

The *Iliad*

Select one activity from each of the Book sections (below) to complete. Responses should be typed, size 12 Times New Roman, and be double-spaced. Responses should be in paragraph form and include textual evidence. Each response should be multiple paragraphs. You should submit one document with your three responses labeled according to Book and option answered.

Book 1 “The Quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon”

- a. Homer presents both sides of the argument between Achilles and Agamemnon. Each character has valid parts to the argument, but each also has faults in their arguments. Choose the one character that you agree with more and explain why. Then compare that argument to any other argument discussed in the *Iliad*. Which character did you side with in this second argument and why.
- b. Achilles’ primary objective for participating in the war is to prove himself to be the best, most honorable Greek fighter. Is Hector similarly motivated? Are modern heroes similarly concerned with proving themselves honorable? Compare Achilles, Hector, and a modern hero of your choice. Describe their actions, and explain whether or not they are “honorable.”
- c. An epic hero is usually of noble birth and demonstrates bravery, superhuman strength, success in battle, and a desire to be famous for his/her deeds to have a sort of immortality from fame. Explain how Achilles, Hector, and another character from another piece of literature that you have read each fit this definition.

Book 18, “The Arming of Achilles”

- a. Homer’s description of Achilles’ shield is an ekphrasis, an extended description of a work of art, real or imaginary, used to focus attention on the symbolic meaning and reflect on the main story. Identify the positive and negative images portrayed on the shield that represent the totality of Greek life. Then compare the shield to the Trojan life. And finally, compare/contrast this image of life to the perception of life presented in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* quote:

“Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.”

- b. Both Hector and Achilles live in the Greek culture that expects males to fight to win glory for their families and themselves. However, they react differently to this warrior code. Explain which hero is characterized as being more human and how their reasons differ for winning glory. How are heroes today perceived? Give a modern example and an explanation.

Book 22, “The Death of Hector,” and Book 24, “Achilles and Priam”

- a. Analyze the scene between Achilles and Priam and explain the ways it shows their common bonds of humanity. Give another example from the *Iliad* that illustrates that enemies have more in common than opposite.
- b. Two great cultural expectations in Greek life were hospitality (*xenia*) and ritual funerals for the warrior dead. Explain the difficult process of hospitality inside Achilles’ tent and the burial expectations and rituals for Hector. Find two other examples of these cultural expectations in the *Iliad* and explain the expectations and emotions that are demonstrated.