

The Iliad and the Trojan War

Classroom Edition

Homer's Epic Adapted for Young Readers, with
Student Activities and Teacher Guidance

by Frances Bianchi & Mara Seronda



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This work is a literary adaptation of *Homer's The Iliad*, rewritten and simplified for young readers for educational purposes.

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Editorial Note

This edition has been adapted to make the original epic accessible to middle-grade readers. Certain scenes, descriptions, and narrative structures have been modified or expanded to support comprehension and age-appropriate engagement.

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How to Use This Book

This Classroom Edition is designed for teacher use. It is intended to be used alongside the Standard Edition of *The Iliad*, which contains the narrative text for student reading. This volume brings together the full adapted story, structured classroom activities, and chapter-by-chapter teaching guidance in a single resource.

Using the Two Editions Together

Students read from the Standard Edition. Teachers use this Classroom Edition to plan instruction, guide discussion, and distribute activities.

This edition may be used selectively or as a complete course resource, depending on instructional goals and classroom needs.

Reading the Story

The narrative text in this edition is identical to the Standard Edition. It may be read aloud in class, used for close reading, or referenced when preparing discussion and activities.

Teachers may:

- Read chapters aloud or assign independent reading from the Standard Edition.
- Select specific episodes for focused discussion or literary analysis.
- Use key scenes to support ethical reasoning across the curriculum.

Student Activities

Following each chapter (or chapter block), Student Activities provide structured opportunities for comprehension, discussion, and reflective or creative response.

Activities are designed to be printed or photocopied for classroom distribution. They may be completed individually or collaboratively, orally or in writing, and may be selected or adapted as needed.

Chapters 1 and 2 share a combined activity section to ensure that students develop sufficient narrative context before beginning written or discussion tasks. The instructional section appears after Chapter 2, once the conflict, main characters, and initial situation have been established.

Teacher Notes and Teacher Introductions

Each chapter includes a Teacher Note immediately following the Student Activities. These notes offer practical guidance for classroom use and are intended to support, not prescribe, instruction. They are placed after the activities to allow photocopying without the guidance text appearing on student copies.

Longer Teacher Introductions for each chapter appear at the end of this volume. They provide detailed guidance on key themes, learning objectives, suggested classroom approaches, and differentiation strategies.

Downloadable Materials and Additional Resources

Printable versions of the Student Activities, teacher support materials, and additional classroom resources are available for download on the Ollada de Tinta website:

www.olladadetinta.es/en/resources

These materials allow teachers to easily print individual activity sheets, access updated teaching resources, and download supplementary materials designed to support classroom use of this book.

A QR code linking to this page is also included at the end of this volume for quick access.

Curriculum Connections

This edition can support instruction in English Language Arts (ELA), Humanities, Ethics, and World Literature, and may be integrated flexibly into existing units.

Companion Standard Edition

The Iliad: An Illustrated Retelling of the Trojan War for Young Readers
ISBN: 9791399178951



Prologue

Long, long ago—when gods still walked among men and the stars hung closer to the earth—a war began that would change the fate of the world. It happened in Troy, the proudest and mightiest city of the East, whose walls rose as if to challenge the sky itself.

For centuries, poets retold its story, and the greatest of them all—Homer—turned it into song everlasting.

They say he sat by the fire, lyre in hand, singing of heroes who sought glory, love... or simply victory.

But this story is not only about battles.

It speaks of pride and wrath, of courage and compassion, of gods who toyed with mortal fate—and of men who dared to defy the gods.

Among them was Achilles, the bravest of the Greeks.

Born of a sea goddess and a mortal man, he grew up knowing his life would be short, though his name would live forever.

To protect him from that fate, his mother—when he was just a baby—tried to make him invulnerable.

She carried him to the River Styx, whose dark waters were said to grant immortality to all they touched. The water wrapped around

him like a dark mirror, leaving only his heels—where the goddess held him—untouched. When he came of age, the god Hephaestus, moved by his fondness for Thetis, forged for Achilles an armor no mortal weapon could pierce. His shield, bright as the sun, mirrored the whole world: the sea, the land, humankind, and the gods. When he raised it, it seemed he held the fate of his enemies within it.

Swift as the wind and fierce as the storm, Achilles sought neither riches nor kingdoms—only that his name would never be forgotten.

