

Summer Reading Assignment
English Honors I
Mrs. Shay
The Odyssey (translated by Robert Fagles)

Dear Parents and English Honors I students,

English Honors I is a high school credit class. Students' grades become part of their high school grade point average (GPA). When students enter high school as freshmen, they will be placed in English Honors II (or English II), a class predominantly for sophomores. In subsequent years, they probably will be placed in AP English Composition then AP English Literature. **This class is intended for *high achieving English students with a serious approach to their studies*. Class requirement: 4 or 5 on Reading FSA in 6th grade and teacher recommendation.**

To help students improve their reading skills and to prepare them for the rigor of high school work, summer reading will be required. Students enrolled in English Honors I must read *The Odyssey* (translated by Robert Fagles). (Many translations are available and can be read; however, if a different translation is read, names may have slightly different spelling and content may vary.) Epic poetry may be a new format for students, but most will enjoy this adventure story that has endured for nearly 3000 years. In the back of the book, there is a useful glossary. Be familiar with names used *repeatedly*. In the front of the book, there are maps to help students follow Odysseus' journeys.

During the first week of school, students will take a multiple-choice test on The Odyssey and write an in-class essay.

The Odyssey can be purchased from local bookstores, borrowed from a public library, or purchased online.

The Odyssey is divided into four sections:

- Books 1-4 – The Telemachia
- Books 5-8 – Odysseus' journey from Ogyia to Phaeacia
- Books 9-12 – Odysseus' adventures following the Trojan War
- Books 13-24 – Odysseus' return

Please consider the following as you carefully read *The Odyssey*.

Characters (focus on their actions and motivations)

Aspects of Greek culture, including the role of women

Ways of governing

Family dynamics (i.e. husbands and wives, fathers, and sons)

Role of the gods/relationship with the gods

Social structure (i.e. servants and masters, status of warriors/heroes)

Customs (i.e. rules of hospitality)

Admirable characteristics of men, women, sons, leaders

The purpose of repeating lines in this long poem

For clarity, write a one sentence description (on your own paper) for each of the following names from *The Odyssey*. Please have this assignment with you on the first day of school.

Odysseus	Menelaus	Zeus
Penelope	Laertes	Theoclymenus
Athena	Eumaeus	Phemius
Telemachus	Eurycleia	Broadsea
Calypso	Helen	Anticleia
Aeolus	Eurymachus	Ajax Telemonius
Alcinous	Antinous	Tiresias
Arete	Helios	Nestor
Agamemnon	Hermes	Pisistratus
Charybdis	Mentor	Polyphemus
Scylla	Nausicaa	Poseidon
Circe	Proteus	

If you wish to enroll in English Honors I next year, please cut and attach this signed acknowledgement to your student's 8th grade registration sheet. I have read and understood the information concerning summer reading and the requirements for English Honors I.

Student's Name _____

Parent's Name _____

Parent's Signature _____