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Black Ships Before Troy Study Guide



What Is Myth and Why?

By definition, a myth is a traditional, typically ancient story dealing with supernatural beings, ancestors, or heroes that serves as a fundamental type in the worldview of a people, as by explaining aspects of the natural world or delineating the psychology, customs, or ideals of society.

Every civilization has its own stories; however, our focus will be on Greek/Roman mythology. Although the Roman civilization came hundreds of years later, the Romans, for the most part, believed in the same myths but changed the names of the gods to make them their own.

Edith Hamilton is one of the leading authorities in Greek and Roman mythology. According to Hamilton, Greek mythology is largely made up of stories about gods and goddesses, but it must not be read as a kind of Greek Bible, an account of Greek religion. According to the most modern idea, a real myth has nothing to do with religion. It is an explanation of something in nature; how, for instance, any and everything in the universe came into existence: men, animals, this or that tree or flower, the sun, the moon, the stars, storms, eruptions, earthquakes, all that is and all that happens. Thunder and lightning are caused when Zeus hurls his thunderbolt. A volcano erupts because a terrible creature is imprisoned in the mountain and every now and then struggles to get free. The Dipper, the constellation called also the Great Bear, does not set below the horizon because a goddess once was angry at it and decreed that it should never sink into the sea. Myths are early science, the result of men's first trying to explain what they saw around them (19).

But there are many so-called myths that explain nothing at all. These tales are pure entertainment, the sort of thing people would tell each other on a long winter's evening. The story of Pygmalion and Galatea is an example; it has no conceivable connection with any event in nature. Neither has the Quest of the Golden Fleece nor Orpheus and Eurydice. This fact is now generally accepted; and we do not have to try to find in every mythological heroine the moon or the dawn and in every hero's life a sun myth. The stories are early literature as well as early science (19).

Directions: Search online to discover the answers to the following:

Death-resurrection: How did the following mortals live forever as flowers?

1. Hyacinth
2. Narcissus
3. Adonis

Animals: How did these animals come to be?

4. spider
5. grasshopper
6. frog
7. horse (giraffe, zebra, donkey, camel)

Origins: What aspect of nature does each of these stories explain?

