



NINTH GRADE REQUIRED SUMMER READING

TEXT - Please buy the specific edition listed below (publisher, year, and ISBN).

The Iliad by Homer translated by Emily Wilson (ISBN: 978- 1324076148, Norton & Company; 2024, paperback edition: [Amazon.com: The Iliad: 9781324076148: Homer, Wilson, Emily: Books](https://www.amazon.com/dp/9781324076148))

There is also a good audio version of this translation on Audible narrated by Audra McDonald.

This summer, incoming 9th graders will be reading *The Iliad* by Homer. We will be using a new translation by Emily Wilson, which I believe will be easier and more accessible to students. Her translation also comes with helpful tools including summaries of each chapter (called books) and a list of names with pronunciation and a short description of each character. *The Iliad* is widely considered the first and among the greatest of classical texts and is well worth reading and studying. That being said, I know that reading this book can be a challenge (it was for me when I read it in college). To help you get the most out of this epic, I am going to have you read at three different speeds/levels (see below). I am only requiring students to read half of the epic (12 out of 24 books).

Level 1: Read the following books slowly and carefully. Read with a pen and/or highlighter in hand and annotate as you read. These are the most important books because they contain the central story of Achilles and Hector and because they deal most directly with the central themes of the work. These books are: **1, 6, 9, 18, 22, and 24**. The writing portion of the assignment will cover only these six books.

Level 2: These chapters are not critical but include enjoyable/memorable moments that you don't want to miss. You don't have to make annotations (though, of course, you are always welcome to do so. It is your book). Read the whole chapter. Consider reading it out loud. Some exciting things you'll encounter in these books include a Greek soldier stabbing a goddess and talking horses. These books are: **3, 5, 10, 16, 19, and 21**.

Level 3: These chapters are not critical to the plot. You may skim these chapters or skip and read the summaries in the back of the book. That way you will be able to keep track of the storyline. These books are: **2, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, and 23**.

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Reading Guide

Read the books in order and in the way described below. For example, carefully read book 1, skim/read the summary of book 2, leisurely read book 3, etc.

Bold: read slowly and annotate

Underlined: read leisurely and/or out loud

Normal: skim or skip and read summary in the back of the book (in the Notes section)

Book 1: The Quarrel

Book 2: The Multitude

Book 3: Gifts of the Goddess

Book 4: First Blood

Book 5: Gods on the Battlefield

Book 6: The Price of Honor

Book 7: A Duel

Book 8: The Scales Tip

Book 9: The Embassy

Book 10: Espionage by Night

Book 11: Wounds

Book 12: The Wall

Book 13: The Waves

Book 14: An Afternoon Nap

Book 15: Fire at the Ships

Book 16: Love and Death

Book 17: Battle for a Dead Man

Book 18: Divine Armor

Book 19: A Meal Before Dying

Book 20: The Warrior's Return

Book 21: The River

Book 22: A Race to Death

Book 23: Funeral Games

Book 24: A Time to Mourn

The following assignment may be completed in the space provided and/or on separate sheets of notebook paper. If so, be sure to label your answers with the book and theme and staple all papers to the back of the summer reading packet. Write in complete sentences. You may use either cursive or print.

DUE: MONDAY AUGUST 17TH (FIRST DAY OF CLASS) FOR A QUIZ GRADE

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Vocabulary List for *The Iliad*

To help you understand the text, I have outlined 30 vocabulary words you will encounter in the text. This list is limited to the 6 major books you are to read carefully. Please follow the instructions below. This will count toward your grade for the summer reading assignment:

1. Write the **definition** of each word before reading that book. *Hint*: The way that Homer/Wilson uses the word may be different from the dictionary definition.
2. **Use at least 5** of these 30 words in your responses in the rest of the packet (not including the direct quotes). Please **highlight** each word you use in the packet.
3. **Bonus**: Use (and highlight) 10 words, +2. Use (and highlight) 20 words, +5.

Book 1

1. cataclysmic
2. spoils
3. bedecked
4. aegis
5. quarrel
6. seethe
7. mollify

Book 6

8. rampart
9. brandished
10. embossed
11. compunction

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Book 9

- 12. embassy
- 13. craven
- 14. scrutinized
- 15. onslaught
- 16. implored

Book 18

- 17. keened
- 18. uncanny
- 19. decrepit
- 20. mayhem

Book 22

- 21. slaked
- 22. bulwark
- 23. impending
- 24. enmity
- 25. ruination

Book 24

- 26. taint
- 27. deigned
- 28. trundling
- 29. suffused
- 30. dirge

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Book 1: Kleos

As you read book 1, look for the theme of *kleos* (CLAY-ohs). This is a Greek word which means glory or fame and is one of the central themes of the epic. Kleos can refer to one's reputation as a soldier or to the treasure a soldier wins in battle. In book 1, Achilles gets some of his glory taken away by Agamemnon when he steals his war-prize (a girl named Briseis). Identify one quote (3 to 10 lines in length) that highlights/explores this theme and write it in the space below. **Include a citation for the quote in parentheses with the book and line numbers** i.e., (1.162-166). Then, reflect on the quote by answering the questions in 1-2 sentences each.

