



SAMPLE MATERIAL

Greek Myths: Vocabulary Lesson, Word List, and Riddle Poems

Pocomoke Middle School, Maryland

Topic: Adolescent Literacy

Practice: Vocabulary Instruction

Through a mythology unit, Carlton Cartwright provides his seventh-grade language arts students with opportunities to practice vocabulary skills in varied contexts. Goals for this vocabulary lesson include asking students to represent word meanings through movement and voice and to use print and online resources to gather information about words derived from Greek myths.

The lesson begins with students using their acting skills to apply their vocabulary knowledge by kinesthetically representing word meanings derived from the names of mythological Greek gods, such as narcissistic (Narcissus) and titanic (Titan). Cartwright moves on to using technology integration to support student learning of word meanings. First, he models for the whole class the process of using an online resource to research the origin of words from classical myths, such as “siren” and “zeal” highlighted in the Words from Classical Mythology student assignment.

Then, based on the student’s ability or readiness, Cartwright assigns each student a list of words, the Greek Mythology Word Map, and gives them an opportunity to practice researching their words through the online process he modeled.

The lesson ends with an activity that requires students to independently research the origins of an assigned word from Greek mythology using a dictionary, reference books, and internet sources. Students complete this Vocabulary Scene Investigation Case assignment by preparing a graphic organizer displaying the word's etymology, definition, related words, a graphic or symbol, and at least one example of a modern usage. Examples of graphic organizers are provided to students. In addition, students create riddle poems to demonstrate their understanding of vocabulary words. Riddle poem examples are shown on the last page of this resource.

Unit: Mythology	Date: Tuesday, February 3, 2009
Objective(s): The student will... Discuss Roman takeover of Greek mythology Represent word meanings through movement and voice Use print and online resources to gather information about words derived from Greek and Roman mythology	
Activities/Procedures: 1. “The Takeover” homework Check as students are reading at beginning of class Verbally review as a whole class to discuss Roman names for Greek gods Ask purpose of this sheet – use title to help articulate (text feature) Ask: “Did we meet objective?” and get volunteer to articulate how we met it. Check it off on board. 2. Simon Says (arts immersion) Discuss how brain uses visual and kinesthetic cues to retain/remember concepts. Word wall – connect visual cues with “story” behind words from unit so far Acting tools – body (movement), voice, imagination Create (or practice for period 5/6) kinesthetic cues for remembering words based on their meanings. (Simon Says...) Ask: “Did we meet objective?” and get volunteer to articulate how we met it. Check it off on board. 3. Words from classical mythology (technology integration) Hand out notes from yesterday’s lesson and discuss briefly Introduce project (scope and sequence for week) Pass out Group B worksheet Model process with group B words as whole class – be sure to include incorrect answers; as time moves on, don’t write out answers, just go through process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ titanic – (what do students remember?) ▪ Achilles heel – (what do students remember?) ▪ siren – (what is it for us today?) Tell students that they will be assigned a word list tomorrow and we’ll visit lab Ask: “Did we meet objective?” and get volunteer to articulate how we met it. Check it off on board.	
Homework: Friday, February 6 – ILA Benchmark; Book orders due Thursday, February 5 – Planner and book check	

Name _____

Date _____

Subject/Period _____

Words from Classical Mythology – Group B

Instructions: Write in the answers as you go along. Remember that words often change meaning over time: a word that originally meant something bad might mean something good today, and vice versa.

1. Plato, a famous Greek teacher, named his school after a generous host named _____.
2. Plato's students were called "academics," and today our word "academic" means _____.
3. According to one story, Achilles was invulnerable except for his heel. Why wasn't his heel protected like the rest of his body? Use your own words.

4. If your doctor says you have injured your Achilles tendon, which of these will you probably need as you recover?
 - A. a sling
 - B. crutches
 - C. a back brace
 - D. a collar around your neck
5. What happened to the men who heard the Sirens sing (except for Orpheus and Odysseus)?

6. A modern siren would not have the body of a bird, but how might she be like the original sirens?

7. It was so hard for Zeus and the Olympians to defeat the Titans because the Titans were so _____.

8. Which of the following words does NOT mean the same thing as our modern word "titanic"?

A. colossal
B. huge
C. minuscule
D. gargantuan

9. The ancient Zelus was the personification or symbolic embodiment of the concept of zeal. What is zeal?

10. Complete this analogy:

Zeal is to painting your face in your team's colors as _____.

