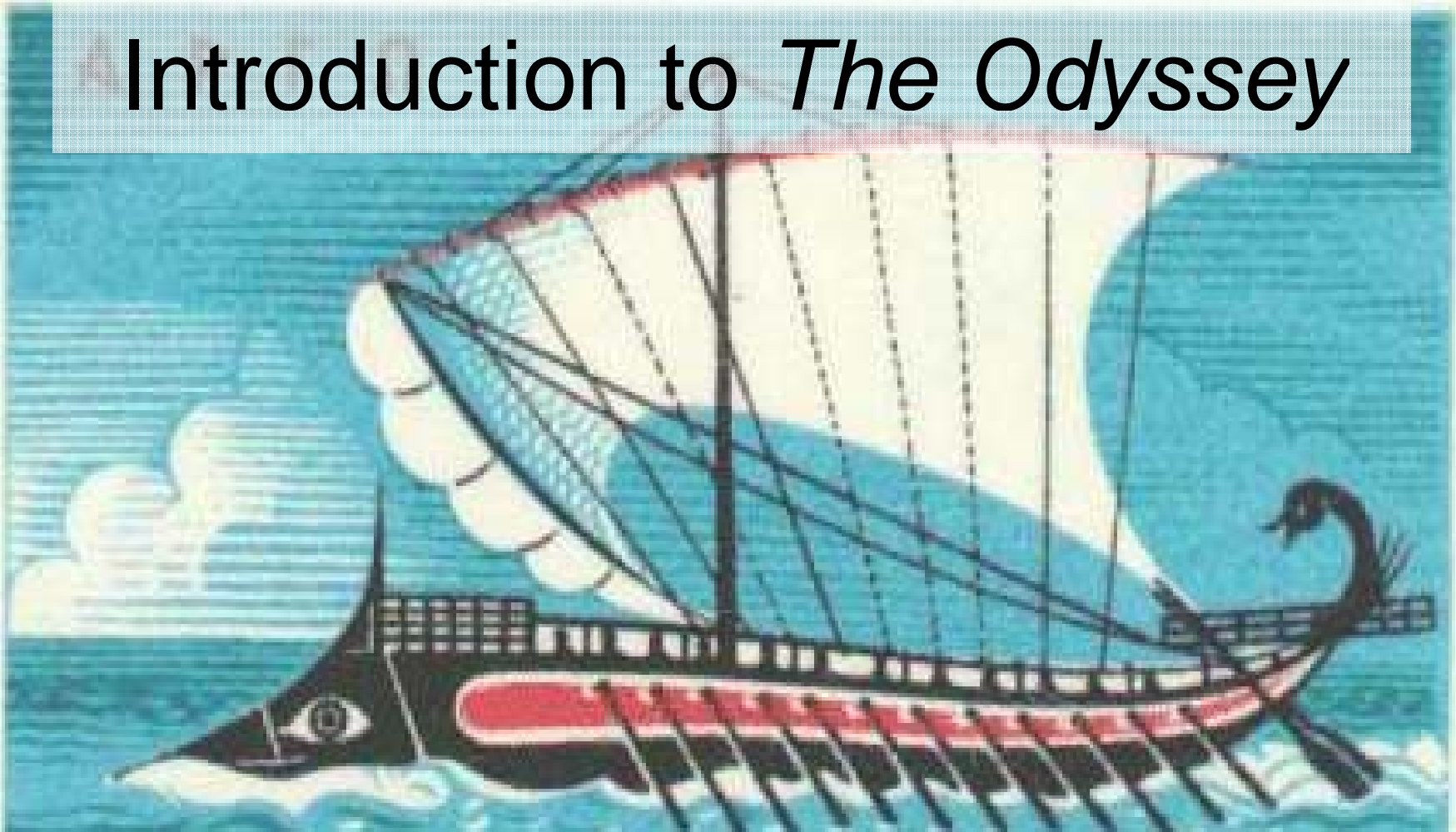


# Introduction to *The Odyssey*



**Learn it, Love it, Live it:  
This stuff will be on a test!**

5  
PX. 5

# I wonder who wrote *The Odyssey*?

- I. The author was Homer. He was blind, and he was a minstrel (or bard)
  - A. He wrote 2 epics: long, narrative poems
    1. The Iliad is a war epic
    2. The Odyssey is a long journey epic
  - B. They were written about 800 B.C. and told about events that happened in 1200 B.C.



