



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 6: Module 1: Unit 2: Lesson 12

Determining Theme: Reading Myths in “Expert Groups”



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Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)

I can determine a theme based on details in a literary text. (RL.6.2)

I can use a variety of strategies to determine word meaning in informational texts. (RI.6.4)

I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and concepts using relevant information that is carefully selected and organized. (W.6.2)

Supporting Learning Targets

- I can get the gist of my expert group myth.
- I can collect details from my expert group myth to determine a theme.
- I can identify the criteria for strong analytical writing based on Row 1 of the NYS Writing Rubric.

Ongoing Assessment

- Expert group myth annotated for gist



Agenda	Teaching Notes
<p>1. Opening</p> <p>A. Connecting Themes in Myths and <i>The Lightning Thief</i>: Introducing End of Unit Assessment Prompt (2 minutes)</p> <p>B. Unpacking Learning Targets (2 minutes)</p> <p>2. Work Time</p> <p>A. Initial Read: Expert Group Myths, Getting the Gist, and Determining Key Vocabulary (15 minutes)</p> <p>B. Carousel: What Are the Themes of the Expert Group Myths? (10 minutes)</p> <p>C. Introducing the NYS Writing Rubric and Focusing on Row 1 (12 minutes)</p> <p>3. Closing and Assessment</p> <p>A. Mix and Mingle: Sharing Themes of Expert Group Myths (3 minutes)</p> <p>4. Homework</p> <p>A. Read Chapter 19 of <i>The Lightning Thief</i> and consider this question: “What does the scene in the throne room tell you about each of the three friends: Annabeth, Grover, and Percy?” Record your answer on the Homework: Purpose for Reading sheet and support your answer with evidence from the text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember to have students’ mid-unit assessments ready to return to them by Lesson 14. This lesson marks the start of the second half of Unit 2, which focuses more deeply on connecting themes of myths to themes in <i>The Lightning Thief</i>. To help set purpose, students see the end of unit assessment prompt. In Lessons 12 and 13, students continue to work in their triads. However, triads are referred to as “expert groups” because each triad is building expertise around one of three different myths alluded to in <i>The Lightning Thief</i>. Review the “expert group” myths of “The Fates”, “The Story of Medusa and Athena” and “Theseus and the Minotaur” Assign one of these three myths to each existing triad. In their triads, students do a first read of the myth to get the gist, then determine a theme of the myth. This group work serves as a scaffold for the thinking students will need to do for the end of unit assessment (for which all students will write about the “Cronus” myth). In previous lessons, students have worked with the Odell Education resource Reading Closely: Questioning Texts (specifically the Topic, Information and Ideas questions) to help them do an initial read of a myth for the gist. In this lesson, students review this skill and follow the same process to read a new myth in their discussion triad. Beginning in this lesson and over the course of the next several lessons, students continue to build a clear vision of what a strong literary analysis will look like using the NYS Writing Rubric, which helps prepare them to succeed in the end of unit assessment. Although students are not yet writing themselves, this lesson addresses W.6.2 by helping them understand the criteria for their future writing success. Students analyze and annotate the language in Row 1 of the NYS Writing Rubric and discuss the meaning of the academic vocabulary to better understand how to use the rubric as a tool to improve their writing and provide self-assessment. Having students actively work to understand and apply the criteria of the rubric helps them make their literary analysis stronger. In Advance: Review Row 1 of the NYS Writing Rubric, with a focus on the academic vocabulary students need to discuss to be able to use the rubric effectively. Create four charts, one for each of the “Key Elements of Mythology” that lead to a theme (see supporting materials). If possible, ensure that there are a similar number of triads working on each myth. (Time in lessons is allocated for students to leave their triad and talk with a new partner from another triad who has read the same myth.) Post: learning targets, end of unit assessment prompt, Homework: Purpose for Reading: Chapter 19—Questions.



Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
<p>allusion, gist, theme; criteria, extent, conveys, logically, insightful “The Fates” -- destinies, wielded, distaff, terminate, moral, inexorable, prophetic “The Story of Medusa and Athena” -- maiden, awed, priestesses wavered, vain “Theseus and the Minotaur” -- ambition, woe, hastening, maidens, habitation, dismal, appalled, yielded, labyrinth, trod, vessel, monarch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• End of unit 2 assessment prompt (one per student and one to display)• Expert Group myths: “The Fates,” “The Story of Medusa and Athena,” and “Theseus and the Minotaur” (one per student)• <i>The Lightning Thief</i> word catcher (introduced in Unit 2, Lesson1)• Reading Closely: Questioning Texts (from Lesson 8; one for display and students’ own copies)• Key Elements of Mythology (one to display if possible; if not, students’ own copies from Lesson 6)• Key Elements of Mythology charts (For Teacher Reference)• NYS Writing Rubric (one per student and one for display)• NYS Writing Rubric - Row 1 (one per student and one to display)• Music for the Mix and Mingle (debrief)• Sticky notes (four per triad)• Homework: Purpose for Reading—Chapter 19 (one per student)



Opening	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p>A. Connecting Themes in Myths and The Lightning Thief: Introducing End of Unit Assessment Prompt (3 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congratulate students on their work in the mid-unit assessment. Tell them that they will get the assessments back with feedback in a couple of days, once you have looked through all of them and scored them against the NYS Writing Rubric. • Tell them that in this half of the unit, they are going to begin by working in “expert groups.” Each group will be given a myth to read and discuss. Explain that they are going to identify a theme in their expert group myths and consider how that same theme is communicated in <i>The Lightning Thief</i>. Tell them that they also will start thinking about the life lessons we can learn from myths. • Display and distribute the end of unit 2 assessment prompt and explain that over the next lessons until the end of the unit, students will be learning more about how and why author Rick Riordan alluded to various Greek myths in <i>The Lightning Thief</i> and how the themes of the myths are connected to themes in the novel. This will give them a deeper understanding of <i>The Lightning Thief</i>. Read the prompt aloud: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What is a theme that connects the myth of Cronus and <i>The Lightning Thief</i>? After reading the myth of Cronus and the novel <i>The Lightning Thief</i>, write a literary analysis in which you do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ Summarize the myth and present a theme that connects the myth and the novel ___ Describe how the theme is communicated in the myth ___ Describe how the theme is communicated in <i>The Lightning Thief</i> ___ Explain why myths still matter and why the author may have chosen to include this myth in the novel * You will have the opportunity to discuss the reading and your thinking with your partner before writing independently.” • Ask students to Think-Pair-Share: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What do you notice about this prompt?” * “What do you wonder about this prompt?” 	



Opening (continued)	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p>B. Unpack Learning Targets (2 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point to the posted learning targets and invite students to read them aloud with you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “I can get the gist of my expert group myth.” * “I can collect details from my expert group myth to determine a theme.” * “I can identify the criteria for strong analytical writing based on Row 1 of the NYS Writing Rubric.” • The first target should be very familiar to students. Focus on the second target. Review the key concept of theme. Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What are the <i>themes</i> of a myth? How can we work out what the themes are and which one is most significant?” • Listen for: “A theme is an idea that is repeated throughout the text to communicate a message. We can work out what the themes are by reading for details about the elements of mythology and identifying elements that run throughout the myth to communicate a message.” Clarify as needed; remind students of all their hard work analyzing the theme of the myth of Prometheus. • Refer to the third target. Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What is a <i>rubric</i>? What do we use rubrics for?” • Listen for: “A rubric is a chart that helps us to see what we need to do to do something well. We can use it to self-assess our work, and teachers can use it to score our assessments.” • Tell students that you are using the rubric that they will be introduced to in this lesson, focusing on the first and second rows, to score their mid-unit assessments. Tell them it is important that they become familiar with the rubric to understand the feedback from their mid-unit assessment and to begin to use it as a general guide to help them improve their writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posting learning targets allows students to reference them throughout the lesson to check their understanding. They also provide a reminder to students and teachers about the intended learning behind a given lesson or activity. • Discussing and clarifying the language of learning targets helps build academic vocabulary.



