



Daedalus and Icarus

6_A

Introducing the Read-Aloud

10 minutes

What Have We Already Learned?

Help students review the previous Greek myth, “Theseus and the Minotaur,” by having them share with the class their last journal entry. If none of the students wrote about Daedalus, remind them of his role in the previous read-aloud. (Daedalus was the creator of the Labyrinth and told Princess Ariadne how Theseus could escape from the Labyrinth.)

Ask students how they think King Minos felt when he discovered that Theseus and the other Athenians had escaped from the Labyrinth. Do they think King Minos would have been happy to discover this?

You may wish to add to the Greek Myths Chart you started in the previous lesson. Remind students that the myth of Theseus does not have gods and goddesses, that it tries to explain how the Aegean Sea got its name, etc. Remind students that myths are *fictional* stories that try to explain events or things in nature, teach moral lessons, and/or entertain listeners. (You may wish to emphasize the fictional aspect of myths with students, because some of them have sad events.)

Essential Background Information or Terms

Meet the Characters

Note: You may wish to add to the Character Chart as you introduce the characters in this read-aloud.



← Show image 6A-1: King Minos ordering Daedalus imprisoned

Remind students that in the last read-aloud they heard about King Minos. Tell students that King Minos is also in this story titled “Daedalus and Icarus.” Ask students how they would describe King Minos’s face and the way he is standing. Ask them what



kinds of feelings he might have at this moment in the story based on how he looks in this image.

← **Show image 6A-4: Daedalus instructing and warning Icarus**

Remind students that they met Daedalus in the last story. Ask students what they remember about Daedalus. Tell students that this image shows Daedalus and his son Icarus who is also in this story.

Personal Connections

Ask students if they have ever eaten an ice cream cone on a hot day. Ask students what happens if they don't eat their ice cream quickly enough. Tell students that their ice cream probably melts in the heat. Heat can cause things to melt, like ice.

Purpose for Listening

Tell students to listen carefully for a problem in today's myth caused by something melting.



Daedalus and Icarus

← Show image 6A-1: King Minos ordering Daedalus imprisoned

This is the story of a very brilliant man, a genius, whose name was Daedalus [DED-ah-lus]. He was able to look at a problem and think until an answer came to him. Once, however, Daedalus faced a challenge he wished he did not have to solve.¹

King Minos of Crete was upset with Daedalus for helping the young hero Theseus defeat the Minotaur and escape from Crete with Minos's daughter, Princess Ariadne.² The king had no **proof**³ that Daedalus had helped them, but he believed that only Daedalus was smart enough to have done it, since he had also created the Labyrinth.⁴ So King Minos announced, "Daedalus, you helped them escape, so now I will lock you up in turn; and since there were two of you responsible for their escape, one of whom was my own daughter, you shall share your imprisonment with your son, Icarus [IK-er-us]."

- 1 Do you remember what a challenge is? What kind of challenge do you think Daedalus wished not to face?
- 2 [Point to the image.] This is King Minos.
- 3 or evidence
- 4 Was the king right? Had Daedalus helped Theseus and the princess?



← Show image 6A-2: Prison tower

The king was too smart to lock Daedalus in an ordinary cell, however, for he feared the genius might escape. He commanded, "Guards, lock up Daedalus and Icarus in that great stone tower that overlooks the ocean cliffs. There is only one window at the top of the tower and one door, which we will lock. Even if they escape through the window, there is nothing below but sharp rocks and raging ocean tides."⁵

So the father and son were locked away. Twice a day, soldiers unlocked the door to deliver food or take away the dishes. On one of those occasions, Daedalus sent a message by the soldiers to King Minos: "If we must live out our lives here, at least give us some books to read, and candles by which to read them after dark." Minos saw no harm in that, and agreed—but he should have known better, for Daedalus had a plan.⁶

- 5 Do you think Daedalus and Icarus could ever escape from a place like this?
- 6 Do you think Daedalus will try to use the books and candles to escape? How might he do that?



7 or the horizontal piece at the bottom

← **Show image 6A-3: Daedalus and Icarus constructing wings**

He and Icarus would set breadcrumbs on the **sill**⁷ of the tower's high window to attract sea birds. Over a period of months, the birds lost their fear of Daedalus and his son and would allow the two men to pick them up. The father and son began to pluck feathers from their wings, though not so many as would hurt the birds or keep them from flying. He and Icarus hid the feathers under their beds, along with some wax from each candle the soldiers supplied, until after several years Daedalus told his son, "Now we have what we need in order to escape."⁸

8 How do you think Daedalus will use the feathers and wax to escape?

9 What does *unravel* mean?

Daedalus began to unravel threads from the blankets in their tower room.⁹ Using the flames of the candles for heat, he melted and shaped the wax they had saved, inserted into it the feathers they had hidden, and tied it all with thread. Icarus's eyes lit up. "You are making us wings!"

