

The Odyssey WebQuest

Academic Learning · Grade 9 · Web-Based Inquiry

Purpose

This public edition demonstrates the project architecture, learner experience, assessment design, standards alignment, and instructional-design rationale. Teacher answer-guide pages have been intentionally removed from the public edition. Additional evidence is available during interviews.

USAGE NOTICE

This file is provided only to evaluate Michael D. McKinney's instructional-design work.
No permission is granted to reproduce, teach from, adapt, distribute, or sell this material.
Complete master files and editable source materials remain private.

THE ODYSSEY

A WebQuest Through Myth, Map, Memory & the Hero's Journey

GRADE	FORMAT	ACTIVITIES
9	WebQuest	24

PORTFOLIO PACKAGE Teacher lesson-plan cover • Student WebQuest handout • Teacher/answer guide • Standards & objectives alignment • Instructional Design case study

Designed as a classroom-ready digital inquiry experience and a professional instructional-design sample.

Prepared by Michael D. McKinney | Instructional Design Portfolio

TEACHER-FACING

Lesson Plan Cover

A concise implementation brief for a 9th-grade literature classroom.

Unit Snapshot

Unit / Text	The Odyssey by Homer
Grade / Course	Grade 9 • Literature & Composition I / English I
Estimated Time	4-6 class periods (45-60 minutes) plus reading time
Grouping	Individual research + partner checks + small-group synthesis
Technology	Internet-enabled device, word processor/LMS, optional map/slides tool
Final Product	Odyssey Expedition Brief: evidence-based synthesis + hero’s journey map

Essential Question

How do mythology, geography, history, and the hero’s journey shape our understanding of Odysseus and the meaning of home?

Learning Objectives

- Analyze how historical and geographic context shapes events, conflicts, and values in The Odyssey.
- Explain the roles of major Greek gods, monsters, customs, and mythic ideas using credible digital sources.
- Trace Odysseus’s journey and connect key episodes to stages or movements in the hero’s journey framework.
- Support interpretations with relevant textual and research evidence, distinguishing fact, inference, and interpretation.
- Synthesize information from literary, historical, geographic, and visual sources into a clear final product.
- Practice digital research habits: source evaluation, hyperlink use, paraphrasing, and concise citation.

Teacher Launch

HOOK Project an unlabeled Mediterranean map and ask: “What makes a journey heroic: distance, danger, choices, or change?” Students write for two minutes, then pair-share.

Instructional Flow

Phase	Focus	Activities	Checkpoint
I	Launch + Mythology	1-6	Mythology quick-check
II	Geography + History	7-12	Annotated route/map notes
III	Close Reading + Hero Journey	13-19	Evidence tracker
IV	Synthesis + Transfer	20-24	Expedition Brief + reflection

Differentiation & Accessibility

- Chunk activities by phase and provide a visible completion tracker.
- Allow text-to-speech or teacher-selected excerpts for complex passages.
- Offer a partially completed Mediterranean map and a hero's journey organizer as scaffolds.
- Permit written, audio, or slide-based final synthesis when learning targets remain equivalent.
- Extension: compare Penelope's or Telemachus's development to the same journey framework and identify where the model fits imperfectly.

STUDENT-FACING

Odyssey WebQuest

Mission: build the context you need to read an ancient epic like a modern investigator.

Your Mission

Odysseus is trying to get home. Your job is to figure out why that takes ten years - and why the journey still matters. Across 24 activities, you will investigate Greek mythology, the Mediterranean world, the Trojan War, Homeric culture, and the hero's journey. You will finish by creating an evidence-based "Expedition Brief" that explains how context changes the way we read the epic.

Directions

- Complete activities in order unless your teacher assigns stations.
- Use the linked sources first. You may use additional credible sources only with teacher approval.
- Answer in complete sentences when a prompt asks you to explain, compare, infer, or defend.
- Paraphrase research. Put borrowed wording in quotation marks and identify the source.
- Keep a running evidence bank: at least 6 pieces of evidence from the epic or approved resources.
- When a link is unavailable, notify your teacher and use the alternate source provided in the Teacher Guide.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP A good WebQuest is not a copy-and-paste hunt. Your score depends on what you do with the information: connect it, explain it, and use it as evidence.

