Parent Guide

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We're excited to share this activity with you. If you are interested in finding more engaging, fun and interesting activities for you and your children, then check out these links to different areas of the Twinkl Parents website.

games

crafts

puzzles

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word searches

What is this resource and how do I use it?

This reading comprehension aimed at children aged 9 to 10 is based around the legend of Icarus and his escape from Crete. After reading the short text, your child can test their understanding of what they have read by answering the ten accompanying questions.

What skills does this practise?

- Reading Comprehension
- Greek Mythology
- History
- Ancient Greece

Further Activity Ideas and Suggestions

Your child can learn more about the labyrinth with this Lateral Thinking: Minotaur's Labyrinth activity, or they can design their own mythological creature with this art activity. Challenge them to practise their sequencing skills by completing this Labours of Hercules Sequencing Activity.

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Year 5 Reading Comprehension

Icarus's Great Escape

King Minos was a powerful leader who ruled over the island of Crete. The island was also home to a hideous, bloodthirsty beast known as the Minotaur. With the body of a man and the head of a bull, he struck fear into those who crossed him. To keep his people safe, Minos sent for the most respected architect and craftsman in Greece – Daedalus.

Daedalus's task was to design a labyrinth: a maze so complex that the Minotaur would never be able to escape. Daedalus happily accepted the challenge and travelled to Crete along with his son Icarus. King Minos was pleased with the labyrinth that Daedalus built. The people of Athens, a nearby city who were enemies with Crete, were indebted to King Minos after the death of his son. Every year, seven boys and seven girls from Athens were sent by boat to Crete to be sacrificed to the hungry Minotaur.

One year, the Prince of Athens himself – Theseus – volunteered to be sacrificed. He travelled with the children to Crete with a plan to slay the Minotaur and free his people from their cruel debt to King Minos. When Theseus arrived in Crete, King Minos wasn't concerned. Even if Theseus managed to slay the Minotaur, there was no way he would be able to find his way out of Daedalus's labyrinth.

But King Minos didn't count on his daughter Ariadne falling in love with Theseus. As he entered the labyrinth, Ariadne gave Theseus a ball of string. He tied it to the entrance so that he could follow its path back and escape. In the labyrinth, Theseus was successful in his quest. He defeated the Minotaur and led the children to safety.

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King Minos was furious, but he didn't blame Ariadne. He believed that Daedalus must have given Theseus the secret to escape the labyrinth. As punishment, King Minos locked Daedalus and Icarus in a tower with no means of escape. While in the tower, Daedalus had an idea. He and Icarus used feathers and the thread from blankets to make a set of wings each. They used beeswax as a glue to hold the wings together. It was Daedalus's most ingenious invention yet.

Before they made their escape, Daedalus warned Icarus of two things. First, he should not fly too close to the sea, as the water would weigh down his wings. Second, he should not fly too close to the sun, as the heat would melt the beeswax. Icarus agreed with his father and together they jumped from the tower and took flight. Amazed that their plan was working, Daedalus and Icarus swooped and soared over the ocean and away from Crete. Icarus, however, began to fly recklessly. He was having the time of his life and felt as free as a bird. He felt indestructible. Ignoring his father's warning, he flew higher and higher, until the wax began to drip from his wings and one by one the feathers fell out. All Daedalus could do was watch helplessly as his son plummeted into the ocean, never to be seen again.

Questions

1 Where is this myth set? Circle the correct answer.

Crete Ariadne Athens Minos

2 Fill in the gaps with the adjectives used to describe these characters.

King Minos was a _____ leader.

The Minotaur was a _____ and _____ beast.

Daedalus was a _____ craftsman.

The people of Athens, a nearby city who were enemies with Crete, were indebted to King Minos after the death of his son.

3 What does **indebted** mean in this sentence?

- ☐ The people of Athens owed King Minos.
- ☐ The people of Athens belonged to King Minos.
- ☐ The people of Athens disliked King Minos.

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4 Match the characters to their descriptions.

Icarus	the Prince of Athens
Ariadne	the daughter of the King of Crete
Minotaur	the son of a craftsman
Minos	the beast trapped in the labyrinth
Theseus	the most respected architect in Greece
Daedalus	the King of Crete

5 What was Theseus's plan?

_____

_____

6 Why do you think that King Minos chose to blame Daedalus instead of Ariadne?

_____

_____

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It was Daedalus's most ingenious invention yet.

7 Which of these words is an antonym for **ingenious**?

- ☐ imaginative
- ☐ innovative
- ☐ unresourceful

8 Why do you think that Icarus ignored his father's warnings?

_____

_____

9 Add numbers to these sentences to put the events of the story in order. The first one has been done for you.

	Theseus planned to slay the Minotaur.
	Daedalus and Icarus flew from the tower on wings made of feathers and beeswax.
	The people of Athens sent seven boys and seven girls to Crete as a sacrifice.
1	King Minos sent for Daedalus to design a labyrinth.
	Ariadne gave Theseus a ball of string to help him to escape.

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10 What do you think people can learn from Icarus's story?

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Icarus's Great Escape

Answers

1

Where is this myth set? Circle the correct answer.

Crete Ariadne Athens Minos

2

Fill in the gaps with the adjectives used to describe these characters.

King Minos was a **powerful** leader.

The Minotaur was a **hideous** and **bloodthirsty** beast.

Daedalus was a **respected** craftsman.

The people of Athens, a nearby city who were enemies with Crete, were indebted to King Minos after the death of his son.

3

What does **indebted** mean in this sentence?

- [x] The people of Athens owed King Minos.
- [ ] The people of Athens belonged to King Minos.
- [ ] The people of Athens disliked King Minos.

Icarus's Great Escape

4 Match the characters to their descriptions.

Icarus	the Prince of Athens
Ariadne	the daughter of the King of Crete
Minotaur	the son of a craftsman
Minos	the beast trapped in the labyrinth
Theseus	the most respected architect in Greece
Daedalus	the King of Crete

5 What was Theseus's plan?

Theseus's plan was to travel to Crete as a sacrifice and slay the Minotaur so that the people of Athens would be free from their debt to King Minos.

6 Why do you think that King Minos chose to blame Daedalus instead of Ariadne?

Child's own answer, such as:

- **I think that King Minos didn't want to punish his daughter Ariadne.**
- **I think that King Minos wouldn't believe that Ariadne would betray him by helping his enemy.**

Icarus's Great Escape

It was Daedalus's most ingenious invention yet.

7 Which of these words is an antonym for **ingenious**?

- [ ] imaginative
- [ ] innovative
- [x] unresourceful

8 Why do you think that Icarus ignored his father's warnings?

Child's own answer, such as:

I think that Icarus ignored his father's warnings because he was having too much fun.

I think that Icarus ignored his father's warnings because he didn't believe him about how dangerous it would be.

9 Add numbers to these sentences to put the events of the story in order. The first one has been done for you.

3	Theseus planned to slay the Minotaur.
5	Daedalus and Icarus flew from the tower on wings made of feathers and beeswax.
2	The people of Athens sent seven boys and seven girls to Crete as a sacrifice.
1	King Minos sent for Daedalus to design a labyrinth.
4	Ariadne gave Theseus a ball of string to help him to escape.

Icarus's Great Escape

10 What do you think people can learn from Icarus's story?

Child's own answer, such as:

- **I think that people can learn that you should take advice from your parents.**
- **I think that people can learn that you shouldn't get too carried away.**

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.

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