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Greek Epics

An epic is a very long poem that tells a story. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are the oldest and most famous Indian epics.

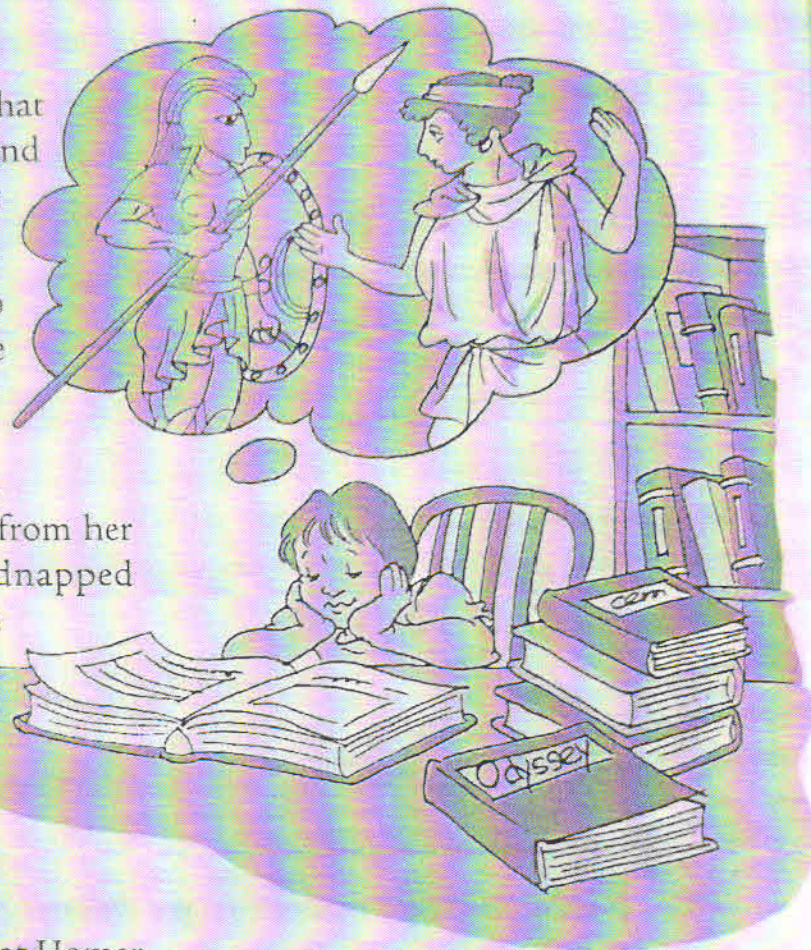
The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are two famous Greek epics. They were composed by a blind storyteller named Homer. The *Iliad* tells us how a beautiful Greek queen, called Helen, was kidnapped from her husband. The man who kidnapped her was a prince from a city in Asia Minor called Troy. The Greeks fought with the rulers of Troy to rescue their queen. The Trojan War, as it was called, lasted for ten years.

In the past, it was thought that Homer had invented the story of the Trojan War. Now, the remains of the ancient city of Troy have been found and we are certain that the war really did take place. But we do not know if all the exciting things we are told about in the *Iliad* really happened.

The second story, the *Odyssey*, is about a Greek prince called Odysseus (whom

we also know as Ulysses) and the adventures he had on his way home after the Trojan War. Though the distance was not great, it took Odysseus ten years to reach home, so many were his adventures. This is why people today often call a long and adventurous journey an 'odyssey'.

From *Down the Ages*



A. Comprehension

1. What is an epic?

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2. What are the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*?

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3. Name the two most famous epics of India.

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4. Put these sentences in the right order.

- a. The Greeks declared war on Troy.
- b. The Greeks wanted to rescue their queen.
- c. Troy was a city in Asia Minor.
- d. The prince of Troy kidnapped Helen.
- e. Helen was a Greek queen.
- f. The war between the Greeks and the Trojans is known as the Trojan War.
- g. The Trojan War lasted for ten years.

5. How do we know that the Trojan War truly happened?

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6. Fill in the blanks using single words from the passage instead of the phrases given in brackets.

- a. The Greeks wished to their queen. (to save from danger)
- b. It is now that the Trojan war happened. (known for sure)
- c. The Greeks with the rulers of Troy. (went to war)

B. Composition

1. Have your grandparents ever told you stories from any epics? Write a few lines about your favourite one.