Quote: _____

Citation: _____

1. What is happening in this passage?

2. How does this relate to the theme of *kleos*? What is Homer saying about this theme?

3. What questions do you have about this passage or this part of the story?

4. What does this remind you of? How does this compare to something in Scripture or another book you've read (either from Geneva or personal reading)?

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Creative Interlude

The Iliad is a very visual book. Sometimes the best way to engage with the text is to illustrate a scene to capture the action and details.

Choose a dramatic/dynamic scene from Book 3 or 5 and illustrate it below. Use at least 4 boxes to tell the story, and be sure to label your scene, characters, etc.

Scene: _____

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Book 6: Duty

As you read book 6, look for the theme of **duty**, particularly duty to family. What is our duty to our family? How do we balance that with duty to our country? Is there a relationship between duty and *kleos*? Identify one quote (between 3 and 10 lines in length) that highlights and explores this theme and write it in the space below. Include a citation for the quote in parentheses with the book and line numbers i.e., (1.162-166). Then, reflect on your quote by answering the questions in 1-2 sentences each.

Quote: _____

Citation: _____

1. What is happening in this passage?

2. How does this relate to the theme of duty? What is Homer saying about this theme?

3. What questions do you have about this passage or this part of the story?

4. What does this remind you of? How does this compare to something in Scripture or another book you've read (either from Geneva or personal reading)?

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Book 9: Mortality

As you read book 9, look for the theme of mortality. What does it mean to be mortal? What is the value of human life? How should we think about the fact that we will die someday? Pay close attention to how Achilles wrestles with his own mortality in this book. Identify one quote (3 to 10 lines in length) that highlights and explores this theme and write it in the space below. Include a citation for the quote in parentheses with the book and line numbers i.e., (1.162-166). Then, reflect on your quote by answering the questions in 1-2 sentences each.

Quote: _____

Citation: _____

1. What is happening in this passage?

2. How does this relate to the theme of mortality? What is Homer saying about it?

3. What questions do you have about this passage or this part of the story?

4. What does this remind you of? How does this compare to something in Scripture or another book you've read (either from Geneva or personal reading)?

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Creative Interlude

The Iliad is a very visual book. Sometimes the best way to engage with the text is to illustrate a scene to capture the action and details.

Choose a dramatic/dynamic scene from Book 10 or 16 and illustrate it below. Use at least 4 boxes to tell the story, and be sure to label your scene, characters, etc.

Scene: _____

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Book 18: Rage

As you read book 18, look for the theme of rage. What causes rage? What are the consequences when rage gets out of control? On the other hand, what happens when men control their rage? Is peace possible? The epic began with the wrath of Achilles; it is the driving force of the story. Now, at the death of his best friend, his wrath is on full display.

Quote: _____

Citation: _____

1. What is happening in this passage?

2. How does this relate to the theme of rage? What is Homer saying about this theme?

3. What questions do you have about this passage or this part of the story?

4. What does this remind you of? How does this compare to something in Scripture or another book you've read (either from Geneva or personal reading)?

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Creative Interlude

The Iliad is a very visual book. Sometimes the best way to engage with the text is to illustrate a scene to capture the action and details.

Choose a dramatic/dynamic scene from Book 19 or 21 and illustrate it below. Use at least 4 boxes to tell the story, and be sure to label your scene, characters, etc.

Scene: _____

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Book 22: Fate

As you read book 22, look for the theme of fate. You have probably noticed this theme throughout, but here, in the epic showdown between Achilles and Hector, it becomes palpable. Why do things happen the way they do? Do we have any freedom or agency about our lives or the decisions we make? What power controls the course of human events? Pay close attention to Hector's inner monologue as he stands in front of the walls of Troy.

Quote: _____

Citation: _____

1. What is happening in this passage?

2. How does this relate to the theme of fate? What is Homer saying about this theme?

3. What questions do you have about this passage or this part of the story?

4. What does this remind you of? How does this compare to something in Scripture or another book you've read (either from Geneva or personal reading)?

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Book 24: Grief

As you read the final book of *The Iliad*, look for the theme of grief. Is grief positive or negative? How can grief bring us together? Is grief a uniquely human emotion? What is the relationship between grief and mortality? Between grief and rage? Pay close attention to the dialogue between Achilles and Priam. As you finish the book, think about why Homer chose to end his epic here and not with the fall of Troy or the death of Achilles.

Quote: _____

Citation: _____

1. What is happening in this passage?

2. How does this relate to the theme of grief? What is Homer saying about this theme?

3. What questions do you have about this passage or this part of the story?

4. What does this remind you of? How does this compare to something in Scripture or another book you've read (either from Geneva or personal reading)?

9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

After you've read *The Iliad*, respond to **ONE** of the following prompts in **at least 5 sentences**.

- What does Homer believe about glory (kleos)? Is it worth pursuing?
- What does Homer believe about war? Should it be celebrated or avoided? Explain
- What does Homer believe about the gods? Are they helpful or harmful to man? Should we respect, honor, or imitate the gods?
- What does Homer believe about the value of human life? What makes life meaningful?

Finally, share your thoughts and reflections on the book. What stood out to you? What was the most confusing or challenging part of reading the book? What would you most like to talk about together in class? Write at least one paragraph (**minimum 5 sentences**).
