



*This is the revision that earned a 30. Compare it to the original to see why.*

## Score Report

DEC  
14  
2012

## Analyzing Odysseus: First Impressions

for English 9 2012

After ten long years of fighting, he devised the scheme that would end the Trojan War. He was lost at sea for many months, a victim of the unmerciful god Poseidon. He was smart enough not to give in to the temptation of the lotus flower. But all Odysseus really wanted to do was get home to Ithaca. Odysseus is one of the most well-known heroes in Greek mythology due to his part in Homer's epic poems *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. As you can tell, the title of the second epic is named after him, and the word *Odyssey* has come to mean a long journey with a series of adventures. Many modern movies like *The Lord of the Rings* and *Batman* are based on the ancient epics of Homer, but Odysseus is not like the average superheroes that populate such movies. He is much more complicated, and sometimes the Greek ideal of a "hero" doesn't seem to fit with what we consider heroic today. Despite his many courageous and intelligent deeds, Odysseus enslaved women and children and unmercifully butchered the men in the cities he raided; you don't see Superman or Spiderman doing that. Also, there are episodes in *The Odyssey* that call his leadership into question. Although Odysseus was a hero to be greatly admired in ancient Greece, he also represents how our ideas of heroism have changed.

Heroes must be clever, and Odysseus is known as much for his craftiness and trickery as he is for strength and leadership. After long years of battle around the city of Troy, he was the one who finally figured out a way to beat the Trojans, and it involved more cleverness than brute strength. Under his leadership, the Greeks pretended to give up. They moved their ships offshore and left a great wooden horse at the city gates, seemingly a trophy for the victorious Trojans. What they did not know was that Odysseus and a crew of his men were hidden inside the horse, waiting. The Trojans moved the horse inside the city gates and had a victory celebration. Late at night, after all of Troy was asleep, Odysseus and his men quietly sneaked out, opened the city gates to the rest of the Greek army, and slaughtered every Trojan, ending the war. This episode shows the two sides of the hero's character: He was clever enough to find a way to end a ten-year war, but the complete lack of mercy he showed in finishing it would not be considered heroic by today's standards. Nowadays, we have rules of war, and the object is not to kill every person we fight against; in fact, now when a drone strike kills innocent civilians, soldiers and politicians get widely criticized. In the world of Odysseus, crushing the enemy without mercy was expected behavior. So, yes, Odysseus was very clever and crafty, but this was often overshadowed by his brutality.

Another quality Odysseus possessed that seems to go hand in hand with his cleverness is his intelligence. This is a quality that is still admired today. Ⓔ Heroes cannot be fooled or tricked into going into their villain's traps, and Odysseus does manage to save his crew from the Lotus Eaters because he is smart enough to recognize that giving in to the temptation of the lotus makes men "lose their hope of home." Upon landing at the island of the Lotus Eaters, Odysseus sends some scouts inland to see who inhabits the island. When they do not return, he goes after them and discovers that they have become "addicted" to the plant called lotus. Enchanted by the flower, they "longed to stay forever, browsing on that native bloom, forgetful of their homeland." In modern terms, the lotus is like a drug. It saps one's ambition and desire to accomplish anything, making the user believe that nothing is really important anymore, as long as there is always more lotus to eat. Odysseus does not give in to the temptation, but rather he rescues his men against their will and drags them back to the ship. He single-handedly ties them under the rowing benches, which shows his heroic strength, and continues on his journey home.

While modern readers can appreciate Odysseus's intelligence and loyalty to his home, they may not be able to understand why he has such a difficult time controlling his crew. There are many examples of times when they disobey his orders. Ⓔ When he tells them to quickly get back to the ships after defeating the men they meet on the beach at the isle of the Cicones, they prefer to stay and have a drunken barbecue, which gets many of them killed when the horse-riding warriors return in full force. Later, the Wind King gives Odysseus a leather bag containing the winds that will prevent him from getting home. As long as he keeps them in the bag, his journey will go smoothly, but his idiot crew disobeys his order to leave the bag unopened (because they think it contains treasure), and they are blown wildly off course yet again. Ultimately, their failure to follow orders gets them killed when they feast on the cattle of the sun god, something Odysseus specifically told them not to do, but one wonders why such a good and heroic leader would allow his crew to be so unruly. Why does he tolerate them? Is this really leadership?

