

## TEACHING IDEAS

This section includes ideas for teachers using this website. While the activity suggestions are grouped by grade levels, you may well find an adaptable idea in a younger or older grouping. Each grade level includes some ideas for teaching about myths and literature, history, and archaeology.

Please share your own teaching ideas with us and other teachers! Email us at [CERHAS@uc.edu](mailto:CERHAS@uc.edu).

### GRADES 3-6:

#### 1. Scavenger Hunt

Use this activity to acquaint students with information in the website and to ensure that they visit many of its parts. Students can fill in the hunt on their own, or work in pairs. You can make up a page, selecting from the list of objects below and providing space for students to fill in where in the web site they found the objects, and what their meaning or use was. To begin, you'll need to find the answers yourself. This list is in an order from most obvious to more obscure objects and people.

1. The first wall around the lower city of Troy
2. Achilles
3. The Athena temple
4. A murex shell
5. Herd of goats
6. The Dardanelles
7. Heinrich Schliemann
8. Alexander the Great
9. A horse drawn chariot
10. Hector's son
11. Ilion
12. A double gate to upper Troy
13. A circular hearth
14. The Fort of Hercules
15. Loom weight
16. Propylaion
17. Mount Ida
18. The Lokrian maidens
19. The Golden Apple of Discord
20. Ladder to a house roof

## 2. Who Am I in Trojan Myth?

Have students familiarize themselves with the characters and stories in the [Legends](#) section of the website. If you wish, supplement the information with more tales and versions (see [Resources](#)). Have each student choose a mythic figure to “be.” You’ll want to encourage as much variety as possible. Then, have students decide on attributes or actions which will allow their classmates to guess who they are. Assemble props, costume elements, etc., from home or classroom as necessary; and/or have students decide on bits of myths they can act out, alone or with others. For example, “Paris” could steal “Helen” away from the house of “Menelaus.” Have students come before the class to show or act out their myths and figures. Dress and acting may be simple or as complex as you like. Everyone must be familiar with the characters and stories, however, in order to guess identities correctly.

## 3. Legendary Plays

This activity can be a follow-up to Activity 3. Have students write their own plays based on Troy legends, or improvise dialogue in acting out legends. After each “play,” encourage students to think about the motivations of the actors and the consequences of their actions. One way to get at these is with a session after each play in which the audience can ask questions of the actor/producers.

## 4. Trade Mapping

Trade and control of trade were probably central to the founding of Troy and remained important throughout its history. Review with students the [trade map](#) in the website. Have them point out the locations of important materials for Troy such as copper and tin (used to make bronze weapons and tools), and gold. Have students create their own maps showing only one or two items from the trade map. Ask them to draw in the most direct ship routes from the sources of the items to Troy. Extend this mapping activity if you like by having students explore the wreck of a trade ship, the Uluburun, in the late Troy VI era. An excellent web site provides views and information about the many objects aboard that ship: <http://sara.theellisschool.org/shipwreck>  
Probably many ships like it stopped in at Troy.

## 5. Troy and Our Town

Troy may seem very distant in time and place; but comparing Troy to your community may make both places more comprehensible to students as they see how different communities may face similar situations. Have students, individually or in small groups,

look for answers in the website and in your own local history sources to these questions, asked both about Troy and about your town:

- a. Why did people decide to settle here?
- b. How did the first settlers get their food?
- c. How did the landscape make a difference to the people here?
- d. How did people and goods get in and out of town?
- e. What conflicts arose with people outside of the town?
- f. Did the population change over time? How and why?
- g. Are there stories people tell about the town, true or fictional?
- h. What makes you proud to be from this town? What might have made a person in Troy proud to be a Trojan (in any period)?

