

SCHEME OF WORK

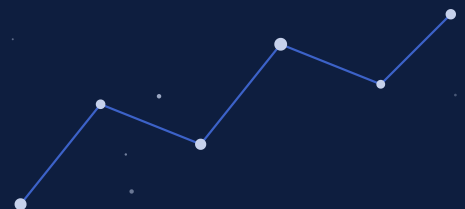
Homer's Odyssey

OCR A Level Classical Civilisation · H408/11 · The World of
the Hero

A one-year plan across six half-terms · one topic per half-term

Built on an ordered spine of lessons – concepts taught and revisited in sequence, with intentions and criteria

Books 1–24 in the E. V. Rieu translation · prescribed and wider-context books flagged



How the course is shaped

One topic of the poem is taught each half-term, following the narrative in order, each pairing close reading of the prescribed books with wider reading of the context books.

Michaelmas First Half	Topic 1 <i>The Telemachy</i>	1 2 3 4	Lessons 1–8
Michaelmas Second Half	Topic 2 <i>The Phaeacians</i>	5 6 7 8	Lessons 9–14
Lent First Half	Topic 3 <i>The Wanderings</i>	9 10 11 12	Lessons 15–21
Lent Second Half	Topic 4 <i>The Homecoming</i>	13 14 15 16	Lessons 22–26
Summer First Half	Topic 5 <i>The Palace</i>	17 18 19 20	Lessons 27–32 · all revisits
Summer Second Half	Topic 6 <i>The Reckoning</i>	21 22 23 24	Lessons 33–37

n prescribed for close study **n** read for wider context

The lesson spine. The course runs on an ordered sequence of lessons (overleaf), followed top to bottom. A **New** lesson introduces a concept with a learning intention and success criteria; a **Revisit** lesson brings an established idea back for contrast. Not every lesson is on the spine: consolidation, essay planning, debate, close-reading and reading slot in around the numbered steps.

THE THREE SPECIFICATION STRANDS

- **Literary techniques & composition** – structure and plot; language (formulae, flashback, similes); oral tradition.
- **The heroic world** – the hero's values (*timē*, *kleos*); the societies depicted; major and minor characters; *nostos*; disguise; recognition; the supernatural.
- **Social, cultural & religious context** – fate; the gods and mortals; justice and revenge; *xenia*; women; slaves.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

- **AO1** – knowledge and understanding of the poem and its context.
- **AO2** – analyse, interpret and evaluate, using textual evidence and secondary scholarship.

Lesson spine – work through in order

1–8

Each **New** lesson introduces a concept with a learning intention (LI) and success criteria (SC); each **Revisit** lesson brings an established idea back for contrast. Each carries a suggested passage to read. Work top to bottom; reading, essays and debates slot in around the numbered steps.

Michaelmas · First Half – The Telemachy (Books 1–4)

1	NEW Xenia – the guest–host code	BK 1, 3–4
	LI Understand xenia as the code governing host and guest, and why it drives the poem. SC Define xenia and its obligations on both sides; judge a host or guest against the code. Read Bk 1 – the suitors feasting in the hall; Bk 3 – Nestor's welcome of Telemachus at Pylos.	
2	NEW Nostos – the homecoming	BK 1
	LI Understand nostos as the poem's goal and organising idea. SC Explain what Odysseus seeks and what blocks him; tell a good return from a failed one. Read Bk 1 – the proem and the divine council on Odysseus's return.	
3	NEW Kleos & timē – fame and honour	PROEM, BK 1
	LI Understand the values a Homeric hero lives by. SC Define kleos and timē; explain how the wish for fame shapes a character's choices. Read Bk 1 – the proem; Athene spurring Telemachus with the example of Orestes.	
4	NEW The gods, fate & responsibility	BK 1
	LI Understand how the gods act, and how Zeus frames human responsibility. SC Describe Athene, Zeus and Poseidon; explain the Orestes paradigm (this plants 'justice'). Read Bk 1 – the Olympian council: Zeus on Aegisthus and human responsibility.	
5	NEW Mētis – cunning intelligence	PROEM, BK 1
	LI Understand mētis as Odysseus's defining quality, against biē (force). SC Define mētis; predict where cunning will matter (flag the Cyclops to come). Read Bk 1 – the proem ('the man of many turns') and Athene's disguise as Mentēs.	
6	NEW Disguise & recognition	BKS 1, 4
	LI Understand disguise and recognition as a driving mechanism of the poem. SC Identify a recognition and its token; explain how disguise creates dramatic irony. Read Bk 1 – Athene as Mentēs; Bk 4 – Helen and Menelaus knowing Telemachus by his likeness.	
7	NEW Storytelling, bards & oral style	BK 1
	LI Understand how the poem shows its own telling, and how oral epic works. SC Spot formulae and epithets; explain the internal bard (Phemius). Read Bk 1 – Phemius sings the Achaeans' return, and Penelope's response.	
8	NEW Women in society – Helen	BK 4
	LI Understand how the poem first represents women and their power. SC Characterise Helen; set up the female thread to be developed later. Read Bk 4 – Helen in Menelaus's hall: her entrance, the drug, and the rival Troy stories.	

