



# Theseus and the Minotaur

WORKSHOPS

## STORY:

Theseus and the Minotaur

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## COUNTRY:

Greece

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## AGE:

9 - 12

Year 4

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## MATERIALS:

A4 size white paper, coloured pencils or felt-tip pens, scissors, gouache colours, glue, images of the sea (on a calm day, during a thunderstorm, in the morning, at night, etc.)

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

To develop imagination by predicting continuation of the text.

Discussing the text, sharing knowledge and expressing opinion on such topics as wars and travel in the past and nowadays.

Developing fine motoric skills by sketching and painting of own ship.

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## METHODS:

Work with the text.  
Discussion/conversation on the text.  
Describing own experience.  
Painting technique.  
Colour mixing.  
Sketching.  
Composition creation.  
Evaluation of works.

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## AUTHORS:

Association "Creative Ideas"

## **Ancient Greek myths**

The ancient Greeks told stories about their gods. These stories are called myths (short for mythology, or stories about gods.) Stories about the ancient Greek gods are still told today.

The magical world of the ancient Greek gods was a world full of bickering and fights and wars and compromise and fear and fun and punishment and love. Many myths were based on the fact that gods, like mortal men, could be punished or rewarded for their actions.

### **Theseus and the Minotaur**

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there lived a king named Minos. King Minos lived on a lovely island called Crete. King Minos had everything a king could possibly want. Now and then, King Minos sent his navy to the tiny village of Athens, across the sea.

The king of Athens did not know what to do. He was desperate. He figured if he had some time, he could build a strong navy, strong enough to send King Minos packing the next time he attacked Athens. The king of Athens offered King Minos a deal. If he would not attack Athens for 9 years, Athens would send 7 boys and 7 girls

to the island of Crete to be eaten by the awful monster that King Minos kept as a pet, the dreaded Minotaur.

The Minotaur lived in the heart of a maze on the island of Crete. King Minos loved that old monster. King Minos only attacked Athens when he was bored. He really didn't want anything. This way, his beloved monster could look forward to a special treat every 9 years or so. King Minos took the deal.

Although Athens did build a navy, King Minos did not attack as the king of Athens had expected. In fact, King Minos kept his word. And now it was time for Athens to keep theirs. Everyone in Athens was crying. Prince Theseus of Athens knew the importance of keeping your word. He knew that a deal was a deal. But, he was also quite sure that it was wrong to send small children to be eaten by a monster.

Prince Theseus told his father (the king) that he was going to Crete as the seventh son of Athens. He was going to kill the Minotaur and end the terror.

"The Minotaur is a terrible monster! What makes you think you can kill it?" cried his father.

"I'll find a way," Theseus replied gently. "The gods will help me."

His father begged him not to go. But the prince took his place as the seventh Athenian boy. Along with six other Athenian boys and seven Athenian girls, Prince Theseus sailed towards Crete.

When the prince and the children arrived on the island of Crete, King Minos and his daughter, the Princess Ariadne, came out to greet them. The Princess Ariadne did not say anything. But her eyes narrowed thoughtfully. Late that night, she wrote Prince Theseus a note and slipped it under his bedroom door.

*Dear Theseus (Ariadne wrote)*

*I am a beautiful princess as you probably noticed the minute you saw me. I am also a very bored princess. Without my help, the Minotaur will surely gobble you up. I know a trick or two that will save your life. If I help you kill the monster, you must promise to take me away from this tiny island so that others can admire my beauty. If interested in this deal, meet me by the gate to the Labyrinth in one hour.*

*Yours very truly,  
Princess Ariadne*

Prince Theseus slipped out of the palace and waited patiently by the gate. Princess Ariadne finally showed up. In her hands, she carried a sword and a ball of string.

Ariadne gave the sword and the ball of string to Prince Theseus. "Hide these inside the entrance to the maze. Tomorrow, when you and the other children from Athens enter the Labyrinth, wait until the gate is closed, then tie the string to the door. Unroll it as you move through the maze. That way, you can find your way back again. The sword, well, you know what to do with the sword," she laughed.

Theseus thanked the princess for her kindness.

"Don't forget, now," she cautioned Theseus. "You must take me with you so that all the people can marvel at my beauty."

The next morning, the Athenian children, including Prince Theseus, were shoved into the maze. The door was locked firmly behind them. Following Ariadne's directions, Theseus tied one end of the string to the door. He told the children to stay by the door and to make sure the string stayed tied so the prince could find his way back again. The children hung on to the string tightly, as Theseus entered the maze alone.

Using the sword Ariadne had given him, Theseus killed the monstrous beast. He followed the string back and knocked on the door.

Princess Ariadne was waiting. She opened the door. Without anyone noticing, Prince Theseus and the

children of Athens ran to their ship and sailed quietly away. Princess Ariadne sailed away with them. On the way home, they stopped for supplies on the tiny island of Naxos. Princess Ariadne insisted on coming ashore. There was nothing much to do on the island. Soon, she fell asleep. All the people gathered to admire the sleeping princess. Theseus sailed quietly away with the children of Athens and left her there, sleeping.

After all, a deal is a deal.

# ACTIVITIES

## Setting

## Participants

Year 4 – children age 9-12

### Activity 1:

Children listen to the story "Theseus and the Minotaur" (the facilitator explains what a Minotaur is - most people know that it is a half bull – half man), the facilitator occasionally stops reading and asks the Children, what, in their opinion, would happen next. The facilitator then continues reading the story. Each child can assess whether his or her forecasts have come true/has been fulfilled.

Discussion on the theme "War." What wars the children have heard and read about? What wars are going on right now? What kind of people suffers most during the war? How do other countries help war-torn countries?

Discussion on the theme "Means of transport." What were the means of transport in the ancient times? The ship was used in the story. What could ancient sailing ships look like? What was important to enable navigation with such ships?

### Activity 2:

Each child sketches his/hers own sailing ship, then paints it with coloured pencils or sketches his/hers sailing ship with felt-tip pen and carefully cuts out the ship with scissors.

### Activity 3:

Children study various images of the sea photographed on a calm day, during a thunderstorm, in the morning, at night, etc.

Children enumerate the differences – what is the sky and the sea like. What colour nuances are visible? What colours will have to be mixed together to get this colour?

### Activity 4:

On A4 size paper sheet children paint the sea using different colour shades.

On another A4 size paper sheet children paint the sky. Half of the page they cover with the appropriate colour.

When the paper sheet depicting the sea has dried, it is torn into three parts. These three parts are then placed on an A4 paper sheet depicting the sky, and the cut-out ship is glued in the middle. Everyone creates his/her own composition.

## Activity 5:

The ship is drawn on the blackboard. The facilitator tells children that they now have to travel to an uninhabited island. And everyone may take along only three things. Children name them and the facilitator writes them down on the blackboard.

The children are then divided into groups of four.

The facilitator says that the ship is overloaded and cannot start the voyage. Each group has to evaluate things to be taken along and leave 5 items ashore. Each group names the things. The facilitator deletes from the blackboard those things that have been named three or more times. But the ship is still too heavy.

Each group has to remove five more things from the ship's board. The groups make a discussion.

Each group names their five things. The facilitator deletes those things that have been named three or more times.

There is a discussion about things left behind. Why exactly these will be needed most of all? How will they help us in an unfamiliar place? What can you do with them? How do people who leave their homes forever evaluate what things should be taken with them?