PHASE I

Mythology & Epic Foundations

Activities 1-6 • Build the mythic vocabulary and cultural frame.

1

Meet the Epic

TASK: Read the opening of Book 1. In 2-3 sentences, identify what the opening suggests the poem will be about.

SUBMIT: A 2-3 sentence prediction + one phrase/idea from the opening.

RESOURCE: [Perseus Digital Library - Odyssey, Book 1](#)

4 points

2

Who Was Homer?

TASK: Research what scholars can and cannot confidently say about Homer. Separate two established facts/traditions from one uncertainty.

SUBMIT: 3-column mini-chart: known / traditional claim / uncertain.

RESOURCE: [Encyclopaedia Britannica - Homer](#)

4 points

3 Mythology Vocabulary

TASK: Define epic, epic hero, epithet, invocation, in medias res, xenia, and hubris in student-friendly language.

SUBMIT: Seven definitions; star the three you expect to matter most.

RESOURCE: [Britannica - Epic](#)

4 points

4 Gods in the Conflict

TASK: Research Athena and Poseidon. For each, list domain/symbol, relationship to Odysseus, and one way divine influence can complicate human choice.

SUBMIT: Two deity profile cards.

RESOURCE: [Theoi Greek Mythology](#)

4 points

5 Monster File

TASK: Choose Cyclopes, Sirens, Scylla, or Charybdis. Identify origin, defining traits, and what fear or challenge the creature could symbolize.

SUBMIT: A 100-word “monster file.”

RESOURCE: [Theoi Greek Mythology - Bestiary](#)

4 points

6 Myth vs. Religion

TASK: Explain why calling Greek myths “just stories” can oversimplify their role in ancient culture.

SUBMIT: One paragraph with two supporting details.

RESOURCE: [The Metropolitan Museum of Art - Greek Gods and Religious Practices](#)

4 points

PHASE II

Geography & History

Activities 7-12 • Put the journey on a map and in a historical world.

7 Find Ithaca

TASK: Locate Ithaca, mainland Greece, Troy/Hisarlik, Crete, Sicily, and the Strait of Messina on a Mediterranean map.

SUBMIT: Labeled map or digital screenshot with six labels.

RESOURCE: [Google Maps - Mediterranean region](#)

4 points

8 Route Reality Check

TASK: Compare a modern map with Odysseus's legendary route. Which locations are identifiable and which remain debated or symbolic?

SUBMIT: Two-column list: identifiable / uncertain + 2-sentence conclusion.

RESOURCE: [World History Encyclopedia - Odysseus](#)

4 points

9 Geography Creates Conflict

TASK: Choose two geographic features (islands, straits, seas, mountains, distance). Explain how each can create danger or isolation in an ancient voyage.

SUBMIT: Two cause-effect explanations.

RESOURCE: [Britannica - Aegean Sea](#)

4 points

10 The Trojan War Context

TASK: Create a six-event timeline from the cause of the Trojan War through the Greek return voyages. Mark where The Odyssey begins relative to the war.

SUBMIT: Six-event timeline + "Odyssey begins here" marker.

RESOURCE: [Met Museum - Art of the Hellenistic Age / Greek resources](#)

4 points

11 Archaeology & Troy

TASK: Investigate Hisarlik/Troy. What does archaeology support, and what remains literary tradition?

SUBMIT: Three evidence statements: supports / suggests / cannot prove.

RESOURCE: [UNESCO - Archaeological Site of Troy](#)

4 points

12 Life in Homeric Greece

TASK: Research one topic: hospitality, household structure, seafaring, warfare, or oral storytelling. Connect it to a likely conflict or value in the epic.

SUBMIT: 120-word context note with a connection to the poem.

