

***The Iliad* RESOURCES • SIX EXTRACTS**

The Iliad, Book 15, lines 312–17

The Argives held together and stood their ground. Cries of battle rose from either side, and arrows flew from bowstrings. Many a spear sped from strong hands and fastened in the bodies of many a valiant warrior, while others fell to earth midway, before they could taste of man's fair flesh and glut themselves with blood.

The Iliad, Book 15, lines 130–39

As he spoke, Patroclus put on his armour. First he greaved his legs with greaves of good make, and fitted them with ankle-clasps of silver. Then he donned the cuirass of Achilles, richly inlaid and studded with stars. He hung his silver-studded sword of bronze about his shoulders, and then his mighty shield. On his comely head he set his helmet, well wrought, with a crest of horse-hair nodding menacingly above it. He grasped two redoubtable spears well-suited his hands ...

***The Iliad* RESOURCES • SIX EXTRACTS**

The Iliad, Book 16, lines 334–1

Peneleus and Lykon now met in close fight, for they had missed each other with their spears. They had both thrown without effect, so now they drew their swords. Lykon struck the plumed crest of Peneleus' helmet, but his sword broke at the hilt. Peneleus smote Lykon on the neck below the ear. The blade sank so deep that the head toppled, held on by nothing but the skin, and there was no more life left in him.

The Iliad, Book 16, lines 358–63

Meanwhile Ajax the Tall kept trying to drive a spear into Hector, but Hector was so skilful that he held his broad shoulders well under cover of his ox-hide shield, ever on the look-out for the whizzing of arrows and the heavy thud of spears. He well knew that the tide of battle had turned, but still he stood his ground and tried to protect his comrades.

The Iliad* RESOURCES • SIX EXTRACTS**The Iliad, Book 16, lines 401–10***

Next Patroclus sprang on Thestor son of Enops, who was sitting all huddled up in his chariot, for he had lost his wits and the reins had been torn from his hands. Patroclus went up to him and drove a spear into his right jaw, hooking him by the teeth; the spear pulled him over the rim of his car. As one who sits at the end of some jutting rock and draws a strong fish out of the sea with hook and line, even so with his spear did Patroclus pull Thestor all gaping from his chariot. Then Patroclus threw Thestor down on his face, and he died while falling.

The Iliad, Book 4, lines 446–51

When the Trojans and Achaeans met in one place, shield clashed with shield and spear with spear in the rage of battle. Bossed shields beat one upon another, and there was a tramping as of a great multitude. Triumphant shouts of slayers mixed with death-cries of the slain, and the earth ran red with blood.

The Iliad RESOURCES • TEXT 1 (FROM *THE ILIAD*, BOOK 3)

The Trojan squadrons flanked by officers
drew up and sortied, in a din of arms
and shouting voices – wave on wave, like cranes
in clamorous lines before the face of heaven,
beating away from winter's gloom and storms,
over the streams of Ocean, hoarsely calling,
to bring a slaughter on the Pygmy warriors –
cranes at dawn descending, beaked in cruel attack.

The Achaeans for their part came on in silence,
raging under their breath, shoulder to shoulder sworn. **(a)**

.....

Imagine mist the south wind rolls on hills,
a blowing bane for shepherds, but for thieves
better than nightfall – mist where a man can see
a stone's throw and no more: so dense the dust
that clouded up from these advancing hosts
as they devoured the plain. **(b)**

.....

And nearer and nearer
the front ranks came, till one from the Trojan front
detached himself to be the first in battle –
Alexandrus, vivid and beautiful,
wearing a cowl of leopard skin, a bow
hung on his back, a longsword at his hip,
with two spears capped in pointed bronze. He shook them
and called out to the best men of the Argives
to meet him in the melee face to face.

.....

Menelaus, watching that figure come
with long strides in the clear before the others,
Knew him and thrilled with joy. A hungry lion
that falls on heavy game – an antlered deer
or a wild goat – will rend and feed upon it
even though hunters and their hounds assail him. **(c)**

.....

So Menelaus thrilled when he beheld
Alexandrus before his eyes; he thought
I'll cut him to bits, adulterous dog! – and vaulted
down from his car at once with all his gear. **(d)**

.....

But when Alexandrus caught sight of him
emerging from the ranks, his heart misgave,
and he recoiled on his companions, not
to incur the deadly clash. **(e)**

.....

A man who stumbles
upon a viper in a mountain glen
will jump aside: a trembling takes his knees,
pallor his cheeks; he backs and backs away.
In the same way Alexandrus paced backward
into the Trojan lines and edged among them,
dreading the son of Atreus. **(f)**

HOMER

.....

Key:

Achaean, Argive = Greek

Alexandrus = Paris, a Trojan prince
Paris had stolen Helen from her husband, Menelaus

Menelaus = King of Sparta, son of Atreus (Greek)

car = chariot