

from the *Odyssey*, Part 1, by Homer

Literary Analysis: Characterization of Odysseus

A writer creates and develops characters through **characterization**. In **direct characterization**, a writer makes direct comments about a character's nature and personality. In **indirect characterization**, it is up to you to draw conclusions about a character based on the character's appearance and what he or she says and does, as well as what other characters say and do in relation to that character. Much of Homer's characterization of Odysseus relies on indirect information from which you can draw conclusions about this epic hero.

DIRECTIONS: Complete the following chart to examine how Odysseus is characterized in Part 1 of the *Odyssey*. The left column contains examples of what Odysseus says and does, as well as what other characters say and think about him. Use these details to examine what this information reveals about the character of Odysseus. The first one has been done for you.

What Odysseus Says and Does/ What Other Characters Say and Think About Odysseus	What This Information Reveals About the Character of Odysseus
1. Odysseus brings along wine and food to the Cyclops' cave.	Odysseus is a wise man because he knows that it is important to be well prepared by bringing food and drink.
2. Odysseus lies to Polyphemus about his ship being destroyed.	
3. After being attacked, Polyphemus removes the stone from the doorway and stands with his arms open, hoping to catch whoever tries to run out. Odysseus and his men escape by hiding under Polyphemus's sheep as they pass out of the door.	
4. After they escape from Polyphemus, Odysseus and his men evenly divide up the flock sheep. The men believe that Odysseus should get the prized ram.	
5. Odysseus reminds his men that he was able to keep his nerve and use his wits in order to escape from Polyphemus.	
6. Odysseus says that he never would have been able to make it past Scylla had Zeus not been protecting him.	