

Hero Writing assignment

Hero: _____

Write a 1-2 page discussion of one of the following heroes, using material from the Trojan War chapter but potentially including myths found elsewhere in our readings. The five questions below are meant to focus your thought on the hero and help you find a direction for the writing assignment. You don't have to "answer" all of them! In all your responses, give examples and/or references to primary sources.

1. What is the fundamental character of this hero or heroine? That is, if someone from within the *Iliad*, or within Greek culture, or within our culture, were to describe him/her in a few sentences, explaining his/her character and choices, what would they say? (And are there substantial differences in these assessments, from what you know of Greek culture)?

2. What actions is your hero or heroine best known for? Are these actions considered worthy or morally (or otherwise) questionable? Are there differences between our culture's reception of your hero/ine, and the reception they had in their own culture?

3. What conflicts shape the hero/ine's feelings, choices, and actions? What is the nature of these conflicts (e.g. moral, personality, heroic ethos, etc.)

4. What are the hero/ine's motivations for the actions s/he is best known for? Or is s/he a victim of or passive participant in fate or in the will of others? Are there different ways to understand the hero/ine's motivations? Are these differences reflected in the primary sources, or do they signify modern reception of the hero/ine? Give a few examples and/or references to primary sources.

5. Are there significant "lessons" about behavior (toward others, toward the gods, toward oneself, toward family) that are visible in this hero's accomplishments, conflicts, and failures? What are they? Are there differences in how these are portrayed in the primary sources, and how they might be understood in the light of modern culture?