Michaelmas · Second Half – The Phaeacians (Books 5–8)

- 9** **NEW** **Endurance & self-control** BK 5
- LI** Understand endurance (tlēmosynē) as an Odyssean virtue.
- SC** Give examples of self-mastery; contrast this with Iliadic heroism.
- Read** Bk 5 – the raft, the storm and the swim ashore.
-
- 10** **NEW** **The supernatural & the fabulous** BK 5
- LI** Understand the place of the fantastic world in the poem.
- SC** Separate the fabulous from the ‘real’ Ithaca; say what it tests in the hero.
- Read** Bk 5 – Calypso’s island and Hermes’ errand; glance at the Phaeacian palace (Bk 7).
-
- 11** **REVISIT** **Xenia revisited – the Phaeacian ideal** BK 7
- Focus** Measure Alcinous and Arete against the Topic-1 code: the model host.
- Read** Bk 7 – the palace of Alcinous; the supplication of Arete and the welcome.
-
- 12** **NEW** **Suppliancy & the outsider** BKS 6–7
- LI** Understand supplication as a social-religious act.
- SC** Explain the suppliant’s protection; link suppliancy to xenia.
- Read** Bk 6 – supplicating Nausicaa; Bk 7 – supplicating Arete at the hearth.
-
- 13** **REVISIT** **Women revisited – Calypso, Nausicaa, Arete** BKS 5–7
- Focus** Compare three female figures, with Helen as foil; power against propriety.
- Read** Bk 5 (Calypso), Bk 6 (Nausicaa), Bk 7 (Arete) – read the three side by side.
-
- 14** **REVISIT** **Kleos revisited – the hero hears his fame** BK 8
- Focus** Demodocus sings Odysseus; recall the poem’s promise of kleos.
- Read** Bk 8 – Demodocus’s songs, and Odysseus weeping at his own story.
-

Lent · First Half – The Wanderings (Books 9–12)

15	REVISIT The Cyclops – mētis showcased, xenia inverted	BK 9
	Focus Cunning defeats force; the anti-host set against the Phaeacian ideal. Read Bk 9 – the whole Polyphemus episode: the cave, 'Nobody', the blinding, the curse.	
16	NEW Temptation & appetite	BKS 9–12
	LI Understand how appetite threatens the nostos. SC Give examples (Lotus, Circe, the Sun's cattle); contrast crew and captain. Read Bk 9 (Lotus-eaters), Bk 10 (Circe's drugs), Bk 12 (the cattle of the Sun).	
17	NEW Leadership & the crew	BKS 9–12
	LI Evaluate Odysseus as a leader of men. SC Cite decisions that save or doom the crew; argue his share of the blame. Read Bk 10 – the bag of winds; Bk 12 – Scylla and the doomed cattle.	
18	NEW Death & the afterlife – the Nekyia	BK 11
	LI Understand the Homeric view of death. SC Describe the underworld; explain Achilles' verdict on kleos. Read Bk 11 – the opening of the Nekyia: Elpenor, Teiresias, Anticleia.	
19	NEW Prophecy & omens – Teiresias	BK 11
	LI Understand the role of prophecy in the poem. SC Identify the prophecy; explain how it steers expectation and tension. Read Bk 11 – Teiresias's prophecy (the cattle warning and what awaits at home).	
20	REVISIT Nostos revisited – Agamemnon's return	BK 11
	Focus The fatal homecoming as the dark mirror; plant the Clytemnestra foil. Read Bk 11 – the shade of Agamemnon on his murder by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus.	
21	REVISIT Women revisited – Circe & Clytemnestra	BKS 10–11
	Focus The witch-helper and the murderous wife; foils for Penelope. Read Bk 10 – Circe; Bk 11 – the heroines and Agamemnon on Clytemnestra.	

