



HOMER'S *ILIAD*

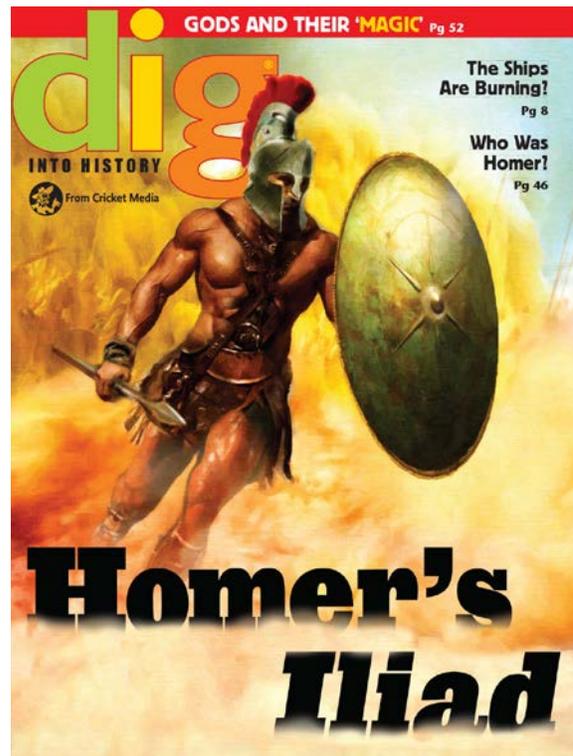
The *Iliad* is an ancient Greek epic poem set during the Trojan War, a ten-year attempt by Greece to conquer the city of Troy. In this issue of *Dig*, you and your students will explore the *Iliad* as a source of information about ancient people, places, and customs, as well as a riveting war story.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What can we learn about the past from Homer's *Iliad*?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the history of ancient Greece
- Students will learn about Homer and his *Iliad*
- Students will analyze perspectives, including factors that influence why and how individual groups develop different ones
- Students will evaluate historical sources, including their reliability, relevancy, utility, and limitations
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas interact over the course of a text
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information
- Students will write narrative texts to develop real or imagined experiences or events



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core STEM skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

- **No!**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1050L
- **The Who & the What**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1050L
- **Understanding Achilles**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1150L

No!

pp. 3–5, Expository Nonfiction

Have students infer information about ancient Greece using this article about the *Iliad*.



RESOURCES

- Analyze Perspectives Worksheet

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article
- Students will analyze perspectives, including factors that influence differences
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas interact over the course of a text

KEY VOCABULARY

- honor (p. 3)** respect that is given to someone who is admired
- dishonored (p. 3)** caused someone to no longer be respected
- spoils (p. 4)** things stolen or taken by soldiers (or thieves)
- vengeance (p. 4)** the act of doing something to hurt someone because that person did something that hurt you or someone else

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What can we learn about the past from Homer’s *Iliad*?

Ask students to describe what a “classic” book is and what makes it different from other books. Invite them to name books that are considered classics. Then explain that referring to a story as classic means that the book has been considered outstanding over a long period of time. Explain that the *Iliad* is one of the oldest classics.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Have students locate the vocabulary words in the article. Ask them to work with a partner to read the sentences aloud, discuss word meanings, and write their own definitions. Finally, tell them to look up the words and make any necessary adjustments to their definitions.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for a class discussion:

- Why did the Greeks nearly lose the Trojan War?
- How would you describe Achilles and Agamemnon?
- What can we learn about ancient Greek culture from this story?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Perspectives

INSTRUCT: Remind students that the *Iliad* is not a factual account of the Trojan War but a story and one of the oldest works of European literature. Continue by explaining that this epic is also an artifact—something made by people from an earlier time that can provide clues to the past. Tell students that they can make inferences, or logical guesses, about ancient Greek society by thinking about the words and actions of the characters in the *Iliad*. Discuss with students what they learned about the concept of honor from the article.

ASSESS: Distribute the *Analyze Perspectives* worksheet to all students. Then have students work in small groups to discuss and answer the questions listed on it. Walk around the room to eavesdrop on discussions and assess understanding.

EXTEND

Language Arts Have students read Book 1 of the *Iliad*. (Robert Fagles’s translation is considered one of the more accessible ones.) Tell students to note what they learn about the story and the characters as well as what they learn about ancient Greece. Invite students to share ideas with the class.

