***The Odyssey* Culminating Writing Task**

**Activity 1: Analyzing the Prompt**

Which is more important to the development of Odysseus’s character and a theme of the epic—the **journey** or the **goal**?

To answer this question:

* Reread the last three stanzas from “Ithaka” by Constantine Cavafy beginning with, “Keep Ithaka always in your mind” and ending with, “you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.”
* Consider what it means to “come home.” Review Odysseus’s journey home to Ithaca and the symbolism of “coming home.” While he returned home in the literal sense, did he return to the same place as he left?

Write an argumentative essay in which you determine whether the journey or the goal was more important to the development of Odysseus’s character and a theme of the epic. Use proper grammar, conventions, spelling, and grade-appropriate words and phrases. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support both your claim and counterclaims, pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.

1. What kind of prompt is this?
2. Which do you think is more important to the development of Odysseus’s character?
* the journey
* the goal

 3. Write down a few notes justifying your answer for number 2.

4. Generate a list of thematic topics/abstract nouns that correlate to *The Odyssey*.

**Activity 2: Writing an Introduction Paragraph and Thesis Statement**

*Consider each of the following as you begin your introduction:*

* *Include the title, genre, author, and subject matter when you write about literature*
* *Who is the main character?*
* *What does the main character want to accomplish?*
* *What conflicts does the main character incur?*
* *How does the main character resolve those conflicts?*

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*Use the template below to write a working thesis statement. This statement can be the last sentence of your introduction paragraph.*

While some might argue that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

 [acknowledge opposing side]

I maintain that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 [assert your opinion]

because, throughout \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it is clear through Odysseus’s actions that

[title of work]

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. [create a thematic statement using one of the abstract nouns from Activity 1]

**Activity 3: Topic Sentences for Body Paragraphs**

*The topic sentences should be precise claims. Use the templates below to help you organize your ideas.*

**Topic Sentence #1**

|  |
| --- |
| In the beginning of the epic, Odysseus is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and/yet/but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [character trait--adjectives] motivated by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  [abstract nouns] |

**Topic Sentence #2**

|  |
| --- |
| As the epic continues and the conflicts become more complicated, Odysseus’s actions \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [rhetorically accurate verb] that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. [thematic idea] |

**Topic Sentence #3**

|  |
| --- |
| In the end, it is apparent that the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ultimately causes Odysseus to evolve into a [choose: journey or goal] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_character.  [character trait--adjective]  |

**Activity 4: Choosing Evidence**

For this essay, you must choose evidence from throughout the epic. Use your characterization and motivation notes from the unit to complete the graphic organizer below to help you outline the order in which you will present your evidence. Remember to cite your evidence using MLA format.

**Despite the fact that this story begins in medeas res, consider presenting events chronologically as they occurred in Odysseus’s life.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **EVIDENCE + CITATION** | **HOW DOES THIS EVIDENCE SUPPORT YOUR CLAIMS?** |
|  | For body paragraph #\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | For body paragraph #\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | For body paragraph #\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | For body paragraph #\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | For body paragraph #\_\_\_\_\_ |

**Activity 5: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph**

*Follow the steps that your teacher walks you through in order to draft your conclusion paragraph below.*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 6: Style Revision**

*To add variety and interest to your essay, apply the stylistic suggestions below.*

* Scan your essay for the name *Odysseus*. Replace his name three times with epithets.
* Scan your essay for the following verbs, and then replace them with action verbs:
	+ is
	+ are
	+ was
* Scan your essay for ways to vary your sentence structure using various types of phrases.
* If students are unsure about the first bullet, consider providing the following template:
	+ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that chronicles the wanderings of the famous hero \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

             [TITLE]               [GENRE]               [AUTHOR]                   [MAIN CHARACTER]

The Odyssey is an epic by Homer that chronicles the wanderings of the famous hero Odysseus. Odysseus is the King of Ithaca and went to fight in the Trojan War. He wants to come home; however, many obstacles keep him from doing so. Finally, after learning many lessons about humility, he makes it home.

Lesson 34 Sample Paragraph

* In my first sentence, I’ve made a claim about Odysseus. I need to back that claim up with some evidence. Who can give me a specific example from the text that demonstrates his pride and gives the reader some context?”
* “My second sentence is a quotation from the text; however, it is not clear where and when the event occurs in the story. I need to clear this confusion up for the reader by creating a lead-in so both the setting and speaker is clear to the reader.”
* “Before moving on to another quotation, I must interpret the quotation for the reader by adding some commentary.”
* “I will repeat the same process with the second piece of evidence as I did before. Just like last time, I need to integrate the quotation into my own language by using a lead-in. Additionally, I want the reader to understand that even though Odysseus is urging his men to leave Ismarus, he was the one who encouraged their earlier behavior of sacking and pillaging the village.”
* “Finally, I need to add a concluding sentence.”
* ay, “Read the template on the slide silently as I read it aloud.”
* Then say, “Remember, a template is just a tool to help you. You do not have to follow this pattern exactly. Feel free to add sentences to it and adapt it. For the last two sentences on the template, feel free to pull a poignant or meaningful quotation from one of the supplementary texts from the unit, such as Constantine Cavafy’s poem ‘Ithaka’.”
* Next, instruct students: “I am going to set a timer for ten minutes. In those ten minutes, draft a conclusion in the space under activity five on your handout, or use loose leaf paper if you need more room.”
* Set the timer, and circulate throughout the room as students work independently.
* Depending on your students’ needs, you might choose to show them the exemplar conclusion paragraph after the students have drafted theirs.

**Guiding Questions and Prompts:**

* As needed, review the definition of an abstract noun (an idea that is not concrete).

Possible abstract nouns:

* + Temptation
	+ Danger
	+ Pride
	+ Heroism
	+ Choices
	+ Loyalty
* As needed, review the definition of a concession as taught in lesson 32: a concession is a respectful acknowledgement of others’ views.
* As needed, remind students of the criteria of a thematic statement:
	+ Thematic statements:
		- should be declarative sentences.
		- should be universal. (The thematic statement should be able to apply to another text.)
		- should not be bound by time period, genre, culture, etc.
		- should reveal truths about human nature.
* Use this time to work individually with students or pull together small groups of students to conduct a writing or grammar mini-lesson. This can also be done as a whole class if additional writing support is needed for all students. Choose an approach that matches the level of support your students need. Possible approaches for mini-lessons:
	+ Engage in[shared writing](http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/shared-and-interactive-writing.pdf?sfvrsn=2)
	+ Model using[student examples](http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/modeling-%28student-examples%29.pdf?sfvrsn=2) or [mentor texts](http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/modeling-%28mentor-texts%29.pdf?sfvrsn=2)
	+ Revise a portion of writing together focused on a specific skill
	+ Consult the [ELA Guidebook Grammar Guide](https://learnzillion.com/resources/81043) and the[WriteAlong](https://learnzillion.com/resources/39149-writealong)lessons to target a skill or concept

**Student Look-Fors:**

* Access an exemplar response under the Additional Materials tab.
* Sample student response:

The Odyssey is ultimately a story about pride and growth. Even though Odysseus makes foolish decisions and puts his needs first many times, readers can take valuable lessons from the epic. For example, his tale teaches that humility and respect are necessary qualities in life. Likewise, it is Odysseus’s evolution through his trials that teaches that how we respond to conflict dictates our outcomes. In the words of Constantine Cavafy in the poem “Ithaka,” “you will not meet [insurmountable obstacles]/ unless you carry them in your soul,/ unless your soul [raises] them up before you” (10-12). Often the flaws that we carry around within us do more damage that any trial we will face.