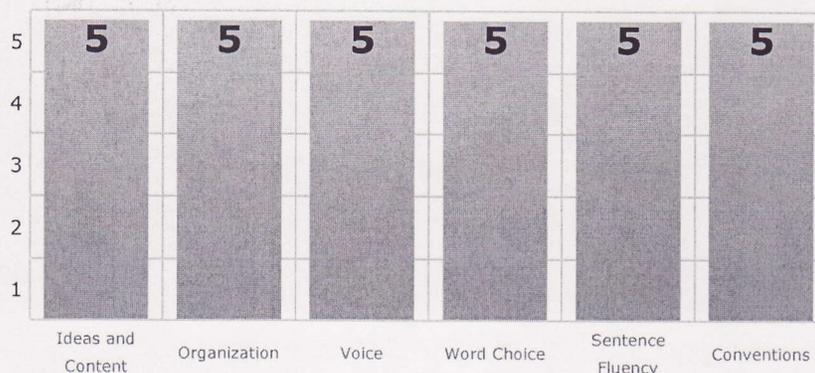
When modern people think of heroes, they may not normally think of Odysseus because, while he does have certain positive qualities like strength and intelligence, he lacks a hero's sympathy for the conquered, and he is at times a miserable leader. This strange combination of characteristics is what makes him an interesting hero. The element of revenge that we see in movie heroes nowadays is absent as Odysseus tries to get back to his rightful place. Ironically, he is not vengeful. He just wants to get home. What an odd combination of traits!

Scores

This essay's total score is **30**

The essay was scored by PEG, the automated essay scorer, according to the scoring standard for your level. Any trait score below 3 shows a need to strengthen skills in that category.

Trait Scores



Writing Analysis

Ideas and Content



You scored 5 out of 5

EVALUATION

- This essay is clear, controlled and focused.
- Your essay has balance and exhibits good control of connection between ideas.
- You have expressed your ideas in a convincing manner by providing ample support.
- Your essay holds the reader's attention through details and anecdotes that enrich the main idea.

SUGGESTIONS

- Make sure every sentence has a verb.

LESSONS

Building Depth

Organization



You scored 5 out of 5

EVALUATION

- The transitions or connections between your ideas are seamless and smooth.
- An effective introduction and conclusion leave the reader with a sense of completeness.
- Your essay is carefully organized with well-placed details from beginning to end.
- The writing is well balanced and moves along smoothly.
- The organization of this essay enhances and highlights the main idea.

LESSONS

Organization Organization Basics Paragraphing

Voice



You scored 5 out of 5

EVALUATION

- You speak directly to the audience through expressive and engaging writing.
- The language is natural and brings the topic to life.
- The reader feels a strong sense of interaction with the writer and senses the person behind the words.

## Word Choice



You scored 5 out of 5

### EVALUATION

- The words convey the intended message in an interesting and precise way.
- The words are specific and accurate.
- Your vocabulary is vivid, natural and not overdone.
- Excellent word choice gives this essay power.

### LESSONS

Appositives

## Sentence Fluency



You scored 5 out of 5

### EVALUATION

- The writing in this essay is very natural and fluent.
- The amount of sentence variety present in this essay makes the text interesting.
- The writing is concise and effective in conveying your meaning.

### SUGGESTIONS

- Try to use more advanced words.

### LESSONS

Run-Ons   Fragments   Sentence Variety

## Conventions



You scored 5 out of 5

### EVALUATION

- You have demonstrated a good grasp of standard writing conventions.
- This essay is sufficiently long and complex and shows command of a wide range of conventions.
- Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation are few, if any, and they do not interrupt the flow of reading.

### LESSONS

Dialog Punctuation   Capitalization   Apostrophes

## Messages

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