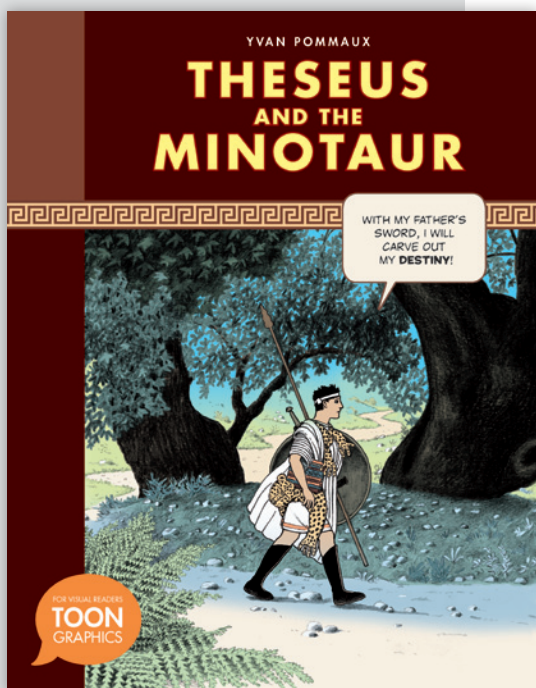




# Theseus and the Minotaur

## CCSS-aligned Lesson Plan & Teacher's Guide

### TOON GRAPHICS FOR VISUAL READERS



#### **Theseus and the Minotaur:**

by Yvan Pommaux

A TOON Graphic

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#### THE TOON EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH TEAM:

**Hsin Yu Chao**, an illustrator and comic artist in her native Taiwan, is currently pursuing a master's degree in Arts Administration at Teachers College, Columbia University. Chao has worked for numerous galleries as well as for the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

**Sasha Steinberg**, who holds a BA in Comparative Literature from Vassar College and an MFA in Cartooning from the Center for Cartoon Studies, was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to study political art in Russia.

TOON Graphics are comics and visual narratives that bring the text to life in a way that captures young readers' imaginations and makes them want to read on—and read more.

The very economy of comic books necessitates the use of a reader's imaginative powers. In comics, the images often imply rather than tell outright. Readers must learn to make connections between events to complete the narrative, helping them build their ability to visualize and to make “mental maps.” A comic book also gives readers a great deal of visual context that can be used to investigate the thinking behind the characters' choices.

### PAY ATTENTION TO THE ARTIST'S CHOICES

Look carefully at the artwork: it offers a subtext that at first is sensed only on a subliminal level by the reader and encourages rereading. It creates a sense

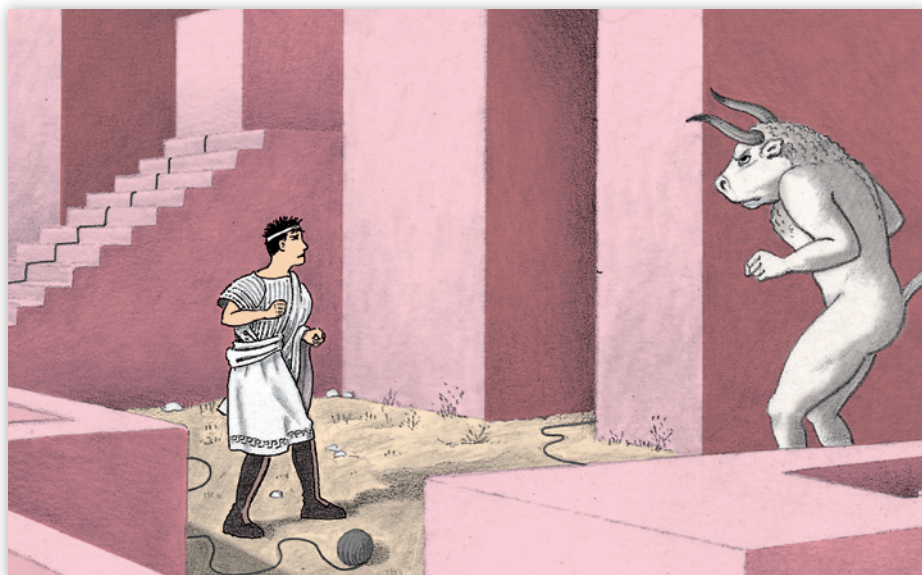
of continuity for the action, and it can tell you about the art, architecture, and clothing of a specific time period. It may present the atmosphere, landscape, and flora and fauna of another time or of another part of the world.

