

Theseus and the Minotaur

King Minos was the powerful and spiteful king of Crete. He would frequently launch surprise attacks on the beautiful city of Athens. King Aegeus was the king of Athens. He stopped the attacks by making a terrible deal with Minos. Every year, Athens had to send over seven girls and seven boys to be given to King Minos's half-man, half-bull beast called the Minotaur. As long as they sent the children, King Minos would not attack.



Soon, Aegeus's son called Theseus was tired of the bargain. Just before the next ship was due to leave, he spoke with his father in his study, "This deal with Minos needs to end. Families are constantly worried that their children will be picked next. Tomorrow, I am going to be one of the seven boys sent to Crete. Then, I will defeat the Minotaur and we can live in peace."



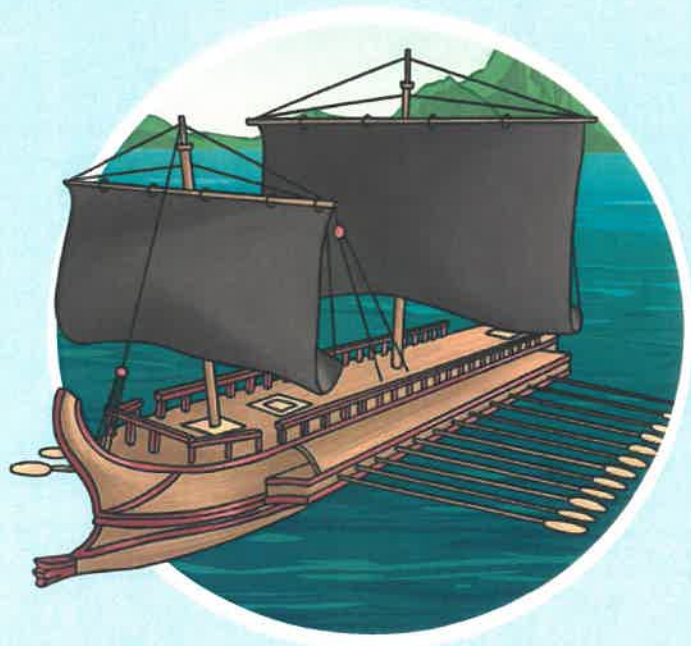
Aegeus knew that his son was strong and brave but the Minotaur was unstoppable. It was so dangerous that it had to be locked inside a complex maze called a labyrinth. Fearful, Aegeus begged Theseus to change his mind but Theseus refused. Finally, Aegeus agreed, "Alright, go to Crete. However, the moment you set sail for home, please change your black sails to white ones so that I can see from our cliffs that you are safe." Theseus promised to change his sails.

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In the morning, Theseus joined the 13 children that had been chosen as offerings for the Minotaur. When they arrived, King Minos's daughter Ariadne pulled Theseus to one side and told him that she recognised him. She offered to help Theseus defeat the Minotaur if he agreed to take her away from her father and Crete. Theseus agreed and the two met outside the labyrinth's entrance that night. In the dark, Ariadne gave Theseus a ball of string, "This labyrinth is so complicated that no one can ever find their way out. If you unravel this string behind you, you will be able to follow it back to the entrance."

Courageously, Theseus set off to find the Minotaur. Unwinding the string as he searched, he crept through the dark tunnels until he found the beast. After a long and vicious battle, Theseus emerged victorious and the Minotaur had been defeated.

Immediately, Theseus escaped to his ship with Ariadne. He felt wonderful but exhausted. Eager to get away, Theseus raised the black sails of his ship and headed for home. He'd forgotten all about the promise that he had made to his father.



Questions

1. Where was Theseus from? Tick one.

- Crete
- Sparta
- Athens
- Olympia

2. How many children were sent every year? Tick one.

- 7
- 5
- 13
- 14

3. Draw **four** lines and match each setting to its description.

Theseus's ship

Crete

the labyrinth

Athens

where Theseus is from

where king Minos lives

where the Minotaur is kept

where Theseus forgets his promise

4. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- Ariadne recognises Theseus as the prince.
- Theseus and Ariadne meet up at the labyrinth entrance.
- Theseus boards the ship heading to Crete.
- Ariadne offers to help Theseus if he takes her with him to Athens.

5. Look at the second paragraph. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'deal'.

6. Fill in the missing words.

He would _____ launch surprise attacks on the _____ city of Athens.

7. How do you think Minos will react when he discovers that the Minotaur has been defeated?

8. How would you feel if you were one of the children travelling with Theseus?
