Kids don’t get enough art these days. Not in their schools. Not in their communities. Which is why the only Homer some kids know is the one who can’t write his own last name. The original Homer created epic poetry. Homer was a storyteller. A philosopher. And he’s credited with writing the most important literary texts in Greek history. Just a thought: Maybe your kid should get to know him.

Greek gods. Achilles heel. Trojan horse. All of these icons are brought to us by one very ancient dude — Homer in The Iliad and in its sequel, The Odyssey. He presented Greek mythology in everyday language. In over 25,000 lines of lilting verse, Homer describes bravery, violence and lust in ancient Greece.

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 defining moment in their society. The Iliad and The Odyssey set Greek character in stone.

If these classic texts can get passed down all the way from the eighth century B.C., then surely we can pass them down to our kids today. Make sure your kids get their daily dose of art. Take them to a museum or the opera. The experience will for sure do more than entertain them. It’ll build their capacity to learn more. In fact, the more art kids get, the smarter they become in subjects like math and science. And that’s enough reason to make a parent say, “D’oh!” For Ten Simple Ways to instill more art in your kids’ lives, visit AmericansForTheArts.org.

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