10 Do you think Daedalus's plan will work?

Daedalus smiled. "If we cannot walk from our prison, we will fly. Come, hold that candle closer to soften this wax so I can bend it."¹⁰



← **Show image 6A-4: Daedalus instructing and warning Icarus**

It took several days to finish the work, until one morning, the two sets of wings were ready. Daedalus had studied the movements of the birds and knew where the **currents** of air blew near their seaside tower.¹¹ He carefully taught Icarus what he knew, adding, "We will land at that harbor over there, remove our wings, and sail away in one of the boats anchored there. By the time King Minos knows we are gone, we will be far from Crete. However, my son, follow me as I ride the winds safely down. If we are not careful, and we fly too high, the sun's heat could melt the wax in our wings and plunge us down into the sea. Our friends the birds need not fear this, but we are only borrowing their skills."

11 Currents are strong flows of air or water moving in a certain direction.

"I understand, Father," replied Icarus. They strapped on their wings and waited as the sun began to rise over the sea.



← **Show image 6A-5: Daedalus and Icarus flying**

Below their tower were dangerous rocks and crashing waves. Daedalus worried that they might not make it. He thought over every detail, and then told his son, “It is time to regain our freedom. Come!” Stepping up to the window, he drew a deep breath and leaped outward—and his wings worked! The air lifted him and held him. Looking back over his shoulder, he saw his son leap from the tower.

Icarus laughed out loud at the sheer joy of flying. Lifting and dipping the tips of his wings, he turned and swirled, delighting in the wonder of it all. Forgotten in the moment was his father’s warning. As Daedalus glided gracefully down toward the harbor, Icarus thought, “I wonder if I can make this kind of curve, or that,” and he rode the winds higher and higher and farther and farther out over the water.¹²

12 What do you think is going to happen?



← **Show image 6A-6: Icarus falling, Daedalus watching helplessly**

Daedalus looked back for him, but Icarus was not following behind. Eyes wide with fear, Daedalus called, “Icarus! Come down!” But the boy shouted, “Look, father!” and continued his tricks in the air, until all of a sudden, he saw a feather loosen and drop from one of his wings. He realized that he had flown too high. The growing heat from the morning sun was melting the wax.

Desperately,¹³ Icarus tried to turn and follow his father’s path, but the warming air currents carried him higher. The feathers began dropping from his wings, first one at a time, and then in clumps. “Father! Help!” But Daedalus could not turn and rise fast enough to help. He could only watch. Too many feathers had fallen out, and the wings could no longer support Icarus. He **plummeted**¹⁴ down, down, down into the sea. Daedalus, weeping, reached the harbor, took a boat, and sailed off to safety.

13 or wildly with a sense of panic and need

14 or fell straight

Comprehension Questions

10 minutes



← **Show image 6A-1: King Minos ordering Daedalus imprisoned**

1. *Inferential* What problem happens in this myth because something melts? (Icarus falls into the ocean because his wings melt.)

2. *Inferential* How does King Minos feel when he discovers Theseus escaped from the Labyrinth? (terribly angry) Who does he blame or hold responsible even though he doesn't have proof? (the inventor Daedalus)

3. *Inferential* How does King Minos decide to punish Daedalus? (He locks him up in a high tower.)

4. *Literal* Who else does King Minos lock in the tower with Daedalus? (his son, Icarus)



← **Show image 6A-3: Daedalus and Icarus constructing wings**

5. *Evaluative* How does Daedalus plan to escape the tower? (He makes wings from bird feathers, melted wax, and thread. He plans to fly away on the air currents.) How would you have tried to escape? (Answers may vary.)

6. *Inferential* How does Daedalus get the feathers and wax that he needs for his plan of escape? (He puts bread crumbs on the window sill to attract the birds and asks the soldiers for candles.)



← **Show image 6A-5: Daedalus and Icarus flying**

7. *Inferential* Does Daedalus's plan work? Are he and Icarus able to escape safely from the tower? (Yes and no. Daedalus is able to escape, but Icarus does not heed his father's advice and flies too close to the sun; his wings begin to melt, and despite his desperate efforts to then follow his father's path, he plummets into the sea.)

8. *Evaluative* Do you think there is a lesson to be learned from this myth? (Answers may vary.)

[Please continue to model the *Question? Pair Share* process for students, as necessary, and scaffold students in their use of the process.]

9. *Evaluative What? Pair Share:* Asking questions after a read-aloud is one way to see how much everyone has learned. Think of a question you can ask your neighbor about the read-aloud that starts with the word *what*. For example, you could ask, “What is Daedalus accused of?” Turn to your neighbor and ask your *what* question. Listen to your neighbor’s response. Then your neighbor will ask a new *what* question, and you will get a chance to respond. I will call on several of you to share your questions with the class.
10. After hearing today’s read-aloud and questions and answers, do you have any remaining questions? [If time permits, you may wish to allow for individual, group, or class research of the text and/or other resources to answer these questions.]

