

Mr. Francis  
European Literature

### Using Textual Evidence from Homer's *Odyssey*

You should be prepared to consult an MLA style guide when completing assignments for this course. Below are some specific guidelines for completing your essay on Homer's *Odyssey*.

Your essay must defend a central thesis (argument). That thesis should be consistent with the topic sentences of your body paragraphs, and you will state 1-3 supporting arguments per body paragraph. All arguments should be supported by textual evidence: concrete details and/or quoted text.

Concrete details should be specific, and their context should be briefly stated. Do not summarize the text: expect your audience to be familiar with the *Odyssey*.

Quoted text should be introduced by briefly stating the context in the plot. It should be part of a longer sentence, often introduced by a subordinate clause. It must be cited parenthetically, with book and line numbers, e.g., (9.345-8).

In most cases, the citation should immediately follow the quoted text. Use appropriate transitions when quoting more than one section. You must correctly punctuate the quoted text and the sentence in which it appears. As it should be obvious you are quoting from the poem, there is rarely the need to include the author's name in your citation when doing so.

You do not need to cite concrete details or to quote plot elements. If you quote or paraphrase an outside source, you must cite it appropriately. There is no need to consult outside sources. Ask me first to approve any additional sources.

Because Robert Fitzgerald's version of the *Odyssey* is a verse translation, you will identify end breaks with a slash, offset with spaces, when quoting two or three lines. Quoted text of four or more lines should be offset as a block quotation with appropriate end breaks and should be indented--not centered. You may single-space block quotations<sup>†</sup>.

The typical formulation for using evidence should be: state your argument, state your evidence, provide your analysis. Your analysis will explain how the evidence supports your argument.

If you do not consult any additional sources, you do not need a works cited list. At the end of your essay, simply state, "A note about works consulted: the author has only used Robert Fitzgerald's translation of Homer's *Odyssey*." If you have consulted other sources (including Fitzgerald's postscript or a different translation), you must provide a works cited list immediately following your essay. Titles in your works cited list need to have been cited in your essay. To conserve resources, please avoid putting your declaration or works cited list on a separate page<sup>†</sup>.

Do not refer to quoted text as "quotes" or "quotations." Suggested alternatives include: passage, speech, section, line(s), statement, moment, description, action.

<sup>†</sup> exceptions to MLA style