



# Democracy through Drama:

## YOUR TRAVEL JOURNAL

ODYSSEUS AS A GUIDE IN NAVIGATING YOUR EVENTFUL  
JOURNEY TOWARDS A DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM



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JOURNEY TOWARDS A DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM

*Odysseus' Travel Journal. A self-reflective tool towards a democratic classroom was made by Nele Willems and Sara Lembrechts for the Erasmus + Project 'Democracy through Drama'.*

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Picture on p. 4: Jean-Charles Cazin (1841–1901): *Odysseus shipwrecked*, Tate Gallery, London.

Pictures on pp. 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15: John Flaxman (1755–1826): *Illustrations of the Odyssey*.

## Welcome

Welcome to this travel journal. You are about to embark on an eventful journey from Budapest towards a democratic classroom. Odysseus, one of the epic heroes in ancient Greek mythology, will be one of your guides on this voyage. He invites you to use this journal to ask questions, plan your goals, write down your struggles and formulate actions to reach your goals.

## Who is Odysseus?

Odysseus is the main character in the epic poem *The Odyssey*. Scholars believe the story was composed near the end of the 8th century BC by a blind poet, Homer. After ten years of fighting as a soldier in the Trojan war, Odysseus finally embarks on his way home to his wife and son in Ithaka. Struck by troubles, temptations, encounters and detours, it takes Odysseus another ten adventurous years to reach his destination. On the way, he faces obstacles and headwind, but also support and companionship.

In this journal, we use the metaphors of Odysseus' story to make you think about your own journey towards a democratic classroom.

## How to use this journal?

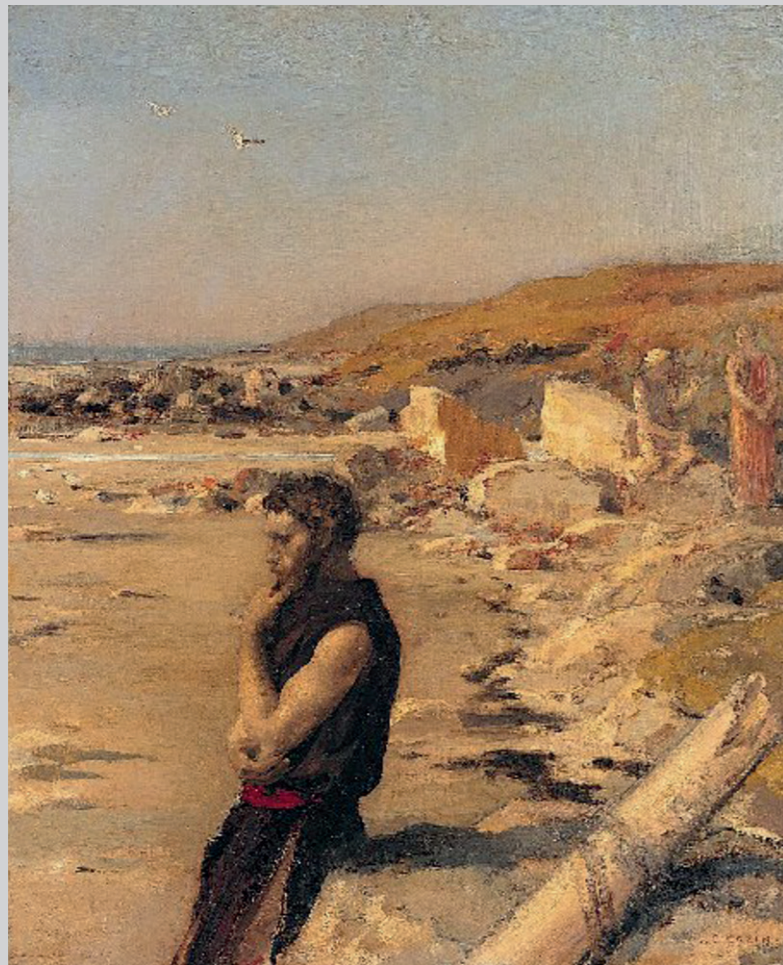
Odysseus was known for his so-called "cunning intelligence". Through a set of reflective questions and exercises, he will be your guide in your journey to realise democracy in the classroom.

In this journal, we use the metaphors of Odysseus' story to make you think about your own learning process in achieving your goals. Each chapter starts with the story of Odysseus, its metaphors and their explanations, framed and printed in *italics*.

Afterwards, you will find a set of reflective questions and exercises. There is not one way to understand the questions. Also, there is not one way to answer the questions. The answers cannot be wrong. They are always right, because they are yours.

