



# The Iliad



*Retold from the Homer original  
by Kathleen Olmstead*

*Illustrated by Eric Freeberg*



STERLING CHILDREN'S BOOKS  
New York

## What Do *You* Think? Questions for Discussion



**H**ave you ever been around a toddler who keeps asking the question “Why?” Does your teacher call on you in class with questions from your homework? Do your parents ask you about your day at the dinner table? We are always surrounded by questions that need a specific response. But is it possible to have a question with no right answer?

The following questions are about the book you just read. But this is not a quiz! They are

designed to help you look at the people, places, and events from different angles. These questions do not have specific answers. Instead, they might make you think of these stories in a completely new way.

Think carefully about each question and enjoy discovering more about these classic myths.

1. In *The Iliad*, Achilles is the most feared of the Achaean soldiers. He is widely honored and respected. Do you consider Achilles to be a hero? Are there times in this story when he does not act as a hero?

2. *The Iliad* is a story about the Trojan War. But it is also a story of a quarrel between two mighty warriors: Achilles and Agamemnon. When you read the story, did you side with one or the other? Why? How does their fight affect the larger war?

3. A feud over beautiful Helen is what started the Trojan War. Do you think she is in the

middle of this war? How would you feel if you were Helen? Would you take sides? Which side would you take: Trojan or Achaean?

4. The gods of Mount Olympus seem to take sides in the Trojan War and claim certain humans as their favorites. How do some of the gods choose their sides? How does their involvement change the outcome of certain battles? Do you think the gods should be involved in the Trojan war or in human life at all?

5. Some Achaean and Trojan soldiers know they are favored by certain gods. Does this knowledge affect their behavior in battle? If you knew a powerful figure was always on your side, would it change the way you live your life?

6. Some of the Achaean and Trojan soldiers dare to challenge the gods. Do you think doing so is wise? Can you remember a time when you challenged someone with more power than you? What were the results?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

7. Hector and Paris are brothers, both of them sons of King Priam of Troy. In what ways are these two princes different? Are they at all similar? Do you think either of them fits the description of prince?

8. How does the death of Patroclus affect Achilles's decisions? What was he like before his friend's death? What was he like after?

9. Hector and Achilles are both told their fates by the gods. Does this affect their actions during the war?

10. *The Iliad* ends very much the way it began: with the war still going strong. Do you think any progress is made between the Trojans and the Achaeans during this story? What do you think happens after this story ends?