

The Odyssey Book XXI Study Guide Questions

All questions should be answered on a separate sheet of paper and in complete sentences.

1. How did Odysseus acquire his famous bow?
2. Explain the epic metaphor underlined on p. 420. What two things is it comparing? What does that comparison say about the object in question and its use?
3. Why does the author repeat the phrase “messengers of death” first on p. 419 and then on p. 421? (To what items does the term refer?)
 - a. What literary term is it an example of, other than epithet?
4. What is Penelope’s challenge? What is the reward?
5. How is Antinous using the fact that he saw Odysseus to intimidate the other suitors?
6. Why is Telemachus going to attempt the challenge?
7. How does Telemachus do at the challenge? Be specific and clear.
8. According to Leodes, how should Penelope choose a husband? Why?
9. Why does Odysseus tell Eumaeus and Phileteus who he is? Two reasons.
10. What is each servant’s job(s) at Odysseus signal?
11. Other than losing Penelope, what upsets Eurymachus about failing the challenge?
12. Why pause to feast for Apollo? (There are several reasons, one to do with Apollo’s patronage.)
13. Why does Antinous say the beggar should not try the challenge? (Explain how this is also a threat, using the story that he tells the beggar.)
14. Why does Eurymachus say the beggar should not try the challenge, both for the suitors and for Penelope?
15. What reward will Penelope give to the beggar if he succeeds at the challenge?
16. Why do the suitors make fun of the beggar while he examines the bow?
17. Find the example of dramatic irony [an character foreshadowing their own fate]. Copy the line.
18. Explain the epic metaphor on p. 433. What two things is it comparing? What does that comparison say about Odysseus’ actions at that moment and his treatment of the object in question?
19. How quickly do the events occur at the very end of the packet? How might this effect the ability of the suitors to process what just occurred and react quickly?