8. Helios
9. Aurora
10. Vulcan

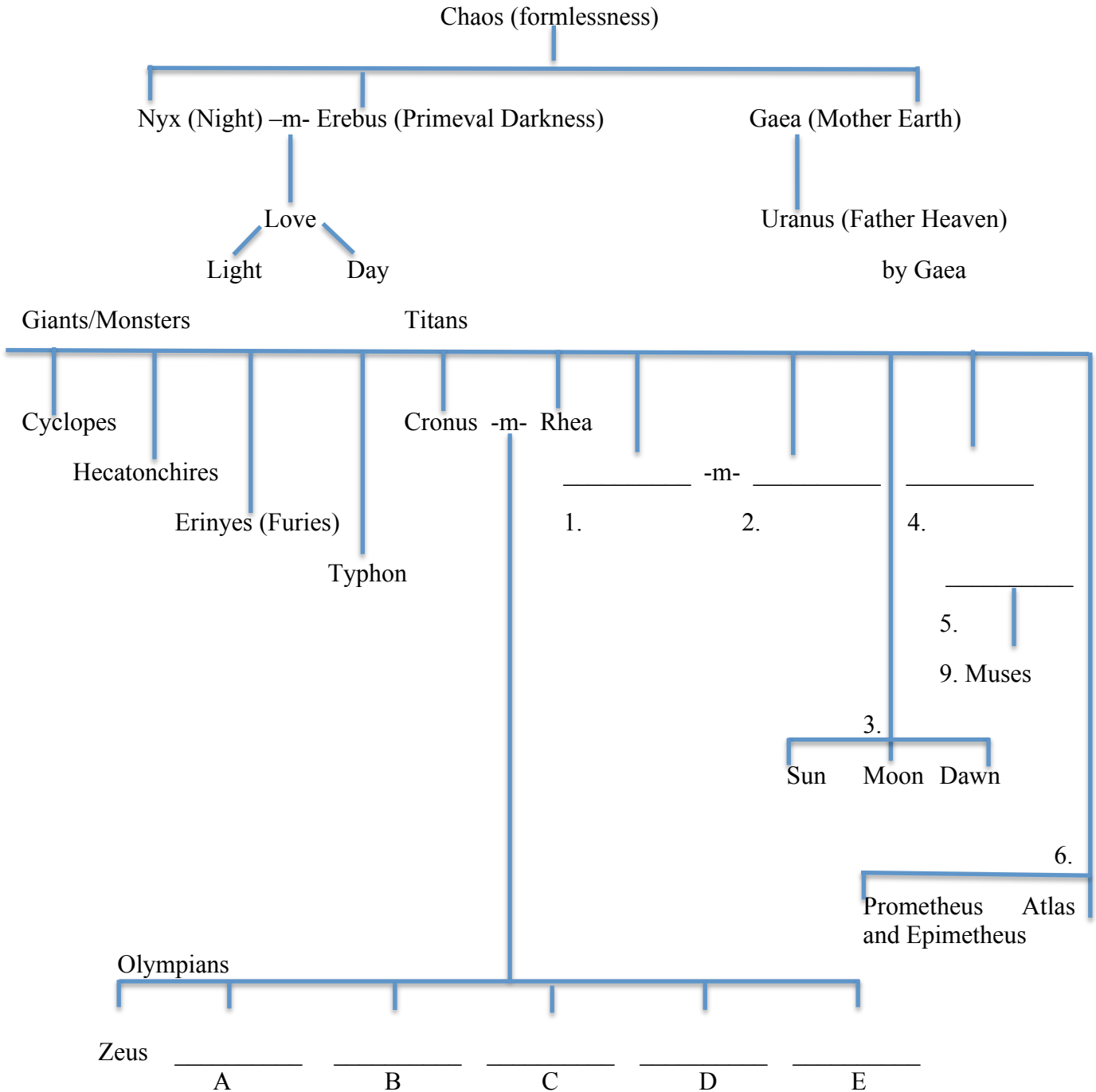
Who's Who on Mt. Olympus

Directions: Complete the chart below by using online sources. SPELL CORRECTLY! It is likely that there will be more than one symbol per god or goddess.

Realm	Greek Name	Roman Name	Symbol	Why?
King of gods and ruler of mankind				
God of sea, horses, and earthquakes				
God of underworld (did not live on Mount Olympus)				
Goddess of hearth and home; sister of Zeus				
Queen of gods and wife of Zeus				
God of War				
Goddess of wisdom, war, and weaving				
God of sun, music, poetry, and medicine				
Goddess of love and beauty				
Messenger-god; god of commerce, travelers, and thieves				
Goddess of moon and hunting; patroness of maidens				
God of fire; forger or armor				

The Greek Origin of the World

I. Read the excerpt, study the visual on page 5, and then fill in the blanks below. Then read Edith Hamilton’s *Mythology* Chapter 3, pages 65-70T, and add notes to help you better explain this graphic version of creation.



II. Using this story of creation, explain how it shows this statement: **As human society developed, so too developed a need for order.**

III. As yet there are no human beings; there are gods in human forms, but no mortal human beings. Since all myths were originally transmitted orally, it is only natural to assume that numerous versions of the same myth would occur. A storyteller might borrow a character from one tale, an incident from a second tale, then add his or her own imaginative idea, and a new myth would be born. The creation of humanity is just such an example of a myth with a number of variations. In the boxes below, summarize each of the identified versions as detailed on pages 70-77.

