*THE ODYSSEY* NOTES

AUTHOR: Homer

**EPIC: A long, narrative poem on a great and serious subject that is centered on the actions of a heroic figure. The epic hero has a goal and typically is embarked on a long journey that involves struggles with natural and supernatural beings which test the hero’s bravery, wits, and skill in battle.**

**PURPOSE: The purpose of an epic poem is to entertain, teach, and inspire the listener or reader with examples of how people can strive and succeed against great odds.**

**EPIC CHARACTERISTICS:**

**1. invocation to the Muse, goddess who presided over the arts**

**2. lengthy speeches**

**3. repetitions of passages**

**4. epithet**

* **favorite device of epic poets**
* **word or phrase used to characterize someone or something**
* **example - “raider of cities” (Odysseus)**

**5. Homeric simile**

* **sometimes called epic simile**
* **extended comparison of two actions or objects that develops mounting excitement and usually ends in a climax**
* **often runs several lines**
* example - p.654