

Reading Comprehension Homework Task

Read this short extract called 'Heroes and Monsters'.

Greek myths are epic stories about the gods and magical beings of Greece. They often feature heroes, heroic battles and monsters.

King Minos was the powerful ruler of Crete. In his palace he had a labyrinth (a system of complicated tunnels like an underground maze). There he kept the half-man, half-bull minotaur who was the son of the king and queen. This monster was savage and dangerous and it ate any human who wandered into its lair.

Every nine years, King Minos demanded that King Aegeus of Athens send him seven girls and seven boys as a sacrifice. The young people were sent into the labyrinth to be devoured by the minotaur. This was not a very pleasant thing for Minos to do, but King Aegeus was terrified of Minos and so he had to comply.

The boys and girls were chosen by drawing lots and all Athenian people feared lest their sons or daughters be taken for the monster to devour.

Brave Theseus, son of King Aegeus, decided he'd had enough of this and he saw that the only way to free the Athenians was for him to go into the labyrinth and kill the minotaur. He told his father that this time only six boys would be chosen by lot and that Theseus himself would be the seventh.

Ariadne, King Minos' daughter, wanted to help Theseus. Before he went into the labyrinth, she gave him a ball of golden silk string. You might wonder what use that would be against the monster.

Remember, the minotaur was half-bull, half-man. He was a fearsome sight and he was hungry! It wasn't easy, but after an intense and bloody fight, courageous Theseus finally killed the minotaur by plunging his sword into the heart of the beast.

But how did our hero find his way out of the underground maze, you ask? Why, you can't have forgotten the golden thread! You see, Theseus had tied one end to the entrance of the labyrinth. All he had to do was follow the thread back to the start. He walked out of the labyrinth, leading the young people to safety.

And so, with Ariadne's help, the hero Theseus slayed the monster minotaur and the Athenians lived happily in safety again.

Now complete Challenge 1 and 2. Just writing the answers neatly in your homework books is fine - you don't need to print these sheets out.

Challenge 1

- 1 In what way was the minotaur's body different to a human body?

☐
1 mark

- 2 Reread the paragraph that begins 'King Minos was the powerful ruler of Crete.' Find and copy one word that means 'wild, violent and frightening'.

☐
1 mark

- 3 Number the following sentences to show the order in which they happened. The first one has been done for you.

Theseus led the young people out of the labyrinth.	
Theseus grappled with the minotaur.	
Ariadne gave Theseus a thread made of gold.	
Theseus vowed to free the people of Athens.	1

☐
1 mark

Challenge 2

- 1 How were the girls and boys chosen?

☐
1 mark

- 2 Why did Theseus tell his father that only six boys should be chosen to go into the labyrinth?

☐
1 mark

- 3 Which of the following would be the most suitable title for this story? Tick one.

The Minotaur of Crete

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Theseus Slays the Minotaur

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Ariadne and the Golden Thread

☐☐
1 mark

- 4 a) Explain why King Minos' daughter had an important role in the story.

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- b) Why do you think she chose to help Theseus?

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2 marks

Total: _____ / 8 marks