This is your journal. We describe topics and ask questions in English. You can answer them in any language you choose. No one is reading them but you. You can also choose to discuss the questions with your colleagues and fill them out together.

In this journal you will find a number of topics to write about. You can choose which pages you use and which you do not. Please fill in at least 1 page every day. You can choose at which time of the day you want to do this. Some of the exercises will also be used in KeKi's reflective sessions throughout the summer school.



## HORIZON 1 – Before we embark

### Odysseus on his way home to Ithaka

Odysseus is the hero of Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. He is married to Penelope and has a son, Telemachus, who both live on the island of Ithaka. Odysseus is most famous for his "homecoming". After fighting for ten years in the Trojan War, it takes him another decade to reach Ithaka and fulfil the task that was assigned to him – "coming home".

On his journey to Ithaka, Penelope and Telemachus are always on his mind. They are the 'home' he wants to reach. In this journal, the 'home' we want to reach is a democratic classroom. This is where our journey is leading to.

Can you describe what this 'home' means to you? What does a 'democratic classroom' look like for you?

What, in your opinion, are the parallels between democracy and a democratic classroom?

Can you describe the conditions that must be met in order to be able to speak of a democratic classroom? What conditions are very important to you?

*For example, you can think about teacher identity, class management, power relations between students, power relations between students and teachers, inclusion, professional (in)security, dealing with perceived pressure, democratic values, participation and relationship, expression and impression, mandate, relevance, hidden assumptions, evaluation methods...*

Why do you really want to reach a democratic classroom? What motivates you in that direction?

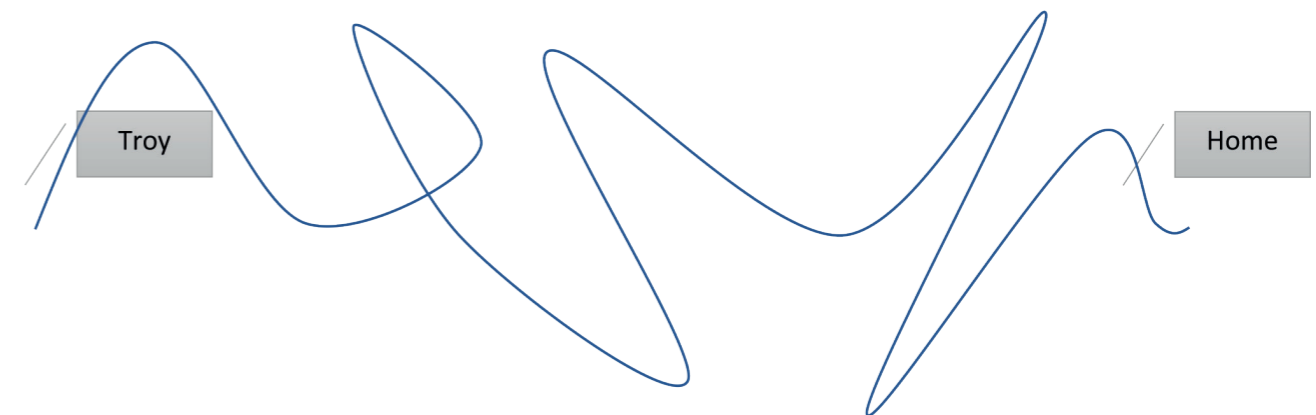
## Homecoming – An eventful journey

It takes Odysseus 10 years to get home from Troy. Along the way, figures like the Lotus Eaters, the Sirens and Calypso try to lead him astray with their temptations. Even though Odysseus has the impression he is going in the right direction, he appears to be drifting away. At the same time, Odysseus needs to overcome monsters like the Cyclops, Circe, Charybdis and Scylla. These monsters represent disruptive factors or forceful obstacles that need to be conquered before he can continue his journey and reach his goal. Luckily, the journey is not just doom and gloom. Odysseus also receives help from people that support him, like Tiresias in the Land of the Dead and Nausikaä of Phaeacia.



Achieving a democratic classroom is also a long journey. Where are you on this journey? Have you just left Troy, or are you almost home in Ithaka?

Mark your place on the journey. The closer you are to 'Home', the more your democratic classroom is developed. You can mark your place on this line, or draw your own journey in a different colour.