Analyze Perspectives

Use details from the text and your own knowledge and ideas to make inferences about ancient Greek society beliefs.

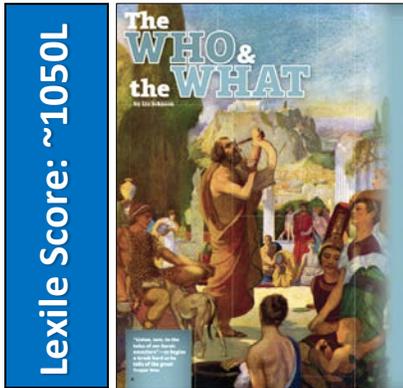
	Inference	Text details that support the inference
What behavior is considered good?		
What behavior is considered bad?		
What traits are highly valued?		
What traits are disliked?		
Which people are highly valued?		
What objects are highly valued?		

What else can you infer about the ancient Greek society?

The Who & the What

p. 7 Expository Nonfiction

Use this article about what is and isn't known about Homer and the Trojan War to teach students to evaluate sources.



RESOURCES

- Evaluate Sources Worksheet

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article
- Students will evaluate historical sources, including their reliability, relevancy, utility, and limitations
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information

KEY VOCABULARY

- **flourished** (p. 7) did very well
- **evidence** (p. 7) something that shows that something else exists or is true
- **plunged** (p. 7) to fall or drop suddenly in amount or value
- **recover** (p. 7) return to a normal state after a period of difficulty
- **antiquity** (p. 7) ancient times
- **illiterate** (p. 7) not knowing how to read or write

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What can we learn about the past from Homer's *Iliad*?

List the following on the board: encyclopedia article, short story, editorial, advertisement, first-person account, newspaper story. Ask students which sources would be most and least useful to find out about ancient Greece. Ask students to support their opinions. Then explain that the *Iliad* is used as a source of information about ancient Greece.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Read the vocabulary words aloud. Then have students work in pairs to find the words in the article and use context clues to come up with their own definitions. Pairs should use the dictionary to check their definitions. Finally, discuss with the class how these words are used to tell about the *Iliad*.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for a class discussion:

- What are the mysteries surrounding the *Iliad*?
- Compare the Mycenaean Age to the Dark Age. Explain similarities and differences.
- How did the oral tradition affect the story of the *Iliad*?
- What methods have been used to verify information in the *Iliad*?

SKILL FOCUS: Evaluate Sources

INSTRUCT: Write the words *reliable* and *trustworthy* on the board and discuss what these words mean. Then ask what kinds of sources about the past are probably reliable and trustworthy. Explain that the *Iliad* is one of the most important sources of information about the Trojan War and the Mycenaean period. Briefly discuss with students whether the epic is a trustworthy and reliable source of information. Then distribute the *Evaluate Sources* worksheet to each student and have them work in small groups to complete it.

ASSESS: Have students use the Reliability Scale at the bottom of the *Evaluate Sources* worksheet to rate the reliability of the *Iliad*. Then have a class discussion where students share and support their ideas about the *Iliad*'s reliability and usefulness as a source.

EXTEND

Science Have students conduct research to learn how scientists could determine the date that the *Iliad* was first written. Invite students to share their sources and discoveries.

Evaluate Sources

Is the *Iliad* a reliable source of information about ancient Greece? Use the questions below to help you decide.

1. What was Homer’s purpose for writing the *Iliad*? Did he want to inform readers, entertain them, or persuade them?
2. Is the *Iliad* a firsthand account of the Trojan War?
3. How did Homer learn about the Trojan War?
4. Has information in the *Iliad* been validated or checked for accuracy? If so, how?
5. What events and circumstances could have affected the reliability of the *Iliad*?
6. In what ways is the *Iliad* a unique source of information?

Reliability Scale

0	1	2	3	4
The <i>Iliad</i> cannot be judged: no way to determine the reliability of the information.	Unreliable: information in the <i>Iliad</i> is contradicted by other sources of information.	Mostly unreliable: only a small amount of information is reliable.	Fairly reliable: other sources of information confirm information in the <i>Iliad</i> .	Reliable: no doubts about the trustworthiness of the source.