Facial expressions and body language reveal subtle aspects of characters' personalities beyond what can be expressed by words.

### READ AND REREAD!

Readers can compare comic book artists' styles and evaluate how different authors get their point across in different ways. In investigating the author's choices, a young reader begins to gain a sense of how all literary and art forms can be used to convey the author's central ideas.

The world of TOON Books, TOON Graphics, and of comic book art is rich and varied. Making meaning out of reading with the aid of visuals may be the best way to become a lifelong reader, one who knows how to read for pleasure and for information—a reader who *LOVES* to read.





## LITERACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In addition to providing students with the tools to master verbal literacy, each TOON Graphic offers a unique focus on visual learning. The 21st Century has seen a shift where literacy has been redefined to include visual literacy. Our unique lesson plans and teacher's guides help instructors and students alike develop the vocabulary and framework necessary to discuss visual expressions, structure, and meaning in the classroom.

For schools that follow the ELA Common Core, TOON Graphics lesson plans offer examples of how to best utilize our books to satisfy a full range of state standards. The Common Core's learning goals outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade, and were created to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life, regardless of where they live. Though this book can be used in any grade, we focused this lesson plan on state standards for grades 4 and 5. Questions included in this guide fulfill the following standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. Reading: Literature (RL).4-5.1-10

Students build skills in reading and comprehending literature independently and proficiently.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. Reading: Informational Text (RI).4-5.4, 9

Students determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text. Students integrate information from several texts in order to speak knowledgeably on a subject.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. Speaking and Listening (SL).4-5.1

Students engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. Speaking and Listening (SL).4-5.2

Students summarize a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. Speaking and Listening (SL).4-5.4

Students report on a topic or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. Writing (W).4-5.1

Students write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

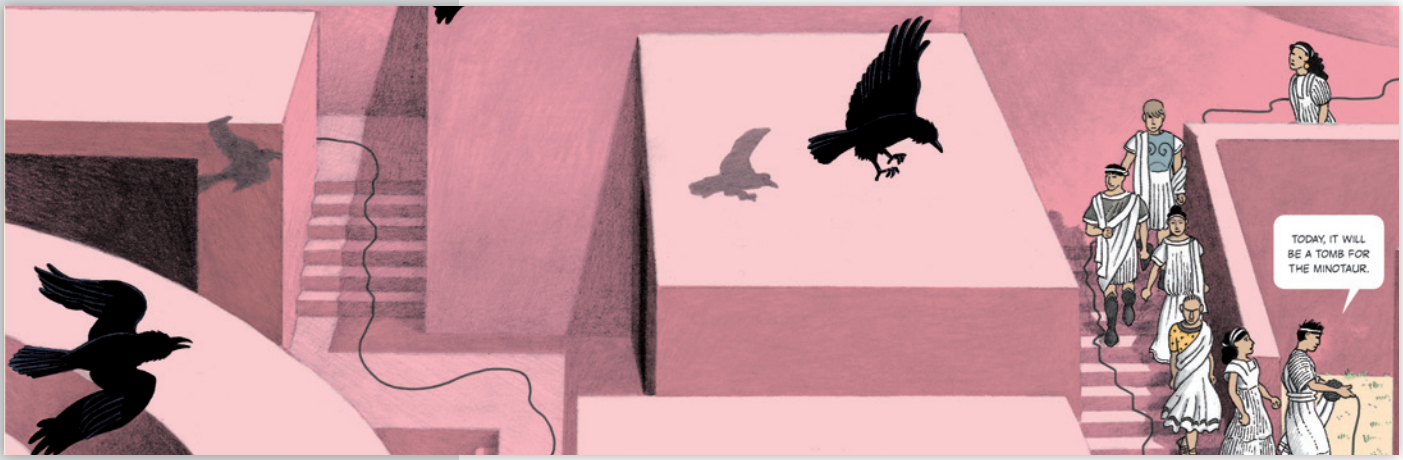
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. Writing (W).4-5.2

Students write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

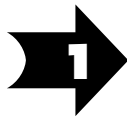
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. Writing (W).4-5.7

Students conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.





