

Greece

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Homer, the blind poet, documented the events of the Trojan War back in 800 B.C. in *The Iliad*, the first of Homer's two epics relating to the ancient Greeks. *The Iliad* has been translated into many languages, and is a part of curriculums around the world. It chronicles a battle and is based on the real Trojan War. The story that follows is based on Homer's works. Carefully read the text—CLOSE READ the text—highlight passages, make notations in the margin.**

## **The Apple of Discord—The Story of the Trojan War**

The greatest war in ancient Greek history, the Trojan War, was started with an apple, the apple of Eris to be exact. Eris, the goddess of Discord was well known around Mt. Olympus (the residence of the Olympic gods and goddesses) as a poor and ungracious party guest. Indeed, she was known to start disastrous arguments. It was only natural, then, that when King Peleus and the sea nymph Thetis were planning the guest list for their wedding that Eris was not to be considered.

Outraged by their oversight, Eris worked her magic at the wedding without being present! Into the wedding hall she threw a golden apple. The inscription on the fateful fruit read "For the Fairest". Of course, every goddess present wanted the apple for herself, and heated arguments ensued. After much debate and many tears, three strong candidates for the apple emerged, Aphrodite, the goddess of love; Hera, the wife of Zeus; and Athena, the goddess of wisdom.

Who was really the fairest? The question was put to Zeus, ruler of men and gods. Realizing what a loaded question this was, Zeus pushed the decision over to Paris, a Trojan prince. Each of the three goddesses tried to win Paris's favor by offering him bribes. Hera offered Paris military glory, Athena offered him worldly wisdom, and Aphrodite offered Paris the fairest woman on Earth. When decision tie came, Paris was ready with an answer. Aphrodite was truly the fairest of them all.

The fairest woman in the world was a queen, and of godly parentage. The biological daughter of Zeus and Leda, Helen was the most beautiful woman in all the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Naturally, all of the men from miles around came to ask her earthly father, King Tyndareus, for Helen's hand in marriage. So many suitors were there that Tyndareus feared his kingdom would be split in civil war if he chose the wrong husband for his "daughter". He contrived a vow to be taken by all of the many suitors. If Helen or her husband came to distress, all of the other suitors were to come to their aid. All of the suitors agreed, and Tyndareus chose Menelaus to be Helen's husband. He also made him the King of Sparta.

As Aphrodite had promised Paris the fairest woman in the world, Helen was fated to become Paris's lover. One small problem with that arrangement was her marriage to King Menelaus. Paris journeyed to Helen's home in Sparta, and while Menelaus was away, he took her to Troy.

The abduction of Helen brought the wrath of Greece down upon Troy's head, and the city would pay dearly for Paris's romancing of a Greek queen.

King Menelaus was hesitant to call Greece to arms against Troy. However, his brother Agamemnon saw nothing but opportunity in the entire situation. Agamemnon, seeking glory on the battlefield, took advantage of the suitors' vow and united the forces into a magnificent fleet to take Troy. Men had to leave their families and their kingdoms behind to join the Greek army. Some came reluctantly. One such man was Odysseus, the king of Ithaca. His wife Penelope had just given birth to a son. ...Odysseus had been one of Helen's suitors, so he had to honor his vow.

Oddly enough, Greece's greatest hero, Achilles, was discovered in Lycomedes's court dressed as a woman! Thetis, the mother of Achilles, was reluctant to send her only child into battle, so she dressed him up as a lady of Lycomedes's court. By using his cunning, Odysseus uncovered Achilles's true identity and he was forced to join the Greek fleet.

The Greek heroes assembled in Sparta and were about to set sail for Troy when a terrifying storm rolled in from the sea. The winds howled and torrential rains drenched the land. Calchas, the Greek prophet, told Agamemnon that the goddess of the hunt, Artemis, was angry with the Greeks. ...In order to appease the goddess and end the storm, Agamemnon had to sacrifice his daughter...to Artemis.

...Agamemnon lured his daughter to her death by telling her that she was to marry Achilles, the great Greek hero. ...Her father sacrificed her to Artemis, who in turn made the weather favorable for sailing. After the awful deed was done, the Greeks set sail for Troy. ...

Odysseus, known for his eloquence, and Menelaus were sent as ambassadors to Priam, the King of Troy. They demanded Helen ...be returned. King Priam refused and Odysseus and Menelaus returned with the announcement that war was inevitable.

The first nine years of the war consisted of both war in Troy and war against neighboring regions. ...The Trojan War was approaching the endurance of a decade when the Greeks' luck started to run out. Men were worn out and tired of fighting against the fortified city. Troy had been under siege for ten years, yet the walls of the city remained impenetrable. Battle weary and almost defeated, the Greek force was ready to call it quits. The Greek leaders were unwilling to turn back without the treasure of the city in the hulls of their ships, so Odysseus devised a plan full of cunning that was sure to get the Greek army inside the walls of Troy. ...Odysseus ordered a large wooden horse to be built. Its insides were hollow so that soldiers could hide within it. ...



The first stage of the plan called for the Greeks to stage a retreat by water. Then a Greek “traitor” would be left behind to tell the “victorious” Trojans that the horse was a gift for the gods and was not to be taken into the walled city, else the gods’ favor fall upon the Trojans. Of course, the Trojans brought the huge horse into the city, breaking down parts of the wall to fit the enormous structure through the city gates. During the night while the Trojans were celebrating their “victory,” Odysseus and the others who had concealed themselves inside of the horse dropped down from the horse and let the rest of the army in through the gates.



Once all the Greeks were inside of the city, mass destruction and chaos broke loose. The Greeks burned the city, including the temples, mercilessly killed all of the Trojan men, and enslaved the women. ...Menelaus found Helen. He drew his sword to kill her because of all the trouble she had caused, but the goddess Aphrodite protected her, and when Menelaus looked at Helen, he was so overwhelmed with her beauty that his sword fell to the ground. The Trojan Horse was ultimately the demise of the Trojans, and still stands today as evidence that brains, not brawn, will often win the battle.



With the sack of the city, the Greeks took everything from Troy, but mysteriously the treasure of Troy was nowhere to be found! When the city started to burn, King Priam concealed the royal treasure in the wall of Troy, knowing that the Greeks would never think to look there. So the great Trojan treasure was not discovered by the Greeks, but by a German named Heinrich Schiellmann in 1870, centuries after the city had fallen.

**Taken from:**

“Troy: Myth and Reality?” <http://library.thinkquest.org/C0119366/eng/treas.htm>

“The Apple of Discord” <http://www.stanford.edu/~plomio/history.html>

*The Iliad* tells the tale of the Trojan War, but there's more to the story than the conflict between Mycenae and Troy. After reading "The Apple of Discord—the Story of the Trojan War", answer the following as an analysis of the story.

1. What is the role of women? How is this explained in the story—provide a quote from the story to support your position.
2. How are the gods and/or goddesses portrayed? Provide an example—a quote from the story to support your position.
3. Offer a suggestion as to why Homer would portray the gods/goddesses this way.
4. In your own words, what is the moral of the story? That is...what is the story really about? How do you know? Provide a quote from the story to support your position. (If you can identify one or more morals, please do.)
5. What part of the story stood out to you the most and why? Briefly describe one passage and explain why you found it to be more memorable than the rest.