questions

Please answer each study guide question in body paragraph form as described below. Answers that are not in complete sentences, lack evidence, and/or are full of grammatical and spelling errors will not be graded. Remember to use the Literary Tense. See Handout under the ABOUT tab in Google Classroom if you need a refresher. Submit all Study Guide Questions through Google Classroom as a Google Doc. Work submitted in any other format will not be accepted.

1. Write an assertion statement to begin the paragraph.

The assertion statement must clearly present the topic for the paragraph that will be proven in the paragraph.

2. Give evidence.

You must present evidence to back up the claim given in the assertion statement. This will consist of a quote from the text or a brief summary of a plot detail. Both of these must be cited using the appropriate format. Use MLA for Study Guide Questions. We will be learning CMS when we write our first essay.

3. Comment on the evidence.

Commentary is critical because it creates the connection between the evidence you have given and your assertion statement. For each quote or detail that you give, you should give at least twice as much commentary (argument/opinion). These comments are your thoughts on the quote and how that quote relates to your assertion. Do NOT say, “I think...” “I feel...” “I believe...” “In my opinion...” or “It seems to me...” Simply tell your opinion as if it is fact!

Your commentary should always support the assertion and explain how this quote or detail proves it. If your evidence or commentary does not support the assertion statement, then you have drifted off track. Your commentary should answer the unspoken question, “What does this quote or plot detail show?”

Each paragraph should have at least **two** quotes from the text or **two** sets of details with **twice as much commentary** offering how this evidence supports the assertion.

4. Write a clincher statement to end the paragraph.

The final sentence for each paragraph should be a clincher sentence, one that carefully reflects the assertion statement but does not repeat the wording of that statement. The job of the clincher is to point back to the assertion statement and to prepare the reader to move on to the next topic. Since these paragraphs are not part of an essay, your clincher statement is more open-ended.

Example of a Study Guide Question and Answer

What causes the “rage” of Achilles?

Achilles becomes incensed when Agamemnon dishonors him by taking his prize, Briseis, whom Achilles had come to love. Achilles had joined the expedition to Troy to fulfill his vow to Menelaus and win honor for himself. However, instead of being honored by Agamemnon, Achilles finds himself at odds with the king of the Greeks. Achilles complains to his mother that Agamemnon “disgraces me, seizes and keeps my prize, / he tears her away himself!” (I. 421-422). Briseis had been awarded to Achilles after he successfully led a raid into the towns surrounding Troy. Agamemnon humiliates him when he uses his power to take Briseis from Achilles to replace his own prize, Chryseis, after she is returned to her father. Since Achilles is by far the most valuable fighter of the entire Greek army, he feels unappreciated and his pride is especially wounded. But adding to the pain of being dishonored is the fact that Achilles has grown to love Briseis. While all of the Greek allies fight to retrieve Helen, Menelaus’ wife, from Paris and the Trojans, “the brilliant runner Achilles lay among his ships, / raging over Briseis, the girl with lustrous hair / ... All for Briseis / his heart was breaking now” (II. 784-792). Achilles loves Briseis. Surrendering her to Agamemnon, a man that he does not respect and who has mortified his pride, is torment for Achilles. He grieves for his loss and nurses his anger to such an extent that even when he wants to rejoin the fight, he cannot overcome his hatred of Agamemnon. It is not until Achilles has a different cause for his rage that he will return to the fields of battle before the walls of Troy.

Study Guide Questions

Bks I-VIII Annotations and Study Guide Questions are DUE on August 24th the FIRST day of school.

Book I - The Rage of Achilles

According to the first 8 lines, what will this poem be about?

Book II - The Great Gathering of Armies

From what and/or who is Agamemnon's power derived?

Book III - Helen Reviews the Champions

Compare/contrast how Homer portrays Helen and Paris. Are they to be pitied and/or despised?

Book IV - The Truce Erupts in War

What is the significance of the differences between the descriptions of how the Greeks and the Trojans march into battle in lines 489-516?

Book V - Diomedes Fights the Gods

Can the gods be heroic?

Book VI - Hector Returns to Troy

Compare/contrast the two scenes in Book VI: a) Agamemnon's attitude (58-75) and b) Glaucus and Diomedes exchange (254-279).

Book VII - Ajax Duels with Hector

Is there an underlying sense of justice in lines 401-438? What are the Trojans fighting for, if not for a just cause? What do you think Hector is fighting for?

Book VIII - The Tide of Battle Turns

What is the relationship between fate and the will of Zeus?