

Myths and Legends – extracts from epic poems					
<i>Iliad</i> (c8th century BCE), attributed to Homer		Themes and contexts		Literary terms	
Characters		A tale of gods and men	<i>The Iliad</i> relates the tale of war in Ilium (Troy) from the perspective of one character in particular – Achilles. Parts of the story of the war are told in flashback, or in prophecies of the future.	The epic	A narrative poem that recounts the story of a hero who represents a particular culture.
The Gods					
Zeus	King of the gods	The Trojan War	In ancient Greece many epic tales were told about the Trojan War – a conflict between the Achaeans (an alliance of the Greek states) and the city of Troy.	Epithet	an adjective added to a person's name or a phrase used instead of it, usually to criticise or praise them.
Hera	Queen of the gods				
Athena	Goddess of wisdom	The power of anger	Anger is a predominant theme in the <i>Iliad</i> , manifested in the war itself and as a motivation for the actions of individual characters. There is the righteous anger of Agamemnon and Menelaus over the kidnapping of Helen, but also the wrath that drives Achilles and makes him such a fearsome warrior , provoked again and again by events in the story.	Epic simile	an extended simile used typically to intensify the heroic stature of the subject.
Poseidon	God of the sea				
Apollo	God of the sun				
Aphrodite	Goddess of love				
Artemis	Goddess of the moon				
The Achaeans (Greeks)		The heroic ideal	Underlying the wrath of Achilles is a sense of honour and nobility which, like that of the Greek people, is offended by disrespect and injustice , but is sometimes directed inwards as he struggles with the conflicts that arise between duty, destiny, ambition and loyalty .	Vocabulary	
Agamemnon	King of Mycenae				
Achilles	Greece's greatest warrior				
Patroclus	Companion of Achilles				
Menelaus	King of Sparta				
Odysseus	Commander and king of Ithaca	Destiny and the gods	The warriors Hector and Achilles have contrasting personalities and motivations, which provide recurrent themes in Homer's examination of the heroic ideal. Hector is, like Achilles, a military leader. He is considered the noblest and mightiest of the Trojan warriors. But his character and motivation stand in contrast to those of Achilles, highlighting two very different attitudes to war . Achilles is driven by an inner rage , but also nobler motives of defending the honour of his king and country, and avenging the killing of Patroclus, his comrade-in-arms. Hector fights out of loyalty – to Troy but also to his family. Homer portrays both men as noble, but not without their flaws . Their characteristics and situations are metaphors for the contrasting values of society and those of the individual, and those of duty and responsibility compared with loyalty and love.	Wrath	Anger; rage; fury
The Trojans					
Priam	King of Troy				
Hector	Son of Priam				
Paris	Brother of Hector				
Helen	Wife of Menelaus	Homer knew that his readers – the Greeks – were aware of the outcome of the story because if Troy had won the war, there would have been no Greek civilisation. The Greeks were destined to win and to reinforce this inevitability , Homer makes reference to many prophecies throughout the <i>Iliad</i> .	Hubris	Excessive pride or self-confidence	
Aeneas	A son of Aphrodite				
				Flaw	Imperfection; fault
				Vengeance	Revenge; retaliation; settling of scores
				Righteous	Good; moral; just