

English 9A — Foundations of Narrative, Rhetoric and Argument

STUDENT WORKBOOK • UNIT 1 • WEEKS 1-4

Foundations of Narrative Craft & The Hero's Journey

Anchor text: Homer, *The Odyssey* (Samuel Butler translation, public domain) — Books 1, 9-12 and 21-24 read closely, the whole work read complete

Full-length work: *The Odyssey* — Homer, trans. Samuel Butler (unabridged)

NAME	PERIOD	TEACHER

- What you will hand in**
- 1. **Lesson 1.1** — Close-reading annotations plus a five-item formative check
 - 2. **Lesson 1.2** — Mechanics drill plus five revised analytical sentences
 - 3. **Lesson 1.3** — Recorded 90-second spoken claim plus two substantive written replies
 - 4. **Lesson 1.4** — Thesis-and-evidence graphic organizer, submitted as Stage 1 of the key assignment
 - 5. **Lesson 1.5** — Three-stage essay submission with recorded 60-second thesis defense

How to use this workbook

- 1. Every page here matches a lesson in the online course. Bring the page to the lesson; do not fill it in afterwards from memory.
- 2. The organizer pages are **graded work**. Page 9 is Stage 1 of this unit's key assignment and page 11 is Stage 2 — the course will not open the final draft until both are submitted.
- 3. Write in it. Cross things out. A clean workbook at the end of a unit usually means the thinking happened somewhere else, or not at all.

Unit 1 at a glance

#	Lesson	By the end of it you can...	You produce	Standard
1.1	The Epic Tradition, Invocation, and In Medias Res Anchor Text & Close Reading	Explain how Homer's decision to open The Odyssey in medias res, twenty years into the story, creates urgency and sets up the poem's central theme, and cite specific lines as evidence.	Close-reading annotations plus a five-item formative check	RL.9-10.5
1.2	Language Lab — Semicolons, Conjunctive Adverbs, and the Analytical Sentence Rhetoric & Language Lab	Join two closely related independent clauses with a semicolon, with or without a conjunctive adverb, and explain why that choice is stronger than a period or a comma in a specific analytical sentence.	Mechanics drill plus five revised analytical sentences	L.9-10.2.a
1.3	Seminar — Arete or Hubris? Odysseus in the Cyclops's Cave Socratic Dialogue & Listening Lab	Take and defend a position on whether Odysseus's conduct in Book 9 is excellence or arrogance, using at least two quoted lines, and respond directly to a classmate's reasoning rather than restating my own.	Recorded 90-second spoken claim plus two substantive written replies	SL.9-10.1
1.4	Writing Workshop — Thesis, Topic Sentence, and the Embedded Quotation Recursive Writing Workshop	Write a thesis that a reasonable reader could dispute, build topic sentences that advance it rather than summarise plot, and embed a quotation inside my own sentence with an MLA citation.	Thesis-and-evidence graphic organizer, submitted as Stage 1 of the key assignment	W.9-10.5
1.5	Key Assignment — Heroic Archetype Analytical Essay Culminating Unit Assessment	Produce a 750-1,000 word literary analysis with an arguable thesis, four embedded MLA-cited quotations and a paragraph that handles evidence against my own claim, carried through three separately scored drafting stages.	Three-stage essay submission with recorded 60-second thesis defense	W.9-10.2

The key assignment

Character Arc Literary Analysis Essay, 750-1,000 words.

Reading schedule

Tick each row when you have finished the reading, not when you have started it.

Week	Read	Bring to the lesson	Done
1	Odyssey Bk 1 (invocation, Ithaca)	Your annotated copy of the invocation passage	
2	Odyssey Bk 5 and Bk 9	Two epithets you can quote from memory	
3	Odyssey Bks 10-12	The two lines you will quote in the seminar	
4	Re-read Bk 9 for the essay	Your Stage 1 organizer, completed	

Vocabulary in context

Fill the right-hand column *before* you read the definitions on the next page. A definition you wrote from the way a word was used is one you will still have in June; a definition you copied is not.

Term	Lesson	In my own words
epic	1.1	
invocation	1.1	
in medias res	1.1	
epithet	1.1	
xenia	1.1	
independent clause	1.2	
comma splice	1.2	
conjunctive adverb	1.2	
colon	1.2	
arete	1.3	
hubris	1.3	
metis	1.3	
nemesis	1.3	
thesis	1.4	
topic sentence	1.4	

Vocabulary in context (continued)

Term	Lesson	In my own words
embedded quotation	1.4	
signal phrase	1.4	

The definitions, for checking afterwards

Check these only after your own column is full. Where you disagree with the definition, work out which of you the text supports — that disagreement is worth more than the definition.

epic 1.1 — An extended narrative poem in elevated language about a hero whose deeds decide the fate of a people.