A. courage is to running away
B. anger is to raising your voice
C. joy is to looking the other way
D. fatigue is to exercising

Name _____

Greek Mythology Word Map



Term: *narcissus*

The story behind the term: Because Narcissus didn't return Echo's love for him, he was punished by having to feel unreturned love. He fell in love with his reflection, which obviously couldn't love him back. Narcissus disappeared and a flower grew in the place where he once was; this flower became known as the narcissus.

How word usage fits today: The narcissus flower really exists today. It has a yellow center surrounded by a white circle of petals.

Related word(s) *narcissistic*



Term: *labyrinth*

The story behind the term: King Minos asked Daedalus to build the Labyrinth, a confusing maze of passages the king used to keep the Minotaur, the Bull of Minos. It was to be built so that neither the monster nor any of his victims could possibly escape.

How word usage fits today: We use the labyrinth today to name any confusing maze or situation.

Related word(s) *labyrinthine*



Term: *heliocentric*

The story behind the term: In some myths about Phaethon driving the Chariot of the Sun, it is said that his father is Helios, the Sun-God.

How word usage fits today: Heliocentric is used to name the theory that the sun is the center of our solar system.

Related word(s)

Name _____

Greek Mythology **Word Map**



Term: *nemesis*

The story behind the term: In some versions of the story of Echo and Narcissus, Echo is said to ask the avenging goddess, Nemesis, for help in punishing Narcissus because he refuses to return Echo's love.

How word usage fits today: A nemesis is someone who punishes a person for some wrong he or she has committed. A nemesis is also seen as one's worse enemy that cannot be escaped or outsmarted, no matter how hard one tries.

Related word(s) *archenemy*



Term: *echo*

The story behind the term: Because she loved to talk so much, Echo, a nymph, was punished by Hera to only be able to repeat what other people say and never speak unless someone else speaks first. She pined away until only her voice remained.



Term: *cereal*

The story behind the term: Ceres is the Roman name for the Greek goddess Demeter, who controls wheat, grain, and other living things.

Vocabulary Scene Investigation VSI: _____

Case: **Greek Myth Origins** Date Filed: _____ Shift: _____

Assignment: **WORD** _____

1) Using the information provided in your file as a starting point, you must investigate the origin of your vocabulary word in Greek mythology. A clear explanation of its history (**etymology**) must be provided so that your colleagues can fully understand what they are dealing with should they encounter this word again. Additional investigation may be done on the internet, using reference books in classrooms or libraries, as well as materials you have already encountered.

2) A formal description (**dictionary definition**) of the word under investigation must be included, and some pronunciation guide as well!

3) You must provide the names of relatives (**related words, other forms**) as well as disguises or pseudonyms (AKA's) the word under investigation may use (**modern uses**). Also provide their street meanings (**user-friendly definitions or explanations**) so that your colleagues will not be confused.

4) A sketch or photograph (**any graphic**) of the word in its most common, recognizable form must be provided for easy identification.