Work Time	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p>A. Initial Read: Expert Group Myths, Getting the Gist, and Determining Key Vocabulary (15 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that in the next couple of lessons, until they receive the feedback for their mid-unit assessment, students are going to spend time really digging in to analyze a new myth and think about how its themes connect to <i>The Lightning Thief</i>. In this lesson, they are going to do the first read of a new myth in their discussion triads. • Ask students to sit in their discussion triads. Tell each triad their assigned “Expert Group” myth: “The Fates,” “The Story of Medusa and Athena,” or “Theseus and the Minotaur.” • Tell them that, as before, they will read the text more than once. Today they are just going to get started with the gist. Display Reading Closely: Questioning Texts. Remind students which questions to use when reading for the gist: all of the Topic, Information and Ideas questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * What is this text mainly about? * What information or ideas does the text present? * What details stand out to me as I read? • Those questions should already be highlighted/check-marked on the display copy and on the student copies. • Invite students to consider the questions highlighted on the Reading Closely: Questioning Texts document as they read their expert group myths. Tell them that when they are done with this initial read, they will be able to discuss the answers to the highlighted/check-marked questions with their triad. Post directions for students to refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * On your own, read the myth. * With your triad, discuss the highlighted/check-marked questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * What is this text mainly about? * What information or ideas does the text present? * What details stand out to me as I read? • Invite students to begin. Once they have finished reading, circulate to prompt triad discussion using the highlighted/check-marked questions on the close reading chart. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This initial read of the expert group myths is intentionally “low stakes”; encourage struggling readers to just get the close read flow of the text. • Reviewing academic vocabulary words benefits all students developing academic language. Consider allowing the class to grapple with a complex text prior to explicit teaching of vocabulary. After students have read for gist, they can identify challenging vocabulary for themselves. You can address student-selected vocabulary as well as predetermined vocabulary upon subsequent encounters with the text. However, in some cases and with some students, pre-teaching selected vocabulary may be necessary. • Allowing students to discuss their thinking with their peers before writing helps to scaffold student comprehension of the gist as well as assist in language acquisition for ELLs. • Asking students to identify challenging vocabulary helps them to monitor their understanding of a complex text. When students annotate the text by circling these words, it can also provide a formative assessment for the teacher. • Some students may need more frequent checks for understanding and guided practice when annotating for gist. Consider pulling these students into a small group, checking in with them periodically, and discussing the gist of a section before they write it. • Some students may find it helpful to determine the gist of smaller chunks of the text at a time. Consider calling this “bite-size” reading: When we are having trouble eating



something, we take smaller bites of it before moving on.

Work Time (continued)

Meeting Students’ Needs

B. Carousel: What are the Themes of the Expert Group Myths? (10 minutes)

Note: This is meant as a brainstorming activity and should be kept brief and quickly paced.

- Refocus students whole group. Remind them of the important thinking they did (during Lesson 6) when they determined which elements from “The Key Elements of Mythology” could also lead to themes. Display the article “**The Key Elements of Mythology.**”
- Remind students they decided that the elements of mythology that could also lead to themes are: “Tension between Opposing Forces in the Universe,” “A Struggle for Power,” “Explanation of the Origins of Life and the Natural World,” and “Fate and Prophecy.” Point out to students that these elements, which could lead to themes, are posted on **Key Elements of Mythology charts** hanging around the room. Give directions:
 1. As a triad, travel around to each chart, keeping your expert group myth with you.
 2. When you get to a chart, ask: “Does this element of mythology help me to think about a theme in my expert group myth?”
 3. Discuss what events in your expert group myth help you to think about this element as a theme. For example: “This could be a theme of our myth because _____.”
 4. On a sticky note, write the name of your expert group myth and a possible theme of your myth that connects with that element of mythology.
- Give students 2 minutes at each chart. After 2 minutes, invite groups to rotate to the next chart. Students go into a greater level of detail in their thinking during the next part of the lesson.
- While students are working at charts, circulate and support them in their thinking. Ask questions to help them connect the element of mythology to a theme of their expert group myth:
 - * “Are there opposing forces of light and dark? What does the myth tell us about these opposing forces?”
 - * “Does your myth contain a struggle for power? What does the myth teach us about struggles for power?”
 - * “Does your myth explain the natural world in some way? What does it say about it?”
 - * “Does your myth contain a prophecy or a character fighting against fate? What do we learn about fate and prophecy in your myth?”



- After students have visited each chart, ask them to collect their sticky notes from each chart and return to their triads.