- Black = potential questions for course plans
- Gray = feedback for teachers.



## Verbal Expression

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1  
Refer to details and example in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2  
Determine a theme of a story from details in the text; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3  
Describe in depth a character, setting or event in a story, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1  
Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2  
Determine a theme of a story from details in the text, including how the characters in a story or drama respond to challenges; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3  
Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

*\*The standards listed on the right are fulfilled by every question in this section. Additional standards may be listed in the gray sidebar on the left for particular units listed below.*



## Characters

- ◆ Look at the promise that Theseus makes to his mother on page 20. Does he keep his promise throughout the story?

Theseus promises to use his “brains as well as [his] sword.” Point to the battles on pages 22-23 as examples of Theseus using his brains (literally, in the case of the white bull!). When and how does Theseus fail to keep his promise?

- ◆ Theseus’s mother believes that he is the son of both King Aegeus and the god Poseidon. What evidence is given to show that Theseus is indeed the son of a god?

On page 11, we are told that Aethra “thought [Theseus] was so handsome that he must be the son of both a god and a king.” Ask students if this makes sense. Is there really a connection between beauty and power? Why might Ancient Greeks have told stories to connect the two? Is there more specific evidence that Theseus has both Aegeus and Poseidon as a father (pages 20, 30)? How would this be possible? What does that idea tell you about Ancient Greek understandings of biology?



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.6

Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.6

Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

◆ Which two traits does Theseus learn to value above everything else at the end of the story (page 49)? What leads him to value these so highly?

On page 49 we learn that, after the events of the story, Theseus decided to “value wisdom and humility over bravery and courage.” This, the text explains, was the beginning of “democracy” as we know it. How is Theseus’s decision to reject bravery a direct response to the events of the story? What are the positive and negative results of Theseus’s bravery throughout the story? Ask students if they agree with his ultimate decision.

◆ How do other rulers like Minos and Aegeus compare to Theseus? What are their values? What lessons do you think the Ancient Greeks could have learned from each king?

Have students look at King Minos’s decisions on pages 13 and 19 (where he decides not to sacrifice the white bull and to tax Aegeus with the lives of seven young Athenians a year.) Why does Minos make these decisions? Likewise, for Aegeus, have students examine pages 17 and 25 (where he decides to send first Androgeos and then Theseus to their deaths). What motivates these decisions? Are we supposed to respect these Kings and their ruling styles? Or are they meant to demonstrate how not to behave?

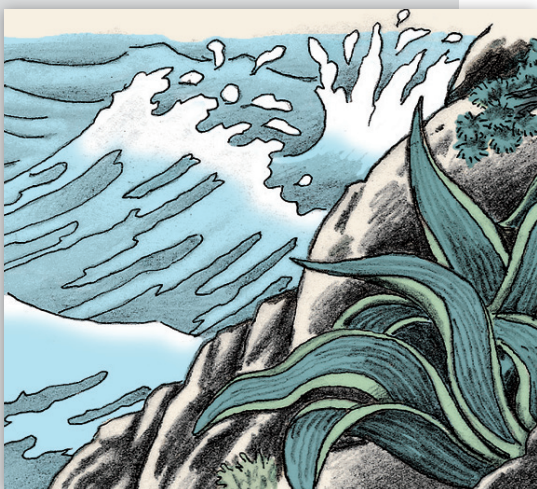
## Ancient Greek World

◆ What does “fate” mean? How does it affect the lives of specific characters (Minos, Ariadne, Theseus)? In what ways do characters try (and fail) to avoid their fates? What would fate have meant to the Ancient Greek world? What does it mean today?