The Titan Prometheus creates man from clay	The gods create man through five ages
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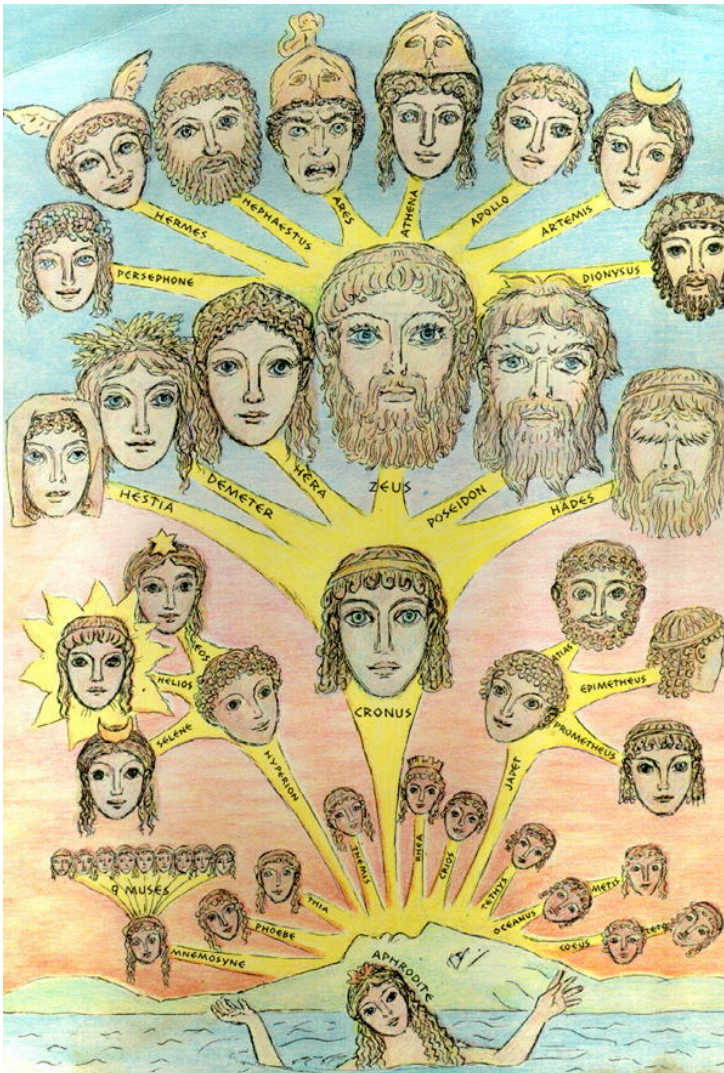
At this point in creation, there were only men. What two things had Prometheus done that angered Zeus so much that Zeus created woman for revenge?

The flood and the race of stone

Excerpt from Chapter 1: The Gods
from Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*

The Greeks did not believe that the gods created the universe. It was the other way about: the universe created the gods. Before there were gods, heaven and earth had been formed. They were the first parents. The Titans were their children, and the gods were their grandchildren.

The Titans, often called the Elder Gods, were for untold ages supreme in the universe. There were many of them, but only a few appear in the stories of mythology—the most important of all being Cronus. The other notable Titans were Ocean and his wife Tethys, Hyperion, Themis, Mnemosyne, and Iapetus.



IV. Use all the readings, research, and activities to help you answer the following questions about the visual on the left.

1. Explain A) why Cronus is the trunk of the tree; B) why Zeus has the biggest head; C) the sizes of the Olympian heads differ in size.

