

FREE PRINTABLE QUIZ

# The Odyssey

## Book 9 — the Cyclops

Homer · 23 questions with a full answer key and explanations

### What's inside

- **23 multiple-choice questions**, including passage analysis with the original text printed above it — the way your English class asks it.
- **Answer key** on its own page so you can take the quiz first.
- **Explanations** for every question, so a wrong answer teaches you something.
- Written from LumLysia's study edition of the book — not scraped summaries.

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# The quiz

The Odyssey — Book 9. Answers begin on the answer key page.

## PLOT & EVENT

**1. What immediate consequence did Ulysses and his men face after their initial victory and plunder at Ismarus?**

- A. They were immediately attacked by a sea monster sent by Jove.
- B. A hurricane blew them off course to the land of the Lotus-eaters.
- C. The inland Cicons, more numerous and skilled, launched a devastating counter-attack.
- D. Their ships were wrecked by hidden rocks near the shore.

## PLOT & EVENT

**2. What was the direct result of Ulysses revealing his true name to Polyphemus after the blinding?**

- A. Polyphemus immediately died from the pain and shock.
- B. Polyphemus offered Ulysses a treasure hoard as a peace offering.
- C. Polyphemus invoked his father, Neptune, to curse Ulysses' journey home.
- D. The other Cyclopes returned and attacked Ulysses' ship.

## CHARACTER

**3. What is Ulysses' primary motivation for refusing his men's suggestion to steal the Cyclops' cheeses and livestock and immediately flee the cave?**

- A. He feared divine retribution for theft, even from a savage.
- B. He wanted to assess the Cyclops' strength and fighting ability firsthand.
- C. He hoped the Cyclops would offer him traditional guest-gifts, as was customary.
- D. He was too proud to leave without confronting the owner of such a magnificent cave.

## CHARACTER

**4. Polyphemus's reaction to Ulysses' false name, 'Noman,' primarily demonstrates his:**

- A. Lack of intelligence and gullibility.
- B. Cruelty and disregard for human life.
- C. Desire to prolong Ulysses' suffering.
- D. Adherence to a twisted sense of hospitality.

**MICRO-DETAIL**

**5. What specific color was the wine Maron gave to Ulysses, which was later used to intoxicate the Cyclops?**

- A. Crimson
- B. Golden
- C. Black
- D. Purple

**MICRO-DETAIL**

**6. How many men did Ulysses' fleet lose from each ship during the Cicons' counter-attack at Ismarus?**

- A. Four
- B. Six
- C. Eight
- D. Ten

**MICRO-DETAIL**

**7. From what type of wood was the Cyclops' massive club made?**

- A. Oak
- B. Pine
- C. Green olive wood
- D. Cedar

**MICRO-DETAIL**

**8. When Maron drank his special wine, how many parts water did he mix with one part wine?**

- A. Ten parts water
- B. Fifteen parts water
- C. Twenty parts water
- D. Five parts water

**MICRO-DETAIL**

**9. Which specific animal did Ulysses cling to in order to escape Polyphemus's cave?**

- A. A large goat
- B. A young lamb
- C. The largest ram
- D. A ewe with its young

**ANALYTICAL**

**10. The Cyclops' refusal to acknowledge Jove or any gods, coupled with his cannibalism, primarily serves to illustrate:**

- A. The Cyclopes' advanced philosophical rejection of divine authority.
- B. The extreme danger of the natural, untamed world outside civilized society.
- C. Ulysses' own impiety and lack of respect for local customs.
- D. The inherent weakness of the Olympian gods against such powerful beings.

**ANALYTICAL**

**11. Ulysses' decision to reveal his true name to Polyphemus, despite his men's pleas, best exemplifies which recurring theme in the epic?**

- A. The importance of divine intervention in human affairs.
- B. The dangers of excessive pride and hubris.
- C. The necessity of cunning and deception for survival.
- D. The ultimate triumph of justice over savagery.

**READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER**

*And Ulysses answered, "King Alcinous, it is a good thing to hear a bard with such a divine voice as this man has. There is nothing better or more delightful than when a whole people make merry together, with the guests sitting orderly to listen, while the table is loaded with bread and meats, and the cup-bearer draws wine and fills his cup for every man. This is indeed as fair a sight as a man can see. Now, however, since you are inclined to ask the story of my sorrows, and rekindle my own sad memories in respect of them, I do not know how to begin, nor yet how to continue and conclude my tale, for the hand of heaven has been laid heavily upon me.*

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**12. In the opening lines, Ulysses' description of the bard and the feasting Phaeacians primarily serves to:**

- A. Establish his own poetic skill and appreciation for music.
- B. Contrast the present scene of peace and order with his past suffering.
- C. Flatter King Alcinous to gain his favor and assistance.
- D. Suggest that he is reluctant to share his story due to its length.

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**13. The phrase 'the hand of heaven has been laid heavily upon me' functions as a(n):**

- A. Understatement, minimizing the true extent of his trials.
- B. Metaphor, attributing his misfortunes to divine will.
- C. Hyperbole, exaggerating his personal suffering for sympathy.
- D. Irony, as he often attributes his success to his own cunning.

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**14. Ulysses' rhetorical questions, 'I do not know how to begin, nor yet how to continue and conclude my tale,' primarily convey his:**

- A. Genuine confusion about the sequence of events.
- B. Desire to build suspense before his narrative begins.
- C. Overwhelming emotional burden from recounting his past.
- D. Strategic attempt to elicit further encouragement from Alcinous.

**READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER**

*"We sailed hence, always in much distress, till we came to the land of the lawless and inhuman Cyclopes. Now the Cyclopes neither plant nor plough, but trust in providence, and live on such wheat, barley, and grapes as grow wild without any kind of tillage, and their wild grapes yield them wine as the sun and the rain may grow them. They have no laws nor assemblies of the people, but live in caves on the tops of high mountains; each is lord and master in his family, and they take no account of their neighbours. "Now off their harbour there lies a wooded and fertile island not quite close to the land of the Cyclopes, but still not far. It is over-run with wild goats, that breed there in great numbers and are never disturbed by foot of man; for sportsmen—who as a rule will suffer so much hardship in forest or among mountain precipices—do not go there, nor yet again is it ever ploughed or fed down, but it lies a wilderness untilled and unsown from year to year, and has no living thing upon it but only goats. For the Cyclopes have no ships, nor yet shipwrights who could make ships for them; they cannot therefore go from city to city, or sail over the sea to one another's country as people who have ships can do; if they had had these they would have colonised the island, for it is a very good one, and would yield everything in due season. There are meadows that in some places come right down to the sea shore, well watered and full of luscious grass; grapes would do there excellently; there is level land for ploughing, and it would always yield heavily at harvest time, for the soil is deep. There is a good harbour where no cables are wanted, nor yet anchors, nor need a ship be moored, but all one has to do is to beach one's vessel and stay there till the wind becomes fair for putting out to sea again. At the head of the harbour there is a spring of clear water coming out of a cave, and there are poplars growing all round it.*

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**15. The detailed description of the Cyclopes' lack of agriculture, laws, and community (Chunk 7) primarily serves to:**

- A. Emphasize their spiritual connection to nature.
- B. Highlight their self-sufficiency and independence.
- C. Establish their barbarity and contrast with Greek civilization.
- D. Foreshadow their eventual downfall due to their primitive ways.

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**16. The extensive description of the fertile, uninhabited island near the Cyclopes' land (Chunk 8) functions primarily as:**

- A. A symbolic representation of paradise lost.
- B. A demonstration of Ulysses' keen observational skills.
- C. A contrast to the Cyclopes' wasted potential and lack of industry.
- D. A foreshadowing of a future settlement for Ulysses' men.

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**17. The phrase 'each is lord and master in his family, and they take no account of their neighbours' (Chunk 7) reveals the Cyclopes' fundamental lack of:**

- A. Religious piety.
- B. Political ambition.
- C. Social cohesion and civic responsibility.
- D. Personal freedom.

**READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER**

*"Then I thrust the beam of wood far into the embers to heat it, and encouraged my men lest any of them should turn faint-hearted. When the wood, green though it was, was about to blaze, I drew it out of the fire glowing with heat, and my men gathered round me, for heaven had filled their hearts with courage. We drove the sharp end of the beam into the monster's eye, and bearing upon it with all my weight I kept turning it round and round as though I were boring a hole in a ship's plank with an auger, which two men with a wheel and strap can keep on turning as long as they choose. Even thus did we bore the red hot beam into his eye, till the boiling blood bubbled all over it as we worked it round and round, so that the steam from the burning eyeball scalded his eyelids and eyebrows, and the roots of the eye sputtered in the fire. As a blacksmith plunges an axe or hatchet into cold water to temper it—for it is this that gives strength to the iron—and it makes a great hiss as he does so, even thus did the Cyclops' eye hiss round the beam of olive wood, and his hideous yells made the cave ring again.*

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**18. The simile 'as though I were boring a hole in a ship's plank with an auger' primarily serves to:**

- A. Emphasize Ulysses' skill as a carpenter.
- B. Illustrate the precise, methodical, and laborious nature of the blinding.
- C. Suggest the Cyclops' eye was as hard as wood.
- D. Foreshadow Ulysses' future use of shipbuilding knowledge.

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**19. The comparison of the Cyclops' eye hissing to 'a blacksmith plunges an axe or hatchet into cold water to temper it' (Chunk 27) primarily highlights the:**

- A. Cyclops' immense strength and resilience.
- B. Intense heat and searing pain of the injury.
- C. Ulysses' strategic use of fire and metalworking knowledge.
- D. Brutality and primitive nature of the Cyclopes' tools.

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**20. The phrase 'heaven had filled their hearts with courage' (Chunk 27) suggests that:**

- A. Ulysses' men were naturally brave warriors.
- B. The gods were actively assisting Ulysses in his revenge.
- C. Ulysses' leadership alone was enough to inspire them.
- D. The men were too drunk to feel fear.

**READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER**

*"On this he groaned, and cried out, 'Alas, alas, then the old prophecy about me is coming true. There was a prophet here, at one time, a man both brave and of great stature, Telemus son of Eurymus, who was an excellent seer, and did all the prophesying for the Cyclopes till he grew old; he told me that all this would happen to me some day, and said I should lose my sight by the hand of Ulysses. I have been all along expecting some one of imposing presence and superhuman strength, whereas he turns out to be a little insignificant weakling, who has managed to blind my eye by taking advantage of me in my drink; come here, then, Ulysses, that I may make you presents to show my hospitality, and urge Neptune to help you forward on your journey—for Neptune and I are father and son. He, if he so will, shall heal me, which no one else neither god nor man can do.'*

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**21. Polyphemus's lament, 'I have been all along expecting some one of imposing presence and superhuman strength, whereas he turns out to be a little insignificant weakling,' is an example of:**

- A. Dramatic irony, as the audience knows Ulysses' true heroic stature.
- B. Foreshadowing, indicating Ulysses' future physical decline.
- C. Hyperbole, exaggerating Ulysses' small size.
- D. Apostrophe, addressing an absent entity.

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**22. Polyphemus's sudden offer of 'presents to show my hospitality' after realizing Ulysses' identity is best described as:**

- A. A genuine change of heart and remorse.
- B. A desperate attempt to trick Ulysses into returning.
- C. A fulfillment of the prophecy's terms.
- D. A display of his limited understanding of true xenia.

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**23. The mention of Telemus's prophecy (Chunk 40) primarily serves to:**

- A. Undermine Ulysses' achievement by suggesting it was fated.
- B. Emphasize the Cyclops' ignorance of his own destiny.
- C. Highlight the power of prophecy and the inevitability of fate.
- D. Introduce a new character who will aid Ulysses later.

## Answer key

Check your answers here, then read the explanations on the next page.

|              |              |              |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>1. C</b>  | <b>2. C</b>  | <b>3. C</b>  | <b>4. B</b>  | <b>5. C</b>  |
| <b>6. B</b>  | <b>7. C</b>  | <b>8. C</b>  | <b>9. C</b>  | <b>10. B</b> |
| <b>11. B</b> | <b>12. B</b> | <b>13. B</b> | <b>14. C</b> | <b>15. C</b> |
| <b>16. C</b> | <b>17. C</b> | <b>18. B</b> | <b>19. B</b> | <b>20. B</b> |
| <b>21. A</b> | <b>22. B</b> | <b>23. C</b> |              |              |

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## Answers explained

Why the right answer is right — and what the question is really testing.

### 1. C. The inland Cicons, more numerous and skilled, launched a devastating counter-attack.

Their delay in celebrating allowed the more formidable inland Cicons to gather and inflict heavy losses on Ulysses' fleet, a direct result of his men's disobedience.