Work Time (continued)

Meeting Students’ Needs

C. Introducing the NYS Writing Rubric and Focusing on Row 1 (12 minutes)

- Display and distribute the full **NYS Writing Rubric**. Remind students that you are using this rubric, focusing on the first and second rows, to score their mid-unit assessments. It is important that they become familiar with the rubric to understand the feedback from their mid-unit assessment and to use it as a guide to help them improve their writing.
- Point to the Criteria column. Give students 2 minutes to look at the rubric. Ask them to Think-Pair-Share:
 - * “What do you notice?”
 - * “What do you wonder?”
- Invite students to look at the first column, discuss it in their triads, and then share with the group:
 - * “What are *criteria*?”
- Listen for: “Criteria are lists of things that we can use to assess something. They are standards used to judge something.”
- Tell students that each row on the rubric is used to assess different criteria. Read through each of the criteria headings (in caps), one by one: “Content and Analysis,” “Command of Evidence,” “Coherence, Organization and Style,” and “Control of Conventions.”
- Tell students that at the moment they might not understand what each of these mean, but they will by the end of the unit. Also tell them that in this lesson, they will focus on the first row of the rubric.
- Display and distribute **NYS Writing Rubric—Row 1** and tell the class that this is only the first row of the rubric, and it focuses on the introductory paragraph of a piece of writing. Read the criteria box aloud as students follow along silently. Ask students to discuss in triads and then share with the group:
 - * “Are there any words you don’t recognize that you think you might need to know to figure out what this criteria means?”
- Discuss words the students highlight as well as the key academic vocabulary below. Ask students to have a 30-second discussion in their triad and then cold call groups to share their suggestions:
 - * “What does *extent* mean?”
 - * “What does *conveys* mean? Read the rest of the sentence around the word. Now what do you think it means?”

- ELLs may be unfamiliar with more vocabulary words than are mentioned in this lesson. Check for comprehension of general words that most students would know.
- For students who struggle to read complex texts, consider previewing these vocabulary words from this text: *criteria*, *extent*, *conveys*, *logically*, *insightful*. If you select additional words to preview, focus on words whose meaning may difficult to determine using context clues. It is important for students to practice using context clues to determine word meaning so that they become more proficient readers.



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students’ Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To keep the lesson moving forward, when students don’t know what a word means, tell them. • Remind students to record new vocabulary on their word catchers • Invite students to discuss in triads and then share with the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “So now that you know what the key academic vocabulary means, what does the whole thing mean? How would you paraphrase it?” • Listen for: “How clear the information is to support the claim.” • Model paraphrasing the criteria in the margin next to the criteria box. Write: “How clear the information is to support the claim.” Invite the class to do the same on theirs. • Tell students they read <i>across</i> the rubric for different levels of quality within criteria. They read <i>down</i> the rubric for different criteria. Write “good” next to 3 and “great” next to 4 to serve as a clear reminder. Invite students to do the same. • Focus the class on Row 1, Column 3, the “good” column. Ask students to read along silently as you read this column aloud. • Ask students to discuss in their triads and share: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “Are there any words you don’t recognize that you think you might need to know to figure out what the text means?” • Discuss words the students highlight as well as the key academic vocabulary below. Ask students to have a 30-second discussion in their triad and then cold call a couple of groups to share their suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What is a topic?” * “What does it mean by <i>that follows from the task and purpose?</i>” • Invite students to discuss in their triads and then cold call a couple of groups to share their suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “So now that you know what the key academic vocabulary means, how would you paraphrase it?” • Listen for: “The topic is introduced in a way that makes sense using the task and purpose.” Model paraphrasing on the lines under the chart. Invite the class to do the same. • Instruct students to Think-Pair-Share to compare the “good” and “great” columns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What is different about the ‘good’ and ‘great’ columns?” * “What extra do you have to do to get a ‘great’?” 	



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students’ Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for: “To be ‘great,’ it needs to be compelling and logical.” • Invite triads to discuss what the key words are that make the difference between a literary essay being good and being great. • Listen for: “compelling,” “logically,” and “insightful.” Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What does logically mean?” * “What does <i>insightful</i> mean? What does <i>sight</i> mean? So what do you think insightful might mean?” • Highlight/circle those words on the display copy and invite students to do the same. • Remind students to add any new vocabulary to their word catcher. 	
Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p>A. Mix and Mingle: Sharing Themes of Expert Group Myths (3 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that students are going to share their ideas for the theme of their expert group myth. They should try to talk to students who have the same expert group myth, as well as students who are studying a different myth. • Invite students to walk around each other for 20 seconds; play music as they circulate. When you stop the music, they are to stop and share their learning with the person nearest them. • Circulate to listen to student discussion. • Distribute Homework: Purpose for Reading—Chapter 19. 	
Homework	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p>A. Read Chapter 19 of <i>The Lightning Thief</i> and consider this question: “What does the scene in the throne room tell you about each of the three friends: Annabeth, Grover, and Percy?” Record your answer on the homework sheet and support your answer with evidence from the text.</p> <p><i>Note: Be prepared to return students’ mid-unit assessment mini-essays in Lesson 14. In your scoring, focus on Rows 1 and 2 of the NYS Writing Rubric, as those are the most important rows in terms of helping students begin to write effectively with evidence. Students will be familiar with both of those rows by Lesson 14.</i></p>	