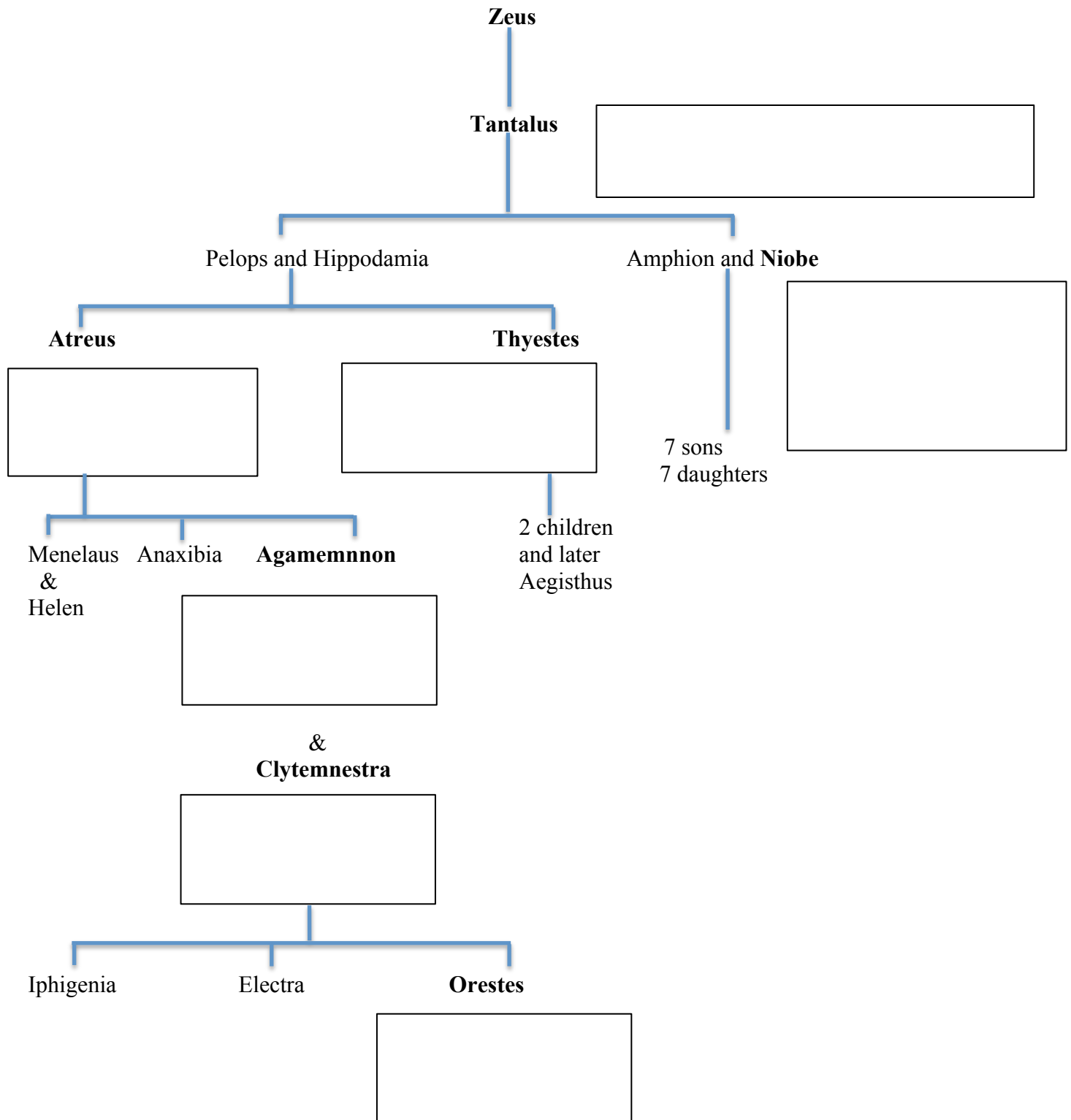
2. Why did the artist draw Epimetheus as he did?

3. Why is Aphrodite separated from everyone else?

4. The artist has incorporated some of the gods'/goddesses' symbols into the drawing. What symbols do you find?

The Doomed House of Atreus

Directions: A) Follow the chart as you read Chapter 17 of *Mythology*, pages 247-265. Fill in each box with the correct crime as you come to it; B) Outside the box, explain why each crime was committed including the crime of Tantalus. Draw an arrow to the crime to connect the reason to the crime.



The Geography of the *Iliad*

Directions: Identify the lettered places and numbered cities on the map on the backside. Search for a map of classical/ancient Greece to help you.