Lent · Second Half – The Homecoming (Books 13–16)

- 22** **REVISIT** **Disguise & recognition – the disguise begins** BKS 13, 16
Focus The sustained beggar-disguise; father and son recognise each other.
Read Bk 13 – Athene on Ithaca and the beggar-disguise; Bk 16 – recognising Telemachus.
- 23** **NEW** **Deception & the Cretan lies** BKS 13–14
LI Understand the lying tales as testing and self-protection.
SC Explain why and to whom he lies; connect the lies to mētis and storytelling.
Read Bk 13 – the first false tale to Athene; Bk 14 – the Cretan lie to Eumaeus.
- 24** **NEW** **Loyalty, betrayal & slavery** BK 14
LI Understand how the household is sorted, loyal against faithless.
SC Contrast loyal and disloyal servants; discuss the poem on enslaved people.
Read Bk 14 – Eumaeus's hut: his hospitality and his own story.
- 25** **REVISIT** **Xenia from below – Eumaeus** BK 14
Focus The poor but perfect host, against the Phaeacians and the Cyclops.
Read Bk 14 – Eumaeus welcoming the disguised beggar (the humble feast).
- 26** **NEW** **Fathers & sons; the generations** BK 16
LI Understand the father-son bonds across the poem.
SC Trace Odysseus-Telemachus (and later Laertes); explain Telemachus as ally.
Read Bk 16 – the reunion and mutual recognition of father and son.

Summer · First Half – The Palace (Books 17–20)

- 27** **REVISIT** **Xenia at its nadir – the suitors abuse the beggar** BKS 17–18
Focus The worst hosts; the case for their punishment is now complete.
Read Bk 17 – Antinous and the footstool; Bk 18 – the Irus fight and the mockery.
- 28** **REVISIT** **Endurance – 'endure, my heart'** BK 20
Focus The peak of the Book-5 quality under maximum provocation.
Read Bk 20 – Odysseus lying awake, restraining his anger ('endure, my heart').
- 29** **REVISIT** **Disguise & recognition – the scar** BK 19
Focus Eurycleia's recognition; another link in the token chain (Auerbach).
Read Bk 19 – the footwashing and Eurycleia's recognition of the scar.
- 30** **REVISIT** **Women – Penelope's cunning** BKS 18–19
Focus Her testing and homophrosyne; Helen and Clytemnestra as foils.
Read Bk 19 – Penelope's interview with the beggar, the dream of the geese, the bow decided.
- 31** **REVISIT** **Loyalty & betrayal – the servants** BKS 17–20
Focus Eurycleia and Philoetius against Melanthius and Melantho.
Read Bk 17 – Argus; Bk 18–19 – Melantho's insolence, against loyal Eurycleia and Eumaeus.
- 32** **REVISIT** **Prophecy & omens – Theoclymenus** BK 20
Focus Portents readying the reckoning; tension at its height.
Read Bk 20 – the portents at the feast and Theoclymenus's vision of blood.

Lesson spine (continued)

33–37

Summer · Second Half – The Reckoning (Books 21–24)

33

REVISIT Recognition – the bow

BK 21

Focus The bow as identity-token; only Odysseus can string it.

Read Bk 21 – the contest of the bow and the stringing.

