

CHANTILLY HIGH SCHOOL - WORLD CIVILIZATIONS I
English 9 Component/Mr. Richardson
Summer Assignment 2007

Rationale: Summer reading is an FCPS requirement for all rising ninth grade students. Returning to school in September is much easier for those who have maintained the habit of responsive reading during the summer; working toward a smooth transition to high school is especially important in World Civilizations I because we will be working at an accelerated pace. Summer reading also is designed to provide a pleasurable broadening of a student's experiences. Students who read as a source of both intellectual stimulation and overall relaxation are likely to become lifelong readers. Those who read over the summer months tend to be more articulate speakers and more graceful writers, skills that are aligned with the Chantilly High School English Department's goals for each and every student.

World Civilizations I/English 9 Honors

Ancient literature reveals the religious, political, and cultural belief systems of ancient peoples. The texts we read in English this year will augment your learning in World Studies. The school year is too short for us to read everything, but we will do our best to explore as many civilizations as possible. To that end, I ask that you complete a preliminary reading over the summer.

I. Source Material

Greek mythology has had a profound influence on Western literature from the Middle Ages to the modern era; familiarity with major characters and stories from the Greek chronicles will enhance your cultural literacy and provide a sound foundation for your continued English studies here at Chantilly High School. Please purchase (borrow, or dig up) a copy of Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* and read the following sections:

1. the chapters on the major Greek and Roman deities (Part One)
2. the chapters on "The Trojan War", "The Fall of Troy", and "The Adventures of Odysseus" (Part Four)
3. the chapter on "The House of Atreus" (Part Five)

You should expect to be tested on your knowledge of these chapters early in the first quarter. You should be able to identify the **major** characters from the myths and **briefly** (1-2 sentences) recount their stories. You are not required to take notes, but doing so will help you retain the information. If you have the time or inclination, I encourage you to read all of Edith Hamilton. Her book is a valuable resource, as important as a good dictionary and thorough encyclopedia.

Required Text: *Mythology* by Edith Hamilton

II. An Heroic Adventure

We will begin our studies of world literature with Joseph Campbell's theory on the Archetypal Hero, and we will return to Campbell throughout the year. Odysseus is one of the most famous heroes in history and an excellent introduction to Campbell's ideas. After reading Hamilton's account of the Greek hero (to familiarize yourself with the basic plot), please read the following Books in **Robert Fagles' translation of *The Odyssey***:

Book 5 "Odysseus—Nymph and Shipwreck"

Book 6 "The Princess and the Stranger"

Book 9 "In the One-Eyed Giant's Cave"

Book 10 "The Bewitching Queen of Aeaea"

Book 11 "The Kingdom of the Dead"

Book 12 "The Cattle of the Sun"

Book 22 "Slaughter in the Hall"

Again, I encourage you to read the entire epic, but these specific Books are essential for understanding Odysseus' character. Odysseus was the greatest hero of ancient Greek civilization; they viewed Odysseus as the exemplar of manhood and kingship. Even further, his story, as told by Homer, was regarded by the Greeks not only as history but also as religion. The Greeks believed that Odysseus' adventures presented lessons in morality and citizenship.

Modern readers, however, often respond critically to Odysseus; many modern readers believe that Odysseus does not meet their standards of heroism. Where the Greeks saw cunning, modern readers might see deceit. Where the Greeks saw courage, modern readers might see arrogance. Where the Greeks saw faith and loyalty, modern readers might see selfishness and infidelity.

Our exploration of *The Odyssey* will begin with a close examination of Odysseus' character. We will consider him, primarily, from the Greek perspective to understand why they venerated the king of Ithaca. We will, however, also discuss Odysseus' relevance to our own society and determine whether he deserves our respect as well.

Please see the next page for instructions on completing your summer assignment.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me: eric.richardson@fcps.edu.

Have a great summer and enjoy your reading.

The Odyssey
World Civilizations I/English 9 Honors
Summer Reading Assignment

After the destruction of Troy, Odysseus encounters many challenges on his journey home:

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| 1. The Cicones | 5. Circe | 9. Helios' Island |
| 2. The Laistrygones | 6. The Underworld | 10. Calypso |
| 3. The Lotus Eaters | 7. The Sirens | 11. The Phaeacians |
| 4. The Cyclops | 8. Scylla and Charybdis | 12. The Suitors |

In each of these adventures, Odysseus demonstrates the qualities the Greeks admired so much (courage, cunning, loyalty, leadership, etc.). Again, modern readers might see in Odysseus' actions the opposite characteristics (cowardice, deceit, disloyalty, weakness, etc.). As you read about each of Odysseus' adventures, look for evidence of his heroism...or lack of heroism. Look for quotations that show Odysseus to be courageous or cowardly, loyal or disloyal, etc. Underline or highlight these quotations as you find them. Try to find **AT LEAST TWO** quotations for **EACH ADVENTURE** (24 quotations total). These quotations may be complementary or contradictory; that is, both quotations might show Odysseus' admirable characteristics **OR** each quotation might show opposing characteristics (i.e. one positive and one negative).

On a separate sheet of paper, list each of Odysseus' adventures and copy the quotations that you found. **Please include the Book # and line # for each quotation.**

This list is due the first day of school. I prefer that the assignment be typed, but, if you're completing this on the beach and must handwrite the assignment, please write **NEATLY** on one side of each page only.

Required Text: *The Odyssey* by Homer (translated by Robert Fagles)

If you have any questions, please send me an email: eric.richardson@fcps.edu. I will try to check this box everyday

Enjoy!