The Odyssey Exam

1. Who is the protagonist of The Odyssey?
   a. Penelope
   b. Homer
   c. Odysseus
   d. Poseidon

2. What are some of the protagonist’s positive attributes?
   a. He is weak and readily succumbs to temptation
   b. He has a pronounced limp and can hardly walk
   c. He is strong and agile and can fell twelve axes in one bow shot
   d. He is obese and a drunkard

3. Who are a few of Odysseus’s antagonists?
   a. Telemachus, Athena and Poseidon
   b. Telemachus, Athena and the Suitors
   c. Scylla, Polyphemus and Calypso
   d. All of the above

4. Who is Odysseus’s greatest nemesis?
   a. Athena
   b. Nausicaa
   c. Penelope
   d. None of the above

5. What are some of the themes conveyed in The Odyssey?
   a. A man’s personal strength is determined by how well he can resist temptation
   b. The role of a god is to do for man only what he cannot do for himself
   c. We are often most loyal to those of the same lineage, or kin
   d. All of the above

6. What literary device does the following excerpt exemplify?
   By now, all the survivors, all who avoided headlong death, were safe at home, escaped the wars and waves.
   a. Alliteration – wars and waves
   b. Metaphor – the death they avoided was not a literal death
   c. Oxymoron – “head” and “long” are complete opposites
   d. Hyperbole – the use of the word “all” is a ridiculous exaggeration

7. In this line “And with those words Dawn rose on her golden throne” the speaker means:
   a. Dawn is a queen who sits on a throne
   b. It is morning and the sun is rising
   c. It is sunset and the moon is rising
   d. Dawn is getting up from her chair
8. What kind of struggle is exemplified in the following excerpt?

*But Odysseus aimed and shot Antinous square in the throat*

*And the point went stabbing clean through the soft neck and out*

a. Internal—Odysseus struggles with his own fear of blood
b. External—Telemachus kills Antinous with fire
c. External—Odysseus seeks and exacts revenge
d. Internal—Odysseus struggles with his mixed feelings about murder

9. The phrase “in the cave’s mouth” is an example of:
   a. Irony
   b. Simile
   c. Repetition
   d. Personification

10. In the beginning of the poem, Zeus’s feelings towards Odysseus could best be described as
   a. Zeus doesn’t care about Odysseus one way or the other
   b. Zeus hates Odysseus because Odysseus blinded Poseidon’s son, the Cyclops Polyphemus
   c. Zeus wants to help Odysseus get home, even if it upsets his brother Poseidon
   d. Zeus idolizes Odysseus and thinks Odysseus should become a god

11. At Odysseus’s in Ithaca, we are introduced to the suitors who are there because
   a. They are trying to escape from their own wives and children
   b. They are genuinely offering their condolences and trying to help Penelope due to the supposed death of Odysseus
   c. While waiting for Penelope to make up her mind about which one of them she will marry, they are eating and drinking all of the food in the house
   d. None of the above

12. In which of these phrases is Odysseus praising Calypso?
   a. “Don’t be angry with me...”
   b. “Much have I suffered, labored long and hard by now...”
   c. “Nevertheless I long – I pine, all my days --/to travel home and see the dawn of my return.”
   d. “Look at my wise Penelope. She falls far short of you...”

13. How do Odysseus and his men avoid destruction by the Sirens?
   a. Odysseus orders his men to plug their ears with beeswax and have them lash him to the mast of the ship
   b. They sing their own songs in the loudest possible voices to drown out the sound of the Sirens
   c. Athena puts all of the men into a magical sleep and guides the boat herself
   d. The men throw trinkets and pieces of brightly colored cloth onto the island. The Sirens are fascinated with these items and forget to sing
14. All the following are vehicles of temptation EXCEPT:
   a. Calypso
   b. Lotus Eaters
   c. Charybdis
   d. Sirens

15. What is the best transcription of the following excerpt?

Yet six more days my eager companions feasted on the cattle of the Sun, the pick of the herds they’d driven off, but then, when Cronian Zeus brought on the seventh day, the wind in its ceaseless raging dropped at last, and stepping the mast at once, hoisting the white sail, we boarded ship and launched her, made for open sea.

   a. After six days of eating the remaining cows and right after the wind died down enough, we set sail
   b. After a week of eating the best cows, and once the wind was at its strongest, we took our chances and set sail on the raging sea
   c. After that cow Calypso let me go, I rushed off for a week-long journey on horseback
   d. All of the above

16. Why is it necessary for Odysseus to force his men away from the land of the Lotus-Eaters?
   a. The lotus fruit contains a magical drug that makes the men want to stay and eat more
   b. The lotus fruit gives the men panic attacks; they become fearful of embarking on another sea voyage
   c. The lotus fruit paralyzes the men so they cannot leave by themselves
   d. The lotus fruit makes them fall in love with the women of the land and not want to leave

17. Which of the following does Odysseus NOT do during his encounter with the Cyclops?
   a. Odysseus offers Polyphemus wine which makes Polyphemus fall asleep
   b. Odysseus and his men drive a sharpened log into Polyphemus’s eye while he sleeps
   c. Odysseus lies to the Cyclops about how big he is
   d. Odysseus tricks the Cyclops by saying his name is “Nobody”