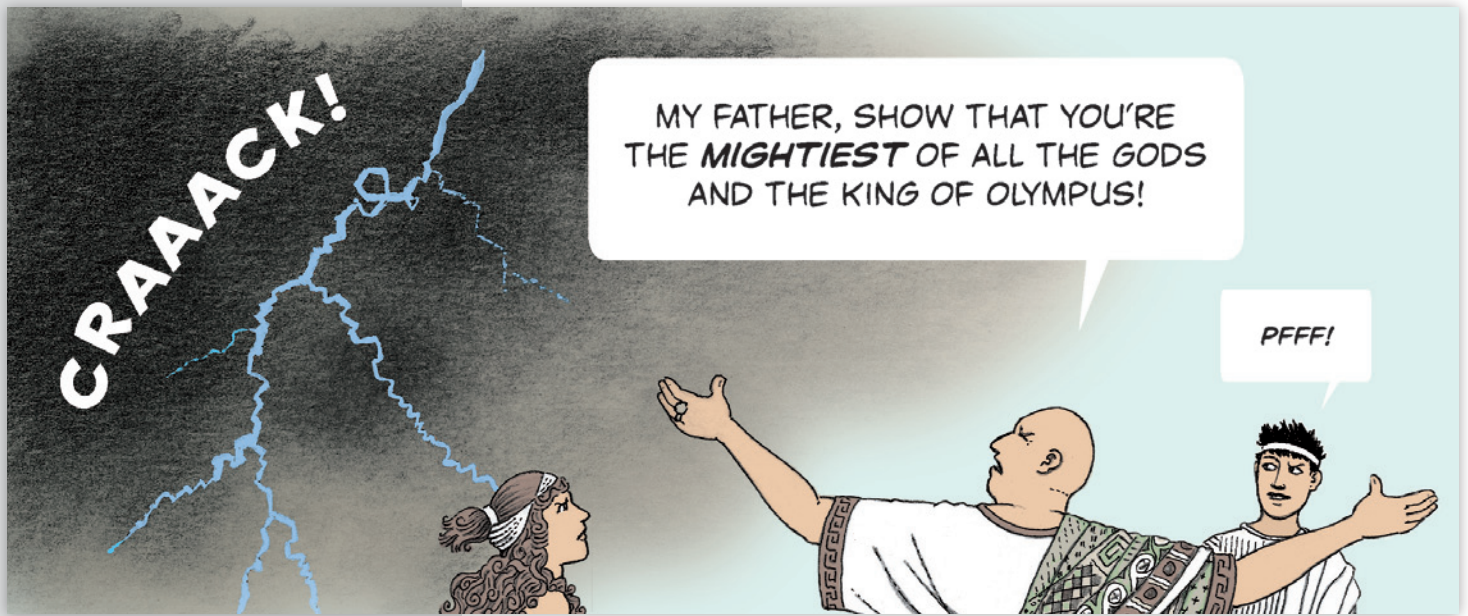
See page 17 for a specific mention of the word “fate” (in connection with Minos). Is fate decided by the gods or does human action affect it (the idea of “sealing one’s fate”)? How do the fates of women in this story compare with the fates of men? Do Ariadne, Pasiphaë, and Aethra have a say in their fates? What happens to Pasiphaë and Aethra (the mothers) in the end of the story? Their stories are not told. What does this tell us about the roles of men and women in Greek society? How is fate connected to parentage and legacy (see the relationship between Aegeus, Poseidon, and Theseus)? Is Theseus’s fate determined by his fathers?

◆ Based on specific events and references in the story, what does the myth of Theseus tell you about the role of the “sea” in ancient Greece?

See, for example, page 10 (when Aethra is impregnated by the sea), page 13 (when Poseidon makes a sacrificial bull jump from the waves), pages 29-31 (when Theseus dives into the water and is assisted by dolphins), and page 46 (when Aegeus throws himself into what is now called “The Aegean Sea” [page 49]). What are the various mythological powers of the sea? Why might the Ancient Greeks have held these beliefs?







CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.4  
Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text. (Here, concepts from the ancient world).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4  
Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text. (Here, concepts from the ancient world).

- ◆ Ask students about the relationship between the humans and the gods. Who is in charge? Which humans are obedient and which humans try to outsmart the gods? Are they successful?

See pages 10 and 13, where Poseidon is able to control the world based on his passions and rages. See also page 45, where Dionysus does the same. What do these moments tell us about the way the Ancient Greeks thought of the gods? Note that in the latter case, Theseus (unlike Minos on page 13), heeds the “great god’s” demand. Would this have been an Ancient Greek indication of a “good person”? How does it compare with today’s standards for good behavior?

- ◆ Who is responsible for the Minotaur? Why are seven young Athenians sacrificed in the labyrinth each year? How does Theseus come to meet (and defeat) the Minotaur?

Ask students to identify some of the circumstances and conflicts that set the stage for Theseus’s epic battle with the Minotaur. See pages 13-19 for the history of the Minotaur, and the back-and-forth power struggle between Minos and Aegeus that sets the stage for Theseus’ adventure. Whose “fault” is the Minotaur? Whose “fault” is the loss of Athenian lives. Students may conclude that both Minos and Aegeus are deeply responsible (with their intertwining competitiveness) for the disasters in this book. What lesson would Ancient Greeks have taken from this story of warring leaders?



## 2

### Visual Expression

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.7  
Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.5  
Explain major differences between poems, drama, prose, etc. Refer to the structural elements when writing or speaking about a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.4  
Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text. (Here, art and comics vocabulary)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.7  
Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.5  
Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, stanzas, etc. fits together to provide the overall structure of a story.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4  
Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text. (Here, art and comics vocabulary)

*\*The standards listed on the right are fulfilled by every question in this section. Additional standards may be listed in the gray sidebar on the left for particular units listed below.*

### Color

◆ Pay attention to the color themes throughout the book. What do you see? What colors play an important role in the book? Why do you think the artist used them?

Note the background colors of tan and blue indicate whether the action is taking place in Athens/Troezen or Crete.

◆ When does the artist use the color pink (or pinkish red)? What could this color symbolize?

Note that the colors pink/red only occur in connection with the Minotaur (and his territory: the labyrinth) or with the death of characters (page 18 - Androgeos's death, pages 19, 26, 27 - the black-sailed boat, page 22 - the bull's death, pages 33-38 - the Minotaur and his labyrinth, page 46 - King Aegeus's death). Ask students about the link between colors and emotions.

◆ See if you can find all the uses of the color black. When and where does it appear in the story? How does the color black make you feel? How might the color black be related to death or fate?

Note that the artist rarely uses black, and when he does, it is outlined or accented with a light color. The use of black seems very purposeful: King Aegeus's clothes, the night sky, the black-sailed boat, shadowy trees and leaves on page 32, and the crows. The use of black is connected to death and fate. King Aegeus is fated for sorrow and ultimate death, the black-sailed boat indicates the fate of being eaten by Minotaur, and the trees, leaves, and crows of Crete symbolize Theseus' own dangerous fate (of facing death in the labyrinth). Ask students why the color black is connected to death in so many cultures?





## Visual Parallels

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1  
Refer to details and example in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2  
Determine a theme of a story from details in the text; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3  
Describe in depth a character, setting or event in a story, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1  
Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2  
Determine a theme of a story from details in the text, including how the characters in a story or drama respond to challenges; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3  
Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

◆ Compare the verbal and visual expression of Theseus's growing up process (pages 10-12) with that of the Minotaur (pages 13-15).

There are strong visual similarities in these two stories. The composition of princess Aethra drifting in the waves (page 10) is very similar to that of the white bull emerging from the waves (page 13). Likewise, the way Theseus is held as a baby (page 11) mirrors the way the Minotaur is held (page 15). There is a real parallel between the two characters. Both are the secret sons of the two warring kings, born in part through the passions of Poseidon. Both are used by their fathers in revenge games against each other, and come face to face in battle on pages 40-43, when the strands of their two fates finally intertwine. The parallel emphasizes the animalistic nature of human violence, which is typically described as "bravery" or "courage." It also brings out the humanity of the Minotaur; we see how human-like he is and how he was once treated like a little boy but slowly (and perhaps through force) developed into a fierce beast.