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Supporting Materials



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What is a theme that connects the myth of Cronus and The Lightning Thief? After reading the myth of Cronus and the novel *The Lightning Thief*, write a literary analysis in which you do the following:

- Summarize the myth and present a theme that connects the myth and the novel
- Describe how the theme is communicated in the myth
- Describe how the theme is communicated in *The Lightning Thief*
- Explain why myths still matter and why the author may have chosen to include this myth in the novel

You will have the opportunity to discuss the reading and your thinking with your partner before writing independently.



The ancients believed that how long people lived and the destinies of mortals were regulated by three sister-goddesses, called Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who were the daughters of Zeus and Themis.

The power that they wielded [held] over the fate of man was symbolized by the thread of life, which they spun out for the life of each human being from his birth to the grave. They divided this job between them. Clotho wound the flax around the distaff [a stick or spindle], ready for her sister Lachesis, who spun out the thread of life, which Atropos, with her scissors, relentlessly snipped asunder [apart], when the life of an individual was about to terminate [end].

The Fates represent the moral force by which the universe is governed. Both mortals and immortals were forced to submit to this force; even Zeus is powerless to prevent the Fates' orders. The Fates, or Moiræ, are the special deities that rule over the life and death of mortals.

Poets describe the Moiræ as stern, inexorable [impossible to stop or prevent] female divinities. They are aged, hideous, and also lame, which is meant to show the slow and halting march of destiny, which they controlled. They were thought of as prophetic divinities.

Adapted from: Berens, E. M. "Moiræ or Fates (Parcæ)". *Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome*. New York: Maynard, Merrill and Co., 1894. 139–141. Web. 7 June 2013. Public domain.

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there lived a beautiful maiden named Medusa. Medusa lived in the city of Athens in a country named Greece—and although there were many pretty girls in the city, Medusa was considered the most lovely.

Unfortunately, Medusa was very proud of her beauty and thought or spoke of little else. Each day she boasted of how pretty she was, and each day her boasts became more outrageous.

On and on Medusa went about her beauty to anyone and everyone who stopped long enough to hear her—until one day when she made her first visit to the Parthenon with her friends. The Parthenon was the largest temple to the goddess Athena in all the land. It was decorated with amazing sculptures and paintings. Everyone who entered was awed by the beauty of the place and couldn't help thinking how grateful they were to Athena, goddess of wisdom, for inspiring them and for watching over their city of Athens. Everyone, that is, except Medusa.

When Medusa saw the sculptures, she whispered that she would have made a much better subject for the sculptor than Athena had. When Medusa saw the artwork, she commented that the artist had done a fine job considering the goddess's thick eyebrows—but imagine how much more wonderful the painting would be if it was of someone as delicate as Medusa.

And when Medusa reached the altar, she sighed happily and said, “My, this is a beautiful temple. It is a shame it was wasted on Athena, for I am so much prettier than she is—perhaps someday people will build an even grander temple to my beauty.”

Medusa's friends grew pale. The priestesses who overheard Medusa gasped. Whispers ran through all the people in the temple, who quickly began to leave—for everyone knew that Athena enjoyed watching over the people of Athens and feared what might happen if the goddess had overheard Medusa's rash remarks.

Before long the temple was empty of everyone except Medusa, who was so busy gazing proudly at her reflection in the large bronze doors that she hadn't noticed the swift departure of everyone else. The image she was gazing at wavered and suddenly, instead of her own features, it was the face of Athena that Medusa saw reflected back at her.

“Vain and foolish girl,” Athena said angrily. “You think you are prettier than I am! I doubt it to be true, but even if it were—there is more to life than beauty alone. While others work and play and learn, you do little but boast and admire yourself.”