Across the sea, on the slopes of Mount Ida, lived a young shepherd named Paris.

He tended his flocks, unaware that he was the son of Troy's king and queen—and heir to their throne. An oracle had foretold that he would bring ruin upon the city; thus, he had been abandoned at birth and raised far from the palace.

Paris grew among mountains and meadows, ignorant of his royal blood—never imagining that a single choice of his would ignite a war remembered for all time.

In Troy, his brother Hector was preparing to become the city's defender.

He was brave and just, beloved by his people, husband to Andromache, and father to a small child. He sought neither glory nor fame, only to protect what he loved.

If Achilles fought so that his name would live forever, Hector fought so that his people could simply go on living.

Meanwhile, in Sparta, a princess was growing up—Helen, a woman of unmatched beauty.

Kings and princes from all over Greece came to win her hand, but her father, Tyndareus, feared that choosing one would anger all the others.

Desperate to avoid a war among his allies, Tyndareus sought the advice of Odysseus, king of Ithaca, known for his cunning.

Odysseus did not seek Helen's hand, for his heart already belonged to Penelope, the king's niece.

By helping Tyndareus, he hoped to gain his favor—and his blessing to marry her.

At last, Menelaus was chosen as Helen's husband.

And, on Odysseus's counsel, all her suitors swore an oath to defend that marriage and protect its peace.

Thus was born The Iliad—the great song of heroes.

A tale that, thousands of years later, still lives on... for pride, courage, and the human heart have changed little in all the ages since.



Chapter 1 – The Apple of Discord

A great wedding lit up both earth and sky. Peleus, the noblest of men, was marrying Thetis, the sea nymph whose radiance made the waters tremble. On Mount Pelion, the peaks were veiled in golden mist, and the immortals descended from their heavenly dwellings to celebrate the union—Zeus, Hera, Athena, Apollo, Poseidon. Laughter rang through the air as the gods raised their cups, and the Muses braided their voices around the fire. Music shimmered in the air, and nothing seemed capable of disturbing that joy.

But on Olympus, peace never lasts for long. Eris, the goddess of discord, had not been invited—and wherever she walks, resentment follows. From high above she watched the banquet: the shining goblets, the laughter... and bitterness grew inside her. The air itself seemed to tighten, as if the sky were holding its breath.

“If they will not have me among them,” she murmured with a crooked smile, “then I’ll make sure no one forgets this day.”

Cloaked in dark clouds, she descended to the feast and let fall a small golden object. It was an apple, polished like the newborn sun. Upon its skin gleamed an inscription: “For the fairest.”

Silence fell like a veil. The laughter died away, and the goblets froze mid-air.

Hera, queen of the heavens and wife of Zeus, spoke first.

“It must be for me,” she said coolly. “I am the queen of the gods.”

Athena, the gray-eyed, replied without raising her voice.

“Beauty without wisdom is a flower that withers at the first wind.”

Aphrodite, bathed in rose-colored light, smiled with dangerous sweetness.

“And without love,” she whispered, “what use is wisdom?”

Zeus stared at the apple, irritation flickering in his eyes. He knew that any choice would set Olympus ablaze.

“Let another decide,” he said at last. “Not a god, but a mortal—one who can judge with unclouded eyes.”

And from that moment, Olympus hung between festivity and storm.

Meanwhile, that same night in Troy, Queen Hecuba gave birth to a son. In her sleep she dreamed of a torch burning in her arms, its flames licking the city walls. Her daughter Cassandra awoke trembling.

“That child will be the flame that consumes the walls of Troy,” she said.

Alarmed, King Priam sought the counsel of seers, and all agreed:

“His fate will bring ruin upon Troy.”

The newborn was secretly given to a shepherd to raise far from the palace—though few believed the child would survive.

Years passed, yet the echo of that golden apple still rang among the goddesses like an open wound. None of them forgot the insult, and each waited for her chance to prove she was the one who truly deserved it. One morning, as the sun rose over the slopes of Mount Ida, three radiant figures appeared before a young Trojan shepherd named Paris. They did not walk—they floated above the grass, so light that even the flowers did not bend at their passing.

Athena, Hera, and Aphrodite—accompanied by Hermes, messenger of the gods—stopped before him.