## 6. Troy Day

This is a culminating activity for your study of Troy. Prepare for and produce as a class a “Troy Day,” a kind of festival honoring Troy and its legends. Incorporate as many aspects of Troy as you are able to explore. Activities for the day might include:

- a. An “agora” or marketplace where student “merchants” can sell Troy-made and imported wares: these can be crafts modeled on items shown in the website, or pictures of them.
- b. Foods that Trojans might actually have eaten, based on website information.
- c. Have students come dressed as mythic figures or people from the city of Troy, in costumes they make.
- d. Draw the plan of Troy VI on the playground
- e. Have students build a “megaron” for exploration, made of cardboard or tape indications on the floor
- f. Have students produce short dramatic versions of parts of the Trojan story
- g. Include music, recorded or live
- h. Organize games and competitions; check the Iliad, Book 23 for the actual funeral games Achilles conducted for Patroclus.
- i. Have a group of students provide an archaeological demonstration area.

### Grades 7-9:

#### 1. Troy Diary

Ask students to write or record a diary entry for a day as a Trojan. First, they will have to pick a level of Troy and choose an appropriate occupation based on what they learn in the website. For example, a student might select a house builder or potter from Troy II; dye maker or mason from Troy VI; a merchant or Lokrian temple maiden from Troy VIII.

#### 2. Map a Trade Ship Route

Have students study the [trade map](#) in the website. Then ask them to prepare the itinerary for a ship leaving Troy with textiles to trade. It will stop in seven ports before returning home, picking up exchange items as it goes. Have students mark the route of their ship on a blank map of the Mediterranean region (extending eastward to the Black Sea), and note what their ship's cargo would be on their return.

### 3. Compare Ancient Cities

Have students, working in pairs, research another ancient city of the Mediterranean and create a chart comparing it to Troy. Candidates for comparison might include the cities of Nineveh, Babylon, Jerusalem, Tyre, Byblos, Memphis. Ask students to look for geographic advantages of location; for city defenses, for temples; for sources of wealth; for special products; for trade practices. They can add categories as they see fit. Have each pair share their chart with the class.

### 4. Make an Illustrated Trojan War Story

Create an illustrated class version of the Trojan War story. One approach is to divide the story into sections as is done in the [Legends Timeline](#). Assign a student or group to each portion, and have them draw a representative picture for it, with their own text underneath. Put the pictures together as a book or display them in sequence around the room.

### 5. Define Heroism

What makes a hero? Ask students to name some heroes they know about, and list their attributes on the board. Then have students read one or more versions of the story of the Iliad (see [Resources for Students and Teachers](#)), focusing on the figure of Achilles, Homer's hero. Have students name his qualities, then compare them with those they listed before. Encourage them to consider why ideas of heroism might be different (different times, different values and societies). Try writing a "timeless" definition of heroism (acting to benefit the society? acting to be true to your deepest values?). Can it be done?

### 6. Plan Troy's Future

Have students consider how the Troy site might be used today to help teach its history and preserve its legends. (Archaeologists and planners are doing just that right now!) Begin by brainstorming what the class thinks is most important for people to know or feel about Troy, based on what they have learned from the website. Then create a few teams to come up with plans on how to teach or memorialize the major items on the list, at the site itself. Ask each team to report to the class using visual aids or digital resources as appropriate.

## Grades 10-12:

### 1. Analyze a Passage from the *Iliad*

*Literature, Analysis.* Your students may be reading all or much of the *Iliad*; but even if they are not, it is worth while to concentrate discussion on a short passage from the actual work so they can appreciate the power of the poetry – even in translation. One good choice, from the Fagles translation (see the general [bibliography](#)) is Achilles’ refusal to return to the battle which he left because Agamemnon seized his war prize, the Trojan woman Briseis: Book 9, lines 381-407. The passage is about the soldier’s despair with the nature of war: “the same honor waits for the coward and the brave. They both go down to Death...” Focus on how particular words or metaphors (such as the mother bird) help the poet make his point. In the second part of the passage, Achilles says he fought for “piles of splendid plunder” which Agamemnon took over. Students may find this kind of warfare far from the wars we fight today; encourage them to consider however the human relations here: do soldiers still resent the unreasonable or selfish actions of poor officers?