“Nonsense,” Athena retorted. “Beauty fades swiftly in all mortals. It does not comfort the sick, teach the unskilled, or feed the hungry. And by my powers, your loveliness shall be stripped away completely. Your fate shall serve as a reminder to others to control their pride.”

And with those words, Medusa's face changed to that of a hideous monster. Her hair twisted and thickened into horrible snakes that hissed and fought one another atop her head.

And with that, Athena sent Medusa with her hair of snakes to live with the blind monsters—the gorgon sisters—at the ends of the earth, so that no innocents would be accidentally turned to stone at the sight of her.

Adapted from: Berens, E. M. “Moiræ or Fates (Parcæ)”. *Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome*. New York: Maynard, Merrill and Co., 1894. 139–141. Web. 7 June 2013. Public domain.



Prince Theseus was greatly loved by his father, King Egeus. Theseus, however, was much too brave and active a young man to spend all his time talking about the past with his father. His ambition was to perform other, more heroic deeds.

One morning, Prince Theseus awoke to sobs and screams of woe—from the king’s palace, from the streets, and from the temples. He put on his clothes as quickly as he could and, hastening to the king, inquired what it all meant.

“Alas!” quoth King Egeus. “This is the saddest anniversary of the year. It is the day when we draw lots to see which of the youths and maidens of Athens shall go to be devoured by the horrible Minotaur!”

“The Minotaur!” exclaimed Prince Theseus; and, like a brave young prince as he was, he put his hand to the hilt of his sword. “What kind of a monster may that be? Is it not possible to slay him?”

But King Egeus shook his head and explained. In the island of Crete there lived a dreadful monster, called a Minotaur, shaped partly like a man and partly like a bull. But King Minos of Crete built a habitation for the Minotaur and took care of his health and comfort. A few years before, there had been a war between the city of Athens and the island of Crete, in which the Athenians were beaten. They could only beg for peace if they agreed to seven young men and seven maidens, every year, to be devoured by the pet monster of the cruel King Minos.

When Theseus heard the story, he said, “Let the people of Athens this year draw lots for only six young men, instead of seven. I will myself be the seventh; and let the Minotaur devour me if he can!”

As Prince Theseus was going on board, his father said, “My beloved son, observe that the sails of this vessel are black, since it goes upon a voyage of sorrow and despair. I do not know whether I can survive till the vessel returns. But as long as I do live, I shall creep daily to the top of yonder cliff, to watch if there be a sail upon the sea. And if by some happy chance you should escape the jaws of the Minotaur, then tear down those dismal sails, and hoist others that shall be bright as the sunshine. When I see the white sails, I and all the people will know that you are coming back victorious.”

Theseus promised that he would do so. Then he set sail, and eventually arrived at King Minos’ kingdom. The guards of King Minos came down to the waterside and took charge of the 14 young men and damsels. Theseus and his companions were led to the king’s palace.

When King Minos saw Theseus, the king looked at him more attentively, because his face was calm and grave. “Young man,” asked he, with his stern voice, “are you not appalled at the certainty of being devoured by this terrible Minotaur?”

“I have offered my life in a good cause,” answered Theseus, “and therefore I give it freely and gladly. But thou, King Minos, aren’t you appalled to do this dreadful wrong? Thou art a more hideous monster than the Minotaur himself!”

“Aha! do you think me so?” cried the king, laughing in his cruel way. “Tomorrow you shall have an opportunity of judging which is the greater monster, the Minotaur or the king!”

Near the king’s throne stood his daughter Ariadne. She was a beautiful maiden who looked at these poor doomed captives with very different feelings from those of the iron-breasted King Minos. She begged her father to set them free.

“Peace, foolish girl!” answered King Minos. He would not hear another word in their favor. The prisoners were led away to a dungeon. The seven maidens and six young men soon sobbed themselves to slumber. But Theseus was not like them. He felt that he had the responsibility of all their lives upon him, and must consider whether there was a way to save them.



Just before midnight, the gentle Ariadne showed herself. “Are you awake, Prince Theseus?” she whispered. She invited him to follow her. Ariadne led him from the prison into the pleasant moonlight.

She told him he could sail away to Athens. “No,” answered the young man; “I will never leave Crete unless I can slay the Minotaur and save my poor companions.”

