



From myPerspectives (p. 500)

The Cyclops

In the next land we found were Cyclopes,¹⁵
giants, louts, without a law to bless them.
In ignorance leaving the fruitage of the earth in mystery
to the immortal gods, they neither plow
nor sow by hand, nor till the ground, though grain—
wild wheat and barley—grows untended, and
wine-grapes, in clusters, ripen in heaven's rains.
Cyclopes have no muster and no meeting,
no consultation or old tribal ways,
but each one dwells in his own mountain cave
dealing out rough justice to wife and child,
indifferent to what the others do. . . .

As we rowed on, and nearer to the mainland,
at one end of the bay, we saw a cavern
yawning above the water, screened with laurel,
and many rams and goats about the place
inside a sheepfold—made from slabs of stone
earthfast between tall trunks of pine and rugged
towering oak trees.

A prodigious¹⁶ man
slept in this cave alone, and took his flocks
to graze afield—remote from all companions,
knowing none but savage ways, a brute
so huge, he seemed no man at all of those

who eat good wheaten bread; but he seemed rather
a shaggy mountain reared in solitude.
We beached there, and I told the crew
to stand by and keep watch over the ship:
as for myself I took my twelve best fighters
and went ahead. I had a goatskin full
of that sweet liquor that Euanthes' son,
Maron, had given me. He kept Apollo's¹⁷
holy grove at Ismarus; for kindness
we showed him there, and showed his wife and child,
he gave me seven shining golden talents¹⁸
perfectly formed, a solid silver winebowl,
and then this liquor—twelve two-handled jars
of brandy, pure and fiery. Not a slave
in Maron's household knew this drink; only
he, his wife, and the storeroom mistress knew;
and they would put one cupful—ruby-colored,
honey-smooth—in twenty more of water,
but still the sweet scent hovered like a fume
over the winebowl. No man turned away
when cups of this came round.

A wineskin full

I brought along, and victuals¹⁹ in a bag,
for in my bones I knew some towering brute
would be upon us soon—all outward power,
a wild man, ignorant of civility.

We climbed, then, briskly to the cave. But Cyclops
had gone afield, to pasture his fat sheep,
so we looked round at everything inside:

a drying rack that sagged with cheeses, pens
crowded with lambs and kids,²⁰ each in its class:
firstlings apart from middlings, and the 'dewdrops,'
or newborn lambkins, penned apart from both.

And vessels full of whey²¹ were brimming there—
bowls of earthenware and pails for milking.

My men came pressing round me, pleading:

'Why not

take these cheeses, get them stowed, come back,
throw open all the pens, and make a run for it?

We'll drive the kids and lambs aboard. We say
put out again on good salt water!'

Ah,

how sound that was! Yet I refused. I wished
to see the cave man, what he had to offer—

THE WANDERINGS OF ODYSSEUS

After the Trojan War was ended by the burning of Troy, the Greeks filled their ships with precious things which they had gathered, and set sail for home. It was not a long journey back to Greece, and some of the princes returned quickly and happily to their own land. But one prince, named Odysseus, had more adventures on the journey back than he had met with before the city of Troy itself; and it was not until ten long years had passed that he succeeded in reaching his native land again

Odysseus had been one of the wisest and bravest men in the battles about Troy, and he proved himself wise and brave in his long and perilous journey home. It would be too much to tell of all the adventures that he had, though some time you may read them in a book composed by a great Greek poet named Homer. Here we can tell only a few of the wonderful things that happened to him.

After sailing for a long time, and seeing many strange lands, Odysseus and his men came to the land of the Cyclops. These were a wild and lawless race of giants, each of whom had only one great eye in the middle of his forehead. They neither planted nor plowed the fields, but lived off their herds of sheep and cattle. Odysseus landed here, and went with some of his men to explore the country. Soon they found a great high cave, with much cheese and milk in it. They entered this to wait till the owner should come; and by and by he appeared, driving his herds into the cave with him.

