

Greek Myths –The radio show!

Using the Information sheets covering Myths and facts about the Minotaur & Myths and facts about the Trojan war, read the two stories. *Do you think these events really happened? You are going to be mythbusters and work out what the truth is behind these myths.*

Use the sheets I have provided to help organise your thinking and plan what you're going to say in your radio show.

End with your conclusion or what you now think about the other myths from Ancient Greece. Do they all have a basis in fact? Or are some completely made up? Discuss how storytelling can lead to stories being embellished over the years.

When you are ready you can choose to record your radio show or write in the style of a script.

If you choose to write a short radio script use the format below to help you.

You might find some of these links useful for researching further. As always, check that an adult is happy with the content of these pages first.

Weblinks

http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/schoolradio/subjects/history/ancient_greek_myths - BBC School Radio programmes on the Ancient Greeks;

<http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2012/10/excellent-audio-recording-apps-for-ipad.html> - Reviews of some iPad apps for recording audio;

<http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends/textonly563-theseus-and-the-minotaur.html> - Longer version of the Minotaur myth; <https://study.com/academy/lesson/knossos-definition-facts-discovery.html> - Information about Knossos;

https://www.ancient.eu/Trojan_War/ - The story of the Trojan War; <http://www.usu.edu/markdamen/1320hist&civ/chapters/04troj.htm> - About Troy and Mycenae.

Example of a play script:

Features of a Play Script

Key	
Character names	Speech
Setting the scene	Character directions within speech
Stage directions	

No inverted commas are needed!

The Mad Hatter, Dormouse and Hare are sitting at a table having afternoon tea.
Alice enters the scene, stage left.

Mad Hatter: *(starts for a moment, pauses and a broad grin appears across his face. He gets up out of his chair and walks across the table towards Alice)*
It's you.

Dormouse: *(exasperated)* No it's not! Hare brought us the wrong Alice!

Hare: *(gasps and throws his hands against his head)* It's the wrong Alice!

Mad Hatter: You're absolutely Alice, I'd know you anywhere!
(to the rest of the characters at the table)
I'd know her anywhere!

Dormouse and Hare laugh maniacally.

Well, as you can see we're still having tea. You're terribly late you know... naughty.

Alice: I'm incredibly intrigued.

Mad Hatter: Yes yes of course, but now we must get onto the Frabjous Day!

Dormouse & Hare together: FRABJOUS DAY!

Mad Hatter: We're investigating things that begin with the letter M.
(whispers) Have you any idea why a raven is like a writing desk?





Topic: Ancient Greece True or False?

Myths and facts about the Minotaur

The story of the Minotaur

King Minos of Crete was a powerful man, feared by the rulers of the lands around him. When he demanded they send tributes to honour him, they sent them without question. It was the only way they could stop him going to war with them. King Minos had a great palace built for himself with a giant maze, a Labyrinth, inside. At the centre of the maze, he kept a terrifying creature, the Minotaur; half man and half bull. It loved to eat the flesh of humans.

As for Athens, Minos demanded that every year the King send him seven young men and seven young women as food for the Minotaur. One day Theseus, the King's son, decided to end the tradition, "Father, when it is time to send the next tribute, I will go as one of them and I vow that it is the last time the Minotaur will be fed with the flesh of any of our people."

His father could not persuade him to change his mind. Theseus insisted that he understood the dangers but would succeed. "I will return to you, father," cried Theseus, as the ship left the harbour wall, "and you will be proud of your son." His father said "I shall keep watch for you every day. If you are successful, take down these black sails and replace them with white ones. That way I will know you are coming home safe to me."

As the ship docked in Crete, King Minos himself came down to taunt the Athenians and to humiliate them even further. "I will let you choose which one goes first into the Minotaur's den. Who is it to be?" he jeered.

Theseus stepped forward. "I will go first. I am Theseus, Prince of Athens and I do not fear what is within the walls of your maze."

Standing behind the king, listening, was his daughter, Ariadne. From the moment she set eyes on Theseus, Ariadne fell in love with him. As he entered the labyrinth and the guards walked away, she called softly to him. "Theseus, take this," she whispered. "Even if you kill the Minotaur, you will never find your way out again."

She threw him a great ball of string and he tied one end of it to the entrance. He smiled at her, turned and began to make his way into the maze, the string playing out behind him as he went. Theseus walked for hours in the dark. Eventually, with his hands held out in front of him feeling his way, he suddenly touched what felt like a huge bony horn. In an instant he was picked up between the Minotaur's horns and tossed high into the air. When he landed on the hard cold stone, he felt the animal's huge hooves come down on his chest.