34

NEW Justice & revenge – the reckoning

BK 22

LI Evaluate the justice of the suitors' punishment.

SC Argue for and against the slaughter; link it to the Book-1 justice principle and divine sanction.

Read Bk 22 – the killing of the suitors and the punishment of the disloyal.

35

REVISIT Recognition – the bed-test

BK 23

Focus Penelope's cunning matches his; the secret of the immovable bed.

Read Bk 23 – Penelope's test of the bed, and the reunion.

36

NEW Order restored; closure

BKS 23–24

LI Understand how the poem resolves, and whether it ends in the right place.

SC Explain the restoration of order; debate the Book 24 authenticity question.

Read Bk 24 – Odysseus and Laertes; the gods halt the feud.

37

REVISIT Women – Penelope answers Clytemnestra

BK 24

Focus Her fame vindicated in the second Nekyia; the foil resolved.

Read Bk 24 – the second Nekyia: Agamemnon's shade praising Penelope over Clytemnestra.

Lesson rhythm. The spine is the backbone, not a lesson-by-lesson timetable. A numbered lesson is followed, as the class needs, by consolidation, an essay plan, a debate, a passage close-reading, or simply reading on. The numbers give the course its structure; the reading fills between them.

Who to track, and how they change

The figures worth following across the whole year; their arcs give the revisit-lessons something concrete to return to.

Odysseus	Absent presence (T1) → the suffering, self-mastering man (T2) → cunning narrator (T3) → disguised, testing beggar (T4–5) → avenger and restored king (T6).
Telemachus	Powerless boy (T1) → young man who finds his voice → his father's ally at the hut (T4) → warrior beside him (T6).
Penelope	Besieged, grieving (T1) → cunning weaver and tester, matching Odysseus' mētis (T5) → the recognised wife whose fame answers Clytemnestra (T6).
Athene	Divine prime mover throughout – petitioner (T1), guide (T2), the mind behind the disguise and reckoning (T4–6).
The suitors	A guilty mass (T1) → individuated as Antinous, Eurymachus, Amphinomus (T5) → judged and destroyed (T6).
The servants	Loyalty and betrayal made concrete – Eumaeus (T4), Eurycleia and Philoetius against Melanthius and Melanthe (T5–6).

A note on circling back. The **Revisit** lessons in the spine, and the blue blocks on each topic page, are light reinforcement – a chance to set a new scene beside an earlier one (a fresh host against the Topic-1 code; Penelope against Helen and Clytemnestra) – rather than a fresh re-teach.

The Telemachy

Books 1–4 **1** 2 3 4

1

LESSONS 1–8

The poem opens *in medias res*. Athene petitions Zeus, and we meet an Ithaca in disorder: the suitors devour the household, Penelope holds them off, and a powerless Telemachus comes of age. Prompted by Athene (as Mentos, then Mentor), he sails to Pylos and Sparta for news, meeting Nestor, and Menelaus and Helen. The **foundation term**: most of the mains are introduced here.

NEW CONCEPTS HERE

- **Xenia** – suitors abuse the house (1), Telemachus received by Nestor and Menelaus (3–4)
- **Nostos** – the premise (1)
- **Kleos & timē** – the proem and the Orestes example (1)
- **The gods & fate** – the council; Zeus's Orestes speech plants **justice**
- **Mētis** – named at the proem
- **Disguise & recognition** – Athene as Mentos (1); Telemachus known by likeness (4)
- **Women** – Helen (4)
- **Storytelling** – Phemius (1)

CIRCLING BACK HERE (LIGHT TOUCH)

- This is where the mains are established – nothing circling back yet.

CHARACTER FOCUS

Telemachus – from powerless boy to assertive young man

- Athene (mentor, disguise, patron)
- Penelope (grief; entry to 'women')
- Antinous & Eurymachus
- Nestor, Menelaus & Helen (hospitality; other *nostoi*)

KEY EPISODES & PASSAGES

- Divine council & Athene's visit (Bk 1, **prescribed**)
- The Ithacan assembly (Bk 2)
- Pylos and Nestor (Bk 3)
- Sparta; Helen; Proteus (Bk 4)

LITERARY TECHNIQUE FOCUS

In medias res; the proem and invocation; epithets and formulae; the Telemachy as delay; embedded narrative.

