

Contrasting Points of View

Activity 1: Warm Up--Examining a Visual Text

Using the OPTIC¹ strategy below, examine the details of the John William Waterhouse's *Ulysses and the Sirens* (1891).

O	O is for Overview . Describe the main subject of the painting.
P	P is for Parts . What parts, elements or details of the painting seem important?
T	T is for Title . What information does the title add to the painting?
I	I is for Interrelationships . What connections or relationships can be made between the words in the title and the individual parts of the painting?
C	C is for Conclusion . What conclusion(s) can be drawn about the meaning of the painting as a whole? Summarize the message in one or two sentences.

¹ Adapted from Pauk, W. (2000). *How to study in college* (7th ed.). Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston.

Activity 2: Generate a list of thematic topics/abstract nouns based on the painting.

Activity 3: Using the notes that you took in Activity 1, complete the following sentence frames.

The sirens can be described as _____, _____, and _____
[ADJECTIVE] [ADJECTIVE]

_____. While the crewmen are _____
[ADJECTIVE] [DESCRIBE THE CREW'S ACTIONS]

Odysseus is _____. This painting communicates the

idea that

[INSERT THEMATIC STATEMENT]

Activity 4: Analyzing the Prompt

In Books Nine through Twelve of *The Odyssey*, Odysseus, the King of Ithaca, recounts his adventures and trials as he and his men attempt to return home after the Trojan War. As his tale unfolds, readers can trace his development as a character. In a well-supported response, compare Odysseus's version of events in the traditional epic to Margaret Atwood's modern adaptation of Odysseus's character in her poem "Siren Song." In your comparison, consider how each writer depicts Odysseus's character.

1. What is the topic of your essay?
2. What task is the prompt asking you to complete?
3. What elements will you need to consider as you read the texts?

4. What were some of the traditional gender roles of the ancient Greeks and Romans? Complete the graphic organizer below.

MEN	WOMEN

5. How would a poem written by a feminist poet in the twentieth century shed new light on the character of Odysseus?

Activity 5: Close Reading--Considering Different Points of View

Read the excerpts from *The Odyssey* below. Follow the instructions below as you annotate:

1. For your first reading, define the terms that have been bolded for you. Write a synonym or definition directly above the boxed word.
2. Then, use a handbook of mythological terms or the Internet to look up background information for the shaded term. Write the explanation directly above the term.
3. Finally, use the questions on the right side of the text to guide you as you record your insights and impressions about the text.

Excerpt 1: Circe's Instructions, pp. 272-273, lines 36-60

After his sojourn to the Land of the Dead, Odysseus returns to Circe, who gives him advice on how to manage his journey home. Consider her explicit instructions to Odysseus.

<p>But Circe ... sat me down and ... probed me for details.</p> <p>I told her the whole story, start to finish,</p> <p>40 then the queenly goddess laid my course:</p> <p>'Your descent to the dead is over, true,</p> <p>but listen closely to what I tell you now</p> <p>and god himself will bring it back to mind.</p> <p>First you will raise the island of the Sirens,</p> <p>those creatures who spellbind any man alive,</p> <p>whoever comes their way. Whoever draws too close,</p> <p>off guard, and catches the Sirens' voices in the air—</p> <p>no sailing home for him, no wife rising to meet him,</p> <p>no happy children beaming up at their father's face.</p> <p>50 The high, thrilling song of the Sirens will transfix him,</p> <p>lolling there in their meadow, round them heaps of corpses,</p> <p>rotting away, rags of skin shriveling on their bones ...</p> <p>Race straight past that coast! Soften some beeswax</p>	<p>What is Odysseus's next obstacle?</p> <p>Highlight diction that characterizes the Sirens throughout the passage. What is the effect?</p> <p>Underline all of the imperative sentences. What is the effect?</p>
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<p>and stop your shipmates' ears so none can hear,</p> <p>none of the crew, but if you are bent on hearing,</p> <p>have them tie you hand and foot in the swift ship,</p> <p>erect at the mast-block, lashed by ropes to the mast</p> <p>so you can hear the Sirens' song to your heart's content.</p> <p>But if you plead, commanding your men to set you free,</p> <p>60 then they must lash you faster, rope on rope.</p>	<p>Does Odysseus have to listen to the Sirens' song? Explain.</p>
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Excerpt 2: Odysseus's Version, pp.276-277, lines 158-217

Read the excerpt in which Odysseus tells his spellbound audience about his encounter with the Sirens. Consider how his version differs from Circe's instructions.