When Odysseus and his men saw how large and fierce he was, they would gladly have run away; but the giant had rolled a huge rock against the mouth of the cave so they could not get out. When the Cyclops saw them, he immediately showed them what they might expect from him, by seizing two of the men and eating them. The next morning he ate two more of them, and then drove his flocks out to pasture. But before he left he rolled the rock back before the mouth of the cave, so that Odysseus and his men were still kept prisoners.

While he was gone, Odysseus planned a way of escape. He found a long stake in the cave; and the end of this he sharpened into a point, and then hardened it in the fire. When the giant had come back, and had again eaten two of the men, Odysseus gave him some wine which they had brought with them when they came to the cave. When he had taken this, and was sleeping

drunkenly, Odysseus and his men plunged the sharp stick into his one eye and blinded him.

The Cyclops could not see them now, and so he could no longer catch them. The next morning Odysseus and his men got out of the cave by clinging to the under side of the sheep as the giant let them out to pasture. And though the giant felt the *back* of each sheep as it went out, to see that none of his prisoners got away, they all escaped safely. But it happened that this cruel giant was the son of Poseidon, the god of the sea; and from this time Odysseus and his companions had to endure the wrath of the sea-god for what they had done to his son.

After leaving the land of the Cyclops, Odysseus came to the island of Aelous, the god of the winds, who entertained them kindly for a whole month. When Odysseus took leave of him, Aeolus gave him a strong sheepskin bag, closely fastened with silver. This held all the winds of heaven except the west wind, which was left out to blow him gently home. With this Odysseus sailed for nine days steadily onward, until he was so near his native land that he saw the people on the shore. Then, while he slept, his men secretly opened the bag of the winds to see what great present it was that King Aeolus had given to their leader. All the winds of heaven leapt from the bag; and storms raged about their heads, and blew them out across the sea, until they reached the very island of King Aeolus from which they had departed. After that King Aeolus refused to help them.

Next Odysseus came to the island of an enchantress named Circe. Here some of his men were changed into swine by her. But by his bravery and the help of the god Hermes, Odysseus overcame the enchantress, and forced her to change them back into men again. Then Odysseus and his companions lived pleasantly with her for a whole year; and when at last they were ready to set sail again, Circe told Odysseus what he must do to get safely back home. This was to go down to the world of the dead, and ask concerning his journey. He did this, and there he was told of the wrath of Poseidon because of what he had done to his son. But he was told also that he should reach his home in spite of Poseidon, if he and his men would only leave untouched the oxen of the sun when they should come to them.

Then Odysseus returned to the upper world, and once more he and his men set out on their way. Again they met with many adventures. At last they came to the island where the oxen of the sun fed in the fields. Odysseus did not wish to

land here, but his men insisted on spending the night on shore. When Odysseus had made his men promise not to harm the oxen of the sun, he agreed to this, and they landed. That night a great storm came, and for a whole month they could not leave the place. Their food gave out, and though they hunted and fished they could not get enough to eat. At last, while Odysseus slept, his men killed some of the oxen of the sun and ate them; and Helios, the sun-god, was angered at them.

When the storm ceased they set sail again. But they had not gone far before Zeus hurled a great thunderbolt at their ship because they had eaten the oxen of the sun. The ship was wrecked, and all the men were drowned except Odysseus. For ten days he swam in the sea supported by the mast of his ship. Then he was thrown on the shore of an island which was ruled by the goddess Calypso. Odysseus was kindly received by the goddess, and he stayed here seven years. But he longed to return to his wife and to his native land. At last the goddess agreed to let him go; and on a strongly built raft he set sail once more—this time alone. For seventeen days he sailed on in safety. But Poseidon had not forgotten his old anger against Odysseus. He sent a great storm which wrecked his raft; but Odysseus once more swam ashore and was saved.