### 2. Look at Artists’ Views

Part of Troy’s heritage lies in the many depictions of the legends in art. Have students select a figure from the [Legends Index](#), then find one or more historic artworks including that figure. See the [Resources for Students and Teachers](#) for books and a website to get started. Ask each student to present the artwork to the class, explain the artist’s approach, and tell what connection there may be to legendary events at Troy.

### 3. Compare the Movie

Show the Brad Pitt movie, “Troy,” or another older film of the story to your class (see the general [bibliography](#)). Ahead of time, assign students to take note of certain aspects of the film: the city’s setting and architecture, costuming, props, nature of characters (especially Achilles, Agamemnon, Menelaus, Helen, Paris, Priam, Patroclus), and main outline of the story. After the showing, have students report on their findings. Discuss the differences between what students know of the Trojan story and place from the website and what is shown in the film. What are some reasons for the differences?

### 4. Find the Value of the Epic

For classes reading the entire *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, it is worth while to consider the big picture: why should these ancient works still be read? What finally is their value to people today? Arrange a “symposium” on the topic, with teams of students defending the poem on the basis of such matters as literary beauty; lasting human values; compelling plotlines; and inspiration for other arts and literature over time.

## 5. Investigate Archaeological Investigation

The major archaeological investigations at Troy have reflected the growth of the field of archaeology (see the Questions Asked at Troy: [Who Discovered Troy?](#) and [Do Archaeologists Today Have Better Tools?](#)). Invite a local archaeologist to your class to discuss new and old methods in archaeology. Check the anthropology department of a college – or find a “contract archaeologist,” someone who checks sites where building is planned. Prepare questions for him or her as a class ahead of time about techniques used at Troy.

## 6. Debate the Return of Treasures

What should happen to objects found at places like Troy? The gold treasures Schliemann found for example were smuggled out, and are now to be found in a Moscow museum. Should they be returned to Turkey? This topic has been in the news in recent years, as Italy has insisted on return of some items from American museums. Divide the class in half, pro-return and anti-return. Have them research the issue and debate it formally.

## 7. Compare Two Levels of Troy

Use all the materials you can in the website to compare and contrast two levels of Troy. This project can be the basis of individual or group reports. Ask students to identify reasons why certain things stayed the same at Troy, and why some things changed. Not all the reasons will be discoverable in the website, so they should end their reports with a series of questions for further research.

## 8. Consider a Memorial Landscape

Review with students the [map](#) on the website which shows locations featured in Homer’s poems. Point out that many of the mounds were built because later visitors wanted to see the places identified in the *Iliad* – even if they had to be built. Invite students to consider how we memorialize mythic events or popular stories today: the memorials in Washington, for example, or historical parks like Sturbridge Village (not a recreation of a real American village) – or even theme parks like Disneyland. Where should the line be

drawn between fact and fiction in cultural tourism? Debate whether we should have physical places to memorialize such events as John Henry competing with the steam drill (a myth) or the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima (a staged event).

## 9. You Are There

The likeliest time for a Trojan War was about 1250 BCE. Assign students to report on what was happening around the world at that time, as if they were reporters giving the news. Concentrate most reporters in the Mediterranean region, but there should be someone from every major world region. Use the expandable [Timeline](#) in the website to get started, but students will need to do more research on their own. At the end of the news session, have a roundtable discussion: is war between Mycenaean Greeks and Trojans likely? What in the “news” makes it more or less likely?

## 10. Why Troy?

Why was Troy a good setting for its legends? This question brings the real Troy and the legendary one together. Even if the Trojan War we know never took place, why would a poet like Homer find the city a good one for the setting of his tales? Have students collect the evidence they find as they go through the website, concentrating on location, defenses, wealth, and trade.