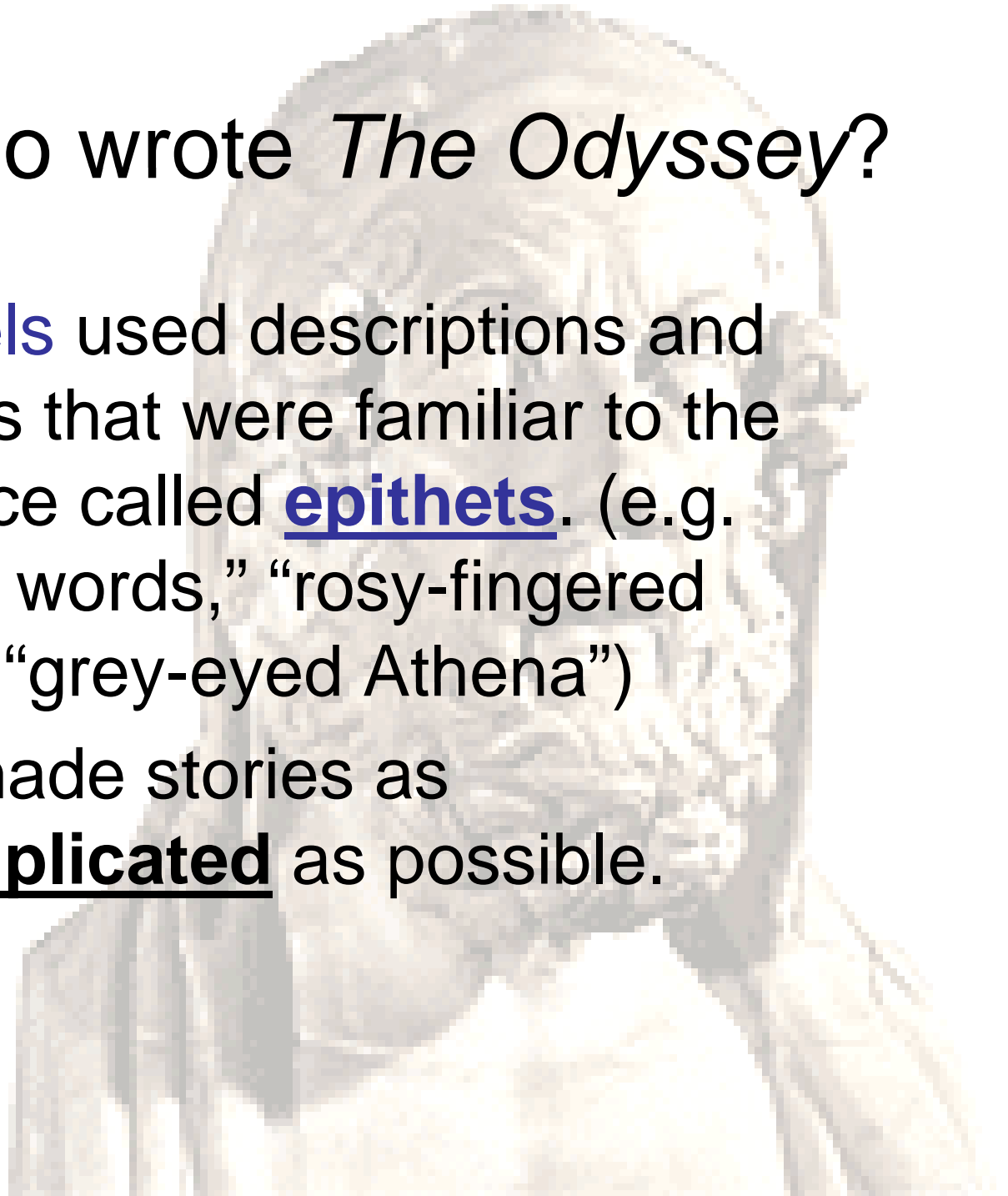
I wonder who wrote *The Odyssey*?

C. A **minstrel** is an entertainer who told stories and sang songs. Also called a **bard**, **rhapsode**, **epic singer**, or **song stitcher**. A minstrel was both a historian and an entertainer.

1. **Minstrels** **borrowed** material from legends, epics, and myths already known by the people.

# I wonder who wrote *The Odyssey*?

2. **Minstrels** used descriptions and phrases that were familiar to the audience called **epithets**. (e.g. “wing’d words,” “rosy-fingered dawn,” “grey-eyed Athena”)
3. They made stories as **uncomplicated** as possible.



