

The Trojan War Timeline

The Trojan War (*The Illiad*)

- Helen is courted by suitors from all over Greece
 - Her father Tyndareus, wary of angering the other suitors, enlists Odysseus (who was one of the suitors but didn't think he'd win) to help to solve the problem.
 - In exchange for Penelope's hand in marriage, Odysseus convinces the suitors to swear an oath of loyalty to whoever is chosen to marry Helen
 - This oath is called the **Oath of Tyndareus**
- Menelaus is chosen as Helen's husband
- The Judgment of Paris: Paris is forced to choose the most beautiful Goddess between Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite
 - He chooses Aphrodite because she promises him the most beautiful woman in the world (Helen) as his bride
- With Aphrodite's help, Paris abducts Helen from Menelaus and brings her back to Troy
- Menelaus invokes the Oath of Tyndareus to bring Helen back to Greece. He raises thousands of ships and all of the Greek kings to his aid
 - Odysseus initially pretends he's insane by sowing salt on his fields in order to avoid going. However, he is discovered when the messenger places his son directly in front of his plow
 - Achilles also tries to avoid going because it was prophesized that he would die at the hands of the Trojans. At his mother Thetis' bidding, he disguises himself as a woman and hides in Lycomedes' court. Odysseus discovers him when he lays out ornaments and weapons on a table and Achilles is drawn to the weapons
- The fleet is assembled, but they cannot move forward due to a strong wind
 - The Greeks discover that Artemis is causing the wind to blow and that she's upset. The only way to appease her is to sacrifice a royal maiden
 - Agamemnon sacrifices his own daughter Iphigenia to allow the armies to set sail
- The Greek troops arrive at Troy
- Apollo sends a plague to punish the Greeks for Agamemnon's mistreatment of his priestess Chryseis
 - Achilles convinces Agamemnon to return Chryseis to her father, but Agamemnon demands Achilles' maiden Briseis in return which angers Achilles
 - Achilles vows to have nothing to do with the Greeks from then on
- Thetis, also upset, tries to convince Zeus to take sides against the Greeks
 - The Gods take sides
- Menelaus fights against Paris to determine whether Helen should return to Greece
 - Menelaus is victorious, but Aphrodite rescues Paris and spirits him away
 - Athena, at Hera's bidding, prevents the Trojans from surrendering Helen

- The battle continues
 - Diomedes injures Aeneas, Aphrodite, and Ares with Athena's help
- Hector joins the battle and swings the tide of battle
 - Achilles is still nowhere to be found
 - Odysseus attempts to convince Achilles to fight, but is unsuccessful
- Zeus aids the Trojans until they are almost upon the Greek ships
 - Hera distracts Zeus long enough for the Greeks to fight their way back
 - Ajax casts Hector to the ground, but Aeneas saves him
- Patroclus begs Achilles to borrow his armor to rally the Greeks
 - Patroclus is slain by Hector who mistakes him for Achilles
- Enraged, Achilles joins the fight
 - He's given divinely made armor by Hephaestus
- Achilles fights Hector
 - Hector is tricked into thinking that his brother has come to aid him by Athena
 - Achilles kills Hector and refuses to return his body to Priam. Instead he parades it along the walls of Troy by dragging it behind his chariot
- Priam begs for the body of his son (Hector) in the guise of an old beggar
 - Achilles relents and the body of Hector is returned
- The *Illiad* ends with Hector's funeral

The Fall of Troy (*The Aeneid*)

- Achilles is slain as prophesized by Paris who shoots him with an arrow in his heel. This is the only mortal part of his body. Apollo guides the arrow in
 - Ajax kills himself after Achilles' armor is given to Odysseus rather than him
 - Devastated, the Greeks withdraw to plan their next move
- Odysseus comes up with the idea for the Trojan Horse
 - The Greek leaders hide inside the horse while the rest of the army pretends like it is leaving
- The Trojans move the horse into their city and celebrate the victory
- At night the Greeks surprise the Trojans while they sleep and massacre them
 - King Priam is killed as well as Hector's son
- Aeneas escapes and sets sail for Italy with a group of his followers. Their journeys become the focus of *The Aeneid* by Virgil

Odysseus' Journey Home (*The Odyssey*)

- The *Odyssey* begins *in medias res* 10 years after the Fall of Troy and 20 years after the Greeks first set sail for Troy

Characters in the Trojan War

Greeks:

Menelaus: King of Mycenae (Sparta) and the husband of Helen. Initiates the Trojan War by calling upon the Oath of Tyndareus (sworn by all of Helen's suitors to support whomever was chosen) after he discovers that Helen has been abducted.