◆ Note that the Minotaur is always nude in the story while Theseus wears clothes and usually animal furs (leopard?). What do you think is the reason that they are depicted in this way?

We can attribute this difference to the typical power hierarchy between humans and animals. Because the Minotaur is a hybrid, and half-human, he is classified as lower, and less advanced than human beings, therefore nude. Theseus, by contrast, who is not only human but actually part god, gets to wear clothes, and sometimes even the skin of "lesser" creatures. Ask students where else can they find power hierarchies of clothed/nude in the history of art and storytelling. Some teachers may wish to introduce traditional western paintings, in which the clothing hierarchy is frequently applied to male/female subjects.



◆ In what ways does Theseus resemble King Aegeus? Are there certain things that they both do? For example, compare the panel in which King Aegeus lifts the rock (page 11, panel #01) and the panel in which Theseus lifts the rock (page 20, panel #01). What are the similarities and differences? Or, compare the panel in which King Aegeus sits in his palace (page 12, panel #02) and the panel in which Theseus sits in the same palace (page 47, panel #02).

In the case of the palace scene, the sky on page 12 is bright, but it is dark on page 47. This may reflect the thoughts and moods of the characters; King Aegeus is angry about his fate whereas Theseus feels saddened and guilty. Ask students to analyze how Theseus's experiences in this story shaped his psychology and made him different from Aegeus in both attitude and personality.

◆ Compare pages 29 (Theseus jumping off the cliff) and 46 (King Aegeus falling from the cliff) what are the similarities and differences? What do you think Theseus is feeling when he jumps off the cliff? How about King Aegeus felt?

Although the cliffs look similar, the composition is reversed. Theseus jumps left to right, indicating a forward movement, in line with the direction of the narrative. Aegeus, however, topples backwards and down, an indication of his defeat. These compositions reflect the different moods of the characters: Theseus is eager/willing to prove himself by jumping off the cliff; King Aegeus feels desperate, devastated, and full of grief.





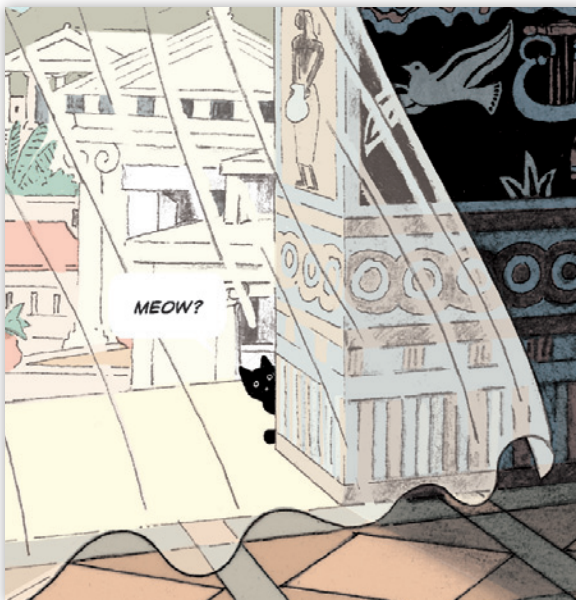


- ◆ Compare the facial expressions of Minos, Aegeus, and Androgeos on pages 17 and 18. How does Minos feel about his son, Androgeos? How does Aegeus feel about Androgeos? What are the differences?

Note that Minos and Androgeos are looking out in the same direction (page 17) whereas Aegeus and Androgeos are facing each other (pages 17 and 18). Perhaps this indicates that Minos and Androgeos have a similar viewpoint and position, but Aegeus and Androgeos do not. In both instances, Aegeus and Androgeos are actually thinking and feeling radically different things, including on page 18, where Aegeus is plotting Androgeos's death, and the young man is none the wiser!