But Theseus was no ordinary man. As the Minotaur bellowed Theseus grabbed the animal's huge horns, and twisted the Minotaur's neck. With one final tug on the head, the creature's neck snapped. Theseus struggled to find the string, which he had dropped in the fight, but eventually, with a whoop of delight, he knew he had found the thread which would lead him back out. Ariadne was waiting for him.

"You must take me back to Athens with you," she cried, "My father will kill me when he finds out that I have helped you." "But of course you must come with us," said Theseus. Quickly and quietly, they unfurled the great sails of their ship and headed for home. But, in his haste to get away, Theseus forgot to change his sails to white. King Aegeus, waiting on the headland, saw the ship approaching with its black sails flying in the wind.

"My son has failed and he is dead," he cried. And in despair, he flung himself from the cliff into the raging waters below. From that day on, the sea was named in memory of Theseus' father, and to this day, it is known as the Aegean Sea.

Topic: Ancient Greece True or False?

Archaeology in Crete

There is a palace in Crete and it was excavated in the early 20th century by an archaeologist called Sir Arthur Evans.

Local farmers had been ploughing up lots of pottery and coins from the ancient town of Knossos. It was known to have been lived in by Romans from the 5th to 2nd centuries BCE. The Romans believed in the old stories about King Minos, the Minotaur and Ariadne and made coins showing some of those characters.



Illustration 1: Coin showing the Minotaur on one side and Ariadne's head on the other, surrounded by the meander pattern which represents the Labyrinth

When Evans started to dig he found underneath the Roman town the remains of an amazing palace that could have belonged to King Minos. The palace was huge and the connecting rooms looked a little like a maze.

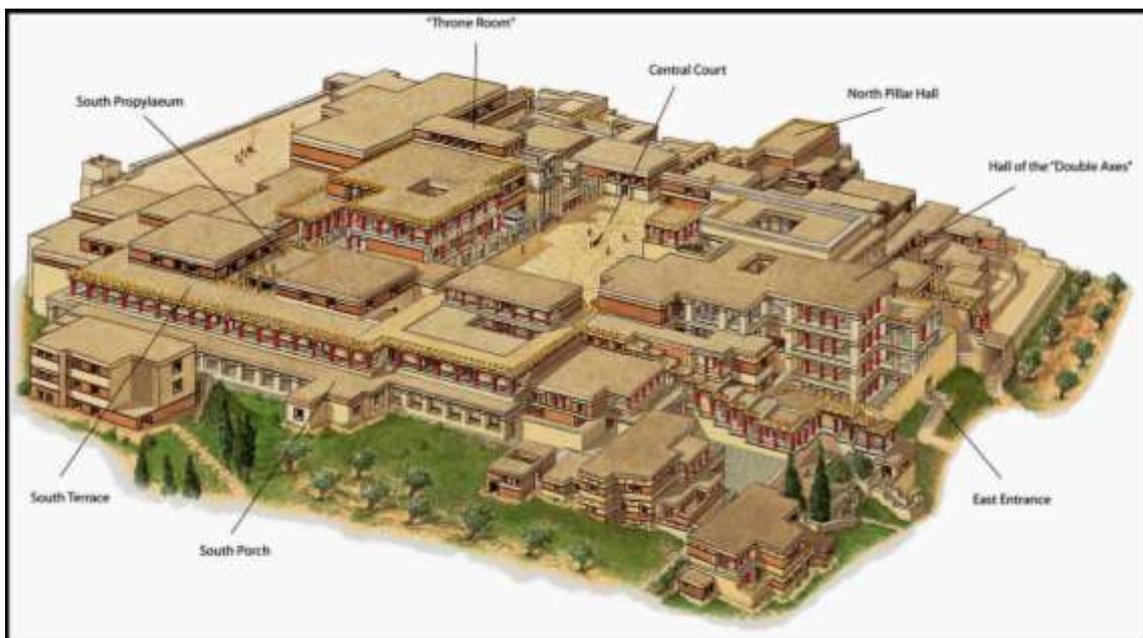


Illustration 2: This is a reconstruction of what the palace at Knossos may have looked like

Topic: Ancient Greece True or False?

The meander pattern was also painted as decoration on the small bits of wall plaster that he found.



Illustration 3: Painted wall plaster found at Knossos decorated with the meander pattern

What is also amazing from the painted wall plaster is what appears to be an ancient festival where young men jumped over bulls.

