WHY SOME PEOPLE SAY “D’OH” WHEN YOU SAY “HOMER.”

KIDS DON’T GET ENOUGH ART THESE DAYS. Not in their schools. Not in their communities. They don’t get enough access to theater, jazz, or poetry. So it’s no wonder the only Homer some kids know can’t compose his own name, much less create epic poetry.

Homer was a philosopher. He was a storyteller. And he’s the guy credited with writing the single most important texts in Greek history: The Iliad and The Odyssey. Greek gods Achilles heeled Trojan horses. All heroes brought to us by one very ancient dude — the blind poet and nomadic artist Homer. Turns out the greatest gossip didn’t originate in beauty shops. The Greeks thrived on oral storytelling and were likely some of the first gossip queens — with Homer serving as their prolific leader. The Greeks were just as obsessed with sensational reality as we are. Although nowadays our melodramatic fixes come from a steady stream of soap operas and reality TV and the comfort of our very own couches.

Woohoo!

MMM, ANCIENT POETRY. The Iliad and Odyssey — the Iliad in particular — are the most famous poems that bring ancient Greece to life for us modern-day folks. In them Homer describes the lust, bravery and violence that plagued a civilization in over 25,000 lines of Greek lore. But these Homeric works don’t just weave a tale of Greek and Trojan warfare. They are considered by the Greeks to be the highest cultural achievements of their people — the single defining moment in their society. The Iliad and Odyssey set Greek character in stone. See, America’s youth has more to learn from Homer than how to properly don a toga, after all.

WHEN IN GREECE. If the Greeks could pass down Homer’s poetry from the 8th century BC, surely we can pass it on to our kids today.

Make sure your kids get their daily dose of art. Take them to a classic movie, a museum or the opera. It will do more than entertain their sponge-like little brains now. It will up their capacity to learn later. For Ten Simple Ways to get more art in kids’ lives, visit us at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

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