“I knew you would say that,” said Ariadne. “Come with me. Here is your own sword. You will need it.”

She led Theseus to a dark grove. Ariadne pressed her finger against a block of marble in a wall that yielded to her touch, disclosing an entrance just wide enough to admit them. She said, “In the center of this labyrinth is the Minotaur, and, Theseus, you must go thither to seek him.”

They heard a roar that resembled the lowing of a fierce bull, yet had a sort of human voice. “That is the Minotaur’s noise,” whispered Ariadne. “Follow that sound through the labyrinth and you will find him. Take the end of this silken string; I will hold the other end; and then, if you win the victory, it will lead you again to this spot.”

So he took the end of the string in his left hand and his gold-hilted sword, ready drawn, in the other, and trod boldly into the labyrinth. Finally, at the center of the labyrinth, he saw the hideous creature. Sure enough, what an ugly monster it was! Only his horned head belonged to a bull; and yet, somehow, he looked like a bull all over. Theseus hated him but also felt pity. The monster let out a roar; Theseus understood that the Minotaur was saying to himself how miserable he was.

Was Theseus afraid? No! It strengthened his heart to feel a twitch at the silken cord, which he was still holding in his left hand. It was as if Ariadne were giving him all her might and courage.

Now the Minotaur caught sight of Theseus and instantly lowered his sharp horns, exactly as a mad bull does when he means to rush against an enemy. They began an awful fight. At last, the Minotaur made a run at Theseus, grazed his left side with his horn, and flung him down; and thinking that he had stabbed him to the heart, he cut a great caper in the air, opened his bull mouth from ear to ear, and prepared to snap his head off. But Theseus had leaped up and caught the monster off guard. He hit him upon the neck and made his bull head skip six yards from his human body, which fell down flat upon the ground.

So now the battle was ended. Theseus, as he leaned on his sword, taking breath, felt another twitch of the silken cord. Eager to let Ariadne know of his success, he followed the guidance of the thread and soon found himself at the entrance of the labyrinth.

“Thou hast slain the monster!” cried Ariadne, clasping her hands.

“Thanks to thee, dear Ariadne,” answered Theseus, “I return victorious.”

“Then,” said Ariadne, “we must quickly summon thy friends, and get them and thyself on board the vessel before dawn. If morning finds thee here, my father will avenge the Minotaur.”

The poor captives were awakened and told of what Theseus had done, and that they must set sail for Athens before daybreak. Prince Theseus lingered, asking Adriane to come with him. But the maiden said no. “My father is old, and has nobody but myself to love him.”



So he said farewell to Ariadne and set sail with the others. On the homeward voyage, the 14 youths and damsels were in excellent spirits. But then happened a sad misfortune.

You will remember that Theseus' father, King Egeus, had said to hoist sunshiny sails, instead of black ones, in case Theseus should overcome the Minotaur and return victorious. In the joy of their success, however, they never thought about whether their sails were black, white, or rainbow-colored. Thus the vessel returned, like a raven, with the same sable wings that had wafted her away.

Poor King Egeus, day after day, infirm as he was, had clambered to the summit of a cliff that overhung the sea, and there sat watching for Prince Theseus, homeward bound; and no sooner did he behold the fatal blackness of the sails than he concluded that his dear son had been eaten by the Minotaur. He could not bear the thought of living any longer; so he stooped forward and fell headlong over the cliff, and was drowned, poor soul, in the waves that foamed at its base.

This was melancholy news for Prince Theseus, who, when he stepped ashore, found himself king of all the country. However, he sent for his dear mother, and, by taking her advice in matters of state, became a very excellent monarch, and was greatly beloved by his people.

Adapted from: Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "Theseus Goes to Slay the Minotaur" and "Theseus and Ariadne." In Storr, Francis, ed. *Half a Hundred Hero Tales of Ulysses and the Men of Old*. New York: Henry Holt, 1911. 138-153. Web. 7 June 2013. Public domain.



Create charts around the room that name the element of mythology and a brief excerpt from that element. Students will then post sticky notes on these charts with their thinking about how that element could apply to their expert group myth to help determine a theme.

Chart 1:

Tension between Opposing Forces in the Universe

Myths are often structured around the tensions between opposing forces in the universe, such as light versus dark and good versus evil.

Chart 2:

A Struggle for Power

This struggle for power may be between two supernatural forces, a supernatural force and a mortal, or two members of a single family.