“Young mortal,” said Hermes, “you have been chosen to settle a dispute. Take this apple and decide which of them deserves it.”

Paris, his fear slowly fading, listened as each goddess made her offer. Athena promised him victory in every battle. Hera offered dominion over all the kingdoms of men.

Aphrodite was silent for a moment, then whispered, her voice soft as wind through the leaves:

“I will give you the love of the most beautiful woman in the world.”

Time itself seemed to stop. Paris desired neither armies nor crowns—only a face he had dreamed of, and a name he did not yet know. He took the apple and held it out to Aphrodite.

“For you,” he said. “For nothing conquers love.”

The other goddesses fell silent, while Aphrodite smiled—a blend of tenderness and triumph.

“Paris, prince of Troy,” she said, “by your birthright you shall meet the most beautiful woman in the world.”



“Prince?” he stammered. “But I’m only a shepherd.”

“Yes,” said the goddess, “but what you have set in motion today will weave the threads of fate beyond any mortal dream. Come with me—I will show you the place that has always been yours.”

Together they walked the same paths Paris had known all his life, yet now they seemed different—grander, almost sacred. The air was still; even the birds dared not sing. When they reached the gates of Troy, the guards approached in awe.

Aphrodite gestured toward Paris, and when the men saw the marks of his birth, they recognized him.

“It is he,” they murmured. “The son of Priam and Hecuba.”

They led him to the palace. Paris felt small before such grandeur, yet he followed the goddess’s warm presence. Priam and Hecuba, with Cassandra and their other children, awaited him. Their faces—lined with years and sorrow—lit up at the sight of him.

Hecuba bent toward him, tears filling her eyes.

“My son... my lost son,” she whispered, holding him close.

Priam wrapped his arms around him gently.

“Welcome home, Paris. We should never have let you go. Now you shall be the prince Troy has long awaited.”

Only Cassandra remained silent.

From that day on, every choice Paris made would carry the weight of his city... and of the world beyond its walls.



Chapter 2 – The *Abduction* of Helen

Since his return to Troy, Paris had tried to adapt to his new life as a prince. Often he longed to be again the shepherd who followed his flocks across the hills. But now he was the son of kings, bound by duty and by the hopes his name inspired. The people watched him with curiosity: some saw in him a favorite of the gods; others, an omen hard to read.

Many whispered that the youth raised far from court would never equal the strength and honor of his brother Hector. Even the king's counselors doubted that Troy's destiny could rest in his hands. Yet neither the gold of the temples nor the voices of the council could erase from his mind the memory of Aphrodite—and the promise that still beat within his chest.

King Priam, wishing to prove his worth and still the murmurs of the people, sent him to Greece as an envoy, charged with strengthening alliances and bringing good tidings to Troy. It was his first true mission—a test of trust and of manhood.

Thus Paris came to Sparta, where King Menelaus and Queen Helen received him with gracious hospitality. For several days, banquets filled the palace: music echoed through the marble halls, wine flowed without end, and the scent of the gardens mingled with the smoke of torches.

But Aphrodite, who never forgets her promises, had woven the threads of this journey in secret. From behind golden curtains, Helen watched the young Trojan, unaware that he was the man the goddess had chosen for her. The prince spoke little, and when he did, his voice carried the calm of one who listens before he answers.

Helen, used to words wrapped in flattery, was startled by that silence that seemed to understand everything. And all the while, Aphrodite, unseen, enclosed them both in her fragrance. Desire grew between them without words; what began as curiosity became a silent vow.

Soon a messenger arrived with urgent news: Menelaus's father had died in Crete. Bound by duty, the king departed for the funeral, leaving his guest in the queen's care. Then the palace changed its rhythm.

The servants' steps slowed, the lights dimmed, and the nights ... grew longer. Helen wandered the corridors with her heart in turmoil, while Paris felt each step draw him closer to a destiny he could no longer escape.

One night, as the moon whitened the marble of the palace, Paris found her among the sleeping gardens. No words were needed—fate had already spoken for them. Helen thought of her husband, of her daughter, of the gods who watched from above ... yet also of the loneliness that had lived within her for years.

Paris stepped toward her, and the world seemed to stop. When their eyes met, the choice was already made.

