

Teacher's Guide
for
"The Odyssey"

program performed by
Lynn Ruehlmann
Storyteller

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Teacher's Guide for "The Odyssey"

About the show:

"The Odyssey" is the original road trip! In this story Odysseus journeys home after helping the Achaeans win the Trojan War. He encounters the one-eyed Cyclops. Then Circe turns Odysseus' crew into pigs but releases them when she falls in love with Odysseus. Odysseus manages to successfully guide his crew past the bewitching sirens and their treacherous songs, only to have to choose between having six men devoured by Scylla or his entire ship and crew destroyed by Charybdis! Later, when his crew finally revolts against him, he cannot deter them from disastrous temptation on Helios' island.

Finally back home, Odysseus discovers that all the eligible young men of Ithaca are demanding that his wife, Penelope, choose one of them to marry in his absence. It takes intervention by Athena herself to help him restore order to his household, thereby completing his journey.

About Homer:

Although scholars disagree, tradition has it that Homer was an ancient, blind, Greek poet who wrote "The Iliad" and "The Odyssey."

About the Bronze Age

"The Odyssey" took place around 1200 B.C. during the Bronze Age when people began using bronze. Bronze is made primarily of copper and tin, although other metals can be added. It is extremely hard and durable and was used to make battle-axes, shields, knives, swords and helmets, as well as ornamental items.

About Storyteller Lynn Ruehlmann:

Lynn has been a professional storyteller for over 15 years. She has taught storytelling at Old Dominion University, won a Folio Award for Best Actress in a Comedy, and Artist of the Year for Young Audiences of Virginia. Her recording of "Spy! The Story of Civil War Spy Elizabeth Van Lew" won two national awards.

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Activities:

1. There is not time in one program to cover all the many episodes of "The Odyssey!" Choose one of these other scenes (about Calypso, Nausicaa, the Laestrygonians, or the Land of the Dead) and adapt it to your own words. Outline it on paper to make sure you have all the details included and in the proper order. Then tell your story out loud to a partner with as much detail and enthusiasm as you can. If there is time, share it again in front of the whole class.
2. If you met Odysseus today, would you want to be his friend or his employee? Why or why not?
3. "The Odyssey" took place during the Bronze Age. Think about how Penelope responded to unwanted suitors and then to the return of her husband after his 20 year absence. If similar situations happened today to a Navy family, how do you think the wife would react? Write a monologue as Penelope and another monologue as the contemporary wife.
4. Summarize or recap the events of "The Odyssey" in one of the following media:
 - a. As a cartoon with 1-3 panels per episode
 - b. As a song with one verse per episode
 - c. As a mini-play
 - d. As a newspaper feature series following Odysseus' return to Ithaca, featuring one strong headline per episode

Greek Roots we still use today:

angel - message, messenger

anthro - human being

arch - ancient, first, rule

bibli - book

cardi - heart

cracy - rule by

chromo - color

crypt - hidden, secret

demon - evil spirit

dem - people

graph - writing, thing written

heli - sun

hex - six

hydr - water

mania - passion for

phobia - fear of

poly - many

pseud - false

pyr - fire

tox - poison

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Characters in Lynn Ruehlmann's performance of "The Odyssey":

Athena: Daughter of Zeus, Goddess of wisdom and war, and guardian of Odysseus.

Charybdis: The whirlpool.

Circe: Goddess who turns Odysseus' crew into swine. Daughter of Helios.

Cyclops: One-eyed monster.

Eumaeus: Swineherd who is faithful to Odysseus.

Eurykleia: Odysseus' childhood nurse.

Eurylochus: Odysseus' second in command on his ship.

Helios: God of the sun, whose cattle are killed by Odysseus' crew.

Hermes: Messenger of the gods.

Laertes: Father of Odysseus.

Penelope: Wife of Odysseus.

Polyphemus: Cyclops; one-eyed monster. Son of Poseidon.

Poseidon: God of the sea. Brother of Zeus.

Scylla: Six-headed monster who lives across the strait from Charybdis.

Sirens: Sea nymphs--half bird, half women--whose singing lures sailors to their deaths.

Telemachus: Son of Odysseus.

Zeus: King of the Greek gods.

EVALUATION FOR
PROGRAM BY
Lynn Ruehlmann, Storyteller

*Lynn Ruehlmann came to your school recently. Could you please take a minute to fill out this evaluation and return it to her at 621 New Hampshire Avenue
Norfolk, Virginia 23508*

Thanks so much for your help!

* * * * *

What program or workshop did you attend?

What did you or your students like best about the program and/or workshop?
Why?

Was there anything you or your students would have wanted changed?

Are there any particular stories or kinds of stories that you would like to hear in the future?

What material or skills would you like covered in the future in a workshop?

Do you have any other comments?

Optional signature

Thank you again for your help and opinions. They are so valuable and appreciated!