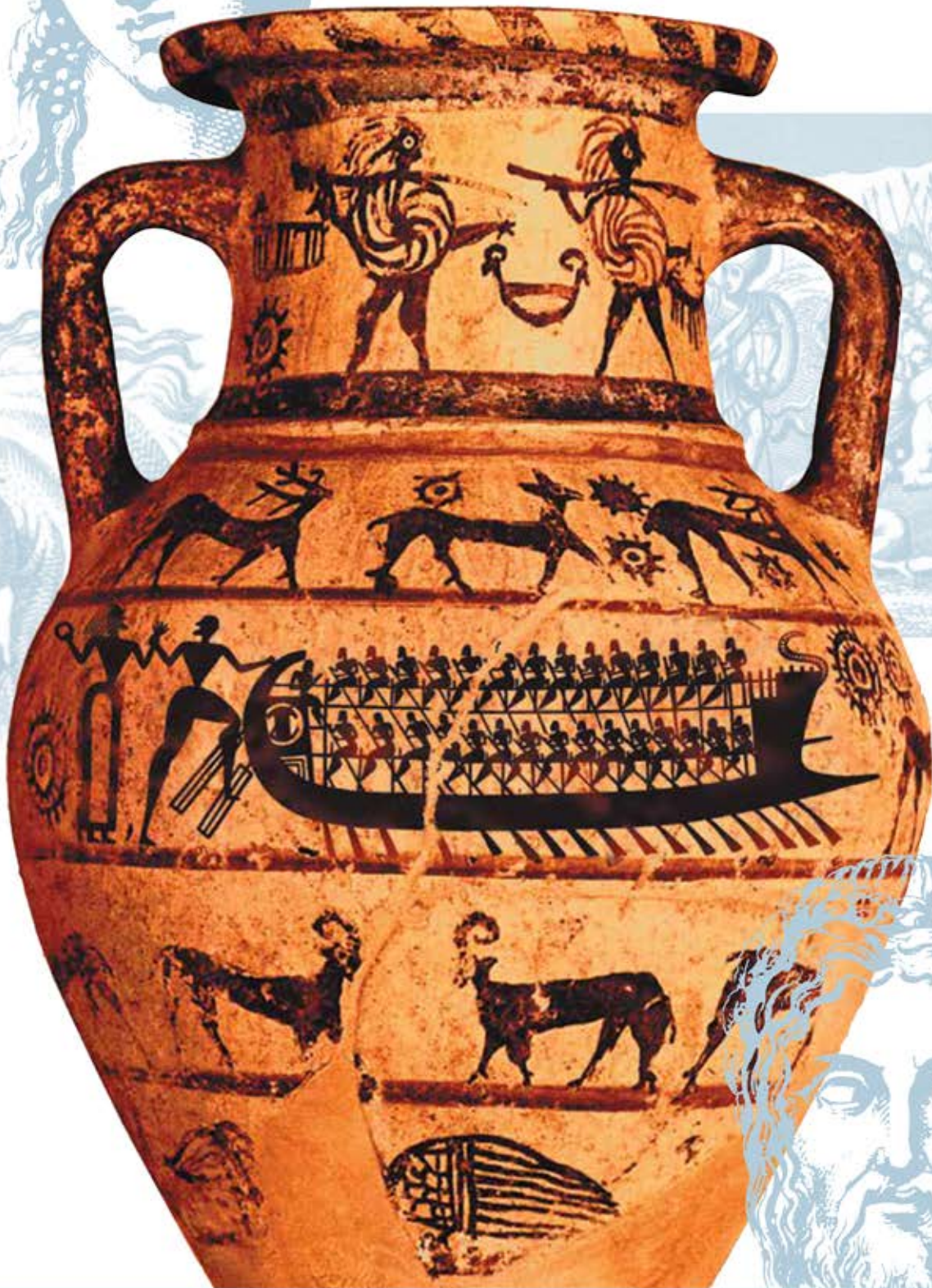


# BLACK SHIPS BEFORE TROY

COMPREHENSION GUIDE



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# BLACK SHIPS BEFORE TROY

Comprehension Guide  
by Adam Kuliszewski

Designed by  
Ned Bustard



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# BLACK SHIPS BEFORE TROY

## *How to use this Guide*

“Mr. Kuliszewski, is Hector a Greek?”