<p>They swung aboard at once, they sat to the oars in ranks</p> <p>and in rhythm churned the water white with stroke on stroke.</p> <p>160 And Circe the nymph with glossy braids, the awesome one</p> <p>who speaks with human voice, sent us a hardy shipmate,</p> <p>yes, a fresh following wind ruffling up in our wake,</p> <p>bellying out our sail to drive our blue prow on as we,</p> <p>securing the running gear from stem to stern, sat back</p> <p>while the wind and helmsman kept her true on course.</p> <p>At last, and sore at heart, I told my shipmates,</p> <p>'Friends ... it's wrong for only one or two</p> <p>to know the revelations that lovely Circe</p> <p>made to me alone. I'll tell you all,</p>	<p>Identify the two epithets in the first paragraph.</p> <p>What kind of mood is set in this first paragraph?</p>
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170	<p>so we can die with our eyes wide open now or escape our fate and certain death together.</p> <p>First, she warns, we must steer clear of the Sirens, their enchanting song, their meadow starred with flowers.</p> <p>I alone was to hear their voices, so she said, but you must bind me with tight chafing ropes so I cannot move a muscle, bound to the spot, erect at the mast-block, lashed by ropes to the mast.</p> <p>And if I plead, commanding you to set me free, then lash me faster, rope on pressing rope.'</p>	<p>How is Odysseus's version the same as Circe's instructions? Different?</p> <p>What patterns of diction do you notice in this excerpt? What is the effect?</p>
180	<p>So I informed my shipmates point by point, all the while our trim ship was speeding toward the Sirens' island, driven on by the brisk wind.</p> <p>But then—the wind fell in an instant, all glazed to a dead calm ... a mysterious power hushed the heaving swells.</p> <p>The oarsmen leapt to their feet, struck the sail stowed it deep in the hold and sat to the oarlocks, thrashing with polished oars, frothing the water white.</p> <p>Now with a sharp sword I sliced an ample wheel of beeswax</p>	<p>What kind of mood is set in this paragraph?</p> <p>Mark the diction that Odysseus uses to describe his actions. What is the effect?</p>
190	<p>down into pieces, kneaded them in my two strong hands and the wax soon grew soft, worked by my strength</p>	

<p> and Helios' burning rays, the sun at high noon, and I stopped the ears of my comrades one by one. They bound me hand and foot in the tight ship— lashed by ropes to the mast— and rowed and churned the whitecaps stroke on stroke. We were just offshore as far as a man's shout can carry, scudding close, when the Sirens sensed at once a ship was racing past and burst into their high, thrilling song: 200 'Come closer, famous Odysseus—Achaea's pride and glory— moor your ship on our coast so you can hear our song! Never has any sailor passed our shores in his black craft until he has heard the honeyed voices pouring from our lips, and once he hears to his heart's content sails on, a wiser man. We know all the pains that Achaeans ... once endured on the spreading plain of Troy when the gods willed it so— all that comes to pass on the fertile earth, we know it all! So they sent their ravishing voices out across the air and the heart inside me throbbed to listen longer. 210 I signaled the crew with frowns to set me free— they flung themselves at the oars and rowed on harder, Perimedes and Eurylochus springing up at once to bind me faster with rope on chafing rope. </p>	<p> Annotate the Sirens' song carefully for diction and tone. </p> <p> What is your impression of Odysseus in this episode? </p>
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But once we'd left the Sirens fading in our wake,
once we could hear their song no more, their urgent call—
my steadfast crew was quick to remove the wax I'd used
to seal their ears and loosed the bonds that lashed me.

What is Odysseus's tone in this excerpt?

Activity 6: Reading a Modern Versions--“Siren Song” by Margaret Atwood

Using the TP-CASTT strategy below, analyze the poem “Siren Song” by Margaret Atwood.

	Description	Notes
<u>Title</u>	Consider the title and make a prediction about what the poem is about.	
<u>Paraphrase</u>	Put the poem into your own words. Make sure you tell what is happening at the beginning, middle, and end. Tell what is really happening, not what the poet is figuratively saying.	
<u>Connotation</u>	Look at the poem beyond the actual events. Look for figurative language, imagery, etc.	
<u>Attitude (Tone)</u>	What is the speaker’s tone? Is there more than one attitude or tone in different parts of the poem?	
<u>Shifts</u>	Are there any changes in the speaker or attitude? Look for key words, time change, punctuation.	
<u>Title again</u>	Look at the title again. Why is the title important to the poem?	
<u>Theme</u>	What is the theme about? What is the poet saying about the subject? What message is the poet trying to send?	