Agamemnon: King of Argos (Mycenae) brother of Menelaus and husband of Clytemnestra. While away during the Trojan War, Aegisthus seduced Clytemnestra and usurped his rule back home. When Agamemnon returned home he was killed by Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.

Odysseus: King of Ithaca. Cleverest of the Greek heroes. Responsible for coming up with the Trojan Horse and the Oath of Tyndareus.

Nestor: The oldest and wisest member of the Greeks.

Achilles: The greatest hero of Greece. The son of Thetis. Immortal except for a small area on his heel. Initially does not fight in the war due to a dispute but eventually enters the battlefield when his friend Patroclus is killed. Destined to die soon after his confrontation with Hector.

Patroclus: Beloved friend of Achilles, he dons Achilles' armor to help rally the Greeks but is killed by Hector. His death brings Achilles into the war at last.

Diomedes: The second greatest of the Greek heroes along with Ajax after Achilles. A favorite of Athena, he manages to wound Aeneas, Aphrodite, and Ares with her aid.

Ajax: The strongest of the Greek heroes, he is considered (along with Diomedes) to be their second greatest hero after Achilles. Also the only major hero not to receive aid from the Gods who participate in the struggle.

Gods Siding with the Greeks:

- **Athena:** Sides with the Greeks to oppose Paris and Aphrodite. Also aids her favorite warriors: Diomedes and Odysseus.
- **Hera:** Sides with the Greeks because of her jealousy for Aphrodite after the latter was chosen instead of her during the Judgment of Paris. Distracts Zeus, preventing him from turning the tides for the Trojans.
- **Poseidon:** Sides with the Greeks because they are a seafaring people.
- **Thetis:** A sea nymph and the mother of Achilles. Initially tries to convince Zeus to help the Trojans win the war after Achilles' dispute with Agamemnon. Later aids her son by giving him armor forged by Hephaestus.

Trojans:

Paris: Trojan prince who won favor with Aphrodite when he chose her as the most beautiful Goddess. In return he was promised the most beautiful woman in the world as his bride: Helen. Began the Trojan War by abducting Helen and bringing her to Troy.

Helen: The most beautiful woman in the world, “The face that launched a thousand ships.” Originally married to Menelaus, she was abducted by Paris and brought to Troy.

Priam: The King of Troy and father to Hector. His wife is Hecuba.

Hecuba: Wife of Priam, Queen of Troy and mother of Hector.

Hector: Troy’s greatest hero. Known as a tamer of horses. He is married to Andromache. Destined to fight with Achilles. His death at Achilles’ hands ends the *Illiad*.

Andromache: Wife of Hector.

Aeneas: Trojan prince and the son of Aphrodite. He survives the war and escapes Troy’s destruction by setting sail with a group of his men. His journeys are chronicled in the *Aeneid* by Virgil. Eventually becomes the founder of Rome.

Gods Siding with the Trojans:

- **Aphrodite:** Sides with Troy because he declared her the most beautiful Goddess. Aids both Paris (whom she favors) and Aeneas (her son).
- **Ares:** Fights for the Trojans because of his connection to Aphrodite. Wounded by Diomedes with Athena’s aid.
- **Apollo:** Sides with Troy due to his favor for Hector. Aids Hector periodically during the war.
- **Artemis:** Sides with Troy due to her loyalty to her brother.
- **Zeus:** Favors the Trojans, but is hesitant to become too involved because of his wife’s association with the Greeks.