

Penelope Needs a Friend

| Problem | Goal(s) |
|--|---------|
| <p>Penelope's husband has been gone for nearly 20 years. A houseful of suitors are eating her food and destroying her home. Odysseus is presumed dead, giving the suitors rights in her home until she marries one. She despises the suitors and has no interest in anyone but her long lost Odysseus.</p> | |

| Alternatives | Pros (+) and Cons (-) |
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| Decision(s) | Reason(s) |
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Penelope Needs a Friend (Example)

| Problem | Goal(s) |
|---|---|
| Penelope's husband has been gone for nearly 20 years. A houseful of suitors are eating her food and destroying her home. Odysseus is presumed dead, giving the suitors rights in her home until she marries one. She despises the suitors and has no interest in anyone but her long lost Odysseus. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penelope's goal is to reunite with Odysseus. • If Odysseus is dead, she'd be content to live the rest of her life as queen and let her son be her successor. • She wants the suitors to leave, forever. • She wants to remain loyal to Odysseus and true to herself, while staying true to Greek customs and traditions. |

| Alternatives | Pros (+) and Cons (-) |
|---|---|
| Do nothing | + Technically she wouldn't be married to one of the suitors and if Odysseus were to return, she'd still be available. |
| | - The suitors won't leave until she chooses. She will, therefore, be responsible for taking care of them until they choose to leave, which isn't going to happen. |
| Choose the least disgusting suitor to marry | + All but one of the suitors would be forced to leave. |
| | - She'd be married to a disgusting suitor. No Odysseus ever. Her son would be influenced by a Cretan. The jilted suitors would probably start fighting. |
| Run away | + She'd be rid of the suitors. I'd assume she'd bring Telemachus with her. |
| | - She'd lose the kingdom. If O does return, he won't know how to find her. How exactly is she going to eat? |
| Wait for Odysseus to return (disguised as a beggar, string his bow, shoot an arrow through 12 axe handles, slaughter the suitors, restore the kingdom, and live happily ever after) | + I like this plan. It would accomplish all her goals. |
| | - Seems a little far-fetched, unless, of course, Athena intervenes. |

| Decision(s) | Reason(s) |
|---|--|
| Hold out as long as she possibly can until Odysseus returns | One of the tell-tale signs of a hero is to go for broke. The only way Penelope can accomplish her goals is to hold off the suitors as long as possible, which she's done a great job of doing thus far. If that fails, oh well. It would be no worse than the other options. |

Here are a smattering of common core objectives this assignment covers.

- **W.9-10.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- **RL.9-10.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RL.9-10.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **RL.9-10.3** Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- **RL.9-10.10** By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

This is just one sample assignment in [The Odyssey teaching unit](#). The entire unit contains about 7 weeks of lesson plans, all aligned to the common core; a seven week calendar layout of the unit; a summary and analysis of the epic; a guide for watching *The Odyssey* movie, including at which point to find each adventure and what parts to avoid; four quizzes with answer keys; a slew of graphic organizers and assignment handouts; a quiver full of rubrics, projects, and essay ideas; and more.