

English 9  
Midterm study guide #1

The English midterm period is 90 minutes long, but many students will be able to complete the test in 75 minutes.

\*\*\*You will be asked to leave your phone in the front of the exam room; you should not be wearing a hoodie anyway, but hoodies are especially forbidden in the exam. You are discouraged from leaving the exam room during the exam; plan ahead.\*\*\*

Vocabulary. (10 minutes, roughly 4 items in each section, 15% of total score)

You'll be asked to find synonyms, think of antonyms, define word parts, derive derivatives, and fill in sentences, as usual.

II. Short answer. (25 minutes, 4 of 5 quotations, 35% of total score)

You'll be asked to identify speaker, context, and significance of passages from *The Iliad*, *Agamemnon*, and the Books 1–8 section of *The Odyssey*. You should review the stories as you prepare the essay, below, and we'll do some practice quotations as the test gets closer. Certainly, if you haven't read any of the stories well, find the time to do that.

III. Essay. (40 minutes, 50% of total score)

Here are three prompts. Prepare two of them, as two of them will appear on the exam, and you'll have to write one essay. You may not bring any materials into the exam with you, so you won't be required to quote text. Your essay should feature a good introduction with a thesis statement in the thesis position, three or so body paragraphs with good topic sentences and evidence, and a short conclusion that redefines the thesis in light of the whole of the essay.

Consider the theme of *kleos* vs. *nostos* in the three works. How does the theme relate to the main characters; what messages do the works convey surrounding this theme? In your essay, dedicate one body paragraph to each of the works, and discuss what the work values as well as the difficulties and benefits that come along with this value.

Consider the story of Agamemnon: Agamemnon at war, Agamemnon at home, Agamemnon as an example. If you would like to, you may read Book 11 in order to include Agamemnon in the underworld as well. In this essay, you examine this character across the texts. What similarities and differences do you find in his depiction? How does the reader feel about him—is he a sympathetic character (a character the reader feels sympathy for)? What does the story of Agamemnon teach us about the position of man relative to the gods and the dangers of hubris?

Consider the role of dramatic irony in the three texts. How do the texts construct situations where the reader knows what the characters do not? While the general situation of Greek literature includes the notion that the listener or viewer already knows the mythological stories, each of these works sets up moments where the reader has specific information the characters lack. Give examples of prominent moments of dramatic irony and explain their effects on the reader and roles in the texts. You may organize your essay by text or by the kind of effect you wish to discuss.