RESOURCE: [World History Encyclopedia - Ancient Greece](#)

4 points

PHASE III

Text Evidence & the Hero's Journey

Activities 13-19 • Test ideas against the epic itself.

13 Close Read: The Cyclops

TASK: Read the Cyclops episode in Book 9. Identify one example each of cleverness, pride, and consequence.

SUBMIT: 3-row evidence chart with brief explanation.

RESOURCE: [Perseus - Odyssey, Book 9](#)

4 points

14 Xenia Under Pressure

TASK: Explain xenia (guest-friendship/hospitality). Compare one example of good hospitality with one violation from the epic.

SUBMIT: CER paragraph: claim, evidence, reasoning.

RESOURCE: [World History Encyclopedia - Xenia](#)

4 points

15 Epic Hero Scorecard

TASK: Using courage, intelligence, leadership, loyalty, and self-control, collect one example of Odysseus showing or failing to show each trait. Do not assign an overall "best hero" score.

SUBMIT: Five-trait evidence chart.

RESOURCE: [Perseus - Odyssey text](#)

4 points

16 Choice vs. Fate

TASK: Find one moment shaped by a god and one shaped by a human decision. Explain how

the poem complicates the idea of responsibility.

SUBMIT: One comparative paragraph.

RESOURCE: [Perseus - Odyssey text](#)

4 points

17 Hero's Journey Basics

TASK: Read the Joseph Campbell Foundation overview. Record the three broad movements Campbell emphasizes: separation, initiation, return.

SUBMIT: Three-part organizer with a plain-language definition for each.

RESOURCE: [Joseph Campbell Foundation - Hero's Journey](#)

4 points

18 Map the Monomyth Carefully

TASK: Match 5-7 Odyssey episodes to hero's journey moments. Note at least one place where the model does not fit neatly.

SUBMIT: Journey map + one "model limitation" note.

RESOURCE: [Joseph Campbell Foundation - Hero's Journey](#)

4 points

19 Homecoming & Change

TASK: Compare Odysseus near the beginning of his narrated adventures with Odysseus at his return. What has changed, and what has not?

SUBMIT: One paragraph using two specific episodes.

RESOURCE: [Perseus - Odyssey, Book 20](#)

4 points

PHASE IV

Synthesis & Transfer

Activities 20-24 • Combine lenses, evaluate sources, and communicate an interpretation.

20 Penelope & Telemachus

TASK: Choose Penelope or Telemachus. Explain how that character's challenge complicates a hero-centered reading of the poem.

SUBMIT: 150-word mini-analysis with evidence.

RESOURCE: [Perseus - Odyssey text](#)**4 points****21 Source Credibility Check****TASK:** Evaluate three WebQuest sources using authority, evidence, purpose, and currency. Which is best for primary text? Which is best for historical context?**SUBMIT:** Source evaluation matrix + 2-sentence rationale.**RESOURCE:** [Perseus Digital Library](#)**4 points****22 Theme Across Contexts****TASK:** Choose one theme: home, identity, loyalty, temptation, leadership, hospitality, or perseverance. Connect it to mythology, geography/history, and one Odyssey episode.**SUBMIT:** Three-spoke concept map + thesis sentence.**RESOURCE:** [Perseus - Odyssey text](#)**4 points****23 Expedition Brief****TASK:** Create a one-page brief or 3-slide deck answering the Essential Question. Include a route visual, a hero's journey connection, 3 pieces of evidence, and a Works Consulted section.**SUBMIT:** Final product; clear claim + evidence + visual + source list.**8 points****24 Exit Reflection****TASK:** Respond: "Which lens - mythology, geography, history, or hero's journey - changed your understanding of The Odyssey the most, and why?"**SUBMIT:** 150-200 word reflection with one specific example.**4 points****STUDENT-FACING**

Grading Criteria

100 points total. Quality of thinking matters more than length.

