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| Lecture Notes |
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| **I. Background and Key Terms*** + One of the two major epics from the culture of ancient Greece
	+ 8th century BC (between 800 BC to 701 BC)
	+ (That means somewhere from 800 BC to the year 701 BC)
	+ We’re not sure who really composed it. Tradition says that it was composed by the poet Homer.
	+ Notice how I’m saying “composed,” not “wrote.” That’s because the 8th century BC in Greece, even though they had written language, was still more of an oral culture – stories were passed down by memorization, not by being written down.
	+ The *Odyssey* was written down in the 6th century, around the year 529 or so.

**EPICS*** + Epics told the stories of great men, great heroes, great deeds.
	+ These stories were central to understanding who they were, how they thought of themselves.
	+ Hard to understand American culture without understanding Batman or Superman.
	+ They reflect our values, the qualities we admire about ourselves.
	+ They were originally SUNG, or chanted to music.
	+ More in common with rap than opera.
	+ That’s why there are so many “labels” in the text.
	+ Ex: Hector, the tamer of horses, faithful Penelope, far-seeing Odysseus, and so on
	+ These “labels” (generally known as epithets) helped to finish the line or round out the meter.
	+ Usually centered on the deeds of a hero and his journey and acquisition of wisdom or other valuable qualities.
	+ Written in dactylic hexameter

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| **Key Terms – A Basic Guide*** **Nostos** = This word gives us our word nostalgia, meaning “the longing for home.” Nostos means “homecoming” and the recognition and welcome that homecoming implies.
* **Kleos** = Fame, especially fame that lives after one’s own death.
* **Aristeia** = Moment of greatness, one’s “place in the sun” in an epic
* **Xenia** = Hospitality. In ancient Greece, the laws of hospitality were sacred.
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