invocation 1.1 — The formal opening appeal to the Muse for inspiration and material; it also announces the poem's theme.

in medias res 1.1 — Latin, "into the middle of things": beginning a narrative partway through the chronology rather than at the start.

epithet 1.1 — A formulaic descriptive phrase permanently attached to a name — "ingenious hero", "rosy-fingered Dawn".

xenia 1.1 — The Greek obligation of hospitality binding host and guest; violating it is the central moral offence of the poem.

independent clause 1.2 — A subject-and-verb group that can stand alone as a sentence.

comma splice 1.2 — Two independent clauses joined by only a comma — an error.

conjunctive adverb 1.2 — A word such as however, therefore or nevertheless that names a logical relationship but cannot join clauses on its own.

colon 1.2 — Announces that what follows delivers on what preceded it: a list, an explanation, or a quotation.

arete 1.3 — Excellence — the full exercise of a person's characteristic capability.

hubris 1.3 — Excess self-assertion that overreaches a human limit and invites retribution.

metis 1.3 — Cunning intelligence; strategy and craft as opposed to strength.

nemesis 1.3 — The retribution that follows hubris — in Book 9, Poseidon's ten-year enmity.

thesis 1.4 — An arguable claim about an author's choices and their effect — not a summary and not a description.

topic sentence 1.4 — The opening sentence of a body paragraph, stating what that paragraph will prove.

embedded quotation 1.4 — A quotation woven into the grammar of the writer's own sentence.

signal phrase 1.4 — The introductory words that attribute a quotation to its speaker or source.

Close reading — what the poem values

Lesson 1.1 — The Epic Tradition, Invocation, and In Medias Res · RL.9-10.5, RL.9-10.1, L.9-10.4.a, L.9-10.4.b

Read the invocation twice. The first time, read for what happens. The second time, fill in this page. You are not looking for plot; you are looking for the phrases that tell you what the poem *values*.

Quoted phrase (exact words)	What it trains you to believe	Does Book 1 support it or complicate it?

The structural question. Homer opens twenty years into the story, in Ithaca, with a son and no hero.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW BY THE END OF BOOK 1 THAT YOU WOULD NOT KNOW IF THE POEM HAD STARTED AT TROY?

WHAT DOES HOMER BUY BY WITHHOLDING ODYSSEUS FOR FOUR BOOKS? ANSWER IN ONE SENTENCE.

One sentence. If it takes three, you have not decided yet.

Mechanics lab — joining what belongs together

Lesson 1.2 — Language Lab — Semicolons, Conjunctive Adverbs, and the Analytical Sentence · L.9-10.2.a, L.9-10.1, L.9-10.1.b, W.9-10.4

The test, every time: **cover the connector**. If what is on each side could stand alone as a sentence, you need a semicolon, not a comma.

Choppy pair	Rewritten as one analytical sentence	Why this punctuation and not a period

Pairs to combine: (a) Odysseus is clever. His cleverness endangers him. (b) The suitors eat Odysseus's herds. They are guests in his house. (c) Telemachus is young. He convenes an assembly of Ithaca's elders. (d) The crew is warned. They eat the cattle anyway. (e) Athena intervenes constantly. Odysseus is still called self-reliant.

BEFORE YOU HAND THIS IN

- ☐ Every sentence has a subject and a verb on each side of the semicolon
- ☐ At least one uses a conjunctive adverb, with a semicolon before and a comma after
- ☐ No comma splices — I ran the cover-the-connector test on all five
- ☐ None of the five is a summary of the plot

Seminar preparation — arete or hubris?

Lesson 1.3 — Seminar — Arete or Hubris? Odysseus in the Cyclops's Cave · SL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3, SL.9-10.1.c, RL.9-10.1

You will record a ninety-second claim and reply to two classmates. Draft it here first. A recording made without a draft is a first attempt performed in public.

MY CLAIM, IN ONE SENTENCE

Line I will quote (Bk 9)	What it proves	Supports my claim / makes it harder

One of your two lines must make your own position *harder* to hold. A claim that has met no resistance is a preference.

THE QUESTION I GENUINELY WANT A CLASSMATE TO ANSWER

Classmate	My move: press / extend / qualify	What I actually said

Stage 1 — thesis and evidence organizer

Lesson 1.4 — Writing Workshop — Thesis, Topic Sentence, and the Embedded Quotation · W.9-10.5, W.9-10.2.b, L.9-10.3.a, W.9-10.9.a

This page is **submitted and scored**. It is Stage 1 of the key assignment and the final draft does not open until it is in. Do not draft the essay here — the point of this stage is that you do not write yet.

THESIS — HOMER MUST BE THE SUBJECT OF THE SENTENCE

"Homer stages... which..." not "Odysseus is..."