Component	Points	What earns full credit
-----------	--------	------------------------

Activities 1-22	88	Complete, accurate, concise responses; evidence used when requested; research paraphrased.
Activity 23: Expedition Brief	8	Clear synthesis, route visual, hero's journey connection, 3 pieces of evidence, source list.
Activity 24: Reflection	4	Specific, thoughtful reflection connected to one WebQuest lens.
Academic integrity	Required	Sources identified; no copy/paste responses presented as original work.
TOTAL	100	

Analytic Rubric

Criterion	4 - Exceeds	3 - Meets	2 - Developing	1 - Beginning
Research & Accuracy	Accurate, specific, and consistently distinguishes evidence from interpretation.	Mostly accurate; relevant details support responses.	Some inaccuracies or vague details; support is uneven.	Frequent inaccuracies, missing research, or unsupported claims.
Textual Evidence	Chooses precise evidence and explains how it supports ideas.	Uses relevant evidence with clear explanation.	Uses limited/general evidence or incomplete explanation.	Rarely uses evidence or explanation.
Synthesis	Integrates mythology, geography/history, and hero's journey into a coherent interpretation.	Connects multiple lenses to explain the epic.	Makes some connections, but ideas remain mostly separate.	Lists information without meaningful connections.
Communication & Design	Clear, concise, visually purposeful, and easy to navigate.	Organized and readable with appropriate visuals.	Meaning is understandable but organization/design is inconsistent.	Difficult to follow, incomplete, or visually distracting.
Digital Research Habits	Evaluates sources, paraphrases responsibly, and identifies sources consistently.	Uses credible sources and identifies them appropriately.	Source use is inconsistent or citation is incomplete.	Sources are missing, unreliable, or copied without attribution.

PORTFOLIO EVIDENCE

Standards & Objectives Alignment

Designed for Georgia Literature & Composition I / Grade 9 and adaptable to other ELA frameworks.

CURRENT CONTEXT Georgia's new K-12 ELA standards were implemented beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. This artifact uses the current high-school domain structure (Texts, Language, Practices) and grade-9 expectation codes where they clearly align.

Georgia Standards Alignment

Standard / Big Idea	Student Action in WebQuest	Evidence	Assessment
9.T.C.1 - Context: purposes & audiences	Analyze how geography, era, culture, and purpose shape meaning.	Activities 6-12, 22	Context notes + synthesis
9.T.C.2 - Context: authors/speakers	Consider speaker, tradition, and perspective when interpreting the epic.	Activities 1-2, 16, 20	Short analysis responses
9.T.SS.1 - Structures & Style: organization	Examine epic structure and how episodes contribute to the whole.	Activities 1, 3, 18-19	Journey map + comparison
9.T.SS.2 - Structures & Style: craft	Analyze choices such as epithets, characterization, and narrative craft.	Activities 3, 13, 15	Evidence charts
9.T.T.1 - Narrative techniques	Analyze character, conflict, pacing, and consequences in narrative episodes.	Activities 13-16, 19-20	CER / close reading
9-12.T.PM.1 - Periods & movements	Connect a major literary work to its cultural/literary period and traditions.	Activities 2, 6, 10-12	Timeline + context note
9.T.RA.1 / 9.T.RA.2 - Research & analysis	Gather, evaluate, synthesize, and communicate information from multiple sources.	Activities 4-12, 21-24	Source matrix + final brief

Measurable Objective Map

Context: Given curated digital sources, students will explain at least three ways mythology, geography, or history shape an episode, scoring 3/4 or higher on the synthesis criterion.

Evidence: Students will select and explain at least six relevant pieces of textual/research evidence across the WebQuest.

Research literacy: Students will evaluate three sources for authority, evidence, purpose, and currency and justify source-to-task fit.

Literary analysis: Students will trace 5-7 defensible connections between Odyssey episodes and hero's journey movements while identifying at least one limitation of the model.

Communication: Students will produce a concise one-page or three-slide Expedition Brief integrating a claim, visual, evidence, and source list.