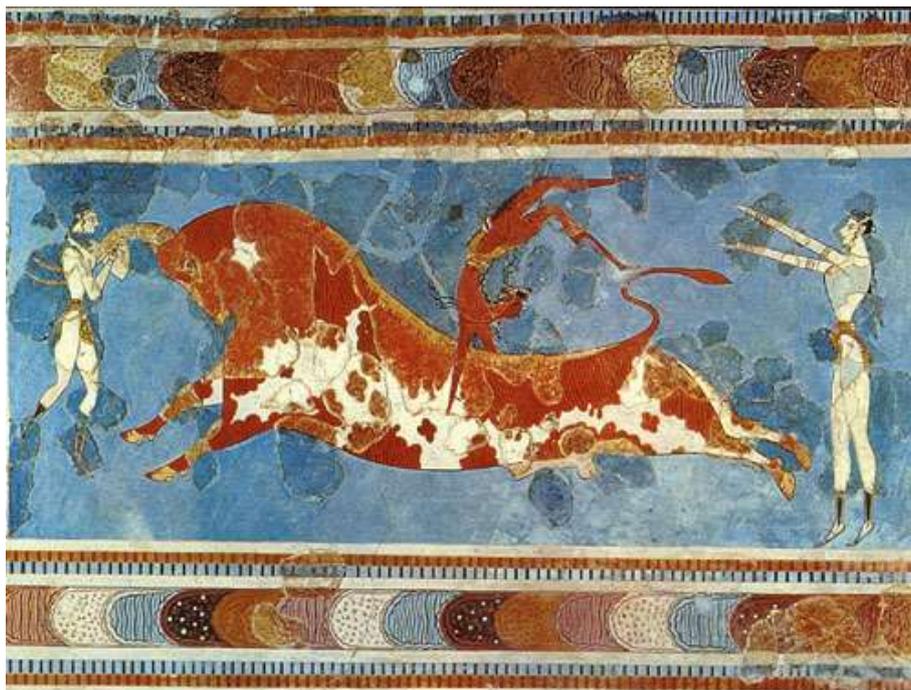


Illustration 4: A young man in the process of jumping over a bull on painted wall plaster from the palace at Knossos

Could this be the origin of the myth of the Minotaur?

From looking at the style of pottery found at Knossos, Sir Arthur Evans worked out that the palace was lived in from 1900-1300 BCE. The earliest written version of the story comes from about 450 BCE, so over time, it obviously picked up some embellishments.

Topic: Ancient Greece True or False?

Myths and facts about Troy

The Trojan horse

There is an old saying - Beware of Greeks bearing gifts. This saying comes from the legend of the Trojan horse.

As the story goes...

A long time ago, there was an ancient city-state on the coast of Turkey, across the sea from Sparta. This city-state was named Troy. At one time, Troy and the other Greek city-states were pretty good friends. But times had changed.

When Paris, a Prince of Troy, was visiting the King of Sparta, Menelaus, he had fallen in love with Menelaus' young bride, Helen.

When Menelaus left Sparta to go to a funeral, Paris abducted Helen and also carried off much of Menelaus' wealth. In Troy, Helen and Paris were married.

Menelaus, however, was outraged to find that Paris had taken Helen. Menelaus then called upon all of Helen's old suitors, as all of the suitors had made an oath long ago that they would all back Helen's husband to defend her honour. Agamemnon, the king of Mycenae, was one of those who joined Menelaus.

Firstly, the general Odysseus, known for his eloquence, and Menelaus went as ambassadors to Troy. They demanded Helen and the stolen treasure be returned. King Priam of Troy refused, and Odysseus and Menelaus returned to the Greek ships with the announcement that war was inevitable.

The city of Troy was protected by a high wall built around the city. Some parts of the wall were 20 feet high! There were gates in the wall to let people in and out but it provided great defence for the people of Troy. It gave the Trojan warriors a relatively safe place to stand, while they rained arrows down on the people below, who were trying to break into the city.

The war lasted for nine years. The Greeks realized that Troy was being supplied by its neighbouring kingdoms, so Greeks were sent to defeat these areas. The Greeks won many important battles and the Trojan hero Hector fell. However, the Greeks could not break down the walls of Troy. The great Spartan hero, Achilles, was felled by Paris with an arrow in Achilles' only weak spot, his heel.

Odysseus eventually had an idea. His plan was to build a horse, a beautiful and huge wooden horse, and leave it outside the gate. Then, the entire Greek army would pretend to leave, as if they had finally admitted defeat. But the horse would not be hollow. Thirty men would be hiding inside.