The goal of this guide is to aid students in their comprehension of Rosemary Sutcliff’s masterful and challenging version of Homer’s Iliad. During the grammar stage of a child’s education, it is crucial that students be able to answer the “who, what, when and where” questions of the literature that is set before them. The comprehension questions in this guide will help the teacher to discern whether or not his student(s) have understood what they have read.

“Mr. Kuliszewski, if Zeus is a god, why can’t he be in more than one place at a time?”

When we, as Christians, read books, it is critical that we not only seek to understand the author’s meaning, but that we also work to apply the Bible to what we are reading. Students should be probed regularly with questions like:

“What commandment(s) did Helen break by not keeping her marriage vow to Menelaus?” “How does question five of the catechism apply to the gods of Olympus?” etc. We must help our students to discern truth from error, belief from unbelief, light from darkness, the God of the Bible from the false gods of man’s own devising (which is especially important in this book).

Additionally, the teacher will need to assist the students to read aloud with fluency and proper vocal inflection, while accurately reflecting the emotion of the passage.

Practical concerns

Answers to the questions are found in the back of the guide. These answers provide the content only. Students, however, must be trained to restate the question in their answer, and these statements should be complete and thorough.

Example:

**Question:** Whom did Paris meet and fall in love with near Mount Ida?

**Answer:** Paris met and fell in love with Oenone near Mount Ida.

In addition to grading the comprehension of the content, I highly recommend that you encourage students to integrate their grammar and linguistics skills by including those areas in your grading.

My students deeply enjoy any opportunity to playact, dress-up, and “feel” what they are studying. To that end I have included a play version of chapters four and five. Another delight of my students is a game entitled: “Who said it?” It will serve well as an end-of-book review.

Finally, it is my hope that through this guide students will understand the story of the Iliad, and are thereby better prepared to grasp and enjoy Homer’s epic.

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# BLACK SHIPS BEFORE TROY

## *Chapter 1—The Golden Apple*

1. Who threw a golden apple on the table? What words were traced on its side?

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2. Who claimed the apple as their own? What caused them to think they each had a right to the apple?

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3. Who was chosen to decide who was the fairest?

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4. To whom was the golden apple given?

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5. Who was Helen of the Fair Cheeks?

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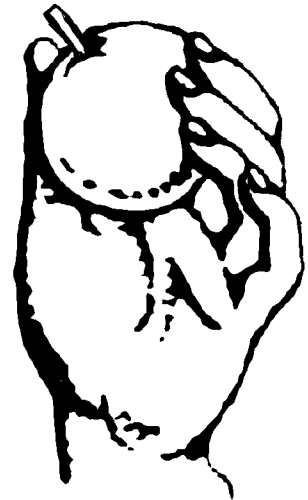
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6. What did Helen leave behind when she departed with Paris?

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## *Chapter 2—Ship-Gathering*

1. Describe what came upon Menelaus when he found Helen gone with Paris?

What did he do because of the wrong done to him?

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2. Which one of the war-leaders was lacking?

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3. What one spot on Achilles' body did the waters of the River Styx not touch?

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4. What was the name of the older boy who was Achilles' companion?

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5. When the High King's summons went out, what did Achilles' mother do to hide him?

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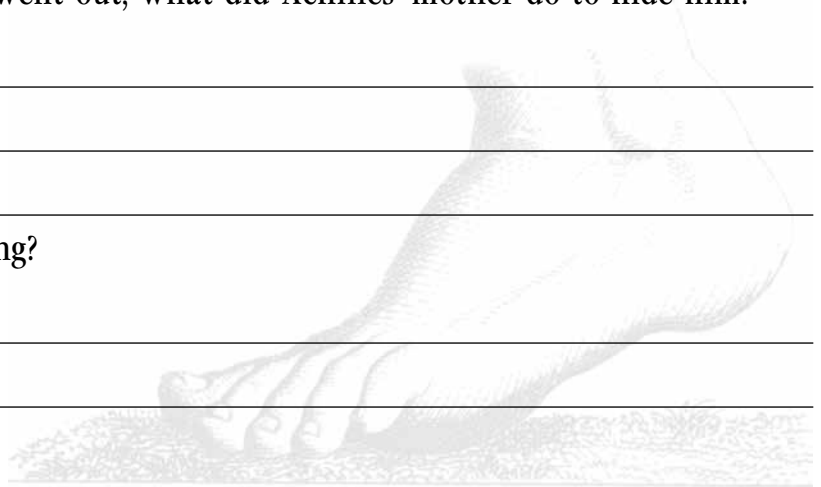
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6. Who tricked Achilles out of hiding?

