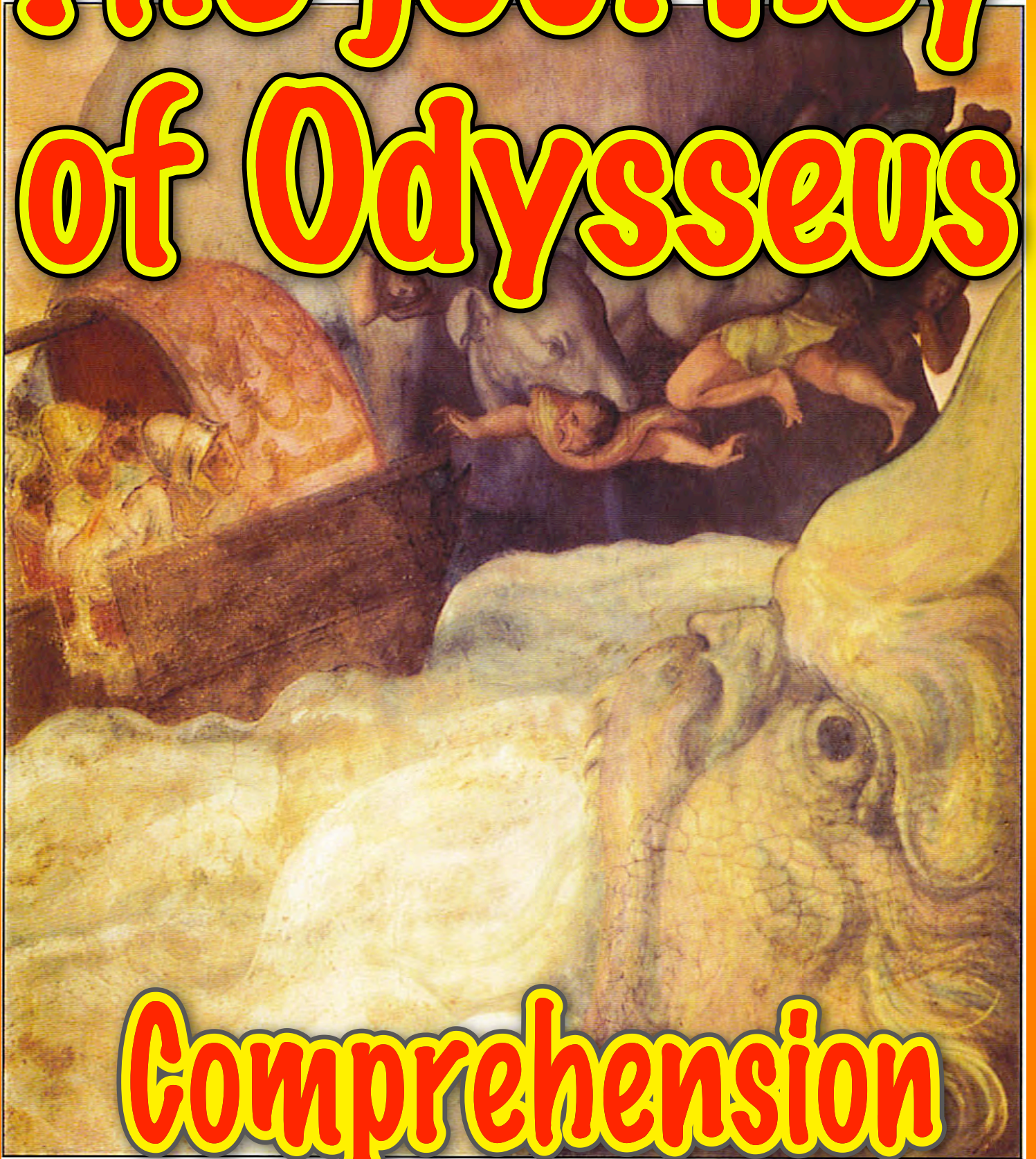


# The journey of Odysseus



Comprehension

# The journey of Odysseus

Odysseus was exhausted. He had fought for ten years against the Trojans in the Trojan War. Then he had set sail with his men for his home on the island of Ithaca. The journey should have been quick, but they had been at sea for many months now.

One day, Odysseus and his men landed on a strange island. It was where the god of the wind, Aiolos, lived. Aiolos let Odysseus and his men rest on his island. When it was time for them to go, Aiolos gave Odysseus a bag that was tied up very tightly. Aiolos explained that he had put strong winds inside, so that only the wind Odysseus needed to get home would blow. All Odysseus had to do was keep the bag sealed at all costs.

Odysseus ordered his men to set sail. He did not tell them what was inside the bag, but they were desperate to know. One of the men thought it must be treasure, and he planned to take it when he got the chance.

The chance came a few days later. Odysseus was so exhausted from watching over the bag that he fell into a deep sleep. The man who wanted the treasure made his move. He grabbed the bag, and cut with his knife the knot that sealed it. He peered into the bag, and was disappointed. It looked like there was nothing in it!

Just then, a strong gust of wind blew out from the bag and knocked the man over. More gusts rushed out of the bag. Each one was stronger than the last. Soon, a howling storm was raging around the boat. It woke Odysseus up. He knew at once what had happened. Now he and his men were caught in a dangerous storm, and it was blowing them away from Ithaca. Odysseus groaned in despair. What if he and his men never made it home?

# Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'sealed'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'sealed' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'sealed'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'sealed'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'sealed' means.

Try this for other words, too. 

# Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

**Key word**

**Synonym (similar word)**

Example: exhausted

very tired

# Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

Odysseus did not tell his men what was in the bag, but they thought it was treasure.

One day, Odysseus and his men landed on Aiolos' island, where they rested for a while.

The storm winds rushed out and blew the boat off course.

When Odysseus fell asleep, one of his men took the bag and opened it.

Odysseus was on his way home from the Trojan War. The journey was taking longer than expected.

When it was time to go, Aiolos gave Odysseus a sealed bag. The bag must not be opened, or the storm winds would be released.

# Get to the facts

1 For how long did Odysseus fight in the Trojan War?

2 What was Aiolos god of?

3 What did Aiolos give Odysseus?

4 What did one of Odysseus' men think was inside the bag?

5 What were Odysseus and his men caught in?

# Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

## In the storm

The storm had been raging for an hour now. The boat raced up and down enormous waves, and leant sharply to one side. I struggled to keep my balance. A strong gust of wind knocked me over the side of the boat. I crashed into the water... (now complete the story)

**Below is a plain text version for printing:**

## Understanding words:

- a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'sealed'.
- b From that sentence, suggest what 'sealed' means.
- c Write a new sentence using the word 'sealed'.
- d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'sealed'.
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## Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – exhausted

Synonym – very tired

## Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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## **Get to the facts:**

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- 2 What was Aiolos god of?
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