As the Greek warriors sailed away, the people of Troy rushed outside, cheering. They found the horse. Fortunately, they did not try to burn the horse. They dragged the horse inside the city gates to keep it on display, which is just what the Greek general thought they would do.

That night, while the Trojan people were sleeping, the men hiding inside the wooden horse climbed out and opened the gates. The waiting Greek army entered Troy and set it alight. That was the end of Troy.

Topic: Ancient Greece True or False?

The archaeology of Troy

Before the work of Heinrich Schliemann, a German archaeologist, the world believed that Troy was just a city of myths, part of the Iliad, an epic supposedly written by Homer around 1000 BCE, but he himself may also have been mythical.

Schliemann, from his knowledge of the myth and his guesswork about where an important prehistoric city might be, decided to look at Tels (mounds that were once the site of a town) in Turkey, specifically at the Hellespont, where Greece and Turkey meet.

The second Tel he excavated was near a village called Hissarlik. It had clearly been an important city and had massive walls, just like Troy in the story.



Illustration 1: The broken down walls of the city near Hissarlik - possibly Troy?

These walls did not completely encircle the city, though, and there wasn't any evidence of a nine year siege, or of the city being burned to the ground at any point.

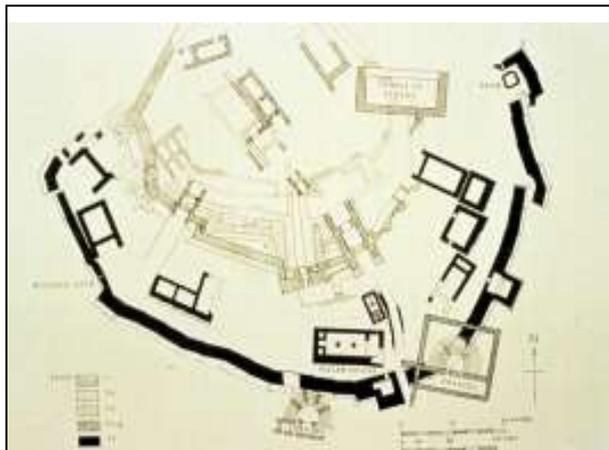


Illustration 2: Schliemann's plan of the buildings and walls of the city near Hissarlik - possibly Troy?

The city was at its height several hundred years before Homer said the Trojan Wars took place, so maybe this wasn't Troy.

Topic: Ancient Greece True or False?

Schliemann turned his attention to Greece to try to find the truth behind Homer's epic. He went to a city he thought was Mycenae, where Agamemnon had been king, and started digging.

He found another great city with impressive architecture. It had been in use from about 1600 to 1100 BCE.



Illustration 3: One of the gates at Mycenae decorated with lions

Schliemann also found tombs of kings who had ruled from the city. Each dead king had a golden mask. When Schliemann found a particularly impressive mask he decided it must have belonged to Agamemnon.



Illustration 4: The golden mask of Agamemnon, perhaps

Not everybody believed Schliemann, but it does seem as if there's some truth behind Homer's Iliad.

Topic: Ancient Greece True or False?

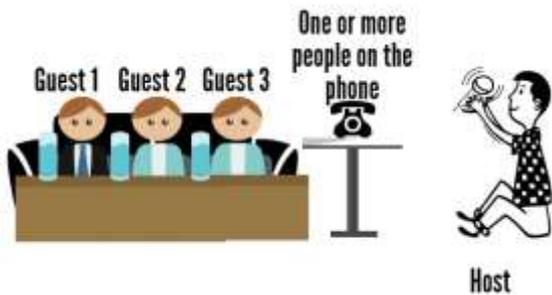
Planning a radio show

Mythbusters.

Which myth will you bust today?	Minotaur/Trojan Horse
Choose a style for your radio show	Wacky with lots of silly noises
	Serious debate with experts
	Chatty, like a conversation with friends
Write the outline of the show. You can write more details later when you know who is saying what.	Introduction: Hello and welcome to... Explanation: Today we're going to be talking about... Part 1: First we're going to tell you a story... or The truth behind the myth of... Part 2: But did this really happen? Well... or The story of... Conclusion: What we can say about the myth of...

Topic: Ancient Greece True or False?

Decide what role everyone in your group will have. Here are some examples, or decide your own roles.



Decide who will be saying what and add more detailed notes to your radio show outline.

Get recording!