TEST IT BEFORE YOU GO ON

- ☐ Could a reasonable person who read the poem disagree with this?
- ☐ Does it name a choice Homer made, and assert an effect?
- ☐ Is it something other than "he is complex" or "he faced many challenges"?

Quotation + (Butler, bk. N)	What it proves	Which paragraph it belongs to

THE COUNTER-QUOTATION — EVIDENCE THAT COMPLICATES MY OWN THESIS

Finding this now is cheaper than finding it in the final draft.

MY FOUR TOPIC SENTENCES — NONE MAY BEGIN "IN BOOK..."

Essay planner and self-check

Lesson 1.5 — Key Assignment — Heroic Archetype Analytical Essay · W.9-10.2, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.9.a, SL.9-10.4

Use this while you draft. The prompt: *does Homer present Odysseus as a moral hero whose excellence justifies the cost of his homecoming, or as a cautionary figure whose need for recognition is the source of the disaster?* Argue one.

Paragraph	Topic sentence (the claim it proves)	Evidence	Done

MY CONCLUSION ANSWERS: WHAT DOES THIS READING LET A READER SEE IN THE POEM THAT THEY WOULD OTHERWISE MISS?

BEFORE STAGE 3 GOES IN

- ☐ 750-1,000 words, and I counted
- ☐ Four or more quotations, each inside a sentence of my own
- ☐ One paragraph deals honestly with evidence against me
- ☐ Every quotation cited as (Butler, bk. N), punctuation outside the bracket
- ☐ I ran the comma-splice test on every sentence containing a comma
- ☐ Works Cited names the translator

60-SECOND DEFENSE: MY CLAIM, MY STRONGEST EVIDENCE, THE OBJECTION I FOUND HARDEST

Peer review sheet

Stage 2 of the key assignment

Use this on a classmate's rough draft. You are reviewing against the criteria the final essay is scored on — not against your own taste. Every comment must point at a sentence.

DRAFT WRITER / REVIEWER

Criterion	Where I see it working (quote the sentence)	One specific change that would improve it
Thesis (W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4) Arguable, names an authorial choice and asserts its effect, and holds across the whole essay rather than drifting.		
Textual evidence (RL.9-10.1, W.9-10.9.a) Four or more quotations, embedded in the writer's own syntax, each analysed rather than left to speak for itself.		
Handling of counter-evidence (RL.9-10.3) Engages a passage that genuinely complicates the claim and explains why the reading survives it.		

THE SINGLE MOST USEFUL CHANGE THIS WRITER COULD MAKE

One. Not five — a reviewer who names five names none.

Draft writer: you will submit a revision note naming one specific change you made and the comment that caused it. Disagreeing with your reviewer is allowed; ignoring them without a reason is not.

MY REVISION NOTE

How this unit's essay is scored

This is the actual rubric your teacher uses. Score yourself in the middle column before you submit; the gap between your column and theirs is the most useful feedback in the unit.

Criterion	What proficient looks like	Me	Teacher
Thesis (W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4)	Arguable, names an authorial choice and asserts its effect, and holds across the whole essay rather than drifting.		
Textual evidence (RL.9-10.1, W.9-10.9.a)	Four or more quotations, embedded in the writer's own syntax, each analysed rather than left to speak for itself.		
Handling of counter-evidence (RL.9-10.3)	Engages a passage that genuinely complicates the claim and explains why the reading survives it.		
Organisation (W.9-10.2)	Topic sentences advance the argument; paragraph order builds rather than lists.		
Conventions & MLA (L.9-10.2.a, L.9-10.3.a)	No comma splices; quotations punctuated correctly; parenthetical citations and Works Cited in MLA form.		
Recursive process (W.9-10.5)	Stage 2 revision note shows a specific, substantive change traceable to peer feedback.		

Submission stages

- Stage 1 — Thesis & evidence organizer.** The organizer you built in Lesson 1.4: thesis, four cited quotations with notes, one counter-quotation, four topic sentences. Scored for the arguability of the thesis and the range of evidence.
- Stage 2 — Peer-reviewed rough draft (600+ words).** Upload the draft, then complete the peer-review rubric for two classmates. Return to your own draft and submit a short revision note: what you changed, and which piece of peer feedback caused it. The revision note is scored.
- Stage 3 — Final revised essay (750-1,000 words) + Works Cited.** Submit as PDF with MLA formatting.
- Stage 4 — Recorded thesis defense (60 seconds).** Claim, strongest evidence, hardest objection. A typed transcript earns equal credit.

Revision log

One line per change: *what I changed, and why*. "Fixed grammar" is not a change; "cut the first paragraph because the essay actually started in the second" is.

Draft	What I changed	Why — and what made me see it