



Read each myth or legend carefully. Use details from the passage to answer the questions in complete sentences.

Odysseus' Perilous Journey to the Underworld



Long ago, after the great Trojan War, the cunning hero Odysseus, king of Ithaca, faced a long and perilous journey home across the vast sea. His voyage was filled with challenges, and he desperately sought a way to return to his beloved kingdom and family.

To find his path, the sorceress Circe instructed Odysseus to journey to the very edge of the world, to the Land of the Dead. There, he had to consult the spirit of Tiresias, the blind prophet, who held the secrets of his future. This was a realm of eternal twilight, where the souls of the departed wandered like shadows, a place mortals rarely dared to enter.

Odysseus and his crew sailed to the dark shores of the Cimmerians.



Following Circe's instructions, Odysseus performed sacred rituals. He dug a trench and poured offerings of milk, honey, wine, water, and barley, then sacrificed two sheep. The spirits of the dead, drawn by the warm blood, began to gather around him, moaning and fluttering like bats. Among them, he saw his fallen comrade, Elpenor, and to his surprise, his own mother, Anticlea, whom he had not known was dead.

After speaking with Elpenor and his mother, Odysseus finally encountered the venerable Tiresias. The prophet drank the blood offering and then, with sightless eyes, revealed Odysseus's difficult destiny. He warned of



Poseidon's continued wrath, the dangers of the Sun God's cattle, and the greedy suitors who plagued his home in Ithaca. Tiresias also foretold Odysseus's eventual return and a peaceful death in old age.



Armed with Tiresias's prophecy and a heavy heart from seeing his mother, Odysseus returned to his ship, understanding the immense trials that still lay ahead. This myth shows the ancient Greeks' belief in an afterlife and the importance of seeking wisdom, even from beyond the grave. It also highlights the universal human yearning for guidance and the enduring bonds of family.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

(1) Who is the main character in this myth, and what is their role?

- (A) Odysseus, the wise king of Ithaca seeking his way home.
- (B) Circe, the sorceress who guides heroes.
- (C) Tiresias, the blind prophet who tells the future.
- (D) Hades, the god who rules the Land of the Dead.

(2) In this myth, Odysseus had to journey to the Land of the Dead in order to

_____.

— continue writing on the lines below

(3) What does the word 'venerable' mean as it is used in the story?

- (A) respected because of age or wisdom
- (B) powerful and dangerous
- (C) young and inexperienced
- (D) blind and helpless

(4) Why did Odysseus undertake the perilous journey to the Land of the Dead? What does this tell us about his character?



(5) What do you think this myth was trying to explain or teach? How does its message connect to something in real life today?