Assessment Architecture

- Diagnostic: opening map/hero quickwrite surfaces prior knowledge and misconceptions.
- Formative: 22 short research/analysis tasks provide frequent evidence of understanding.
- Checkpoint: phase-level quick checks allow reteaching before synthesis.
- Summative: Expedition Brief assesses transfer and integration rather than recall alone.
- Metacognitive: final reflection asks students to identify which analytical lens most changed their reading and why.

Standards source note: Georgia adopted new K-12 ELA standards in 2023 for full implementation beginning 2025-2026. [GaDOE announcement](#)

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN CASE STUDY

From “Read the Epic” to Guided Digital Inquiry

A one-page portfolio narrative showing the design thinking behind the artifact.

The Problem

The Odyssey can become a vocabulary-and-plot unit in which ninth graders encounter unfamiliar names, places, customs, and mythic references faster than they can build a usable mental model. The design challenge was to add context without turning the unit into a teacher-led lecture or an unstructured internet scavenger hunt.

Audience

Primary learners are Grade 9 Literature & Composition students with mixed background knowledge, reading stamina, research experience, and familiarity with Greek mythology. A secondary audience is the classroom teacher, who needs a manageable workflow, visible checkpoints, flexible scaffolds, and assessable evidence of learning.

Design Decisions

Chunked inquiry	24 short activities organized into four phases reduce cognitive load and make progress visible.
Curated research	Links begin with credible primary-text, museum, foundation, encyclopedia, and heritage sources to constrain search noise.
Context before abstraction	Students first build mythology/geography/history knowledge, then test the hero’s journey framework against the text.
Model with limits	Students must identify where the hero’s journey does not fit neatly, preventing a simplistic “fill the boxes” treatment.
Choice with equivalence	The final product may be a one-page brief or three-slide deck, but both require the same claim, evidence, visual, and source list.

Tools & Media

WebQuest structure • hyperlink curation • primary-text digital library • museum/heritage sources • maps • graphic organizers • LMS/word processor or slide tool. The artifact is intentionally platform-neutral so it can be deployed in Google Classroom, Canvas, Schoology, or as a printable/digital handout.

Assessment Strategy

The assessment plan uses a progression from low-stakes retrieval and context building to evidence-based close reading, source evaluation, synthesis, and reflection. The 100-point structure keeps most points attached to the learning process (Activities 1-22) while the Expedition Brief measures transfer. An analytic rubric separates research accuracy, evidence, synthesis, communication/design, and digital research habits.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Learners should leave the experience able to explain how context shapes meaning, use digital sources more deliberately, support literary interpretations with evidence, and apply the hero's journey as a flexible analytical lens rather than a rigid formula. The portfolio artifact demonstrates instructional analysis, sequencing, learner scaffolding, digital resource curation, assessment alignment, and visual information design.

PORTFOLIO VALUE This package shows both classroom credibility and instructional-design thinking: the learner experience, teacher implementation layer, standards alignment, assessment logic, and design rationale are visible in one coordinated artifact.

APPENDIX

Resource Bank & Design Notes

Live hyperlinks used throughout the WebQuest.

- [Perseus Digital Library - Homer, Odyssey](#)
- [Scaife ATLAS - Odyssey English translation](#)
- [Joseph Campbell Foundation - Hero's Journey](#)
- [Theoi Greek Mythology](#)
- [Metropolitan Museum of Art - Greek Gods and Religious Practices](#)
- [UNESCO - Archaeological Site of Troy](#)
- [Encyclopaedia Britannica - Homer](#)
- [World History Encyclopedia - Odysseus](#)
- [Georgia Department of Education - New ELA Standards announcement](#)

Portfolio Presentation Notes

- In a portfolio, lead with the Case Study page, then show the student experience, rubric, teacher guide, and alignment pages.
- For an interview, describe the WebQuest as a conversion of content-heavy background instruction into a guided inquiry sequence with measurable checkpoints.
- If presenting digitally, demonstrate one activity from each phase to show progression from context → analysis → synthesis.
- Optional future iteration: add learner testing data, completion analytics, or a before/after student work sample to document impact.