"Now I will avow that men call me Odysseus, Sacker of Cities, Laertes' son, a Prince of the Achaeans," said the Wanderer.
What IS this story—*Odyssey*?

- Sequel to the *Iliad* (900 and 700 BC)
- The *Iliad* focuses on the days toward the end of the Trojan War (mid 1200s BC)
- The *Odyssey* focuses on one of the soldiers who fought in the Trojan War returning home 19 years after the war—Odysseus
- The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* together were considered sacred to the Greeks—much like the *Bible* to many people today.
- Neither books were originally written down.
- Both were originally recited orally.
1. Greece is circled
2. Europe is light green
3. Greece is dark green
Spartan King Menelaus’ wife Helen (the face that launched a thousand ships) left him for the young Prince Paris of Troy.

- Greeks attacked Troy
- Agamemnon, brother of Menelaus, led the siege.
- Odysseus (main character in the *Odyssey*) was another hero of the war.
  - Odysseus was known not only for being a strong hero, but also for being a wise/smart hero.
- Another hero, Achilles, died in the final year of the war.
- Greek forces were victorious!
Wife: Penelope
Son: Telemachus
Great soldier of the war
Originally tried to get out of going to the war—pretended he was crazy
Came up with the wooden-horse trick that lead to Troy’s collapse.
The Odyssey is the account of Odysseus’ journey home after the war.
The Trojan Horse
• Blind
• Minstrel/Singer from the island Chios
• Homer was a Rhapsode or singer of tales.
• All historians/entertainers of Homer’s time did not write their stories/facts down.
An Epic is a long narrative *poem*

- Tells about the adventures of a hero
- Epics usually embody the values of the cultures for which they are written

- *The Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were used in schools to teach Greek virtues.
  - Values: honor, bravery, hospitality, intelligence, respect for the gods, loyalty to home and family
  - Major faults: disrespect for the gods, lack of hospitality, excessive pride—"HURBIS"

- *Iliad* is the primary model for epic of war
- *Odyssey* is the primary model for epic of the long journey
The term *epic* is also applied to novels, dramas, and films which are grand in the scale of their action or importance of their subject matter --- with important themes and heroes.
Characteristics of the Epic

• Long, narrative poem
• Relates the deeds of an epic hero
• Incorporates myth, legend, folk tale, and history
• Reflects the values of the society from which they originate
• Tone is usually grand
• Heroes and adventures appear larger than life
More Characteristics of an Epic

- Begins *in medias res* (Latin for “it begins in the middle of things”), then flashes back to explain action leading up to that point
- Begins with an invocation or prayer to a god or gods
- Always begins with a statement of theme
- Contains many epithets
- Contains long, formal speeches by many characters
- Frequently has epic digressions
Epic Hero

Superhuman

During quest, goes through trials and tribulations in order to achieve his goal

On a quest for something of great value

Villains try to keep the hero from his quest

Of mixed divine and human birth

Has a tragic flaw
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Major Plot Strands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story in Ithaca about Odysseus’ wife and son as they await his return (called the Telemachy)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tale of Odysseus’ wanderings during the ten years following the Trojan War</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Merging of the strands when Odysseus returns to Ithaca and joins forces with his son, Telemachus, to destroy their enemies</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• A Myth is a traditional story from a particular culture

• It usually explains a belief of that culture, a ritual of the culture, or a mysterious natural phenomenon

• A Myth deals with humans and the unknown
  • or, humans and gods

• Many times the god is an alter ego, or a reflection of the hero’s best or worst characteristics
• Relates: how the world began and how humans and animals were created along with certain customs and gestures

• Emphasized the weakness of humans: cruelty, greed and pride; showed human feelings.

• Greek Mythology
  — No revelations: of spiritual teachings; Pre-Christian era
  — Polytheistic: belief or worship of more than one god; a combination of many tribes/myths.
  — Cities devoted to one or many Gods: built temples and had priests to protect, festivals, oracles.
The Epic
• Long narrative poem about the deeds of an epic hero

Epic Hero
• The central figure of an epic
• Actions are inspiring or noble

Epic Simile/Homeric Simile
• An ELABORATE comparison of unlike subjects

Tragic Flaw
• A weakness in the hero’s character

Symbolism
• Frequent use of words, places, characters, or objects that mean something beyond what they are on a literal level

Irony
• Indicating through character or plot development an intention or attitude opposite to that which is actually stated
Imagery
- The "mental pictures" that readers experience with a passage of literature
  - Often appeals to senses

Foreshadowing
- Hints of future events in a piece of literature

Flashback
- Writers’ technique in which the author interrupts the plot of the story to recreate an incident of an earlier time (goes back in time; like giving the reader a memory).

In Media res
- The classical tradition of opening an epic not in the chronological point at which the sequence of events would start, but rather at the midway point of the story.