

The *Odyssey*, Part 2 by Homer

Literary Analysis: Epic Simile

A simile is a figure of speech used to make a comparison between two basically unlike ideas or objects. Epics often contain elaborate similes, known as **epic similes**, that can continue for several lines. Think about who or what is being compared in each of the following similes and what such a comparison suggests.

DIRECTIONS: Read Homer's epic similes that follow. Then circle the letter of the answer that best completes the sentence.

*A. But the man skilled in all ways of contending,
satisfied by the great bow's look and heft,
like a musician, like a harper, when
with quiet hand upon his instrument
he draws between his thumb and forefinger
a sweet new string upon a peg; so effortlessly
Odysseus in one motion strung the bow.*

- _____ 1. The analogy of Homer's that most closely matches *archer : bow* is
- a. musician : instrument.
 - b. peg : string.
 - c. musician : harp.
 - d. hand : forefinger.
- _____ 2. The comparison suggests that, like the musician, Odysseus
- a. is nervous before he begins.
 - b. works with a stringed instrument.
 - c. is proficient in music.
 - d. knows his instrument and where to get good strings.

*B. Think of a catch that fishermen haul in to a half-moon bay
in a fine-meshed net from the whitecaps of the sea:
how all are poured out on the sand, in throes for the salt sea,
twitching their cold lives away in Helios' fiery air:
so lay the suitors heaped on one another.*

_____ 1. The analogy of Homer's that most closely matches *Odysseus* : *suitors* is

- a. big fish : little fish.
- b. hunter : catch.
- c. Odysseus : enemies.
- d. fisherman : fish.

_____ 2. The comparison suggests that

- a. Odysseus was also a good fisherman.
- b. the suitors had as much chance against Odysseus as hungry fish.
- c. something fishy was going on and it remained for someone like Odysseus to expose it.
- d. the setting of much of the book is the Greek isles.