

# The odyssey epic hero

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When one hears the word "hero", what first comes to mind is usually a fictional character created by a comic book company or a children's book. Did you know that Odysseus, the main character of Homer's *Odyssey* is the original epic hero? In fact, most of these characters are ultimately based on Odysseus. The definition of an epic hero has been pondered practically since the dawn of time. According to Aristotle, a true epic hero must show certain qualities in their actions. These qualities include modesty and willingness to receive help, dedication and loyalty, and also showing terrific bravery. Odysseus fits this definition very well. First of all, Odysseus manages to maintain the delicate balance between hubris and humbleness all throughout his ten year journey home from the Trojan War. Odysseus didn't allow excessive pride to overtake his emotions, by allowing others to help him. This is an essential part of an epic hero's worth. Homer established the fact that Odysseus was willing to take help in addition to friendship from Athena when he wrote, "For I never knew the gods to show such open friendship and Pallas Athene standing by Odysseus." (*The Odyssey*, Homer, 23.) Most men of the time would have been ashamed to receive help, but Odysseus received help gladly. In addition, he even sought help from Tiresius, the blind seer who resided in Hades, the land of the dead. Finally, Odysseus accepted Aeolus' gift of the bag of winds without hesitation. Secondly, Odysseus is faithful to those whom he loves and is determined to return to his home of Ithaca. He was willing to form an alliance with the witch Circe in order to save his men from her turning them into swine. Furthermore, while he was on the island of Calypso, a half Goddess, Odysseus was offered immortality if he agreed to remain on the island. He responded to Calypso by stating, "

Every day I long to travel home and see my day of coming." (Homer, 49.) In essence, Odysseus refused to stay if it meant never seeing his beloved wife, Penelope again. His entire journey was based on his hope that he would once again be reunited with Penelope. Lastly, Odysseus is exceptionally courageous. He was willing to take responsibility for blinding the Cyclops, a monstrous giant who ate members of Odysseus' crew right before their eyes. After departing from the Cyclops' island, he shouted back, " Cyclops, if ever mortal man asks you the story of the ugly blinding of your eye, say [that I did it]." In addition to his bravery concerning the Cyclops, Odysseus was willing to enter Hades alone in order to learn the way back to his home of Ithaca. Lastly, Odysseus risked his life when killing the suitors who were taking advantage of his wife's hospitality, rather than to allow Penelope and his son, Telemachus to suffer in their own home any longer. In conclusion, the question you should be asking yourself is " what is an epic hero?" The qualities which come along with the description include modesty, dedication, loyalty, and courage. Since Homer's Odyssey was written four thousand years ago, Odysseus has been considered an epic hero. The idea of an epic hero in today's society has morphed into a man in tights who saves cities by the dark of the night. What does the term mean to you? Bibliography Homer, The Odyssey.