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# BLACK SHIPS BEFORE TROY

## *Chapter—3—Quarrel with the High King*

1. Who was Hector?

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2. Name the two beautiful maidens who were brought back as part of the spoils.

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3. Which maiden was given to which Greek? Why?

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4. Why did fever come upon the Greek camp?

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5. Which two Greeks had a bitter quarrel between them?

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6. Who dishonored Achilles? What did Achilles swear?

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7. What did Achilles do as he sat among his ships?

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# BLACK SHIPS BEFORE TROY

## *Chapter 4—Single Combat*

1. Who shouted a challenge to the Greek lines for any warrior to meet him in single combat?

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2. Who was glad to accept the challenge?

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3. What was the formal bargain offered to end the war?

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4. Who helped Paris during the combat?

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# BLACK SHIPS BEFORE TROY

## *Chapter 5—The Women of Troy*

1. Who determined that the truce must be broken?

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2. As the tide of the battle began to run more and more strongly for the Greeks, who was bidden to leave his command, to whom did he leave it, and what was he to ask his mother to do?

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3. When Hector went to visit Helen, whom did he find there and what was that person doing?

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4. Why did Hector's baby shrink back from him?

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5. "\_\_\_\_\_ is the work for \_\_\_\_\_."

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# BLACK SHIPS BEFORE TROY

## *Chapter 6—The High King's Embassy*

1. Who bid the Greeks to send out a champion of their own choice against him?

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2. To whom did the lot fall?

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3. What did ancient king Nestor say they should do?

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4. Name the men who went to speak with Achilles.

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5. What was the result of Achilles nursing his anger and allowing it to drive deep within him?

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6. When did Achilles say he would fight?

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## *Chapter 7—The Horses of King Rhesus*

1. Which two men went to the Trojan camp to find out whether they would attack at dawn?

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2. What information did Dolon gabble forth to Odysseus?

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3. When they came to the Thracian camp, what did they find?

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4. Why did Odysseus drag the dead men to make a clear path?

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# BLACK SHIPS BEFORE TROY

## *Chapter 8—Red Rain*

1. Why were the Greeks in better cheer than they had been last evening?

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2. Where was Paris when he loosed an arrow at Diomedes?

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3. What was Achilles doing all this while?

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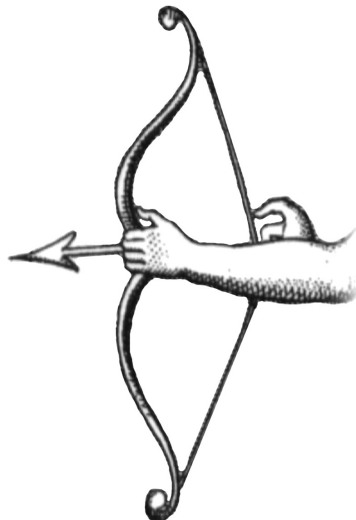
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4. What did Nestor say to Patroclus as he was already turning to go?

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# BLACK SHIPS BEFORE TROY

## *Chapter 9—Battle for the Ships*



1. Why did Hector's company hesitate to join the attack?

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2. What omen did Hector tell his men was best of all?

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3. Which of the gods brought Trojans into the heart of the Greek camp?

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4. When Zeus saw the Trojans in flight and Hector vomiting black blood, whom did Zeus send to care for Hector? How was Hector helped?

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5. What did Hector shout so loud that his voice reached from end to end of the battlefield?

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# BLACK SHIPS BEFORE TROY

## *Chapter 10—The Armor of Achilles*

1. What did Achilles direct Patroclus to do after he had driven the Trojans clear of the ships?

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2. What were the names of Achilles' two immortal horses?

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3. Name the lord of the Lycians whom Patroclus slew. Who was his father?

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4. What did Zeus do, as he was angry for the death of the lord of the Lycians?