Before dawn touched the roofs of Sparta, the Trojan ship had set sail eastward, carrying with it the seed of a war that would set the world ablaze.

When Menelaus discovered his wife's absence, he lifted his voice to the heavens.

"By the gods!" he cried. "Let all Greece bear witness to my dishonor!"

Without delay he journeyed to Mycenae to seek the aid of his brother Agamemnon, mightiest of kings. Agamemnon heard his tale with a grim face and clenched fists.

"Then," he said, "the time has come to honor the Oath of Tyndareus."

He sent messengers to every corner of Greece, reminding the kings of their vow to defend Helen's marriage and punish whoever dared to break it. Across mountains and seas they carried the news: Helen had been taken, and her husband demanded justice.

One by one, the kings answered the call. Agamemnon gathered beneath his command a fleet so vast it darkened the horizon.

But not all came willingly. In Ithaca, Odysseus—who loved the calm of his island and the cry of his newborn son—pretended madness to avoid the war. He yoked an ox and a donkey together and began to plow the sand, as though to sow the sea. But the messengers saw through his ruse, and he had no choice but to join them.

In another corner of Greece, the goddess Thetis tried to hide her son Achilles, knowing that if he sailed to Troy, he might never

return. Yet the young man understood that destiny was calling, and he set out for war without looking back.

And so the heroes gathered: Ajax, strong as a wall; Nestor, wise and aged; Diomedes, bold and loyal. When their sails caught the wind, the coast of Greece shimmered with color—like a garden unfurled upon the sea.

And in the heavens Aphrodite smiled in quiet triumph, while Hera and Athena turned their eyes away, knowing their quarrel had at last reached the hearts of mortals.

Student Activities Chapters 1 - 2

The Apple of Discord & The Abduction of Helen

Understand the Story

Answer the questions using complete sentences. You may refer back to the text.

1. Why was Eris excluded from the wedding of Peleus and Thetis?
2. What words were written on the golden apple, and why did they cause a conflict among the goddesses?
3. What did each goddess promise Paris in exchange for his choice?
4. Why did Paris choose Aphrodite's offer?
5. Why was Helen's departure from Sparta considered an insult not only to Menelaus but to all Greece?

Think and Discuss

Discuss these questions in pairs, small groups, or as a class.

1. Who do you think is most responsible for the Trojan War: Paris, Helen, the gods, or the Greek kings? Explain why.
2. Paris chooses love over power and wisdom. Do you see this choice as brave, selfish, or unavoidable?
3. To what extent do the gods control human actions in this story? Do the characters have real freedom of choice?
4. Helen is often blamed for the war. Is this fair? How much control does she actually have over what happens to her?

Create

Choose one activity.

Option A • The Trial of Paris

Imagine Paris is put on trial for starting the Trojan War.

- **Write a short argument for the prosecution, explaining why Paris should be held responsible.**
- **Write a short argument for the defense, explaining why he should not be blamed.**

You may refer to:

- **the role of the gods.**
- **fate and divine influence.**
- **Paris's intentions.**
- **the oath sworn by Helen's suitors.**

Option B • A Voice from the Story

Write a short diary entry or letter from the point of view of **one character** involved in the events.

You may choose:

- **Helen, on the night she leaves Sparta.**
- **Paris, after judging the goddesses.**
- **Menelaus, after discovering Helen is gone.**

Focus on:

- **thoughts and emotions.**
- **whether the choice feels free or forced.**

Did You Know?

- In ancient Greece, breaking a solemn oath was believed to offend the gods.
- Helen's suitors unknowingly created a powerful military alliance by swearing to protect her marriage.
- Many Greek myths explain wars not as accidents, but as the result of pride, rivalry, and wounded honor.

Vocabulary

- **Discord** – serious disagreement or conflict.
- **Oath** – a solemn promise, often sworn to the gods.
- **Alliance** – an agreement between groups for mutual support.
- **Desire** – a strong wish or longing.
- **Abduction** – taking someone away by force or deception.
- **Fate** – a power believed to control events.

Use the Words

Choose three words from the list.

- Write one sentence using each word to describe something from the story.
- Write one new sentence using the same word in a modern or personal context.

Reflection

In a short paragraph, answer:

Can a single decision change the course of history, or do many forces always work together?