SPEC STRANDS

Heroic world (household, kleos) and **social/religious** (xenia, the gods), with **literary composition**.

ASSESSMENT FOCUS

Passage on a Book 1 extract; short essay on how the opening sets up the poem's concerns.

TEACHING NOTE Only **Book 1** is prescribed. Weight close reading on Book 1; do the concept-teaching here so the mains are live from the start.

The Phaeacians

Books 5–8

5 6 7 8

2

LESSONS 9–14

The narrative turns to Odysseus. The gods free him from Calypso; he is wrecked onto Scheria (5). Nausicaa finds him (6); Alcinous and Arete receive him (7); the games and Demodocus draw out his name (8), setting up the flashback.

NEW CONCEPTS HERE

- **Endurance & self-control** – Bk 5
- **The supernatural** – Calypso and the Phaeacians (5, 7)
- **Suppliancy** – the outsider on Nausicaa's and Arete's mercy (6–7)

CIRCLING BACK HERE (LIGHT TOUCH)

- **Xenia** – the Phaeacian ideal (7), against the Topic-1 code.
- **Women** – Calypso, Nausicaa and Arete (5–7), with Helen as foil.
- **Kleos** – Demodocus sings Odysseus's own fame (8).
- **Storytelling** – Demodocus echoes Phemius.
- **Disguise & recognition** – he withholds, then reveals his name (8–9).

CHARACTER FOCUS

Odysseus – suffering, resourceful, self-controlled, emotional

- Nausicaa (youth, propriety)
- Alcinous & Arete (royal hosts)
- Demodocus (the blind bard)
- Poseidon & Calypso

KEY EPISODES & PASSAGES

- Hermes to Calypso; the raft (Bk 5)
- Nausicaa; supplication (Bk 6)
- Alcinous' palace; Arete (Bk 7)
- The games; Demodocus; the reveal (Bk 8)

LITERARY TECHNIQUE FOCUS

The bard and oral composition; the palace/gardens set-piece; the Nausicaa similes; the 'reveal' as hinge.

SPEC STRANDS

Social/religious (xenia, women, gods); **heroic world** (identity, endurance, kleos); **literary** (the bard, similes).

ASSESSMENT FOCUS

Passage on Nausicaa (Bk 6); essay on hospitality across 5–8.

TEACHING NOTE All four prescribed – core close-study; let xenia and 'women' recur against Topic 1.

The Wanderings

Books 9–12

9 10 11 12

3

LESSONS 15–21

Odysseus narrates the *apologoi*: the Cyclops (9); Circe (10); the Underworld and Teiresias (11); the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, and the cattle of the Sun (12). He reaches Calypso, and the tale meets the present.

NEW CONCEPTS HERE

- **Temptation & appetite** – Lotus, Circe, the Sun's cattle
- **Leadership & the crew** – responsibility and its limits
- **Death & the afterlife** – the Nekyia (11)
- **Prophecy & omens** – Teiresias (11)

CIRCLING BACK HERE (LIGHT TOUCH)

- **The Cyclops** (9) – mētis showcased, xenia inverted, against the Phaeacian ideal.
- **Women** – Circe (10); the heroines and **Clytemnestra** (11), the Penelope-foil.
- **Nostos** – Agamemnon's fatal homecoming (11) as the dark mirror.
- **The supernatural** – at its peak, then receding.
- **Storytelling** – Odysseus as first-person narrator; his reliability.

CHARACTER FOCUS

Odysseus the narrator and leader – voice, self-presentation, flaws

- Polyphemus (the anti-host)
- Circe (helper-after-threat)
- Teiresias; Anticleia
- Achilles, Agamemnon, Ajax (the dead)

LITERARY TECHNIQUE FOCUS

First-person embedded narration; the extended **epic simile**; ring composition; the *katabasis*.

