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| Narrative Structure and Overview of Major Motifs |
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| **Structure of the *Odyssey***   1. Achronological development – the story is not told in chronological order from beginning to end. 2. *In medias res – The story begins “in the middle of things,” after Odysseus has been gone 20 years.* 3. Books 1-4: The Telemachy -- the story of Telemachus’ search for his father 4. Books 5-8: Leaving Calypso – Odysseus leaves the island on which he has been captive 5. Books 9-12: Epic Digression/ Embedded narrative – To the king of Scheria, Odysseus tells his story 6. Books 13-End: Return to Ithaca – Odysseus returns home and reclaims his kingdom   **Major Motifs**  **Note:** A motif is not the same as a theme, although the two are often used interchangeably. A motif is one word or a short phrase that expresses a general topic or concern of a text. A theme is a full sentence expressing an opinion ABOUT a general topic or concern of a text. One **motif** of the *Odyssey* is *kleos*, the desire for fame. One possible theme of the text is that kleos is not as worthy a value as nostos.  **Some major motifs of the text include…**   * Fathers and sons * Xenia * Nostos * Identity and names * Leadership and kleos |

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| Key Motif: Fathers and Sons |
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| |  | | --- | | **Prereading Questions**  Please read the question carefully and write down your answer with explanations and examples. Your answers should typically be about a half a page in development.   1. Does a young man need a father or father figure as a constant presence in his life in order to fully develop his identity as a man? 2. Does a man have to shake off his father’s identity in order to be his own man? |   **Lecture Points – The Telemachy**   * Homer begins the *Odyssey* not with Odysseus, as the title might suggest, but with Telemachus, Odysseus’ 20-year-old son. * By this point, Odysseus is long gone * Everyone else has returned from Troy * Telemachus is in an increasingly vulnerable position * Suitors have taken over * Eating up house and home – violation of xenia * They intend to kill Telemachus because he is a threat * Telemachus must find his father, but in doing so, must also find himself * This is Odysseus’ journey, but it is also Telemachus’ as well * How does Telemachus become a man when his father is absent?   **Focus passage: Athena and Telemachus**  Read the scene between Athena and Telemachus that follows. Then answer the “Reader Questions,” referring to the text to support your claim.  1. Throughout the epic, many of Homer’s characters go out of their way to reassure Telemachus that he is indeed the true son of Odysseus. Why is this matter so important to Telemachus? |