

# The Siren's Song: Writing from a New Perspective in The Odyssey

## Materials Needed:

- Copy of Homer's *The Odyssey* (any translation)
- Notebook or writing software
- Pen/pencil or keyboard
- Optional: Internet access for research on Greek mythology/culture

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## Lesson Activities:

### 1. Introduction: Whose Story Is It Anyway? (15 minutes)

Start by discussing perspective. Whose perspective do we mainly get in *The Odyssey*? (Usually Odysseus, sometimes the narrator focusing on Telemachus or Penelope). How might the story change if told by someone else? Imagine Polyphemus describing his encounter with Odysseus, or Circe explaining why she turned the men into pigs. Talk about how point of view shapes our understanding and feelings about events and characters.

### 2. Scene Selection and Character Choice (20 minutes)

Browse through *The Odyssey* together or independently. Choose a specific, memorable scene (e.g., the encounter with the Cyclops, the stay on Circe's island, the visit to the Land of the Dead, Penelope dealing with the suitors, Telemachus's journey). Once a scene is selected, choose a character *other than* Odysseus who is present or involved in that scene. This could be a major character (Penelope, Telemachus, Circe, Calypso, Polyphemus) or a minor one (Eurylochus, one of the Sirens, Antinous, Athena in disguise, even an inanimate object like Odysseus' bow if feeling very creative!).

### 3. Character Deep Dive (25 minutes)

Before writing, brainstorm about the chosen character's experience during the selected scene. Use these questions as prompts:

- What does this character see, hear, smell, taste, and touch during this scene?
- What are they thinking? What are their private thoughts?
- What are they feeling? (Fear, anger, loyalty, jealousy, confusion, etc.)
- What do they want? What is their main motivation in this moment?
- What do they know or not know about the situation?
- How might they speak or act differently than Odysseus?

Jot down notes, adjectives, and key phrases related to the character's perspective.

### 4. Drafting the Scene (45-60 minutes)

Time to write! Rewrite the chosen scene from the first-person perspective ('I') of the selected character. Focus on:

- **Voice:** Make the language sound like the character. Would Polyphemus use fancy words? Would Calypso sound wistful?
- **Sensory Details:** Immerse the reader in the scene through the character's senses.
- **Internal Thoughts/Feelings:** Show, don't just tell, what the character is experiencing emotionally and mentally.
- **Focus:** Keep the narrative centered on this character's experience of the events.

Aim for a piece that's about 300-500 words, or one to two pages.

## 5. Reflection and Sharing (15 minutes)

After drafting, read the piece aloud. Then, write a short paragraph reflecting on the process. Consider:

- What was challenging about writing from this perspective?
- What did you learn or realize about the character or the scene?
- How does seeing the scene from this new viewpoint change its meaning or impact?

Discuss the rewritten scene and the reflection together.

## Assessment:

The primary assessment is the rewritten scene and the reflection paragraph. Evaluate based on:

- Consistent and believable character voice.
- Effective use of first-person perspective.
- Integration of sensory details and internal thoughts/feelings.
- Clear connection to the original scene in *\*The Odyssey\**.
- Thoughtfulness of the reflection.

## Differentiation/Extension Ideas:

- **Support:** Focus on a very short scene or provide sentence starters. Brainstorm character feelings together in more detail.
- **Challenge:** Choose a very minor character (one of the maids, a sailor who died early) or an abstract concept (Fate watching the scene). Write the scene as a poem, a song, or a diary entry from the character's perspective. Compare the rewritten scene directly with Homer's text, highlighting specific differences in perspective.