

Anna K. Baker

A View of The Odyssey. Curriculum Unit 83.02.02

USA (1983)

TAGS: [Odysseus](#) [Homer](#) [Odyssey](#) [Penelope](#) [Nausicaa](#) [Telemachus](#)



| General information | |
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| <i>Year of publication</i> | 1983 |
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| <i>Original language</i> | English |
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Creators

Anna K. Baker

Anna K. Baker is part of a group of seventy-nine teachers from New Haven, who organised seminars on topics related to curriculum developments between March and August 1983, including one on The seminar entitled "Greek and Roman Mythology", led by William G. Thalmann, Associate Professor of Classics from USC".



Additional information

Contents & Purpose

The purpose of this resource is for the teachers to use the epic poem as a tool to help the students in their own self-discovery and path to adulthood. The complexity of the Odyssey is meant to mirror challenges within the students' own lives, as well as making them more familiar with a literary masterpiece. As the creator writes: "Students can be asked to see in the experience of Odysseus, the archetypal traveler, and his son Telemachus, a vision of their own search for identity." The characters of Penelope and Nausicaa will be examined as female counterparts (although they are not travelers).

The unit offers several themes for discussion, pertaining to the main objective of self-discovery: themes of maturation, initiation, and identity in the Odyssey. The students are encouraged to examine the maturation of the young characters of Telemachus and Nausicaa, who grow up in the course of the poem.

The main activities are a close reading of the Odyssey and in class discussion of the various themes. Additional activities include writing assignments (as part of the students' self-reflection and writing their own lives as an Odyssey), drawings of scenes from the poem, a field trip to Yale Art Gallery

The unit also offers bibliography for teachers and students.

Further comments

This resource focuses on the similarities between the ideas expressed in the poem and the students' own world. While the students also learn about the mythological persons and context, the heart of these lessons is to help the students learn how to choose wisely in their own lives, using the myth as a guide. The ultimate purpose of the unit is not just the understanding of an ancient canonical myth, but guiding the students to be better people and learn how to approach challenges wisely in a conflict-ridden environment. Furthermore, via the epic the students are encouraged to search and examine for their own identity and wishes, while moving from childhood to adulthood.

Odysseus' and Telemachus' different quests in the poem are compared to the students own growing up "odyssey", hence the poem is perceived as a timeless literary piece which is not bound by its ancient setting but can and should guide students in their everyday struggles.



