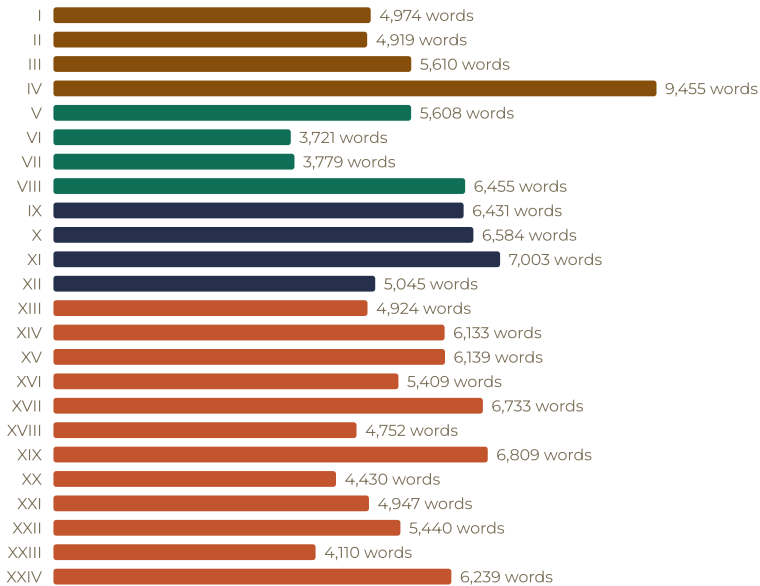


Half of the Odyssey Happens on Ithaca

The Trojan War took ten years and Homer gave the journey home ten more. Count the words and the ratio is sharper still: the wanderings are 18% of the poem, told in four books at a feast, and Ithaca is 49% — twelve books in which the hero is home and almost nobody knows it.

WHERE THE WORDS GO

Each of the 24 books by length in the Butcher & Lang translation, colored by where the poem is standing.



FOUR PARTS

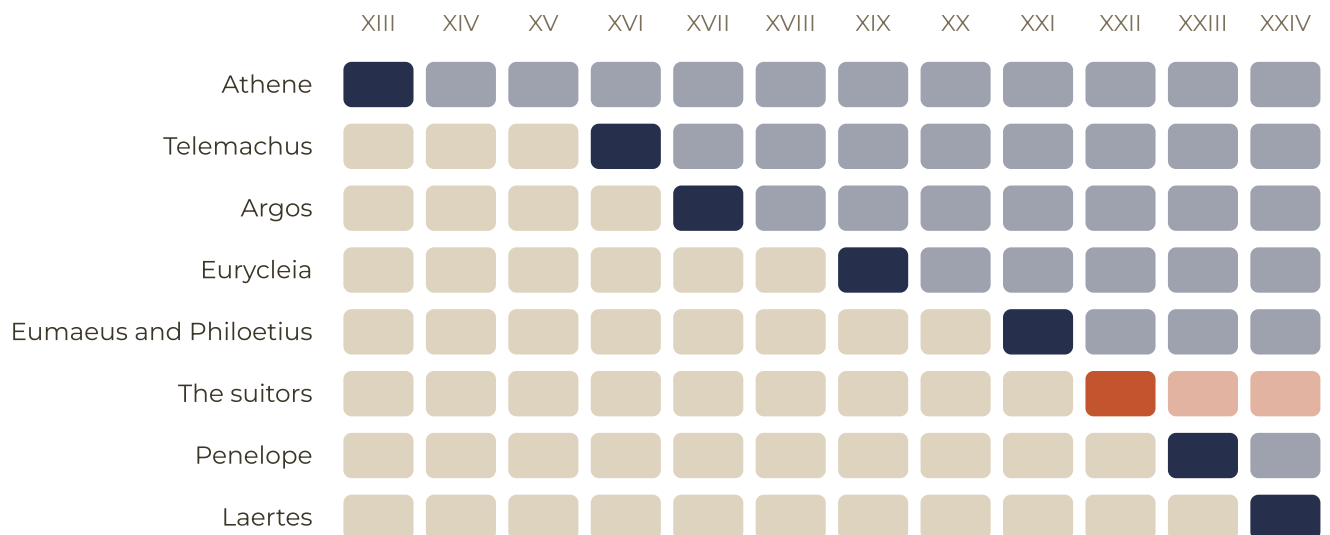
Telemachus searches (Odysseus absent)	18%
Calypso to Phaeacia	14%
The wanderings, told at the feast	18%
Ithaca	49%

The whole poem **135,649 words**

Books I–IV belong to Telemachus, and Odysseus is absent. He appears in Book V on Calypso's shore, tells his own wanderings in IX–XII, and from XIII to the end is on Ithaca: the longest stretch of the poem is a man in his own house in rags, deciding whom to tell.

