

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key: Escape the Labyrinth of Ancient Epics: A 9th Grade Global Odyssey

Ninth graders identify recurring archetypes and foundational plot elements across Mesopotamian, Greek, and Sanskrit narratives to unlock the secrets of shared human history.

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**1. In the Mesopotamian 'Epic of Gilgamesh,' what is the primary motivation for the protagonist's long and dangerous journey?**

**Answer:** A) To find the secret of eternal life after his friend's death

After Enkidu dies, Gilgamesh becomes terrified of his own mortality and seeks out Utnapishtim to learn how to live forever.

**2. The ancient Greek epic 'The Odyssey' focuses on the ten-year journey of \_\_\_\_\_ as he tries to return home to Ithaca.**

**Answer:** B) Odysseus

Odysseus is the central figure of the poem, known for his cunning (metis) and his long struggle to reach his family.

**3. True or False: The 'Ramayana,' a major epic from India, tells the story of Prince Rama's quest to rescue his wife, Sita.**

**Answer:** A) True

The Ramayana is a cornerstone of Sanskrit literature following Rama's exile and his eventual battle against the demon-king Ravana.

**4. Which of these literary devices is most commonly used in ancient epics to help the storyteller remember the long poem?**

**Answer:** B) Epithets (descriptive phrases like 'swift-footed')

Epithets are repetitive formulas used in oral traditions to maintain rhythm and identify characters clearly.

**5. In the French epic 'The Song of Roland,' the hero Roland serves as a brave knight for King \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Answer:** A) Charlemagne

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The Song of Roland is a 'chanson de geste' detailing the Battle of Roncevaux Pass during the reign of Charlemagne.

**6. True or False: Ancient epics were originally written down immediately by the authors who invented them.**

**Answer:** B) False

Most ancient epics began as oral traditions, passed down through generations of bards or storytellers before being transcribed.

**7. What is the name of the monster defeated by the hero in the Old English epic 'Beowulf'?**

**Answer:** B) Grendel

Beowulf travels to Denmark to defeat Grendel, a monster who has been terrorizing King Hrothgar's mead hall.

**8. The 'Shahnameh,' or Book of Kings, is the national epic of which modern-day country?**

**Answer:** C) Iran

Written by Ferdowsi, the Shahnameh is the central cultural epic of the Persian-speaking world (Iran).

**9. True or False: An 'epic hero' is typically a person of ordinary birth who accomplishes small, everyday tasks.**

**Answer:** B) False

Epic heroes are usually of noble birth or semi-divine status and perform deeds of great historical or cosmic importance.

**10. Which of these is a common 'universal theme' found in many different world epics?**

**Answer:** B) The battle between good and evil

The struggle between opposing forces like good and evil or order and chaos is a fundamental theme in global epic literature.