I wonder who wrote *The Odyssey*?

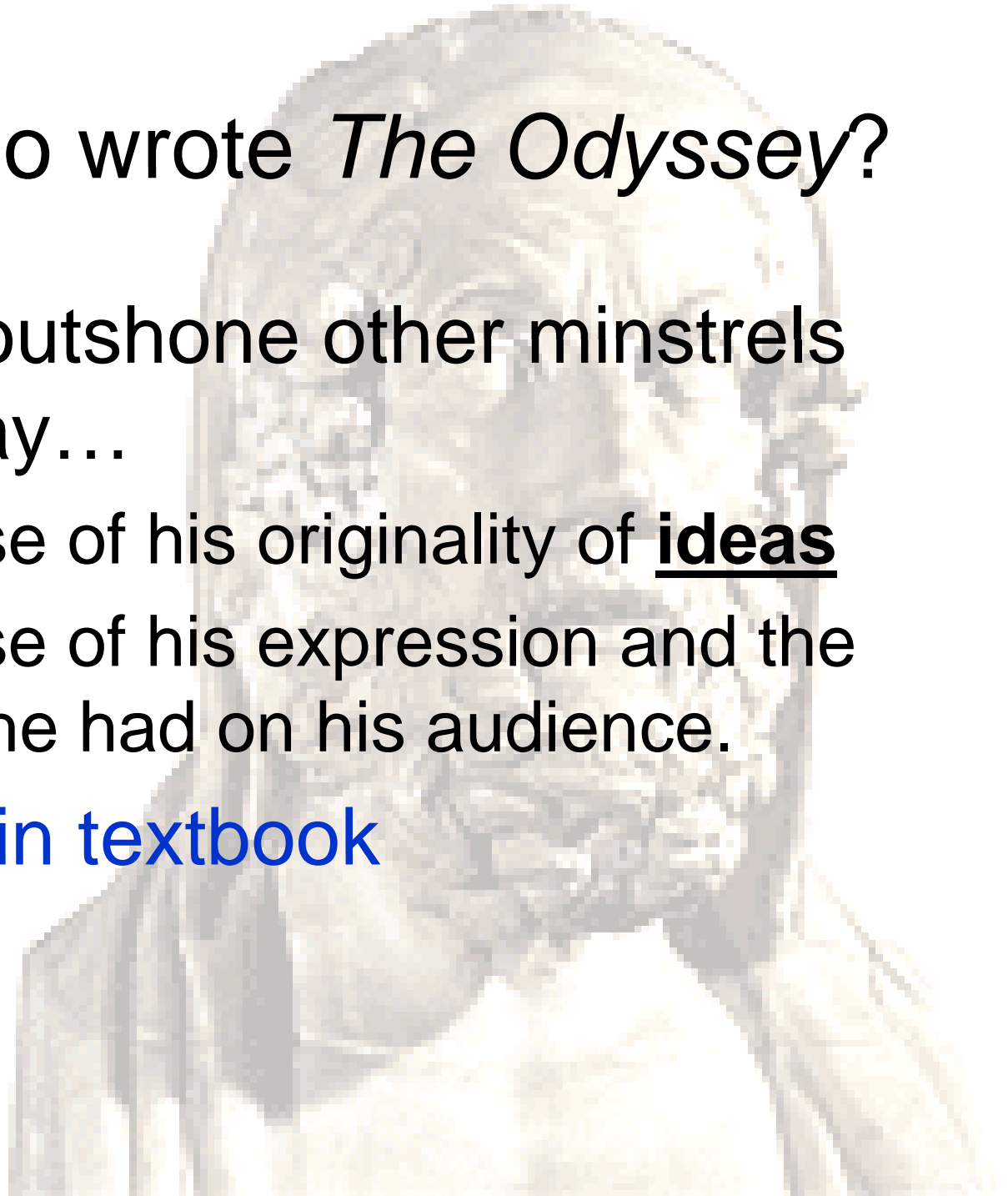
4. Stories were told repetitively
  - a. There was no written history
  - b. Minstrels traveled from place to place singing of recent events or of the stories of heroes or gods & goddesses
5. Audiences never tired of the stories.

I wonder who wrote *The Odyssey*?

