

Gifted English 9

Fall Break BONUS Assessment

We have been studying the physical and spiritual journeys that characters embark upon in memoir and epic during our first unit. As a bonus opportunity to earn points toward your Reading & Literature grade, you may complete one of the following assessments to reveal your understanding of both memoir and epic.

Option 1: Epic to Memoir Transformation

Your task is to convert *The Odyssey* from an epic into a memoir.

1. Write a memoir—from Odysseus’s perspective—in which you utilize and identify (by making notes in the margins) four specific characteristics of memoir listed below. You must transform the third-person epic tale of adventure into a first-person narrative of introspection. You do not, however, have to write the epic in the form of poetry. Your memoir must be at least 500 words in length.
2. Compose a detailed paragraph in which you explain the two most significant differences between *The Odyssey* as an epic and the Odysseus’s memoir.

Option 2: Memoir to Epic Transformation

Your task is to convert the memoir you have read independently into an epic.

1. Write an epic with your memoir’s protagonist in the role of epic hero. In your writing, utilize and identify (by making notes in the margins) four specific characteristics of epic listed below. You must transform the first-person narrative of introspection into a third-person epic tale of adventure. Your epic must be at least 500 words in length.
2. Compose a detailed paragraph in which you explain the two most significant differences between the writer’s narrative as a memoir and the tale as an epic.

Memoir Characteristics:

1. A memoir focuses on a brief period of time or series of related events (doesn't cover a great span of years). It explores an event or series of related events that remain lodged in memory. The narrative is limited to a particular phase, time period, place, or recurring behavior in order to develop the focus fully.
2. It adheres to narrative structure, including the usual elements of storytelling such as setting, plot development, imagery, conflict, characterization, foreshadowing and flashback, and irony and symbolism.
3. The writer contemplates the meaning of these events in retrospect by describing events and then shows, either directly or indirectly, why they are significant—in short, why the author continue to remember them.
4. There is a fictional quality even though the story is true, and the story exhibits emotional intensity. The memoir makes the subject of the memoir come alive.
5. The writer includes a personal reconstruction of the events and their impact. The experience of writing is therapeutic for the writer, especially when the memoir recounts a crisis or life-threatening experience.
6. A memoir focuses and reflects on the relationship between the writer and a particular person, place, animal, event, or object. It explains the significance of the relationship.
7. The memoir centers on a problem or focuses on a conflict and its resolution and on the understanding of why and how the resolution is significant in your life.
8. The writer maintains a first-person point of view.

Epic Characteristics:

1. The epic hero is significant and glorified; is on a quest; has superior or superhuman strength, intelligence, and/or courage; is ethical; risks death for glory or for the greater good of society; is a strong and responsible leader; performs brave deeds; reflects the principles of a particular society.
2. The setting is vast, covering great nations, the world, or the universe.
3. The action consists of deeds of great valor or requiring superhuman courage.
4. Supernatural forces—gods, angels, and demons—interest themselves in the action.
5. The poet opens by stating the theme, invoking a muse, and beginning the narrative *in medias res*—in the middle of things—giving the necessary exposition later.
6. The poet includes catalogs of warriors, ships, and armies.
7. There are extended formal speeches by the main characters.
8. The poet retains a measure of objectivity and employs an elevated style.