**Important Definitions: *The Odyssey***

Epic Poetry

* **Definition:**a lengthy narrative poem that usually contains the heroic deeds and events significant to a particular culture or society. ​
* **Example:***The Odyssey*
* **Characteristics:**​
  + Begins “in medias res” (in the middle of things)​
  + Has a vast setting​
  + Features lengthy, formal speeches​
  + Contains divine interventions—THE GODS!
  + Features heroes that embody the values and morals of the civilization​
  + The protagonist descends into the underworld/hell

Epic Hero

* **Definition:**the protagonist of an epic poem​; Brave and noble character​; Admired for great achievements​; Affected by great events​
* **Example:**Odysseus, Hercules
* **Epic Hero Characteristics:**​
  + Super-human qualities (stronger/braver than others)​
  + Still human, so has a flaw/weakness​
  + Must conquer many difficult tasks​
  + On a quest for something of great value (to him or his people)​
  + Villain(s) try to keep the hero from his quest​
  + Knows that the Gods come first, then heroes, then humans​
  + Physically beautiful

Epic Simile

* **Definition:**an extended simile that is elaborated in great detail and usually runs over several lines​; Still uses “like” or “as”​; Often contains thoughts that do not relate directly to the plot​; Used for **emphasis**
* **Example:** Cyclops​ - "...its crackling roots blazed and hissed - as a blacksmith plunges a glowing ax or adze in an ice-cold bath and the metal screeches steam and its temper hardens - that's the iron's strength - so the eye of Cyclops sizzled round that stake.“​
  + What is the attack on the Cyclops being compared to here?​

Oral Traditions

* **Definition:**stories that were told and retold verbally from one generation to another​;
* Many ancient Greeks were not **literate** unless their profession required them to be​; Women didn’t have jobs, so most were illiterate​
* Men who partook in business professions (trading, selling goods) were literate

Tragic Flaw

* **Definition:**the character defect that leads to the downfall of the protagonist in an epic or tragedy​
* **Example:** ​Odysseys’ PRIDE – Odysseus and his men escape from the Cyclops, but as his ship is sailing away, Odysseus yells out that his name is Odysseus, son of Laeretes. He has a great deal of pride, and it often causes him to make rash decisions.