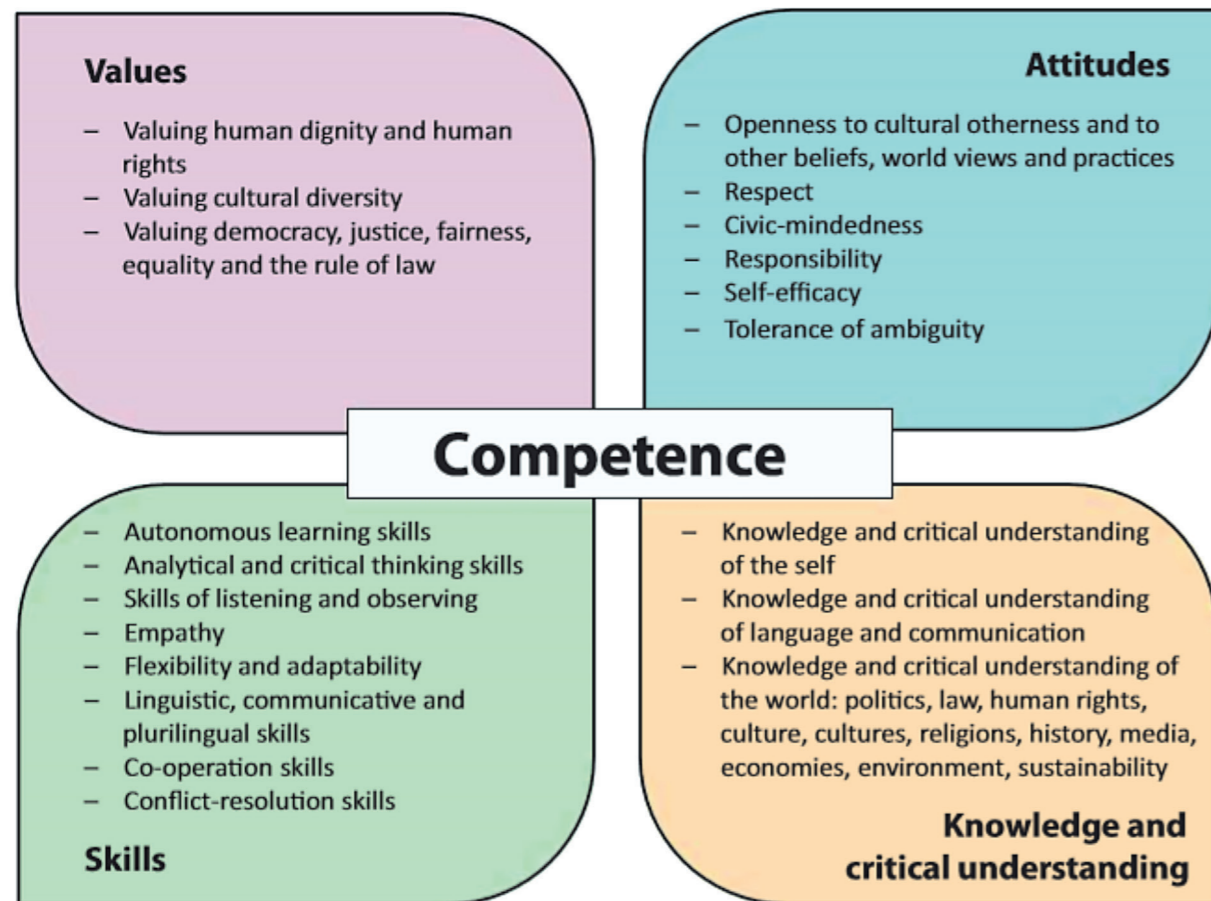


Why did you mark yourself here?

As a teacher with a commitment towards democracy, you can link the learning objectives of your own specific curriculum with learning objectives related to democratic citizenship. Depending on the country you work in, you might or might not have a specific curriculum with learning objectives related to democratic citizenship.

The Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture<sup>1</sup> is designed to create a clear focus and understanding of common goals in citizenship education. It is a comprehensive model that includes 20 competences, divided in four areas: values, attitudes, skills and knowledge & critical understanding. If your country doesn't have a specific curriculum for citizenship, you could use this framework to determine which competences you can focus on.

### The 20 competences included in the model



Mark the competences you already feel confident in with a \* . Mark those that you wish to develop further with a # .

<sup>1</sup> You can download the Framework here: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/publications>. A summary list of the competences which enable an individual to participate effectively in a culture of democracy can be found on pp. 12-14 of this publication: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806ccc07>.

Are there any other competences you have in relation to the creation of a democratic classroom?

Can you give some examples of things you already achieved creating a democratic classroom?

What have you done to get where you are now?

What do you need to get (closer to) home?

## Great expectations

*Odysseus knows his journey will probably be long and adventurous, but upon embarking for home, he has no idea it will take him ten full years to reach Ithaka.*



In terms of strengthening your democratic classroom, ...

... what do you expect from this summer school?

