



OCR Classical Civilisation AS and A Level Component 11

The plot of the *Odyssey*

The first stage in studying the *Odyssey* is to remember the plot. You will then be able to talk with confidence about the events.

There is no right way of remembering what happens.

Here are some ideas.

1. Listen to it, choosing a version which you enjoy. It does not matter if it is not the version you are reading in class.

This is a [link](#) to the Ian McKellen reading the Fagles translation.

2. Use a map for Books 1-13. As you will see if you look at [the various maps that have been drawn](#), nobody can say for certain what Odysseus' route was, but it may help if you visualise his journey and note what happens in each place.
3. Write a full summary of each book as you read it.



4 Draw a grid with the left-hand column headed 'Day', and fill it in as you read what Odysseus does. Homer is quite precise, using phrases like 'on the third day' or 'for 17 days' which makes this a relatively easy thing to work out.

5 Start an Odysseus blog, recounting your adventures as you read

6 Summarise with an acrostic. For example the second part of Book 1:

Telemachus gives xenia

Athene pretends to be Mentos

Disrespectful suitors swagger

Penelope says stop to Phemius

Only Telemachus tells her off

Lots of talk about Odysseus then

Eurycleia puts him to bed

7 Make yourself a set of flashcards for each book, and write 10 or 20 questions about the book on one side . Write the answers on the other side, and keep testing yourself.

8 If you are good at drawing, make yourself a storyboard.

9 If you have contact with a child who likes to listen to stories, compose a simplified version and keep retelling it, adding each book as you learn it and including a bit more detail each time.

10 Compose a list of people who appear in a book. Your list of names should be enough to jog your memory and help you recall the story.

Which book is this?

Telemachus; Odysseus Eumaeus; Eurycleia; Penelope; Athene; Menelaus;

Medon; Melanthius; Phemius; Argus; Antinous;

Retell the events of the book, using the names a prompts.

11 Compose a sheet of images which will prompt you to recall the story.

Which book would be recalled by these pictures?

An island; a bulging bag; a ship; a tall cliff; a huge husband and wife; a kebab; a stag;

smoke coming out of a chimney; wolves, lions and pigs; a white flower; a bed; a

calendar; honey, milk, wine and water; a ram and a black ewe; a hangover remedy

12 Work with a friend. Write each other a set of questions on each book you study. The person who gets the most right gets a reward.