SPEC STRANDS

Heroic world (mētis, leadership, kleos, the supernatural); **social/religious** (fate, death rites); **literary** (embedded narrative, similes).

KEY EPISODES & PASSAGES

- The Cyclops; the curse (Bk 9, **prescribed**)
- Circe; the turn to Hades (Bk 10)
- The Nekyia (Bk 11)
- Sirens; Scylla; the Sun's cattle (Bk 12)

ASSESSMENT FOCUS

Passage on the Cyclops (Bk 9); essay on the supernatural, or on Odysseus as a leader.

TEACHING NOTE All four prescribed and full of set-pieces – the richest term for extracts.

The Homecoming

Books 13–16 **13** 14 15 **16**

4

LESSONS 22–26

The Phaeacians land Odysseus on Ithaca (and are punished); Athene disguises and briefs him (13). He shelters with Eumaeus, spinning Cretan lies (14). Telemachus evades the ambush (15); father and son reunite and plot the reckoning (16).

NEW CONCEPTS HERE

- **Deception & the Cretan lies** – false tales as testing (13–14)
- **Loyalty, betrayal & slavery** – Eumaeus (14)
- **Fathers & sons** – the reunion (16)

CIRCLING BACK HERE (LIGHT TOUCH)

- **Disguise & recognition** – the beggar-disguise begins (13); father and son (16).
- **Xenia from below** – Eumaeus, the poor but perfect host (14).
- **Nostos** – arrival (13): the goal reached, though not yet secured.
- **Storytelling** – the Cretan lies as tale-telling turned weapon.

CHARACTER FOCUS

Odysseus in disguise – patience, testing, the beggar persona

- Athene (the Ithaca briefing)
- Eumaeus (the loyal swineherd)
- Telemachus (ally and fellow-plotter)

KEY EPISODES & PASSAGES

- Landing; the first Cretan lie (Bk 13, **prescribed**)
- Eumaeus' hut (Bk 14, context)
- Telemachus' return (Bk 15, context)
- Father and son reunited (Bk 16, **prescribed**)

LITERARY TECHNIQUE FOCUS

Recognition as type-scene; the 'Cretan lies'; dramatic irony; disguise as plot engine.

SPEC STRANDS

Heroic world (disguise, recognition, nostos); **social/religious** (xenia, slaves, justice); **literary** (recognition, embedded lies, irony).

ASSESSMENT FOCUS

Passage on the reunion (Bk 16); essay on disguise and recognition, or loyalty.

TEACHING NOTE Close study on **13** and **16**; use 14–15 for loyalty and the two-strand structure.

The Palace

Books 17–20 **17** **18** **19** 20

LESSONS 27–32 · ALL REVISITS

5

The disguised Odysseus enters his hall and endures abuse (17). The beggar Irus, and Penelope before the suitors (18). The long night: the scar; the bow-contest set (19). Omens gather; Theoclymenus' vision (20). A heavily **revisiting** term.

NEW CONCEPTS HERE

- None new – Topic 5 is a revisit term (lessons 27–32). The circle-backs opposite are the work of the half-term.

CIRCLING BACK HERE (LIGHT TOUCH)

- **Xenia at its nadir** – the suitors strike the beggar (17–18); the case for punishment complete.
- **Endurance** – ‘endure, my heart’ (20).
- **Disguise & recognition** – the scar (19).
- **Women** – Penelope's cunning and testing (18–19); Helen and Clytemnestra as foils.
- **Loyalty & betrayal** – Eurycleia and Philoetius against Melanthius and Melantho.
- **Prophecy & omens** – Theoclymenus (20).

CHARACTER FOCUS

Penelope – cunning, grief, testing; the *homophrosyne* she shares with Odysseus

- Beggar–Odysseus (endurance)
- Eurycleia (the scar)
- Suitors individuated – Antinous, Eurymachus, Amphinomus
- Loyal vs faithless servants; Argus

LITERARY TECHNIQUE FOCUS

The scar recognition (Auerbach); dramatic irony; foreshadowing and omens; character foils; similes.

