

Theseus and the Minotaur



Long ago, King Aegeus of Athens had a serious problem. King Minos of Crete was constantly invading and attacking his city. The only way King Minos would stop was if King Aegeus sent seven boys and seven girls to Crete once a year. King Aegeus agreed but felt terrible because he knew that these poor children would be given to King Minos's half-man, half-bull beast called the Minotaur.

After three years, Prince Theseus was tired of the bargain and decided to speak with his father, the king, "This deal with Minos is wrong. Tomorrow, I am going to be one of the seven boys shipped to Crete. Then, I will fight the Minotaur and defeat it."

Theseus was strong and clever but Aegeus knew that the Minotaur was so dangerous that it had to be locked inside a complex maze called a labyrinth. Fearful, Aegeus let Theseus go but with one request, "Once you set sail for home, please change your black sails to white ones so that I can see that you are safe." Theseus promised to change his sails.

At sunrise, Theseus boarded the next ship for Crete. When they arrived, King Minos's daughter

Ariadne pulled Theseus away and told him that she recognised him. She offered to help Theseus if he agreed to take her away from Crete. Theseus agreed and the two decided to meet up later on. That night, Ariadne handed Theseus a ball of string, "This labyrinth is so complex that it's very easy to get lost. You will be able to follow it back to the entrance if you unravel this and lay it behind you."

Bravely, Theseus ran off to find the Minotaur.



He unravelled the string as he crept through the dark tunnels. Suddenly, the beast appeared in front of him. After a long battle, Theseus had won and the Minotaur had been defeated.

Quickly, Theseus escaped to his ship with Ariadne following behind. 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 the Minotaur? Tick one.

- in a labyrinth in Athens
- in a labyrinth in Crete
- on a ship in Athens
- in a cave in Crete

2. Who was King Minos's daughter? Tick one.

- Ariadne
- Minos
- Theseus
- the Minotaur

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

- Seven boys and seven girls are sent to Crete.
- Theseus doesn't like the deal.
- King Minos constantly attacks Athens.
- King Aegeus makes a deal with King Minos.

4. Draw **four** lines and match each character to their description.

Ariadne

King Minos

King Aegeus

the Minotaur

the king of Crete

the king of Athens

King Minos's daughter

a half-man,
half-bull beast

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

6. Fill in the missing words.

Theseus was strong and clever but Aegeus knew that the Minotaur was so _____
that it had to be locked inside a _____ maze called a labyrinth.

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7. Do you think that Theseus will make a good king someday? Explain your answer.