### 2. C. Polyphemus invoked his father, Neptune, to curse Ulysses' journey home.

Ulysses' hubris in revealing his name directly led to Polyphemus's powerful prayer to Neptune, setting the stage for many of the future trials and tribulations of the Odyssey.

### 3. C. He hoped the Cyclops would offer him traditional guest-gifts, as was customary.

Ulysses' desire for a 'present' (guest-gift) reflects the importance of xenia, or hospitality, in ancient Greek culture, which he expected even from a seemingly uncivilized host. This decision, however, proves disastrous.

### 4. B. Cruelty and disregard for human life.

Polyphemus's declaration that he will eat 'Noman's comrades before Noman himself' highlights his inherent cruelty and utter contempt for the sacred laws of hospitality, rather than any deep strategic thinking.

### 5. C. Black

The text specifically describes Maron's gift as 'sweet black wine,' emphasizing its richness and potency.

### 6. B. Six

The text states, 'we lost half a dozen men from every ship we had,' which is six men per ship.

### **7. C. Green olive wood**

The text specifies it was 'of green olive wood,' a detail that highlights its natural, unrefined state.

### **8. C. Twenty parts water**

The text explicitly states, 'he mixed twenty parts of water to one of wine,' showcasing its extraordinary strength.

### **9. C. The largest ram**

Ulysses chose 'a ram finer than any of the others,' demonstrating his strategic thinking even in dire circumstances.

### **10. B. The extreme danger of the natural, untamed world outside civilized society.**

The Cyclops embodies the antithesis of Greek civilization and its core value of xenia (hospitality), representing the lawless, savage forces that threaten human order and life.

### **11. B. The dangers of excessive pride and hubris.**

You've hit the nail on the head! This moment is a classic example of hubris, where Ulysses' pride in his cleverness leads him to boast, incurring the wrath of Neptune and prolonging his suffering.

### **12. B. Contrast the present scene of peace and order with his past suffering.**

Ulysses' initial praise for the peaceful, orderly feast highlights the stark contrast with the chaos and suffering he is about to recount, setting a poignant tone for his narrative.

### **13. B. Metaphor, attributing his misfortunes to divine will.**

This metaphor directly attributes his immense suffering to the gods, establishing a theme of divine intervention and fate that runs throughout his tale.

**14. C. Overwhelming emotional burden from recounting his past.**

These questions emphasize the profound emotional toll his experiences have taken, suggesting the depth of his 'sorrows' and 'sad memories.'

**15. C. Establish their barbarity and contrast with Greek civilization.**

This description immediately establishes the Cyclopes as antithetical to Greek values of order, community, and cultivated land, setting them up as savage antagonists.

**16. C. A contrast to the Cyclopes' wasted potential and lack of industry.**

The rich, uncultivated island underscores the Cyclopes' primitive nature and their failure to utilize resources, further emphasizing their 'lawless and inhuman' character by contrasting it with what could be.

**17. C. Social cohesion and civic responsibility.**

This phrase directly points to their absence of communal organization and mutual respect, which are foundational to civilized society and a key aspect of their 'lawless' nature.

**18. B. Illustrate the precise, methodical, and laborious nature of the blinding.**

This simile vividly conveys the mechanical, deliberate, and physically demanding action of the blinding, making the gruesome act more tangible for the reader.

**19. B. Intense heat and searing pain of the injury.**

This powerful simile emphasizes the horrific, searing pain and the physical reaction of the eye to the red-hot stake, making the scene incredibly visceral.

**20. B. The gods were actively assisting Ulysses in his revenge.**

This detail reinforces the theme of divine intervention, indicating that the gods were on Ulysses' side in this particular struggle against the impious Cyclops.

**21. A. Dramatic irony, as the audience knows Ulysses' true heroic stature.**

This is a classic example of dramatic irony, where Polyphemus's misjudgment of Ulysses' physical appearance contrasts sharply with Ulysses' renowned cunning and heroic status, which the audience (and Alcinous) already understands.

**22. B. A desperate attempt to trick Ulysses into returning.**

This is a transparent attempt by Polyphemus to lure Ulysses back, demonstrating his continued treachery and lack of genuine hospitality, even in his pain.

**23. C. Highlight the power of prophecy and the inevitability of fate.**

The prophecy reinforces the pervasive theme of fate in the epic, suggesting that even the gods' plans are sometimes revealed in advance, and that certain events are predetermined.

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