**Homer and the Homeric Question**

**Homer** was the earliest and most famous poet of Ancient Greece. We do not know exactly when he lived, where he lived, or what sort of life he lived, but there are many stories about him that are believed to be true. According to the famous historian, **Herodotus**, Homer lived around 850 BC. However, other people believed he lived during the times of the **Trojan War**, which was approximately between 1194 and 1184 BC. Some accounts say that Homer was blind. At that time, however, people often said poets were blind because it was believed that being blind helped them to see things that others could not see, such as the activities of the Greek Gods.

Homer is thought to have written two major epic Greek poems, the **Iliad** and the **Odyssey**. Epic poems are very long narrative poems that describe heroic deeds and events that are believed to be true and significant to certain people. The Iliad describes the story of the ten year siege of the city of **Troy**. The Odyssey tells the story of the journey of **King Odysseus** on his way back home to the island of Ithaca after the Trojan War was over.

Some scholars believe that these two poems were written by one poet, while others think they were written by several poets. Some people believe the poems were written by more than one person because the poems were changed and lengthened as they were told throughout generations. Others think only one person wrote these poems because they are of the same style. All of this debate over questions relating to Homer and the two poems is known as the **Homeric Question**. The Homeric Question deals with different issues such as the following:

* *Who was Homer?*
* *Was Homer real or fiction?*
* *Who wrote the Iliad and the Odyssey?*
* *Was it one single author or multiple authors?*
* *When, where, and under what circumstances were the poems written?*

**The Iliad - Background Information**

**What is an epic?**

* A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ poem or story about heroic \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or history
* Includes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Who is Homer?**

* An early \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_poet who received credit for composing the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Believed to have lived in the 8th century B.C.

**What is the Iliad?**

* A long, narrative epic \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Combines \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, legends, and religion of Ancient Greece
* Deals with only a small portion of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ War (a few months during the 10th year)

**Why should we study it?**

* To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ an exciting war story and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ more about the minds of humans during war

**Comprehension Activity**

Homer and the Homeric Question

Circle the correct letter.

1. The epic poem, The Iliad, tells the story of:
   1. The ten year siege of Troy
   2. The journey of a kind trying to get back home to the island of Ithaca after the fighting was over.
   3. The life of Homer.
2. The epic poem, The Odyssey, tells the story of:
   1. The ten year siege of Troy
   2. The journey of a kind trying to get back home to the island of Ithaca after the fighting was over.
   3. The life of Homer.
3. What is the Homeric Question? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why do some people believe the poems were written by more than one person? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_