D. Homer outshone other minstrels of his day...

1. Because of his originality of **ideas**
2. Because of his expression and the **effect** he had on his audience.

See p. 646 in textbook



# All About *The Iliad*

- II. *The Iliad* tells of the war between Greece and Troy (located in Asia Minor or the present day country of Turkey). *The Iliad* provides the background for *The Odyssey* and background on Odysseus.
- A. The war lasted 10 long years.



# All About *The Iliad*



B. These are the events of the Trojan War:

1. In reality, it possibly began because Greeks **tried to control trade routes**
2. According to myth: **Paris**, a prince of **Troy**, kidnapped **Helen**, queen of **Sparta** an wife of **Menelaus**, king of **Sparta** (a Greek **city-state**).



# All About *The Iliad*

3. The Greek kings banded together and sent armies in **1,000 ships** across the **Aegean Sea** to attack Troy. (Helen is known as “**The face that launched a thousand ships**”)
4. Gods and goddesses took sides in the war.
5. For nine years there was no victory.
6. Finally, **Odysseus** devised a plan: the **Trojan Horse**

# All About *The Iliad*

A faded, artistic illustration of a Trojan warrior on horseback, likely Hector, serves as the background for the text. The warrior is depicted in a dynamic, forward-leaning pose, wearing a helmet and carrying a sword. The colors are muted and semi-transparent, allowing the text to be the primary focus.

7. The Greeks conquered **Troy**; the Trojans were slaughtered and the city was destroyed.
8. The Greeks set out for home in their ships.
9. Many gods and goddesses were offended when Greeks **desecrated** temples and did not make **offerings**

# All About *The Odyssey*

*III. The Odyssey* - Epic poem of the long journey. Greek audiences would have known the war story of the *Iliad* and been familiar with Odysseus as a hero from that story that came up with the idea that ended the war.

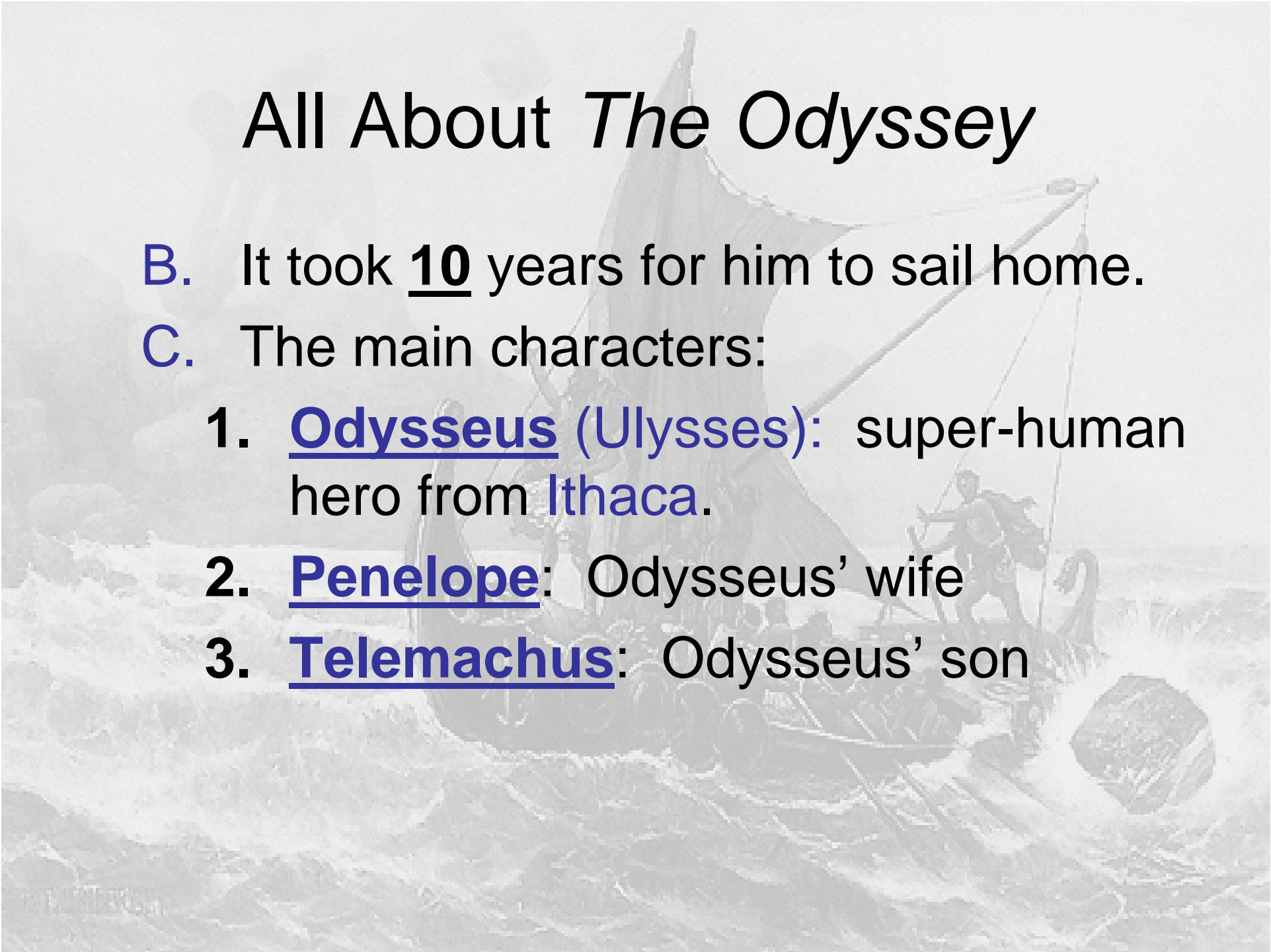
*A. The Odyssey* tells of many adventures of Odysseus trying to sail home after the Trojan War. (Ithaca)

