

ESSAY P. 245

In lines 1–11 Vergil sets forth some of the themes that he will explore in the rest of the poem. Identify and discuss these themes in a short, well-organized essay.

Support your assertions with references drawn from throughout the passage (lines 1–11). All Latin words must be copied or their line numbers provided, AND they must be translated or paraphrased closely enough so that it is clear you understand the Latin. Direct your answer to the question; do not merely summarize the passage. Please write your essay on a separate piece of paper.



TEACHER BY THE WAY

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Several major themes are introduced in the introduction to the *Aeneid*. It seems likely that students will structure their essays around three or four topics. Students may approach the essay question from a range of perspectives, all of which could be valid.

The opening lines introduce several major themes of the *Aeneid*. One significant idea concerns the personal cost, primarily to Aeneas, of founding Rome. Aeneas is a fugitive (*profugus*, line 2) who is tossed much on land and on sea (*multum ille et terris iactatus et altō*, line 3) and who suffers many hardships (*multa . . . passus*, line 5). He will undergo many misfortunes and many labors (*tot volvere cāsūs . . . , tot adire labōrēs*, lines 9–10). A second principal theme has to do with the role of fate and the gods. Aeneas is a fugitive from his native Troy because of fate (*fātō*, line 2), he is buffeted on land and sea by the force of the gods (*vī superum*, line 4), and it is Juno and her anger that are responsible for his suffering many misfortunes and undergoing many toils (*Iūnōnis ob iram . . . nūmine laesō . . . dolēns rēgīna*, lines 4, 8–9). A third major theme involves Rome's history. Aeneas, a fugitive from Troy, makes his way to the Lavinian shores (*Trōīae . . . profugus . . . Lāvīnaque vēnit / litora*, lines 1–3). From Aeneas, the Latin race, the Alban fathers, and the lofty walls of Rome will descend (*genus unde Latīnum / Albānīque patrēs atque altae moenia Rōmae*, lines 6–7). Another theme is Vergil's characterization of Aeneas as *pīus* (*īnsīgnem pietāte*, line 10). This characterization foreshadows the hero's staunch commitment to country, gods, and family, to carrying out the role of leadership in his new destiny, by founding a city to replace Troy and by transferring the state gods from Troy to Italy (*dum cōderet urbem / inferretque deōs Latīō*, lines 5–6).