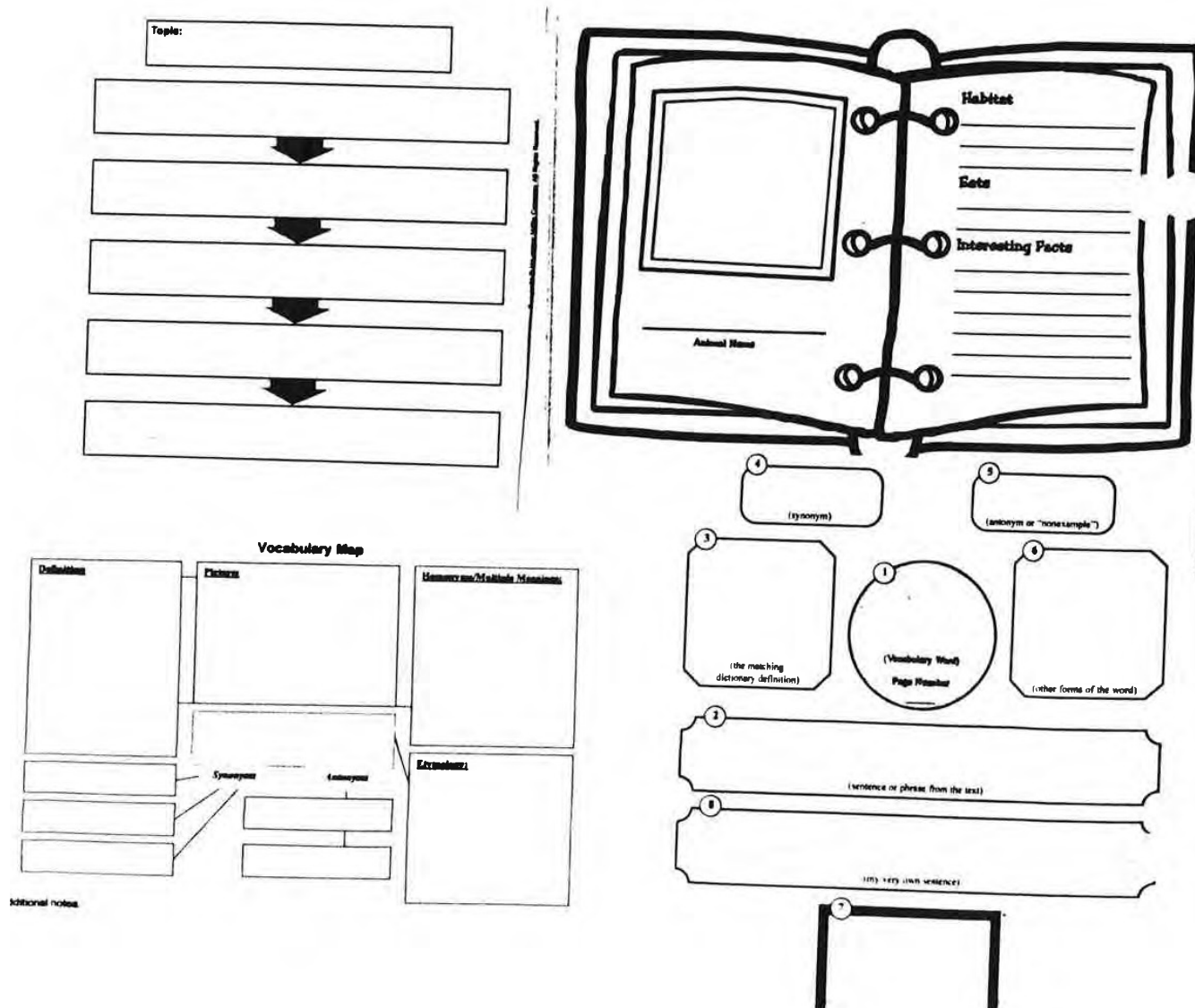
5) Your VSI report is due _____. It must be in the form of a **graphic organizer*** that displays the word's etymology, definition, related words, a graphic or symbol, and at least one example of a modern usage.

6) "Bonus pay" will be given to any VSI who actually apprehends a physical embodiment of the word (**an actual object, example, or large color picture**).

7) Your full report is due and must be presented to your fellow VSIs on _____.

*Several examples of **GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS** are shown below.

You may choose to use an exact copy of one of these, create one that is a combination of several, or come up with a display that is all your own.



**Pocomoke Middle School
Greek Mythology
Student Riddle Poems**

I am from the titans,
Large and strong.
From fighting Olympians to
Holding up the earth.
I am a collection of maps,
I am used to help navigate
My destination.
I am an **atlas**.

I was a beautiful creature
Who attracted sailors with my awesome song
Leading them to their fate on the rocks
I hypnotized mortals with my singing
But now I ring and sing loudly
On top of a firetruck
I scream shrilly
On top of a cop car
I am a **siren**.

I am from Somnus, the god of sleep,
from the darkness and dreams,
that upon him would creep.
I am from the dreams that had many faces,
landscapes, people, and all different places.
The glee of seeming to soar through the air,
the utter dread of a horrid nightmare.
I am from the mind
that would sleep through the night,
while the body would walk without use of sight.
Insomnia is one of the things that I hate,
for with it, you can't **somnambulate**.

I was the Greek goddess, Salus,
but now I am a greeting,
that is a wishing of good health.
I was a goddess of good health
and prosperity, and had a palace
on one of the seven hills of Rome.
Now I am used in the army,
As a greeting of respect and good health.
I am.... **salutary**!

I am from being a Titan
big and strong, father to Hesperides.
Went to war with siblings
sad to say they lost,
they were punished to hold the world.
So I am a collection of maps,
but some use me as a reference.
So tell me, who
Am I? I am an **atlas**.

I am from Vulcan,
who blows out fire and smoke.
From the god of fire,
and also forge.
When I erupt
I blow out fire and smoke!
I scare people at times
I am a **volcano**!

I am from
the spring flower and
festival.
I am from beautiful flowers.
I am from the Roman goddess
of Spring and flowers.
I am **floral**.

I'm from Hercules – strong, courageous.
I'm from being half man, half god
from Alcmena and Zeus.
I'm from one of the greatest Greek heroes.
Hercules killed Medusa.
I'm from being determined to complete the twelve labors,
to free my guilt from killing my family.
I have great strength. I'm very powerful.
I'm **herculean**.