

Year 8 English Unit 1: Myths, legends and stories that inspire

Myths, legends and stories that inspire	
Expected Outcomes - Learners will understand and be able to explain the Greek myth 'The Fall of Icarus'. - Learners will understand the moral of 'The Fall of Icarus'. - Learners will understand how artwork can be inspired by myths and legends. - Learners will be able to write an ekphrastic poem. - Learners will be able to plan, write and improve a well-structured piece of descriptive writing using the five senses and literary devices.	
Developmental Focus Opportunities - Communication, language and literacy: Develop oracy skills through retelling myths and giving opinions on the events / characters in 'The Fall of Icarus'. Expand vocabulary through explicit teaching and learners using this in class activities. Learners explore their senses and learn to articulate their feelings and experiences (both in relation to the texts studied and in their wider lives). Reading and writing opportunities as outlined, focusing on developing confidence and reducing anxiety surrounding literacy tasks. - PSED: Learners explore their own moral compass by discussing the impact of Icarus's choice and relate this to their personal decision-making. Learners develop self-reflection and learn to acknowledge areas for development and celebrate their own success. - Physical development: Activities such as 'freeze-frame' myth scenes or sensory walks support emotional regulation and develop physical skills. - Mathematics: Learners explore rhythmic patterns of poetry and analyse sentence structure. - Understanding the world: Learners connect myth themes to PSHE topics like resilience, ambition, and consequences. - Expressive arts and design: Learners could design myth-inspired artwork to support their writing. They could act out scenes from myths or poems to explore tone, emotion, and narrative voice.	
Key Learning Points	Powerful Knowledge
- I can explain the story of 'The Fall of Icarus'. - I can explain how Peter Bruegel's painting 'Landscape with the Fall of Icarus' was inspired by the Greek myth 'The Fall of Icarus' - I can write an ekphrastic poem inspired by Peter Bruegel's painting 'Landscape with the Fall of Icarus' and William Carlos Williams' poem of the same name.	Learners will understand that Greek myths are stories told by Ancient Greeks as a way of explaining the origin and nature of the world. Learners will understand that artwork can be inspired by myths and legends thereby gaining a wider appreciation of culture. All learners will understand what makes an effective descriptive piece of writing and gain the tools necessary to produce their own descriptions.

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- I can employ the five senses in my descriptive writing to create a chosen effect. - I can plan a well-structured piece of descriptive writing inspired by a painting (The Execution of Lady Jane Grey) which employs a third person as an omniscient narrator. - I can write a well-structured and developed piece of descriptive writing inspired by the painting 'The Execution of Lady Jane Grey'. - I can improve my piece of descriptive writing by making effective use of literary devices (such as alliteration, plosives and sibilance).	
Subject-Specific Vocabulary	Reading Opportunities
Myth Inspired Moral Ekphrastic Enjambment Pace Depict Sensory language (sight, smell, touch, taste, hear) Third person limited Third person omniscient Alliteration Plosives Onomatopoeia Sibilance	'The Fall of Icarus' 'The Execution of Lady Jane Grey' by Lord Tennyson
Possible Misconceptions	Cross-Curricular Links
Learners may display confusion between what a myth, legend and story each are. Learners may think that all legends are based on a hero.	Art – Analysis of two paintings: 'Landscape with the Fall of Icarus' by William Carlos Williams and 'The Execution of Lady Jane Grey'. History – Greeks and Tudor periods

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Learners may have misunderstandings about literary terminology.

Learners may not recognise that artwork can be narrative and symbolic – they are not just visual.

Learners may think an ekphrastic poem is simply ‘describing a picture’ rather than interpreting and responding emotionally or imaginatively through poetry or prose.

Learners may believe that all poems must rhyme or follow a strict structure (they may not recognise free verse).

Learners may think that descriptive writing is solely about physical appearance; they may not incorporate emotion, symbolism, or sensory language that builds atmosphere or mood.

Some learners may still struggle with the idea that editing / redrafting and revising is a way to improve impact, flow, or clarity in their descriptive writing (rather than just checking for spelling mistakes).