



First Read Questions

1. The opening address to the muse gives readers and listeners the gist of the story and helps generate interest and mystery about the “adventures” that Odysseus and his men face as they try to go home. Also, by asking for help from a muse, the poet lets readers and listeners know immediately that this will be a long and important tale.
2. The idea that Odysseus is clever is introduced in “Sailing from Troy” and developed in “The Cyclops.” In “Sailing from Troy,” Odysseus says he is admired for his “guile in peace and war.” In “The Cyclops” the reader sees his guile in action. When they are trapped in the cave by Polyphemus the Cyclops, Odysseus realizes that he cannot kill Polyphemus because Polyphemus is the only one who can move the rock from the entrance. Odysseus thinks of a way to blind him and makes a plan to sneak out by holding on to the sheep.
3. Odysseus realizes that if he kills Polyphemus, he and his men will not be able to move the stone covering the exit from the cave and will be trapped inside. Rather than killing Polyphemus, Odysseus offers him wine to make him drunk and, when Polyphemus falls asleep, blinds him so that he will not be able to see Odysseus and his men as they escape the cave. Odysseus also tells Polyphemus that his name is “Nohbdy.” When Polyphemus is blinded, he screams for help from the other Cyclopes, who ask who has hurt him. Polyphemus says that “Nohbdy” has tricked or hurt him, and the other Cyclopes leave him alone. This eventually helps Odysseus and his men escape to their ship.



Vocabulary

- A. 1. No; to *plunder* is “to steal goods.”
2. Yes; they are “hiding to avoid arrest.”
3. No; Claudio has “inflicted harm in return for a wrong done unto him.”
4. No; Paul has “dealt with a situation quickly.”
5. False; Adam and Teela are “going somewhere” that might be risky or dangerous.
6. No; Sergeant Johnson is using “a carefully planned strategy.”