

# Old Western Culture

*A Christian Approach to the Great Books*

## Year 1: The Greeks

### Unit 1

# The Epics

*The Poems of Homer*



A ROMAN ROADS MEDIA *Video Course*

*Exam "A" Answer Key*

*Please Note: This exam may be periodically updated, expanded, or revised.  
Download the latest revision at [www.RomanRoadsMedia.com](http://www.RomanRoadsMedia.com).*

## NOTES FOR PARENT OR TEACHER

### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- Have the student answer all questions in full sentences.
- Exam should take between 45 min and 1.5 hours. Do not allow more than 2 hours.
- Feel free to allow the student more paper, or to type the answers on a computer.
- This is a closed book exam. If typing the answers, no Internet access allowed.

### POINT SYSTEM

This exam is divided into 100 points, with two extra questions worth 5 points for “extra credit.” If a student answers correctly to all questions, as well as the “Bonus Questions” then he or she will have scored 110%. A ten point question might receive 5/10 if the student correctly answered part of the question, but missed some important elements to the correct answer. Losing some points from the main exam can be recouped by answering the bonus questions correctly.

### HOW TO GRADE

These are essay questions, which means this is both harder to answer and harder to grade compared to multiple choice exams. However this also allows the student to think through what he has learned in a deeper and more meaningful way. It also aids in long-term retention, and more useful application. For example, you will find that a student that is required to answer essay questions will more easily integrate what he has learned into his general knowledge and able to use it in informal conversation.

Since these are not multiple choice, ANSWERS WILL VARY. This answer key has an answer for each question, but it is possible that a varying answer may still be correct. If you have followed along with the video and interacted with your student throughout the term, you should be able to determine if a certain variation of the answer is the correct one. If you are truly not sure, sit down with your student and figure out the correct answer together. You can also submit questions via “Ask Mr. C” by sending an email to [AskMrC@romanroadsmedia.com](mailto:AskMrC@romanroadsmedia.com). We may respond by email, or by a public video response if we feel this is a question many students would benefit in hearing.

Also, we purposefully created short and concise answers in this answer key. We expect most student answers to be longer, though this is not a requirement. Many of these questions could be an entire paper topic, and we would encourage students display as much of their knowledge as they can in their answer. This is also why we encourage parents or teachers to allow the student to type out the answers.



## HOW TO STUDY FOR THE TEST

Have your student read through his or her notes from throughout the term as general preparation, as well as study the answers from the daily worksheets. These questions will be familiar to the student who has worked through all questions in their workbook.

## THE “A” AND “B” EXAM

This course includes an “A” and “B” exam. These tests have some overlap in the questions, but are mostly composed of different but equivalent questions. These tests may be used in several ways. One way is to use exam “A” as a practice exam, open or closed book, and exam “B” as the graded, closed-book exam. Exam “B” could also be used as a “second chance” exam if exam “A” didn’t go as well as the student had hoped.

There is flexibility here, and the parent or teacher is free to choose how to use the extra exam.

## “MY STUDENT IS HAVING TROUBLE GETTING 100%!”

This can prove a frustration with essay exams. One thing to watch out for is that there IS variation in correct answers. Read the “How to Grade” note on the previous page for more information on this.

The other thing is that we have culturally grown accustomed to 100% being the norm for a “good student” and less than 100% means you were deficient in some way. But 100% in the classical Latin system is “SCL” (*Summa Cum Laude*), which means “with highest praise.” In the Latin system of grading, this is reserved for the student that goes beyond the call of duty, and often even teaches the teacher something. In a system where “good” is 100%, going beyond the call of duty is not incentivized, and good students do not progress. So do not worry if your student gets an 85% - in the Latin system that’s a CH, or *Cum Honore*, that is, with honor - and should be received as such.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions, feel free to email us at [questions@romanroadsmedia.com](mailto:questions@romanroadsmedia.com)! We love to hear from our parents and teachers, and look forward to serving you in any way possible!



# The Epics Exam "A" Answer Key

## ESSAY QUESTIONS.

1. According to C. S. Lewis, why should we read old books? (10 pt)

*In his essay "On the Reading of Old Books," C. S. Lewis says that by reading old books we keep "the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds." Old books often challenge the basic assumptions that we inevitably share with our peers and are often unaware that we have. The authors of old books may have serious errors and shortcomings, but probably not the same shortcomings and mistakes that we have.*

2. Why is there an 800 year gap between St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas in most modern Great Books collections? (10 pt)

*Most modern great books collections contain a roughly 800- to 900-year gap that omits many works from the so-called "dark ages." Much of this period was an age of faith, and therefore deemed "dark" by enlightenment standards.*

3. In one sentence, what is the theme of *The Iliad* according to the opening lines of the poem? (10 pt)

*The theme of *The Iliad* is the anger of Achilles and its consequences.*



4. What solution does Paris propose in Book 3 to end the ten year war? (8 pt)

*Paris proposes a dual of champions to settle the war.*

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5. When Thetis asked Zeus to make the Achaians lose for a little while, it was a simple request and Zeus said that he would grant it. Why is the fulfillment of his promise so intermittent and sporadic? (12 pt)

*Zeus is sporadic in keeping his promise because he keeps getting distracted. He is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, so as soon as he turns his attention away from the plains of Troy, other factors come into play.*

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6. Why was it so important that Patroklos' body receive a proper burial? (10 pt)

*The spirit of Patroklos comes to Achilles requesting a proper burial because the Greeks believed that your soul could not rest comfortably in the land of the dead if your body did not receive proper burial.*

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7. How is The Odyssey a "romance", in the old sense of the word? (8 pt)

*The Odyssey is a "romance" in the old sense of the word because it is an adventure story.*

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8. What is the chief characteristic of Odysseus in both The Iliad and The Odyssey? (10 pt)

*Odysseus is a man of "mind" (Greek word "nous"). He is intelligent, thoughtful, clever, and circumspect.*

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9. Who is the god of the guest-host relationship, and what is the code of hospitality that we see in Homer? Why do the Cyclops not honor the code of hospitality? (12 pt)

*Zeus is the god of the guest-host relationship, a code of hospitality in which guests have a right to good treatment when they wander and hosts have an obligation to treat their guests hospitably. The race of the Cyclops, according to Homer, do not honor the code of hospitality because they don't fear the gods.*

10. What do the Sirens tempt Odysseus with? Why is this fitting? (10 pt)

*The Sirens tempt Odysseus with the promise of knowledge, which is fitting, since Odysseus is the man of "mind". (Greek-**νοῦς**)*

11. What is the crime of the suitors? (BONUS QUESTION FOR EXTRA CREDIT) (5 pt)

*The suitors are not just "eating Odysseus out of house and home". They are also guilty of treason, and are even willing to murder Telemachos to that end.*

12. How did the arrival of Homer (and Greek learning in general) into Europe contribute to the Reformation? (BONUS QUESTION FOR EXTRA CREDIT) (5 pt)

*The revival of Homeric learning and criticism in Europe set the stage for the return to the original Greek New Testament that played such an important role in the protestant Reformation.*