WHO KNOWS HE IS HOME

A row per figure on Ithaca, filled from the book in which they learn who the stranger is. The dog knows before any person in the household; the wife is told only after the killing.



Every number here is drawn from the interactive map of the text.

Scan the code, or visit constellate-atlas.app/stories/odysseus-coming-home to open the map and the story behind this page, with the passage behind every line.

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Who learns, and who dies

The nine recognition scenes in order, with the line that shows each; then the suitors as Homer counts them, and the 14 he names among the dead of Book XXII.

THE RECOGNITIONS

BOOK	WHO LEARNS	HOW, AND THE LINE
IX	The Phaeacians	He names himself before telling his wanderings. <i>"I am ODYSSEUS, SON OF LAERTES, who am in men's minds for all manner of wiles, and my fame reaches unto heaven."</i>
XIII	Athene	She lifts her own disguise and his mist. <i>"thou hast indeed returned from wandering, but in silence endure much sorrow, submitting thee to the despite of men."</i>
XVI	Telemachus	Athene restores his looks in the swineherd's hut. <i>"Behold, no god am I; why likenest thou me to the immortals? nay, thy father am I, for whose sake thou sufferest many pains and groanest sore."</i>
XVII	Argos	The dog knows him at the gate and dies. <i>"Yet even now when he was ware of Odysseus standing by, he wagged his tail and dropped both his ears, but nearer to his master he had not now the strength to draw."</i>
XIX	Eurycleia	The nurse finds the boar's scar while washing his feet. <i>"Yea verily, thou art Odysseus, my dear child, and I knew thee not before, till I had handled all the body of my lord."</i>
XXI	Eumaeus and Philoetius	He shows the herdsmen the scar before the bow. <i>"Therewith he drew aside the rags from the great scar. And when the twain had beheld it and marked it well, they cast their arms about the wise Odysseus, and fell a weeping."</i>
XXII	The suitors	He strips off his rags and shoots Antinous. <i>"Ye dogs, ye said in your hearts that I should never more come home from the land of the Trojans, in that ye wasted my house."</i>
XXIII	Penelope	She orders the bed moved; only he knows it cannot be. <i>"So she spake and made trial of her lord, but Odysseus in sore displeasure spake to his true wife, saying: "Verily a bitter word is this, lady, that thou hast spoken. Who has set my bed elsewhere?"</i>
XXIV	Laertes	His father asks for a token; he shows the scar and names the trees. <i>"Look first on this scar and consider it, that the boar dealt me with his white tusk on Parnassus, whither I had gone, and thou didst send me forth."</i>

THE SUITORS, COUNTED

Telemachus itemizes them for his father in Book XVI.

Dulichium	52
Same	24
Zacynthus	20
Ithaca	12
All	108

NAMED DEAD, BY KILLER

Odysseus	6
Telemachus	4
Eumaeus	2
Philoetius	2

NAMED SUITORS KILLED IN BOOK XXII

KILLED	BY	ON THE MAP
Antinous	Odysseus	The man, not the death
Eurymachus	Odysseus	As a line
Amphinomus	Telemachus	As a line
Demoptolemus	Odysseus	As a line
Euryades	Telemachus	No
Elatus	Eumaeus	The man, not the death
Peisandrus	Philoetius	The man, not the death
Eurydamas	Odysseus	As a line
Amphimedon	Telemachus	As a line
Polybus	Eumaeus	No
Ctesippus	Philoetius	As a line
Agelaus	Odysseus	As a line
Leocritus	Telemachus	As a line
Leiodes	Odysseus	As a line

Four men do all the named killing: the father, the son, and the two herdsmen who stayed loyal. Book XXIV opens with the suitors' families arming for revenge; a goddess stops it, twice.



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