This time Odysseus found the daughter of the king of the land washing linen with her maidens in a river which flowed into the sea. When he told her his story, she took him to her father; and at last Odysseus was taken to his own home in one of the ships which belonged to this king.

So, after much suffering and many wanderings, Odysseus reached home. But his troubles were not yet ended, for he found that in his absence evil men had taken possession of his property. With the help of his son and a faithful servant, Odysseus succeeded in overcoming them, and got possession of his house and lands. And at last he lived quietly and peacefully once more in the island kingdom over which he had ruled before he set out for the war against Troy twenty years before.

The stories of the gods, and of the Argonauts, and of the warriors who fought around Troy, are what we call "myths." They tell about things which occurred so very long ago that nobody can tell just when they happened, or how much of the story is true and how much is only what the Greeks imagined about it. Now you

are to read about things most of which we are quite sure did happen, and which took place just about at the time and place and in the way that the story says. These we call "history," to distinguish them from the myths.

How does Baldwin's retelling adapt the Cyclops episode differently than Homer's original does?

- A. In Baldwin's version, Odysseus shows more concern for his men's safety.
- B. In Baldwin's version, the story is told through simplified narrative summary rather than vivid descriptive detail.
- C. In Baldwin's version, Odysseus escapes by using a different method than in Homer's account.
- D. In Baldwin's version, the Cyclops is portrayed as more sympathetic to his victims.

Answer Key

Percentage of Students Answering Correctly: [To be determined after administration]

Reporting Category: Reading Across Genres & Vocabulary

Benchmark: ELA.9.R.3.3

Benchmark Description: Compare and contrast the ways in which authors have adapted mythical, classical, or religious texts.

Table Match Question

Complete the table to show how Homer's original and Baldwin's adaptation present the Cyclops episode.

	Homer's Original	Baldwin's Adaptation	Both Passages
uses direct dialogue and speeches from characters	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
describes Odysseus escaping by having his men hold on to the sheep	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	Ⓕ
emphasizes the educational purpose of the story	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓖ
includes sensory details like the wine's scent and color	Ⓙ	Ⓚ	Ⓛ

Answer Key:

Percentage of Students Answering Correctly: [To be determined after administration]

Reporting Category: Reading Across Genres & Vocabulary

Benchmark: ELA.9.R.3.3

Benchmark Description: Compare and contrast the ways in which authors have adapted mythical, classical, or religious texts.

For struggling 9th grade readers, here are the vocabulary words that will likely cause issues:

Homer's Odyssey excerpt:

Tier 3 (Very Difficult/Archaic)

- **prodigious** - enormous, remarkable (line about "prodigious man")
- **victuals** - food supplies
- **civility** - civilized behavior, politeness
- **firstlings, middlings, dewdrops** - archaic terms for different ages of lambs
- **whhey** - liquid part of milk (in cheesemaking)
- **fruitage** - fruit/produce of the earth

Tier 2 (Moderately Difficult)

- **muster** - gathering/assembly
- **consultation** - formal meeting/discussion
- **untended** - not cared for
- **talents** - ancient Greek currency (not the modern meaning)
- **earthenware** - pottery made from clay
- **brimming** - overflowing, full to the top
- **liquor** - any liquid (not just alcohol - could confuse students)

Baldwin's adaptation:

Tier 2 (Moderately Difficult)

- **perilous** - dangerous
- **drunkenly** - in a drunken manner
- **endure** - suffer through, withstand
- **wrath** - extreme anger
- **enchantress** - female magician/sorceress
- **swine** - pigs
- **insisted** - demanded firmly
- **mast** - tall pole on a ship
- **maidens** - young women (archaic)

Potentially Confusing Context-Dependent Words:

- **Cyclopes/Cyclops** - one-eyed giants (students need the context)
- **Poseidon** - Greek god of the sea

Would you like me to create a vocabulary preview activity or glossary to support students before they read these passages?