18. How does Penelope test Odysseus to confirm his identity?
   a. She asks the suitors to bathe Odysseus in order to see whether or not his body is scarred
   b. She asks the suitors to string a bow and shoot twelve axes, which is a feat only Odysseus can do
   c. She asks Odysseus a series of questions involving pigs
   d. None of the above
19. Odysseys and his men come within sight of Ithaca. Why do they not land?  
   a. They are afraid they will not be remembered and will be killed as intruders  
   b. They want to wait until they have time to clean up and properly prepare themselves  
   c. The men think that the bag from Aeolus contains a treasure that Odysseus is keeping for himself  
   d. While Odysseus is sleeping, they open the bag, the winds escape and they are blown back to the Aeolan island

20. How does Odysseus get rid of the suitors in his house?  
   a. He kills them with arrows and spears  
   b. He ridicules them and they leave  
   c. He ships them off to the Cyclops whose sight has been restored  
   d. Both a and b

21. When Odysseus and his men return to Aeolus's island for the second time, Aelous...  
   a. Gives them a feast and offers to help them again  
   b. Sacrifices one of Odysseus's crew members to Zeus  
   c. Refuses to help them again, claiming they are cursed by the gods  
   d. Begs to join their expedition

22. The only reason that Odysseus is able to resist Circe's enchanted wine is because  
   a. Circe is too attracted to Odysseus and decides not to give it to him  
   b. Odysseus receives help from Hermes beforehand  
   c. Odysseus is too physically strong and the potion has no effect on him  
   d. Circe spills the wine on the floor, thus preventing Odysseus from drinking it

23. Which of the following is an example of the crew's disloyalty to Odysseus?  
   a. Opening the bag of wind while Odysseus is sleeping  
   b. Eating Helios' cattle after being warned by Odysseus not to  
   c. Being consumed by the magic of the Lotus Flower and having to be dragged away by Odysseus  
   d. All of the above

24. Who or what is Scylla?  
   a. The king of the winds  
   b. The flesh-eating whirlpool  
   c. The six-headed flesh-eating monster  
   d. The queen of the Sirens

25. Eurycleia discovers the real identity of Odysseus when  
   a. She recognizes a scar while washing Odysseus's legs and feet  
   b. Argos recognizes the scent of his owner, Odysseus, and runs excitedly to the beggar  
   c. Telemachus accidentally reveals Odysseus's true identity to Penelope  
   d. Eurycleia overhears a conversation between Odysseus and Eumaeus and knows that Odysseus is disguised as the beggar
26. Why does Zeus destroy Odysseus’s ship and kill his crew?
   a. Like Poseidon, Zeus hates Odysseus and wants to punish him
   b. Odysseus’s crew ate the cattle on the island of Helios
   c. Zeus misfires on a lightning bolt and accidentally strikes Odysseus’ ship
   d. None of the above

27. According to Joseph Campbell, what is the first of twelve steps on the hero’s journey?
   a. Call to Adventure
   b. Refusal of the Call
   c. Ordeal
   d. Ordinary World

28. On which step of the hero’s journey is Odysseus when he is first helped by Athena?
   a. Ordinary World
   b. Ordeal
   c. Meeting of the Mentor
   d. Innermost Cave

29. Which is the most accurate definition of plunder?
   a. To help
   b. To wonder
   c. To rob
   d. To make happy

30. Which is the most accurate definition of squander?
   a. To give as a gift
   b. To waste or to spend extravagantly
   c. To surrender
   d. To blind

31. Which is the most accurate definition of fleece?
   a. To rob
   b. To feast
   c. A fabric or coat made of wool
   d. Both a and c

32. Which of the following is a passage from Book 21 of The Odyssey?
   a. “...So with his virtuoso ease Odysseus strung his mighty bow. Quickly his right hand plucked the string to test its pitch...”
   b. “Here at this bay the Phaeacian crew put in – they’d known it long before – driving the ship so hard she ran up onto the beach for a good half her length...”
   c. “They might well wonder, blind to what had happened, till Alcinous rose and made things all too clear...”
   d. “At once they drove off the Sungod’s finest cattle – close at hand, not far from the blue-prowed ship they grazed, those splendid beasts with their broad brows and curving horns...”
33. When and by whom was *The Odyssey* likely written?
   a. Fifteenth century by William Shakespeare
   b. Eight century B.C. by Homer
   c. 1850 by Robert Fagles
   d. 1984 by George Orwell

34. Why does *The Odyssey* begin in media res, which means “in the middle of things”?
   a. As a way to grab the audience’s attention
   b. Because Homer never studied literature and didn’t know that one usually starts with the set-up
   c. Because Shakespeare started all of his plays that way and Homer admired Shakespeare
   d. All of the above

35. How does *The Odyssey* relate to modern life?
   a. People today struggle with temptation and also wonder whether their lives are predetermined by fate or are instead the collective culmination of a series of choices
   b. People today are fascinated by fantasy, adventure and characters that are greater than everyday mortals
   c. People today are frequently given opportunities to be heroic – or at least to try
   d. All of the above

**ESSAY QUESTION**

On separate, lined paper write a 300+-word summary of *The Odyssey*. Be as thorough and detailed as you can.