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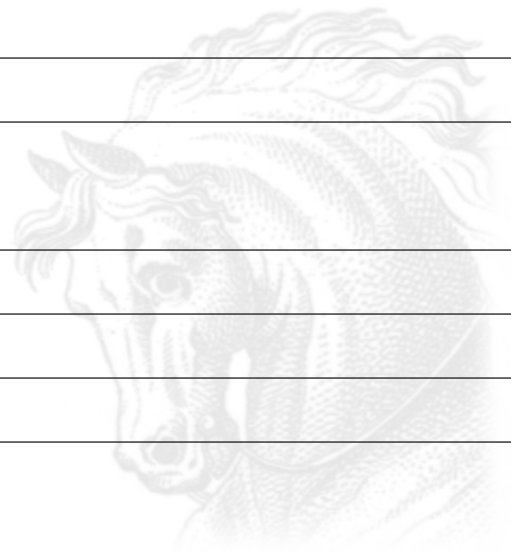
5. What did Hector do with Achilles' armor?

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# BLACK SHIPS BEFORE TROY

## *Chapter 11—Vengeance for Patroclus*

1. *What was the hope of Antilochus in bringing the black news to Achilles?*

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2. *To whom did Thetis go to get new armor for Achilles?*

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3. *Who stood before the Scaean gate unmoving and waiting for Achilles?*

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4. *What happened when Achilles sprang from his chariot and rushed toward him?*

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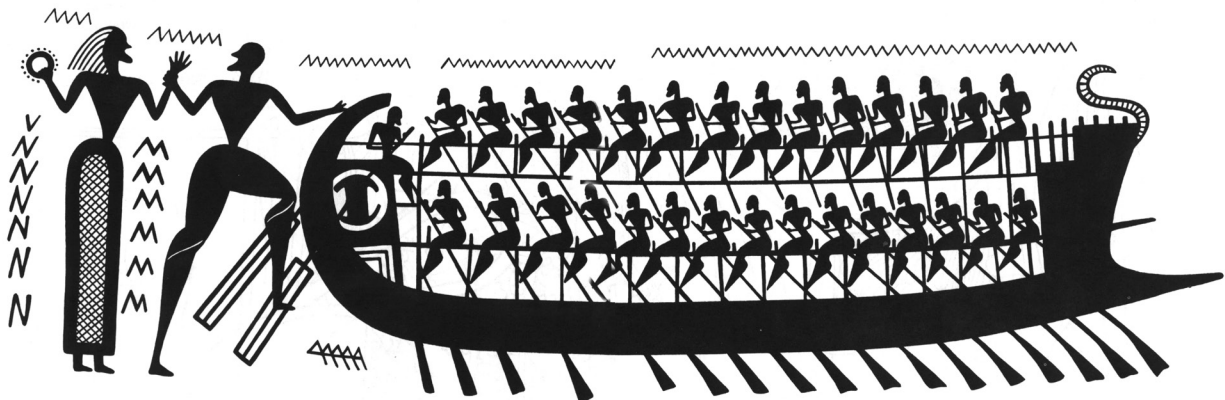
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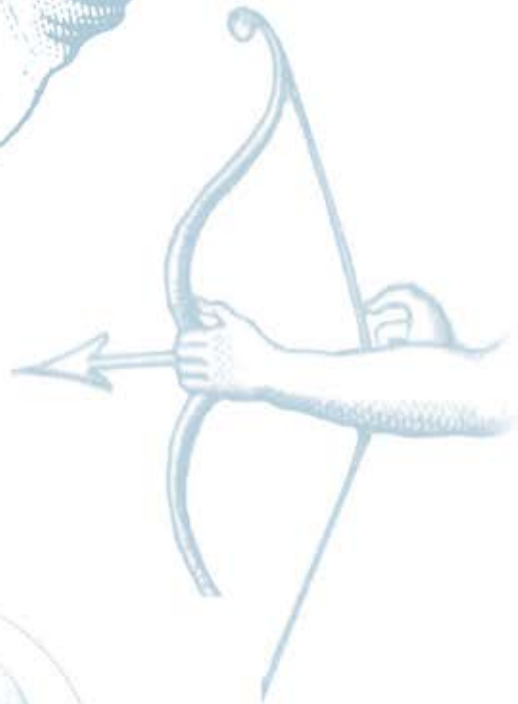
5. *What was Hector's final plea?*

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