Use examples from the story to support your answer.

Teacher Notes

Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the mythological origins of the Trojan War. Through the Judgment of Paris and Helen's departure from Sparta, students explore how personal choices, divine influence, and social obligations combine to trigger large-scale conflict.

These chapters establish that the war does not begin on the battlefield, but through decisions shaped by desire, pride, and power.

Key Themes

- Cause and consequence.
- Free will versus divine influence.
- Responsibility and blame.
- Desire, honor, and social obligation.

Teaching Notes

Students may initially focus on blaming a single character (Paris or Helen). Encourage them to look beyond individual actions and consider the roles of the gods, the oath sworn by the Greek kings, and the cultural values surrounding honor and marriage.

This chapter pair is especially useful for introducing ethical discussion without requiring historical background knowledge.

Suggested Classroom Use

- Read as a single learning block over 2–3 sessions.
- Use discussion questions to explore responsibility before assigning creative tasks.
- Creative activities (trial, diary entry) work well as formative assessment.

Teacher Introduction. Chapters 1-2

The Apple of Discord & The Abduction of Helen

This block introduces students to the origins of the Trojan War, emphasizing that large conflicts rarely begin with a single action. Through mythological storytelling, students explore how personal choices, divine influence, social obligations, and wounded pride combine to produce far-reaching consequences.

Rather than presenting war as inevitable, these chapters encourage students to examine responsibility, causality, and decision-making, helping them understand how myths reflect enduring human behaviors and moral tensions.

This section is particularly well suited for cross-curricular work in Literature, History, Ethics, and Social Studies.

Key Themes

This block explores the following central ideas:

- **Cause and consequence** — how small actions trigger large conflicts.
- **Free will vs. fate** — the limits of choice under divine pressure.
- **Responsibility and blame** — individual actions within collective consequences.
- **Power, desire, and honor** — competing motivations that shape decisions.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this block, students should be able to:

- ✓ Identify the multiple causes that lead to the Trojan War.
- ✓ Explain how mythological characters' choices affect wider events.
- ✓ Discuss ethical responsibility using evidence from the text.
- ✓ Compare human and divine roles in shaping conflict.
- ✓ Use key vocabulary related to conflict, alliances, and responsibility.

Skills Developed

- ✓ Reading comprehension (literal and inferential).
- ✓ Ethical reasoning and structured discussion.
- ✓ Perspective-taking and empathy.
- ✓ Written expression (reflective and argumentative).
- ✓ Academic vocabulary development (including ESL support).

Suggested Classroom Approach

This block can be taught over **2–4 class sessions**, depending on depth and student level.

Suggested sequence:

1. **Guided or independent reading** of Chapters 1–2, clarifying mythological references as needed.
2. **Whole-class discussion** focused on responsibility and the role of the gods in human decisions.
3. **Creative or analytical activity**, such as the Trial of Paris or Helen's diary entry.
4. **Short written reflection** connecting the myth to modern conflicts or personal choices.

Teachers may select or adapt activities based on classroom needs and time constraints.

Differentiation & Accessibility

- **Developing readers / ESL students** benefit from structured questions and contextual vocabulary support.
- **Advanced students** can expand discussion activities into formal debates or short essays.

Tasks may be completed individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

Essential Question

Can a single choice truly cause a war, or is conflict always the result of many forces working together?

This question can remain visible throughout the block to support discussion and reflection.

Visit www.olladadetinta.es/en/resources or scan this QR code to access educational resources and companion materials related to this book.



Acknowledgments

Thank you for joining us on this journey to the age of heroes.

Every reader who opens the pages of *The Iliad* revives the echo of the ancient voices that Homer turned into song.

Without you, this story would remain asleep. Through your reading, it breathes again.

We are Ollada de Tinta, a small independent publisher taking its first steps with the excitement of those who set sail toward the unknown.

Your interest and support inspire us to keep creating books that bridge the past and the present, so that the great stories of the world remain alive in the hands of new readers.

If you'd like to share your thoughts, suggestions, or even your critiques, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

You can write to us at: contacto@olladadetinta.es

Your words help other readers discover our work and encourage us to keep navigating between stories— like the heroes who once sought their destiny.

With gratitude and enthusiasm,

The Ollada de Tinta Team

