

Notes on illustration on facing page

Odysseus slaughters the suitors

*Based on an Attic red figure skyphos, attributed to the Penelope painter, 440 BC,
Antikemuseen, Berlin*

Three suitors are being attacked by Odysseus' arrows, while two young women, possibly female slaves, are watching with anxiety. One suitor has already been shot through the chest with an arrow, and has turned to try to reach it. The other two suitors aim to protect themselves, one by lifting up a table to hide behind, the other by raising up his hand. The suitors are mostly naked – what does this suggest about them?

Suggested activities

The figures in this illustration are posed very expressively and formally. Discuss what each is doing and how you can tell from the pose. However there are not many of them. According to the story the hall was crowded and that made the contest all the more dramatic. Try out different individual poses. This is an opportunity for a whole class to create a tableau of still poses showing all the people in the hall at the moment the arrow was shot.

See also notes for Episode 12.

