

Create your own Epithet

Epithets

Homer repeatedly describes many of his characters or objects in his story with the same phrase. This phrase is called an epithet. Epithets are common epic elements which allow the reader to easily identify the character or object. Epithets stress a quality of what they are describing. The same character often is given several different epithets. The epithet was used as by oral poets to help them "catch their breath" whenever they mention a major figure or describe something familiar and recurring. The epithets were not used to illustrate a specific aspect of the figure at the moment he (she) is being spoken of, but were chosen to fit the meter of the line. Many translators, however, like to fit the epithet to an aspect of the character that is relevant to the moment.

Examples of epithets used in the *Odyssey* are:

- "The great tactician" - This term creates the image of Odysseus as being intelligent, and probably comes his being the initiator of the idea for the "Trojan horse."
- "The clear eyed goddess" - This helps the reader imagine that Athena is alert, and wise - farseeing.

Here are some more epithets:

- "The man of twists and turns" (Odysseus)
- "wine-dark sea "
- "The bewitching nymph" (Calypso)
- "Son of Cronos" (Zeus)
- "Who marshals the thunderheads" (Zeus)
- "Cool headed" (Telemachus)
- "Lord of the war cry" (Menelaus)

Assignment:

Create an original epithet using your name. Your epithet must use words (adjectives) that describe YOU! Your epithet should be colorful and artistic. Please refer to the examples shown in class.

_____/10 creative name

_____/5 Colorful