... what knowledge would you like to gain?

... what skills and competences would you like to strengthen?

... what conversations would you like to have?

... what should happen for you to look back at the end of this week and experience the summer school as a success?

... what challenges or pitfalls do you want to watch out for?

## Freedom space

*Like Odysseus' journey, your sea route is long and adventurous. Now and then, you disembark on beautiful islands, where you can get off your ship for a while and lie on the beach, where you can let your brain storm or breeze, where you can sketch some ideas in the sand. This is a safe space. Feel free to write, draw... anything you want.*

## HORIZON 2 – On your way

### Inspiring or challenging encounters

#### Sirens

The Sirens are dangerous creatures with the body of a vulture and the head of a woman. With their singing, they seduced sailors to sail in their direction. As a rule this ended badly; with the ship on the rocks and a dead crew. On his epic voyage, Odysseus had to pass the islands of the Sirens. To prevent their enchanting music from getting hold of him and his men, Odysseus plugs the ears of his crew with beeswax. He ordered his men to leave him tied tightly to the mast, no matter how much he would beg. Upon passing, Odysseus himself was seduced by hearing the sirens singing, but his men could not hear his order to change the ship's course. Thus, their ship could pass the Sirens unharmed.



What/who are your Sirens? What are the thoughts, feelings, fears, distractions... that can get you off track and are or might be trying to keep you from obtaining the democratic classroom?

What/who are your sailors to tie you to the mast? How can you make sure you don't get distracted from your goal?

#### Polyphemus

On the way home from Troy, Odysseus and his twelve ships are driven off course by storms. They are captured by the Cyclops Polyphemus while visiting his island. After Polyphemus eats several of his men, Polyphemus and Odysseus have a discussion and Odysseus tells Polyphemus his name is "Nobody". Odysseus takes a barrel of wine, and when the Cyclops drinks it, he falls asleep. Odysseus and his men take a wooden stake, ignite it with the remaining wine, and blind him. While they escape, Polyphemus cries in pain. The other Cyclopes ask him what the matter is and who blinded him. When Polyphemus cries "Nobody!", the other Cyclopes think he has gone mad.



Odysseus gives up his real identity in order to survive. As a teacher, when do you experience you need to give up your own identity? Under which circumstances may you be forced to be 'Nobody'?

The Cyclops Polyphemus is blinded by a trick. In your classroom, does it occur that one or more pupils remain "unseen"? What circumstances may lead them to become unseen? What should happen for you as a teacher to really see them?

What/who can help you to see more clearly?

### Scylla and Charybdis

On the way home from Troy, Odysseus and his men face several dilemmas. At some point, they must navigate the straits between Scylla and Charybdis. Scylla is a six-headed monster who, when ships pass, swallows one sailor for each head. Charybdis is an enormous whirlpool that threatens to swallow the entire ship. To continue their journey, they must choose between two evils.

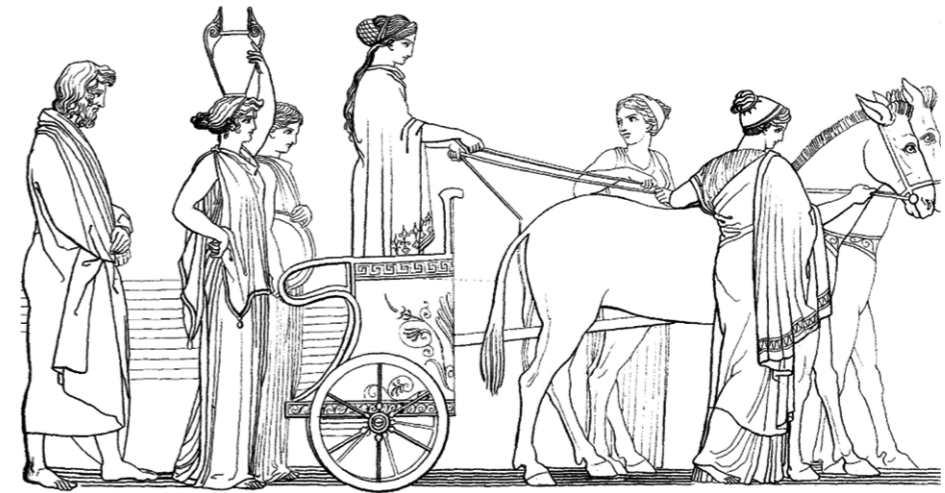


Odysseus and his crew are faced with a dilemma. Sometimes, the choice between two evils leads you to suffer from both. Describe or draw a (moral) dilemma you face as a teacher on your journey towards a democratic classroom. Who or what is the monster with six heads that attempts to eat your resources? Who or what acts like a whirlpool that threatens to swallow all your efforts?

