About the Play

Levels
Guided Reading Level: T
DRA Level: 50

Learning Objectives
Students will learn about a plot that commonly appears in myths: A hero goes on a difficult quest to prove himself (or herself) or to achieve something important.

Content-Area Connections
Social-emotional learning: perseverance, problem solving

Key Skills
Plot, fluency, vocabulary, character, inference, key details, interpreting text, synthesizing, evaluating, supporting an argument, explanatory writing

Standards Correlations
This article and lesson support the following Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.3, R.6, R.10, W.2, SL.1, SL.2, L.6
Check our website for more standards information.

Your Teaching Support Package
Here’s your full suite of materials, all of which you’ll find at storyworks.scholastic.com:

Video: “Medusa: My Side of the Story”

Activities to print or project:
• Vocabulary
• Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions*
• Core Skills Workout: Plot, Character, Setting, Author’s Craft
• Comprehension Quiz*

Vocabulary Slideshow Great visual support!

*Available on two levels
Why do you think Perseus accepts the challenge to get Medusa’s head? (inference) Answers will vary. Students may say that he is brave, so he isn’t afraid of any challenge. Others may say he is angry that the king called him lazy and will do anything to prove him wrong. He is also proud; he wants to prove that he can do what no one else has done and become immortal.

What main problem does Perseus face in Scene 3? What happens that moves him closer to solving it? (plot) Perseus has traveled for months and become exhausted looking for Medusa, but he doesn’t know how to find her. Athena and Hermes come to his aid. They lead him to the Gray Sisters, who send him to the Nymphs of the North.

In Scenes 3 and 4, what objects are given to Perseus to help him? Why is each one important? (key details) Athena gives Perseus her shield, which he eventually uses as a mirror so he can kill Medusa without looking directly at her. Hermes gives him a sickle to cut off her head. The Nymphs of the North give him winged sandals to fly to Medusa’s cave, a sack to put her head in, and a Helmet of Darkness so he can become invisible and escape.

In Scene 4, what character traits does Perseus show in getting Medusa’s head? (character) Perseus shows incredible courage, especially since Medusa’s cave is surrounded by statues of others who have turned to stone. He shows cleverness; he figures out that he can use Athena’s shield to see Medusa’s reflection, so he doesn’t have to look right at her. He shows determination; nothing stops him from going after his goal.

At the end of the play, what does Danae mean when she says, “you have killed a monster with a monster”? (interpreting text) She means that
Perseus used a monster—Medusa—to kill the king. She refers to the king as a monster because of the uncaring way he treats his people and his nonstop demand that Danae marry him.

Critical-Thinking Questions
- Who did Perseus help by going on the quest for Medusa's head? (synthesizing) *He helped all the people of Seriphos, because he used the head to rid them of their cruel king. He helped his mother by freeing her from the king as well. And he helped himself. He wanted to become immortal; because he killed Medusa, his name will be remembered forever.*
- On his quest for Medusa’s head, Perseus relied on both assistance from others and his own traits. What do you think most helped him succeed? (evaluating) *Answers will vary.*
- What do you think it means to be a hero? In your opinion, was Perseus a hero? (supporting an argument) *Answers will vary.*

3. Skill Building
Featured Skill: Plot
- Distribute the **plot activity** and have students complete it in small groups. Then have them respond to the writing prompt on page 24.

4. Watch a Video
- Go to Storyworks Online to show students our delightful video “Medusa: My Side of the Story,” which retells the myth from Medusa’s point of view. Afterward, invite students to discuss how their feelings about Perseus and Medusa might have changed.

Ideas to Engage and Inspire
- Design a Board Game Have students work in groups to design a “Perseus and Medusa” board game in which Perseus moves along a path toward getting Medusa’s head. The game should include the challenges he faces and assistance he receives along the way.

Differentiate and Customize

For Struggling Readers
Help students understand the play by working together to make a list of the important events in the order in which they happen. Alternatively, create a randomly ordered list of the events and have students put them in the correct order.

For Advanced Readers
Ask students to read myths about other Greek heroes, such as Jason, Hercules, or Theseus. Ask them compare the quests of each of these heroes then prepare posters to display their findings.

For ELL Students
Because the context and vocabulary might be unfamiliar to English learners, introduce the myth with a simple retelling in a picture book or on a website.

For Whole Class
Have a class discussion about who students consider heroes today and what their traits are. How are these the same as or different from Perseus’s heroic traits?