# All About *The Odyssey*

B. It took 10 years for him to sail home.

C. The main characters:

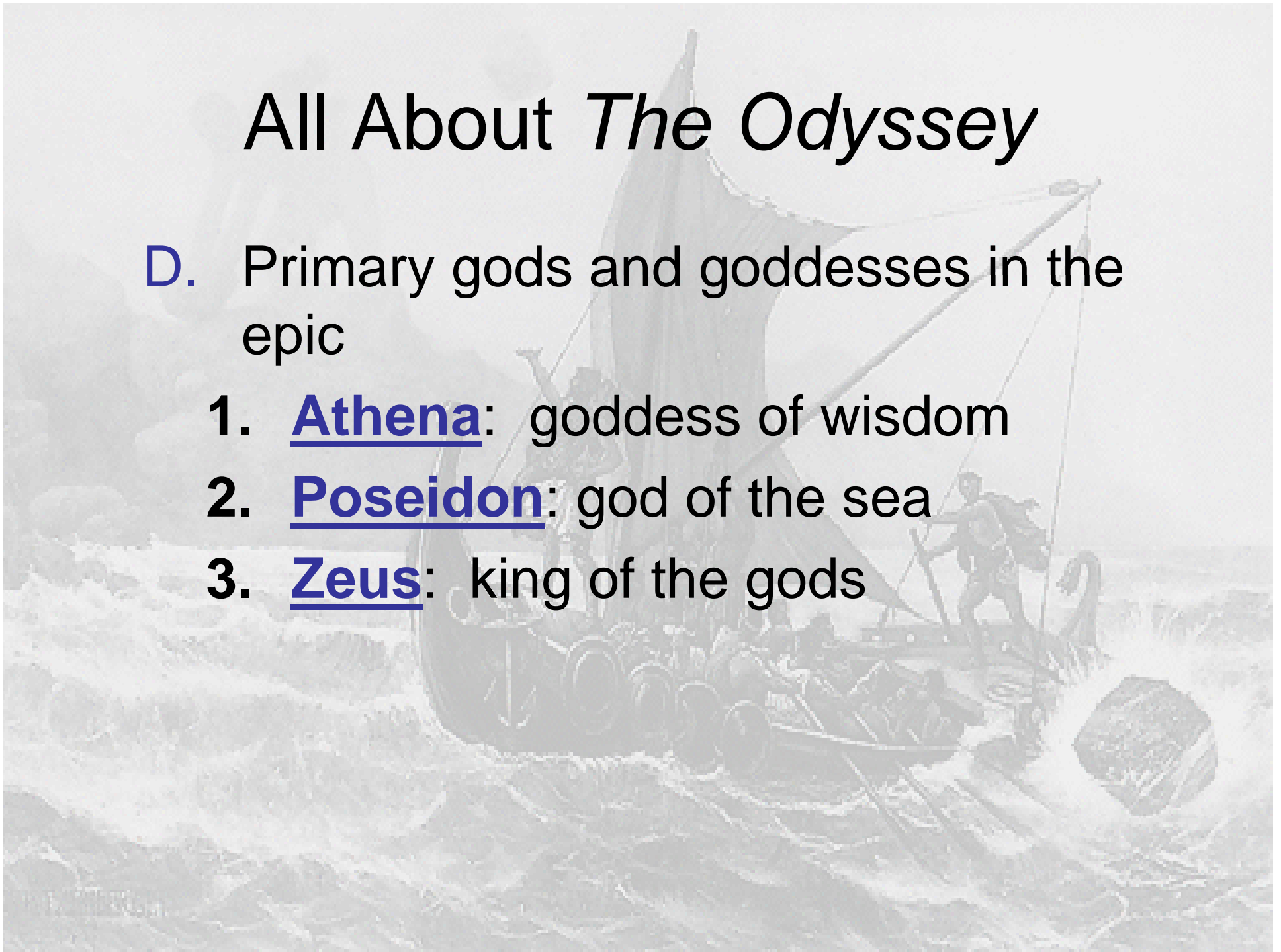
1. Odysseus (Ulysses): super-human hero from Ithaca.
2. Penelope: Odysseus' wife
3. Telemachus: Odysseus' son