What advice would you give to other teachers facing similar dilemmas in how to overcome the choice between two evils?

### Your helpers

Fortunately, Odysseus' journey is not all gloom and doom. On several encounters, he gets help from creatures and characters who have his best interests at heart. Aiolus, god of the winds, puts all of the headwinds in a bag so that only favourable winds will blow. Tiresias gives him an insight in his future and shows him what to do in order to survive. The god Hermes instructs Calypso, who imprisoned him, to release Odysseus. The Phaeacians take Odysseus to Ithaca on one of their faster ships.



Who are the people who can help you obtain the democratic classroom?

How can they help you?

On which point of your journey towards a democratic classroom can you embark on the Phaeacians' faster ships? Where can you gain 'quick wins'?

If a god like Hermes could appear and help you out with a specific challenge you face to reach a democratic classroom, what would this god need to do? What can you do yourself to progress in this situation?

## Your journey progresses

After these exercises, you can draw your journey again and mark your place on it. The closer you are to 'Home', the more your democratic classroom is developed.



Go back to the answers you wrote on p. 8 of your journal (Horizon 1 – Before we embark). What other things can you think of that you already achieved creating a democratic classroom?

Are their democratic classroom competences you did not notice earlier?

What have you done to get where you are now?

What do you need to get (closer to) home?

## Freedom space

*Like Odysseus' journey, your sea route is long and adventurous. Now and then, you disembark on beautiful islands, where you can get off your ship for a while and lie on the beach, where you can let your brain storm or breeze, where you can sketch some ideas in the sand. This is a safe space. Feel free to write, draw... anything you want.*



## Islands and adventures

### Summer school – Day 1

HOW DID TODAY CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING YOUR DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM?

TODAY'S TARGETS:

LESSONS LEARNED:

**What did you learn today? What would you have done differently? Where are some opportunities for improvement?**

WINS:

**How did you win today? Brag about yourself here.**

INTERESTING CONVERSATIONS YOU HAD TODAY

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE WITH YOU FOR TOMORROW?



## Freedom space

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## Summer school – Day 2

HOW DID TODAY CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING YOUR DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM?

TODAY’S TARGETS:

LESSONS LEARNED:

**What did you learn today? What would you have done differently? Where are some opportunities for improvement?**

WINS:

**How did you win today? Brag about yourself here.**

INTERESTING CONVERSATIONS YOU HAD TODAY

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE WITH YOU FOR TOMORROW?



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### Summer school – Day 3

HOW DID TODAY CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING YOUR DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM?

TODAY’S TARGETS:

LESSONS LEARNED:

**What did you learn today? What would you have done differently? Where are some opportunities for improvement?**

WINS:

**How did you win today? Brag about yourself here.**

INTERESTING CONVERSATIONS YOU HAD TODAY

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE WITH YOU FOR TOMORROW?



### Freedom space

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## Summer school – Day 4

HOW DID TODAY CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING YOUR DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM?

TODAY’S TARGETS:

LESSONS LEARNED:

**What did you learn today? What would you have done differently? Where are some opportunities for improvement?**

WINS:

**How did you win today? Brag about yourself here.**

INTERESTING CONVERSATIONS YOU HAD TODAY

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE WITH YOU FOR TOMORROW?



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## Summer school – Day 5

HOW DID TODAY CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING YOUR DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM?

TODAY'S TARGETS:

LESSONS LEARNED:

**What did you learn today? What would you have done differently? Where are some opportunities for improvement?**

WINS:

**How did you win today? Brag about yourself here.**

INTERESTING CONVERSATIONS YOU HAD TODAY

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE WITH YOU FOR TOMORROW?



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## HORIZON 3 – Your journey continues

### Looking back on your journey in Budapest

Who or what has helped you on your journey towards a democratic classroom?

What was the biggest lesson you learned this week?

Did you spend your time on the right things? Have you learned what you wanted to learn here?

### Looking ahead

When you look ahead, what changes, ideas or insights do you want to implement

- (1) This summer, before the new school year starts
- (2) After the first half of the school year has passed
- (3) Towards the end of the new school year

**3**

**2**

**1**

MAKE SURE YOUR GOALS ARE *SMART, PURE AND CLEAR*

S	Specific			C	Challenging
M	Measurable	P	Positively stated	L	Legal
A	Attainable	U	Understood	E	Environmentally sound
R	Realistic	R	Relevant	A	Agreed
T	Time phased	E	Ethical	R	Recorded



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