Word Work: Proof

5 minutes

1. In the read-aloud you heard, “The king had no *proof* that Daedalus had helped [Theseus defeat the Minotaur and escape from the Labyrinth].”
2. Say the word *proof* with me.
3. Proof is evidence that something is true.
4. The muddy paw prints on the carpet were proof that Cindy’s cat had been outside in the mud.
5. Can you think of a time when you have found proof of something? Try to use the word *proof* when you tell about it. [Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase the students’ responses: “I found proof of _____ when . . .”]
6. What’s the word we’ve been talking about?

Use a *Making Choices* activity for follow-up. Directions: I am going to read several sentences. If the person in the sentence has proof that something happened, say, “S/he has proof.” If the person in the sentence believes that something happened but does not have any evidence, or proof, say, “S/he has no proof.”

1. Jan thought Carl was sneaking cookies before dinner, but she knew for sure when she saw him do it. (She has proof.)
2. Sean thought the neighbor’s dog probably took his shoes that he left outside, but he didn’t see the dog take them. (He has no proof.)
3. Juliane believed that fairies existed, but had never seen one. (She has no proof.)
4. The neighborhood kids always played baseball at the end of the street, but no one actually saw their ball break the car window. (They have no proof.)
5. Tony caught his dog eating his homework. (He has proof.)



Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day



Daedalus and Icarus

6_B

Extensions

20 minutes

Greek Myths Journal (Instructional Master 6B-1)

Tell students that they will be continuing their journal to help them remember important information they learn in this domain about the Greek gods and Greek myths. Have students share which characters they heard about in today's read-aloud. (King Minos, Daedalus, Icarus) Ask students if any of these characters were gods or goddesses. (no)

Show students Instructional Master 6B-1. Tell them that for today's journal entry, they should write "Daedalus and Icarus" on the title blank. They should then write two to three sentences about one of the characters to help them remember who s/he is, what s/he does in today's myth, and why s/he might have been important to the ancient Greeks. After writing two to three sentences, students may also draw a picture in the rectangle to illustrate the information.

↔ Syntactic Awareness Activity: Adjectives

The purpose of these syntactic activities is to help students understand the direct connection between grammatical structures and the meaning of text. These syntactic activities should be used in conjunction with the complex text presented in the read-alouds.

Note: There may be variations in the sentences created by your class. Allow for these variations and restate students' sentences so that they are grammatical.

1. We know that a noun is a person, place, or thing. Today we will practice using adjectives, which are words that are used to describe nouns.
2. [Show image 6A-1.] What do you see in this image? (King Minos)

3. King Minos is a person. What words could we use to describe how King Minos looks in this image? (*angry, old, upset, mad, mean, etc.*)
4. The words that describe King Minos are called adjectives. Adjectives are words that describe nouns.
5. In the read-aloud you heard, “This is the story of a very brilliant man . . .”
6. Who is this sentence about? (a man) What word does the story use to describe the man in this sentence? (*brilliant*)
7. *Brilliant* is the adjective that is used to describe the noun *man*.
8. [Gather familiar classroom objects and have students help you describe them.] We can use adjectives to describe objects in the classroom, too. What is the name of the object I am holding? What words, or adjectives, could we use to describe it?
9. Now you try! [Give student partners familiar classroom objects to describe to each other.] First, identify the name of the object (*pencil, marker, pen, eraser, etc.*). Then, describe the size, color, texture, etc. of the object to your partner. What are these describing words called? (adjectives)

Sayings and Phrases: Cold Feet

Proverbs are short, traditional sayings that have been passed along orally from generation to generation. These sayings usually express general truths based on experiences and observations of everyday life. Although some proverbs do have literal meanings—that is, they mean exactly what they say—many proverbs have a richer meaning beyond the literal level. It is important to help students understand the difference between the literal meanings of the words and their implied or figurative meanings.

Ask students if they have ever heard the saying “cold feet.” Have students repeat the saying. Explain that if someone has cold feet, s/he is afraid to do something. Remind them that in the read-aloud, Daedalus made wings to help him and his son Icarus escape from their prison tower. Share that right before they jumped from the window of the tower, Daedalus saw the

dangerous rocks and crashing waves below them. The read-aloud said, “Daedalus worried that they might not make it.” Tell students that we can say Daedalus had cold feet because he became afraid at the last minute that his wings wouldn’t work, afraid for himself and his son. Even though Daedalus had cold feet, he was able to overcome his sudden fear.

Ask students if they have ever been afraid to do something. Ask: “Have you ever had cold feet?” Give students the opportunity to share their experiences and encourage them to use the saying.