# All About *The Odyssey*

## D. Primary gods and goddesses in the epic

1. Athena: goddess of wisdom
2. Poseidon: god of the sea
3. Zeus: king of the gods



# What is an Epic?

## IV. The epic

- A. The oldest literary form or genre
- B. A long story-poem involving:
  1. A great hero having supernatural qualities (but not “super powers”)
  2. The gods and goddesses take an active part in helping or hindering (e.g. Poseidon is Odysseus’ enemy and Athena helps Odysseus).



# What is an Epic?

3. The fate of an entire race of people is often at stake.
4. Heroes found their greatest glory in battle.
5. It involves a struggle that the culture of the hero values
  - a. The hero embodies the values of their culture.
  - b. Greeks used *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* to teach Greek culture and values.

# What is an Epic?

6. Written in **elevated** style (formal)
7. Epics begin with an **invocation** (a prayer to the **muse** of poetry)
  - a. **Muses** are 9 daughters of **Zeus** who were in charge of the arts.  
**Calliope** was the **muse of epic poetry**.

# Classical Mythology



## V. Greek and Roman mythology

A. Polytheists: they believed in many gods

B. Gods had many human qualities

1. They were conniving

## VI. They were quarrelsome

A. Many of the gods lived on Mt. Olympus

# Classical Mythology

- D. Ambrosia: the food of the gods
- E. Nectar: the drink of the gods
- F. Gods interfered in human affairs
- G. Gods were immortal: they live forever

# Greek Values and Beliefs

## VI. Greek values and beliefs

- A. Greeks believed it was wrong for any man to have hubris
- B. The character of a man was very important
  1. One important quality to have was courage
  2. Loyalty to both home and family was the most important

# Greek Values and Beliefs

- C. Man was not master of his own destiny or fate, he was like a “pawn in a chess game.”
- D. Man could not control his own fate, but he could control how he reacted to the gods’ interfering or meddling (how someone reacted was an important character quality).



# The Bronze Age

- VII. Greek life during the Bronze Age (1200 B.C.)
- A. It was an era ruled by tribal chiefs
  - B. It was a violent life in hard times
  - C. Greece consisted of small city-states
    1. Ithaca: Odysseus' home was an island city-state
    2. Athens (named after Athena) was a larger city-state

# The Epic Hero



- VIII. The characteristics of an **Epic** Hero are:
- A. He possesses **supernatural** abilities or qualities.
  - B. He is charged with a **quest**.
  - C. He is **tested**, often to prove the worthiness of himself and his quest.
  - D. He receives **help** by divine beings along the way.