Seas (A – G)

- _____ Aegean Sea
- _____ Black Sea
- _____ Ionian Sea
- _____ Mediterranean Sea
- _____ Sea of Crete
- _____ Sea of Marmara
- _____ Thracian Sea

Mountains (S – U)

- _____ Mt. Ida
- _____ Mt Olympus
- _____ Mt. Pelion

Rivers (V - W)

- _____ Scamander
- _____ Simois

Countries and Regions (H – R)

- _____ Asia Minor
- _____ Crete
- _____ Dardania
- _____ Greece
- _____ Ithaca
- _____ Lycia
- _____ Macedonia
- _____ Peloponnesus
- _____ Phrygia
- _____ Thessaly
- _____ Thrace

Cities (1 – 9)

- _____ Argos
- _____ Athens
- _____ Aulis
- _____ Chryse
- _____ Mycenae
- _____ Phthia
- _____ Pylos
- _____ Sparta
- _____ Troy

Black Ships: Chapters 3 and 4

Part I: As you read, place each character/god into the appropriate side **and** then briefly identify.

Achilles, Agamemnon, Aphrodite, Apollo, Athene, Briseis, Calchas, Chryseis, Hector, Hera, Menelaus, Nestor, Odysseus, Paris, Priam, Protesilau, Thetis, Thersites

Greek Side	Trojan Side

Part II: Give one or more examples of a Homeric epithet and Homeric simile.

Part III: “Quarrel with the High King”

1. The Greeks were much better fighters and warriors than the Trojans. List reasons why after nine years they still weren't able to conquer Troy. Who were they able to conquer?
2. Define the term “spoils of war.” Why would spoils of war affect a Greek warrior's honor?
3. Homer begins the *Iliad in medias res*. What is the high point of action that begins it?
4. Who won the quarrel and how?
5. What gods have played an active role in the *Iliad* so far? Why?

Part IV: “Single Combat”

6. Ancient warfare looks very different than modern warfare. What does this warfare look like?
7. What gods have now played an active role in the action of this chapter? Why?
8. As a result of the protocols established for the single combat, what should have happened?
9. How do the Trojans feel about Helen—the woman at the center of the war?
10. How would you describe the characters of Helen and Paris as shown in this chapter?

Black Ships: Chapters 5 and 6

Part I: As you read, place each character/god into the appropriate side **and** then briefly identify.

Aeneas, Ajax, Andromache, Astyanax, Diomedes, Machaon, Pandarus, Patroclus, Phoenix, Sarpedon

Greek Side	Trojan Side

Part II: Give several examples of a Homeric epithet and Homeric simile different from those in previous chapters.

Part III: “The Women of Troy”

1. The Greeks won the single combat and should have taken Helen and gone home. Athene, however, decides that the truce should be broken. Why do you think she would do that since she is on the Greek side and wants them to win?
2. The *Iliad* is a war story; therefore, there obviously are many battles. Who does Athene choose to break the truce and what happens?
3. In the previous chapters, you learned of some of the customs of ancient warfare. As you read of more battles, more customs are described. Why did they continue to fight over dead bodies?
4. What is ironic about the Trojan soothsayer telling Hector to pray to Athene to have mercy on the Trojans?
5. The scene between Hector and Andromache is one of the most famous in all of the *Iliad*. Contrast their relationship between them and Paris and Helen.

Part IV: “The High King’s Embassy”

6. Once again a one-on-one combat occurs. Who won? What additional warfare customs did you learn?
7. Why did the Trojans for the first time in the war feel confident enough to remain outside the city walls overnight?
8. Why does Agamemnon now think that the Greeks will lose and that they all should just pack up and go home? Who changed his mind and how?
9. Who were the members of the embassy? Where did they go? Compare their persuasive tactics. Were they successful?

Black Ships: Chapters 7-9

Situation: These three chapters focus on the war rather than the all the personal issues of the main characters. You are a war reporter. You have the opportunity to interview **five** characters about the happenings in the war as shown in these three chapters. You may ask each character **two** questions. Your questions should

- not be able to be answered with a simple yes or no
- show that you are searching for “the real story”
- show that you are an objective reporter

How much of the story can you get?

Directions: Choose 5 characters. Choose carefully so that you will get the most information about the war happenings in these three chapters. Keep in mind what each character could and could not know when you develop your questions.

Character	Questions	Why are you asking this question? What do you hope to discover?
	1.	
	2.	

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	1. 2.	

