SUMMARY OF HOMER'S ILIAD

http://homepages.uwp.edu/canary/eng246/iliad.html

BOOK I. Apollo is angry because Agamemnon has failed to let one of the god's priests ransom a daughter Agamemnon had allotted himself as a war-prize. Agamemnon reluctantly gives the girl up but insists on taking in her place Briseis, a captive originally assigned to Achilles--hence the "wrath of Achilles," which is the epic's announced topic. Achilles complains to his divine mother, Thetis, who persuades Zeus to let the Trojans prevail in battle until Achilles's honor is satisfied.

BOOK II. Lured by a false dream sent by Zeus, the Greeks mass for battle, as do the Trojans. Homer gives long lists of both and their allies.

BOOK III. Paris agrees to single combat with Menelaus to settle the issue of the war and everyone on both sides hopes that the war will soon be over, but when Paris starts to lose Aphrodite wafts him away. Even Helen is mad at both Paris and the goddess.

BOOK IV. The Olympians quarrel among themselves and help stir up battle on the fields of Troy.

BOOK V. Athena helps Diomedes, the son of King Tydeus of Argos, wound Aphrodite as that goddess is bearing her Trojan son Aeneas off the battlefield. Ares comes to the aid of the Trojans, and Diomedes wounds him, too.

BOOK VI. The Trojan hero Hector drops home during battle to make some sacrifices. His wife Andromache begs him not to leave her a widow, but he goes back to battle anyway. Diomedes and the Trojan hero Glaucus discover that their fathers were friends and exchange armor--Diomedes gets the better of the bargain, giving his bronze armor in return for golden armor.

BOOK VII. Hector wreaks havoc, and Apollo keeps Athena from helping the Greeks. Ajax is chosen to face Hector in single combat; they fight till night without result. Priam's brother-in-law Antenor advises the Trojans to give up Helen, but Paris refuses. The Greeks build a wall and dig a moat to protect their ships.

BOOK VIII. Guided by Zeus, Hector leads a Trojan rout of the Greeks, but nightfall keeps them from climbing the walls and burning the ships.

BOOK IX. Advised by Nestor, Agamemnon finally agrees to return Briseis to Achilles and give him other great gifts, but Achilles won't come back. He knows that his glory will mean his death.

BOOK X. Sent to spy on the Trojans, Odysseus and Diomedes capture a Trojan spy and learn about a Trojan ally on his way. They kill him and the spy.
BOOK XI. The next day brings another bloody battle. Nestor carries off one of the wounded. Achilles sends his closest friend PATROCLUS (or Patrokles) to find out who it is, and Nestor urges Patroclus to wear Achilles's armor and lead their men into battle.

BOOK XII. Led by Hector, the Trojans break through the Greek walls.

BOOK XIII. Poseidon disobeys Zeus and helps rally the Greeks.

BOOK XIV. Poseidon keeps Agamemnon from calling a retreat to the ships, while Hera (borrowing a magic girdle from Aphrodite) seduces Zeus and lulls him to sleep. Hector is wounded by a stone, and the Trojans are driven back.

BOOK XV. Zeus wakes up mad at his wife and sends Apollo to heal Hector, who comes back and burns the Greek ships.

BOOK XVI. Achilles agrees to let Patroclus wear his armor and lead his men. The Trojans fall back, but Hector kills Patroclus after Apollo stuns him.

BOOK XVII. There is a big fight for the body of Patroclus. Menelaus goes to tell Achilles his friend is dead.

BOOK XVIII. Achilles weeps and carries on. His mother Thetis promises to buy him some new armor overnight. Just seeing him come out to the field of battle makes the Trojans retreat some.

BOOK XIX. Achilles reconciles with Agamemon and leads the Greeks to battle.

BOOK XX. Zeus allows the gods to join in the battle. The Greeks are supported by Hera, Athena, Poseidon, Hermes, and Hephaestus; the Trojans, by Apollo, Artemis, Ares, and Aphrodite.

BOOK XXI. The gods quarrel among themselves, while Achilles is winning the day. The Trojans retreat within their walls.

BOOK XXII. Hector reproaches himself for not having retreated at the first appearance of Achilles. He goes out to meet Achilles in single combat and is slain. Achilles ties his body behind a chariot and drags it off to the Greek ships.

BOOK XXIII. Funeral games are part of the magnificent burial Achilles gives Patroclus.

BOOK XXIV. As part of his mourning, Achilles keeps dragging the body of Hector around the tomb. Zeus insists that he give the body back, and the gods help Hector's father Priam sneak into the Greek camp to beg for it. Achilles holds the war off while funeral rites are held for Hector. Homer's epic ends with Hector mourned by his wife Andromache, his mother Hecuba, and even Helen, to whom he had been kinder than most Trojans, many of whom understandably resented her role in bringing on the war.