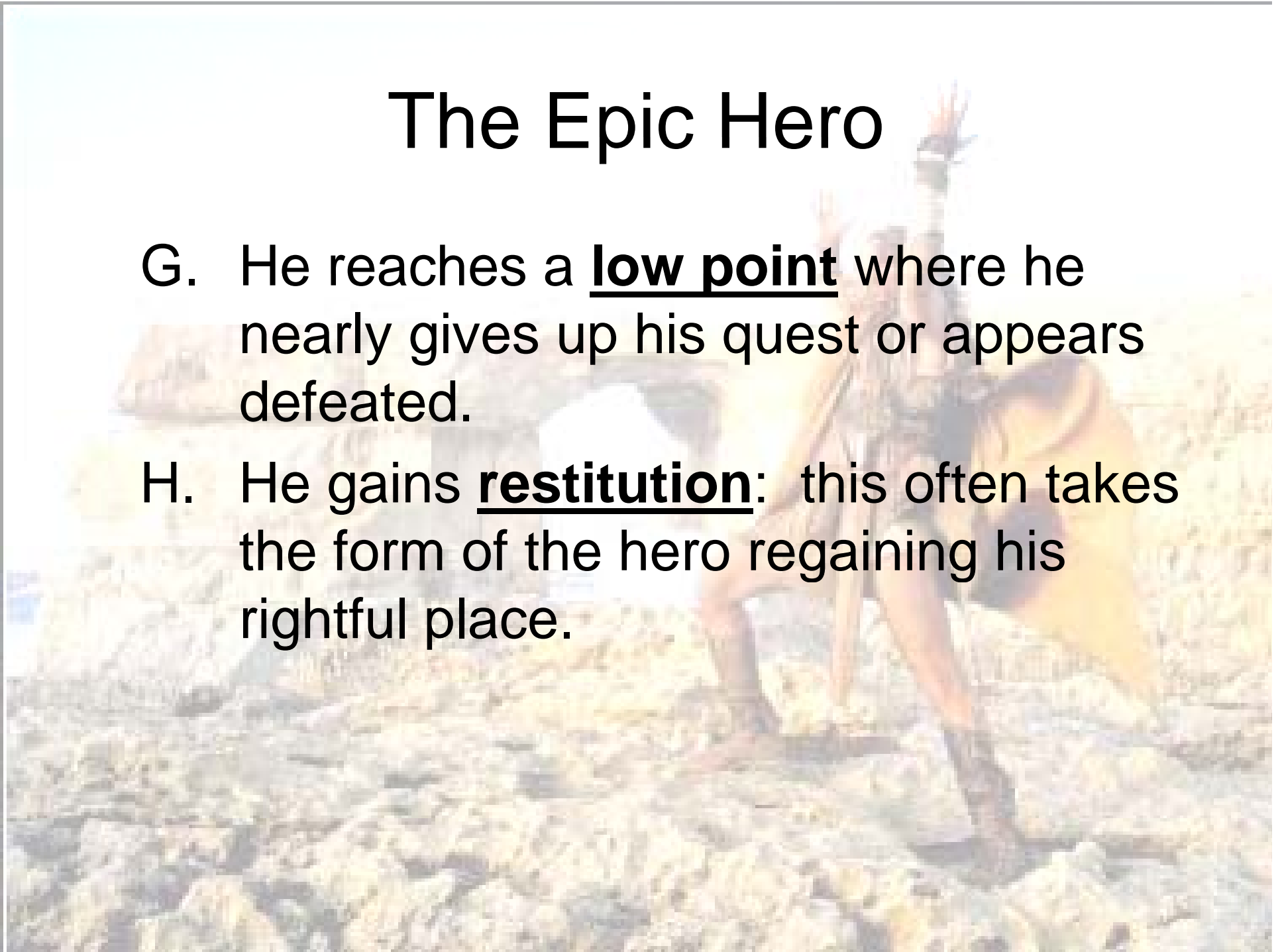
# The Epic Hero



- E. He encounters numerous **mythical** beings, magical and helpful **animals**, and human helpers and companions.
- F. His travels take him to a **supernatural** world, often one that normal human beings are barred from entering.

# The Epic Hero

- G. He reaches a **low point** where he nearly gives up his quest or appears defeated.
- H. He gains **restitution**: this often takes the form of the hero regaining his rightful place.



# Your Homework

1. Paste these pages into your spiral notebook.
2. Add questions to the left hand column.
3. Find and draw pictures to illustrate these notes. You must have **AT LEAST** 15 pictures. **Label each picture or give a short description.**



# Some websites to check out!

**A Guided Web Tour of Homer's Greece:** Links:

[http://www.gpc.edu/~shale/humanities/literature/world\\_literature/greece/links.html](http://www.gpc.edu/~shale/humanities/literature/world_literature/greece/links.html)

**HOMER'S *ODYSSEY*:** <http://www.miracosta.cc.ca.us/home/gflore/odyssey.htm>

**Mythweb:**

<http://www.mythweb.com/odyssey/index.html>

**Greek Mythology Link:** <http://www.maicar.com/GML/>