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Black Ships: Chapters 10-13, Parts I-V

Part I. Just how influential are the epics? Let's begin by looking at a modern piece of literature, such as *Harry Potter*. Make a list of how you have seen this work influence other areas.

Part II. The epics are almost 3000 years old. Now that you have a list for a modern piece of literature, which of those would not apply to the epic? Can you add any areas that the epics would have influenced?

Part III. Read the points below about classic literature and then answer the questions below.

- a. A classic usually expresses some artistic quality--an expression of life, truth, and beauty.
- b. A classic stands the test of time. The work is usually considered to be a representation of the period in which it was written; and the work merits lasting recognition. In other words, if the book was published in the recent past, the work is not a classic.
- c. A classic has a certain universal appeal. Great works of literature touch us to our very core beings--partly because they integrate themes that are understood by readers from a wide range of backgrounds and levels of experience. Themes of love, hate, death, life, and faith touch upon some of our most basic emotional responses.
- d. A classic makes connections. You can study a classic and discover influences from other writers and other great works of literature. Of course, this is partly related to the universal appeal of a classic. But, the classic also is informed by the history of ideas and literature--whether unconsciously or specifically worked into the plot of the text.

1. Is *Harry Potter* a classic? Explain why or why not.

2. Using Chapters 10-13, give **specific** examples as proof that the *Iliad* is indeed a classic.

a.

b.

c.

d.

Part IV. The epics have influenced fine art throughout the ages. The epic remains the same, but why might a character or event look different in art? Make a list what might influence an artist.

Part V. If you were an artist, what characters and/or events from Chapters 10-13 would you choose as the topic of your art? List 3 and explain why.

1.

2.

3.

Black Ships: Chapters 10-13, Parts VI-XI

Part VI. One of the most popular events for artists is the death and funeral of Patroclus. Describe (or quickly draw) what your one piece of art would be on this event.

Part VII. You will be shown several pieces of art on this topic. Write down your first impression of each.

Slide 55:

Slide 56:

Slide 57:

Slide 58:

Slide 59:

Slide 60:

Part VIII: How have the visuals enhanced your understanding of the importance of this event?

Part IX. Another popular events for artists is the death of Hector. Describe (or quickly draw) what your one piece of art would be on this event.

Part X. You will be shown several pieces of art on this topic. Write down your first impression of each.

Slide 64:

Slide 65:

Slide 66:

Slide 67:

Part XI: How have the visuals enhanced your understanding of the importance of this event?

Black Ships: Chapters 14 and 17

Part I: As you read, place each character/god into the appropriate side **and** then briefly identify.

Antilochus, Hippolyta, Idomeneus, Memnon, Palladium, Penthesilea, Philoctetes, Polydamas, Thrasymedes,

Greek Side	Trojan Side

Part II: Give several examples of a Homeric epithet and Homeric simile different from those in previous chapters.

Part III: “The Luck of Troy”

1. According to *Black Ships*, Odysseus stole the Palladium. According to most renditions, he was not alone. Look up this incident. Who acted with him?

2. What pact is made between Helen and Odysseus?

Part IV: “Warrior Women”



3. Who?
4. What?
5. When?
6. Where?
7. Why?

Part V: “The Death of Achilles”

8. Compare the death and funeral of Achilles to that of Patroclus using a Venn Diagram

Part VI: “Poisoned Arrow”



9. Who?
10. What?
11. When?
12. Where?
13. Why?

Black Ships: Chapters 18 and 19

Part I: As you read, place each character/god into the appropriate side **and** then briefly identify.

Automedon, Cassandra, Deiphobus, Epeius, Laocoon, Sinon

Greek Side	Trojan Side

Part II: Turn to page 148-149. There are six places within the list of names. Give the six places and identify.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Part III: “The Wooden Horse”



1. Who?
2. What?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. Why?

6. Who?

7. What?

8. When?

9. Where?

10. Why?



Part VI: “The Fall of Troy”

After the fall of Troy, what happened to the following:

11. Helen

12. Astyanax

13. Andromache

14. Cassandra