

English 9

Student projects supplementing *The Iliad*

In order to enrich our understanding of *The Iliad*, there's some supplementary work we can do. Each presentation should be about 5 minutes long and should include some kind of visual aid that we can refer to when we have questions—a Prezi or PowerPoint, a poster or tri-fold, or some other material. Presentations can be creative (costumes?) and must provide thorough and accurate information, appropriate for ninth-grade English.

Projects may be individual or in small groups or pairs. If you work together, remember you are not doing half a project each, but a full project's worth of work and information each. Group and paired projects will be graded accordingly. If you work with others, the presentation component may be longer than the single project. We'll discuss the proper parameters for your group, based on what you are doing.

When you give your presentation, you'll hand in a Works Cited/Consulted page in MLA style that includes the sources you used—the sources can be scholarly and must be credible. Credible, mainstream popular sources (*National Geographic*, for example) are fine, though Wikipedia or an internet-based study guide (like Shmoop) is not. You may use the graphic novel from last year's history course to remind you of background, but you should not lift art from it or otherwise rely on it in a substantial way. I will provide a sample Works Cited/Consulted page. You should feel free to show me your Works Cited/Consulted page well before you present, and I can help you choose sources.

Topics

1. The Geography of the Trojan War: This topic asks you to map the main events of the Trojan War. Consider: Where is Troy? Where is the city relative to where the Greeks probably encamped? What physical obstacles presented themselves?

Project 1: Troy and the Greek encampment

Project 2: The Greek coalition—the geography of the Catalog of Ships

2. Excavation of Troy: This topic asks you to consider where and when Western archaeologists discovered and interpreted their findings about Troy. You'll find that there have been several teams, findings, and controversies.

3. The Homeric Question: For this project, investigate this “Homer” to whom the poem is attributed. We've said there's controversy. Delve into the different possibilities. Which seem credible to you? Anchor your ideas also in the dates of composition and then the emergence of different theories over time.

4. The Oral Tradition: How does *The Iliad* work as a story sung by a bard? What is the form; how can the bard remember all the material? Read, in credible popular sources, about the work of Milman Parry and others to understand the spoken roots of the poem.

5. Homeric Simile: How does *The Iliad* use similes to make word pictures and to add to the epic scope of the text? Choose important examples (at least one easy one so we can understand and then some more complex examples) and explain what this poetic device adds to the text.

6. *The Iliad* in Art: Find other works inspired by *The Iliad*. While your bibliography may contain 20+ pieces, show us 3–4 famous works in your presentation. Consider poetry, visual art, and so on. Because *The Iliad* is so frequently the basis for others' works, please choose pieces that are considered great. (If you'd like me to help you look through your list well before you present, please feel free to ask.) If multiple people would like to do this project, we can split the task by genre.

7. *The Iliad* in Literature:

Project 1: Consider treatments in literature of Helen. Highlight Yeats' "No Second Troy," HD's "Helen" and other classic treatments you find (check with me to help choose). Touch on HD's *Helen in Egypt* as well. Have an overarching theme or thesis that unifies your presentation.

Project 2: Read and present WH Auden's "The Shield of Achilles."

8. Mythology: Do in-depth work on the mythological framework of *The Iliad*. Focus on three myths that have direct bearing on the poem and on how these myths enrich our understanding of the text.

9. More *Iliad*: Choose Book 23 or another book of *The Iliad* that we did not all read. What do we need to know? What are the best passages that sum up information (plot), characterization, and theme?

10. With a small group, enact a scene from the text. Present your scene live or as a video. Be sure the work that results is fully high school work, fully considered in all aspects. Keep in mind, too, that there are only three workdays for this project and a weekend, if the project is particularly ambitious. If you are interested in this option, let's discuss.

10. Propose your own topic. Proposals must be received by 9pm Monday, 10/17.