Chart 3:

Explanation of the Origins of Life and the Natural World

Myths often attempt to answer the fundamental questions: How did the world come to be? Who are we? What is our purpose on earth?

Chart 4:

Fate and Prophecy

The idea of fate, and its overwhelming power, is a central theme in many myths. Neither gods nor man seem able to escape fate, despite many attempts to do so. Making this theme even more prominent, many myths begin with a prophecy.



CRITERIA	4 Essays at this level:	3 Essays at this level:	2 Essays at this level:	1 Essays at this level:	0 Essays at this level:
<p>CONTENT AND ANALYSIS: the extent to which the essay conveys complex ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to support claims in an analysis of topics or texts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly introduce a topic in a manner that is compelling and follows logically from the task and purpose demonstrate insightful analysis of the text(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly introduce a topic in a manner that follows from the task and purpose demonstrate grade-appropriate analysis of the text(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduce a topic in a manner that follows generally from the task and purpose demonstrate a literal comprehension of the text(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduce a topic in a manner that does not logically follow from the task and purpose demonstrate little understanding of the text(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the text(s) or task
<p>COMMAND OF EVIDENCE: the extent to which the essay presents evidence from the provided texts to support analysis and reflection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) sustain the use of varied, relevant evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) sustain the use of relevant evidence, with some lack of variety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> partially develop the topic of the essay with the use of some textual evidence, some of which may be irrelevant use relevant evidence inconsistently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate an attempt to use evidence, but only develop ideas with minimal, occasional evidence which is generally invalid or irrelevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide no evidence or provide evidence that is completely irrelevant



CRITERIA	4 Essays at this level:	3 Essays at this level:	2 Essays at this level:	1 Essays at this level:	0 Essays at this level:
<p>COHERENCE, ORGANIZATION, AND STYLE: the extent to which the essay logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibit clear organization, with the skillful use of appropriate and varied transitions to create a unified whole and enhance meaning establish and maintain a formal style, using grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary with a notable sense of voice provide a concluding statement or section that is compelling and follows clearly from the topic and information presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibit clear organization, with the use of appropriate transitions to create a unified whole establish and maintain a formal style using precise language and domain-specific vocabulary provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the topic and information presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibit some attempt at organization, with inconsistent use of transitions establish but fail to maintain a formal style, with inconsistent use of language and domain-specific vocabulary provide a concluding statement or section that follows generally from the topic and information presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibit little attempt at organization, or attempts to organize are irrelevant to the task lack a formal style, using language that is imprecise or inappropriate for the text(s) and task provide a concluding statement or section that is illogical or unrelated to the topic and information presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibit no evidence of organization use language that is predominantly incoherent or copied directly from the text(s) do not provide a concluding statement or section
<p>CONTROL OF CONVENTIONS: the extent to which the essay demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate grade-appropriate command of conventions, with few errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate grade-appropriate command of conventions, with occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate emerging command of conventions, with some errors that may hinder comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate a lack of command of conventions, with frequent errors that hinder comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are minimal, making assessment of conventions unreliable



Name: _____

Date: _____

CRITERIA	4 Essays at this level:	3 Essays at this level:	2 Essays at this level:	1 Essays at this level:	0 Essays at this level:
<p>COHERENCE, ORGANIZATION, AND STYLE: the extent to which the essay logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibit clear organization, with the skillful use of appropriate and varied transitions to create a unified whole and enhance meaning establish and maintain a formal style, using grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary with a notable sense of voice provide a concluding statement or section that is compelling and follows clearly from the topic and information presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibit clear organization, with the use of appropriate transitions to create a unified whole establish and maintain a formal style using precise language and domain-specific vocabulary provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the topic and information presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibit some attempt at organization, with inconsistent use of transitions establish but fail to maintain a formal style, with inconsistent use of language and domain-specific vocabulary provide a concluding statement or section that follows generally from the topic and information presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibit little attempt at organization, or attempts to organize are irrelevant to the task lack a formal style, using language that is imprecise or inappropriate for the text(s) and task provide a concluding statement or section that is illogical or unrelated to the topic and information presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibit no evidence of organization use language that is predominantly incoherent or copied directly from the text(s) do not provide a concluding statement or section

