

The Odyssey Essay Prompts and Square Notes Prep

Directions: Each prompt option is a practice in a literary theory called **sociological criticism**. This theory states that readers, through study of a piece of literature, can learn about the society and culture which produced that piece of literature. Read through the following prompts carefully. Select **one** as the focus of your essay. Each prompt requires an essay of an introduction, at least two body paragraphs, and a conclusion.

Refer to the tape-in in your English Notebook or the back of this document for a reminder about what needs to be in your Square Notes. Be sure you follow its directions carefully. Your Square Notes should be completed on a separate sheet of paper, be properly labeled, and have all your responses clearly written for each section. The Square Notes itself is worth four assessment points. It is due at the start of class on 12/5 (A day) or 12/6 (B Day).

If the Square Notes is turned in early (before or after school or during lunches before you have English class on the given due date above) and is correctly filled out and approved, you will get ten extra credit points added to the assignments portion of your grade. If it's after the due date, the Square Notes can be turned for late credit *before* the calendar day of the essay draft. If it has not been turned in or approved before 12/7 (A day) or 12/8 (B day), no credit for the Square Notes can be earned.

- A. One of the most important cultural values in The Odyssey is that of *xenia*, a Greek concept encompassing the generosity and courtesy between guest and host. In a well-organized essay, discuss both ancient Greek expectations for a host as well as ancient Greek expectations for a guest. Use and analyze evidence from the text in your discussion. Avoid mere plot summary.
- B. In literature, an epic hero is a larger-than-life figure who represents the ideals of a nation or race. Odysseus, as the central hero in Homer's *The Odyssey*, allows the opportunity to identify what traits or skills the ancient Greeks admired. In a well-organized essay, discuss two significant traits that the ancient Greeks admired in their heroes. Be sure you're not merely discussing that Odysseus has these qualities but rather discussing how Homer's depiction of these qualities reveals what the ancient Greeks admired. Use and analyze evidence from the text in your discussion. Avoid mere plot summary.
- C. Different cultures at different times in history have had varied expectations for what is required for one to be considered loyal to one's spouse. Based on the content of *The Odyssey*, what was the standard of loyalty that the ancient Greeks apparently followed when it came to expectations for a husband *and* expectations for a wife? Use and analyze evidence from the text in your discussion. Avoid mere plot summary.

Square Notes

Take a **separate piece of paper** and fold it into quarters. **Label each box with the bolded headings** as you see below (anything not in bold you don't need to copy; you just need to be aware of the information as you're planning that section). Be sure you **leave space for answers**.

<p>Prompt Part #1: <i>What is the first question/topic the prompt asks you to cover?</i></p> <p>What is your answer? <i>(You'll use this in your topic sentence for your first body paragraph)</i></p> <p>What evidence <i>(quotes, data, expert testimony) helps answer it? TWO QUOTES NEEDED. They should be from different parts of the text. Cite them.</i></p> <p>1)</p> <p>2)</p>	<p>Prompt Part #2: <i>What is the second question/topic the prompt asks you to cover?</i></p> <p>What is your answer? <i>(You'll use this in your topic sentence for your second body paragraph)</i></p> <p>What evidence <i>(quotes, data, expert testimony) helps answer it? TWO QUOTES NEEDED. They should be from different parts of the text. Cite them.</i></p> <p>1)</p> <p>2)</p>
<p>Task: <i>What type of writing are you being asked to do?(Essay, Narrative, Letter, Article, Instruction Manual)</i></p> <p>Audience: <i>Who is it that is going to be reading your paper? (Teacher, peer, school or government official, boss)</i></p> <p>Purpose: <i>What is the reason you are writing this? (To inform, to entertain, to persuade, to analyze, to evaluate)</i></p>	<p>Claim: <i>Your direct answer to all parts of the prompt.</i></p>