SPEC STRANDS

Heroic world (disguise, recognition, endurance); **social/religious** (xenia, women, slaves, justice, fate); **literary** (recognition, irony, scholarship).

KEY EPISODES & PASSAGES

- Argus; Antinous' footstool (Bk 17, **prescribed**)
- The Irus fight; Penelope (Bk 18, **prescribed**)
- The scar; the bow announced (Bk 19, **prescribed**)
- Omens; Theoclymenus (Bk 20, context)

ASSESSMENT FOCUS

Passage on the scar (Bk 19); essay on Penelope, or on sympathy for the suitors.

TEACHING NOTE 17–19 prescribed; 20 for context. A strong place to build AO2 with scholarship.

The Reckoning

Books 21–24 **21** **22** **23** 24

6

LESSONS 33–37

The contest of the bow (21); the slaughter and purification (22); the reunion and the test of the bed (23); a second Underworld, Laertes, and a feud stopped by the gods (24). Nostos completed and order restored.

NEW CONCEPTS HERE

- **Justice & revenge** – the reckoning (22): taught in full here, resolving the principle planted in Book 1.
- **Order restored; closure** – the bed, Laertes, peace (23–24); the Book 24 debate.

CIRCLING BACK HERE (LIGHT TOUCH)

- **Recognition** – bow (21), bed (23), trees (24) complete the token chain.
- **Xenia vindicated** – abusers punished, the loyal rewarded (22).
- **Nostos completed** – (22–23), against Agamemnon one last time.
- **Women** – Penelope's fame answers **Clytemnestra** (24).

CHARACTER FOCUS

Odysseus as avenger and restored king – the bow as identity

- Penelope (the bed–test; her fame)
- Telemachus, Eumaeus & Philoetius
- The suitors' end; the faithless servants
- Laertes; Athene & Zeus

LITERARY TECHNIQUE FOCUS

The bow–stringing simile; battle similes; the bed as token; ring composition and closure; the Book 24 debate.

SPEC STRANDS

All three culminate – **heroic world, social/religious, literary**.

KEY EPISODES & PASSAGES

- The contest of the bow (Bk 21, **prescribed**)
- The slaughter; purification (Bk 22, **prescribed**)
- The test of the bed (Bk 23, **prescribed**)
- Second Nekyia; Laertes; peace (Bk 24, context)

ASSESSMENT FOCUS

Synoptic essay on justice and revenge, or on whether Odysseus is admirable; passage on the bed–test.

TEACHING NOTE 21–23 prescribed; 24 for context. Draw the year's threads together for revision.

Assessment, essays & scholarship

By Summer the six topics should read as one poem. These synoptic lines cut across the year, and the scholars give students the secondary voices AO2 rewards.

SYNOPTIC ESSAY THEMES

- Is Odysseus an admirable hero? (endurance, cunning, the naming boast, the slaughter)
- Is the killing of the suitors just? Proportion, xenia, and divine sanction.
- Hospitality across the poem – Phaeacians, Cyclops, Eumaeus, the suitors.
- The women of the *Odyssey* – Penelope, Circe, Calypso, Nausicaa, Clytemnestra as foil.
- Disguise and recognition as the engine of the second half.
- The gods and fate – do mortals have real agency?

SCHOLARS TO WEAVE IN

- **M. I. Finley** – *The World of Odysseus* – society, gift-exchange and xenia.
- **Jasper Griffin** – *Homer on Life and Death* – mortality, the gods, heroic tone.
- **Erich Auerbach** – ‘Odysseus’ Scar’ (*Mimesis*) – recognition, digression, the Homeric style.
- **Emily Wilson** – Translation and introduction – the poem’s ethics, women, enslaved people.
- **Irene de Jong** – Narratological commentary – narrator, focalisation, embedded tales.
- **Edith Hall** – *The Return of Ulysses* – reception, and why the nostos endures.

Revision hook. Book 24’s authenticity (athetised by Alexandrian critics after 23.296) makes a ready debate for the final half-term: where *should* the poem end, and what does the second Nekyia add?