Odyssey Timeline

**Trojan War ends** (lasted 10 years)
Odysseus offends the gods by not giving credit in the victory during the Trojan War. Then Odysseus offends Zeus by attacking Troy’s ally – Circones. Zeus blows them off course for nine days – and they land on the island of the Cyclops. After Odysseus attacks Polyphemus, the cyclop’s father, Poseidon (God of the Sea), is angered. Poseidon vows to teach him a lesson by not allowing him to return home.

**TIME SPAN OF THE STORY = 10 years (he is gone for a total of 20 years)**

Odysseus leaves on his ship with his crew – attempting to go home to Ithaca

- **Encounters the Lotus Eaters** – escapes by tying the men to the rowing benches until they were safely away (Lotus makes them not care about home)

- **Stops on the Cyclops’ island** – out of curiosity. He then has to find a way to cleverly escape the BRAUN of such a mean giant. Blinds him and blames it on Nohbdy (and sails away taunting him all the while due to his ego).

- **Odysseus runs into Aeolus – the God of the Wind.** Aeolus is not thrilled with Poseidon so he decides to help Odysseus by sealing a bag of wind to be opened at a specific spot in the ocean. This wind power should be enough to get him back to Ithaca – Poseidon or NOT! The men think the bag is filled with treasure that Odysseus is hoarding for himself and break it open while he is sleeping. The winds create a hurricane and they are no closer to home.

- **Odysseus’ ship lands on Circe’s island (a witch).** She turns his men into animals (all pigs) and locks them up. Odysseus heads to the witch’s hall. On the way, Hermes flies up and gives him a nearby plant, telling him that if he eats it he will be immune to Circe’s spell. Odysseus eats the plant and frees his men. **He loses track of time there and stays for some time (under her persuasion).** He finally convinces her to help them get home. She tells him he must see Tiresias in the Land of the Dead and how to conjure him to speak. She also warns him about the Sirens and the Scylla and Charybdis.

- **The Land of the Dead is Odysseus’ next stop.** This is not a pleasant trip, nor safe. He has to go there to get guidance from Tiresias (the blind seer) who can help him home. He promises to sacrifice his best pregnant cow to them when he returns home – the dead feast on blood. Once he sees Tiresias he has to slaughter a sheep to get him to speak to him.

  Tiresias tells him about Scylla and Charybdis, Helios’s cattle (leave them alone or else), and that he will live, but his men will die. He will get home eventually and he will win against the suitors. He also tells Odysseus that he will take more journeys and die at sea an old man. Odysseus asks to be able to speak with his mother (who was alive when he left Ithaca).

  Odysseus tells his mother he feels all gods are against him (especially that she is dead). She tells him of Penelope and to tell Penelope of the Land of the Dead when he gets home.

- **The ship sails through the Sirens** – but are unaffected because Odysseus heeded Circe’s warning and filled their ears with beeswax so they wouldn’t be called to their death. He, however, is tied to the mast so he can hear the ‘crying beauty’ but can’t react or get him men to.

- **Now onto the choice of the Scylla and the Charybdis.** The Scylla is a monster with 6 heads. She will eat 6 of his men if they are close to her. Charybdis is a whirlpool that will drown the entire boat and all the men if they are close to her. It is such a narrow passage between them that they have to pass next to one
or the other. Odysseus chooses Scylla – better to lose 6 than all. – after all of this they disobey his orders and eat Helios’s sacred cattle (since they are starving). Zeus strikes the boat with a thunderbolt and all are destroyed except for Odysseus.

*SPLIT TIME HERE (Odysseus’ story continues + Telemachus’ story of his journey and Penelope’s with the suitors)*

Calypso’s Island is where Odysseus (sans ship) washes up. *We aren’t sure exactly how much time is spent here, but it is a couple years, anyway.* She is a nymph with only women on the island. He is quite the novelty. She promises him immortality if he stays, but knows he is in love with his wife. Athena goes to her father, Zeus, to ask for him to intervene so Odysseus can try to return home. Zeus sends Hermes – who tells Calypso to set him free. She allows Odysseus to build a raft and leave the island.

Once on the ocean, Poseidon attacks the raft – Odysseus lands (unconscious) upon the Phaecian island.

Nausicaa (a princess) finds Odysseus – after Athena tells her in a dream to go to the shore to do laundry. She *takes him to the palace*. A bard sings Odysseus’ song – Odysseus is emotional and *they recognize him for who he is and sail him home to Ithaca.*

MEANWHILE – Penelope is home trying to stall 108 suitors who want to marry her to gain Odysseus’ palace, power and wealth. They are eating them out of house and home and Telemachus is too young to help. She is weaving a tapestry during the day and taking it out at night (to stall) telling them that when she is done she will pick one to marry. She is still in love with Odysseus and doesn’t want to admit that he is dead – although all signs point to that since the war has been over for years and he still hasn’t returned.

AND AT THE SAME TIME – Telemachus (Odysseus and Penelope’s son) has been told by Athena (in disguise) to go in search of his father or news of him. When he returns he may be old enough to defend his home and mother against the suitors. They plan to kill him upon his return.

**10 years after the Trojan War ended**

Odysseus returns home – but disguised as a beggar (thanks to Athena) to spy and see if his wife still wants him and who is loyal to him.

Telemachus returns from his voyage with news that his father is still alive and was on Calypso’s island.

Odysseus confides his true identity to his son – they concoct a plan.

Odysseus finds out that Penelope loves him still.

He devises a contest to see who will win Penelope’s hand in marriage: whomever can string the bow (Odysseus’) and shoot it through several small rings on the tops of axes will win. This is an old trick of Odysseus’ and he is the only one who has ever been able to string his bow – but he looks like a poor old beggar. The suitors all try, one at a time, an none succeed. Finally Odysseus tries and does so – and shoots the arrow clean through the rings. The doors are barred and he and Telemachus kill all the suitors. The maids (who betrayed Penelope by telling the suitors how she was stalling) were told to clean up the mess and then killed.

And they all lived happily ever after! **THE END**
Odysseus
home (as beggar)

Telemachus
home from Menelaus

Argos recognizes Odysseus

Euryclia recognizes 'beggar'

Deal w/ suitors

Odysseus and Laertes

Telemachus and Odysseus 'meet'

'Beggar' talks to Penelope about Odysseus