

Uncovering the Past: The Humanities of Ancient Greece (Lesson 3)
Greek Literature: Odysseus and the Cyclops Polyphemus

Lesson Overview: This lesson introduces students to Homer's ancient Greek epic poem, *The Odyssey*. Dating back to 700 B.C., *The Odyssey* continues to stand the test of time being taught in both middle school and high school English classes around the world. Following the tragic hero Odysseus on his journey home from the Trojan War, readers are introduced to a cast of mythological creatures and Greek gods and goddesses. This lesson offers students a taste of one of Odysseus's adventures; his interaction with a cave full of monsters known as Cyclops. Students will read the myth, and then be invited to imagine what this story would like by creating a storyboard of the events.



1. **Pre-reading:** Before reading the tale of Odysseus and the Cyclops, read this summary of Homer's *The Odyssey* with your student. This will provide them with some background of the story.
➤ <https://www.dkfindout.com/us/history/ancient-greece/odyssey/>
2. **Exploring Maps:** Have your student study the map below of Odysseus's journey. Guide them to locate where the island of Cyclops is. This is the setting of this story.



4. Next, ask your student whether they have heard of a monster called the Cyclops. Ask them to describe and/or sketch what they think this creature looks like. (examples: *A big, scary monster with one eye.*) You can also introduce your student to the Greek etymology of the word “Cyclops” meaning, “round eye”.

5. **Reading:** Read the story of Odysseus and the Cyclops below. The second link will take you to the original (translated) text of *The Odyssey*. Your student is welcome to read that version as well.

- ★ <https://www.mwpai.org/assets/Education/MA-Resources-9-15-2016/Myth-Odysseus-and-the-Cyclops.pdf>
- ★ https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/Odyssey9.php#anchor_Toc90267835

6. **Extension Activity:** Share this film clip of this scene of *The Odyssey* with your student.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jfq5jA6vFR0>

7. Activity: Storyboard

After reading the story, ask your student to create a list of characters, settings, and major plot points from the myth. Based on their notes, have them create a storyboard of the selection from the epic poem. What scenes do they feel are most important to include in their storyboard? What scenes can be combined in the same frame (box)? What colors showcase the mood of this story? Will these colors vary by scene? Allow your student to be creative with this assignment.

- More about Storyboards can be found here:
<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/what-are-storyboards/>
- Free Printable Templates:
<https://boords.com/storyboard-template>
<https://www.teachwire.net/teaching-resources/blank-storyboard-templates-various-portrait-and-landscape-styles>