- ◆ What do you make of the transparent curtain that hangs in King Aegeus' palace (pages 24-25) and in the scene of Theseus saying goodbye to his mother (page 20)? What might this curtain represent?

The transparent curtain appears in scenes that link Theseus to parents (especially to his father Aegeus). In some ways, it may be an allusion to a white sail (a symbol of safety that also foreshadows the accidental death of Aegeus [for which Theseus is indirectly responsible]). In other ways, it may simply represent the "safe space" of family, which is set off from the rest of the world by a kind of protective, private membrane. Be sure to note that the transparent curtain is gone on page 47 (after Aegeus' death). This supports both explanations—because Theseus is cut off from his family, and also feels exposed to the violence of the world.



- ◆ Compare the texture of the curtain with the other materials used in buildings in the book, what are the similarities and differences between those materials? Compare the palaces of Minos and Aegeus, as well as the Minotaur's labyrinth. Describe the appearance of the buildings, and analyze the ways that this corresponds with the personalities of the characters.

The palaces of Minos and Aegeus are quite similar in composition and color (pages 24 and 28), although the way in which the two leaders occupy them are quite different. Aegeus appears almost exclusively in his elaborate throne room, an indication, perhaps, of his obsession with power and inheritance. Minos, by contrast, often appears at the edge of the ocean, gazing towards Athens. This, in turn, may indicate his competitive spirit, and his quest to dominate the surrounding kingdoms. The Minotaur's labyrinth resembles a city, but is completely devoid of embellishment. It is also the only palace/city that is not located on water. The Minotaur's domain is completely cut off, unfinished, abandoned.

## Composition



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4-5.9  
Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics and patterns of events in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures. (See Picasso question below)



Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937)

◆ Drawing on your sense of traditional Greek and Roman painting (see the front endpapers and the jars on page 26 for inspiration), do you see any similarities between the style of art throughout the book (especially pages 16-18) and actual Greek and Roman illustration? What is unique about this special style of art? How does it make you feel as a viewer? Do you like it? Why or why not?

Traditional Greek and Roman painting features characters facing to the side and many flat backgrounds. Greek and Roman art did not have a developed perspective technique. That being said, it also used sequential illustration to tell stories in many media (walls, jars, etc.), making it deeply connected to the history of comics. Students may be interested to learn about the historical development of narrative art / sequential narrative. In many ways, this book is actually designed to resemble the ancient style sequential narrative expression—horizontal panels, tiered story-telling (from top to bottom), characters in profile—yet it also has adopted more advanced techniques such as perspective, camera angles, and more realistic modern landscape renderings.

◆ How many enemies does Theseus fight in the story? Take a look at pages 22-23, where the illustrator utilizes different sizes of panels for Theseus' different battles. Why did the artist choose to do this?

The size of panels may be related to the power or strength of the enemy. The more difficult the enemy is to beat, the larger the panel. Ask students to compare with pages 39-43, where huge spreads are devoted to Theseus's battle with the Minotaur.

◆ Look at the fight scene between Theseus and the Minotaur (pages 38-43). How does it make you feel? What techniques does the artist use to build tension? How is this scene similar to (or different from) suspenseful scenes in films or novels?

On page 38, we see Theseus walking through a narrow doorway to find the Minotaur (who appears in close-up on the facing page). This, along with the growing prevalence of the colors pink and red, slowly builds the tension and stress, guiding the audience to expect a strong enemy and a dramatic confrontation.

◆ Pages 42-43 display the long battle between Theseus and the Minotaur in a single image. What do you make of this image? What do you see? Does the composition remind you of anything?

Some students may be interested to compare this composition to Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*. *Guernica* was painted in April of 1937 in response to the bombing of Guernica, Spain (a Basque Country village) by German and Italian warplanes during the Spanish Civil War. The painting shows the violence and suffering of war and is considered to be a strong anti-war symbol. Certain visual similarities (not least of which is the white bull and the black/white/yellow/blue color palette) connect *Guernica* to the scene in *Theseus*. Ask students to think about what the two paintings are trying to communicate, and why the artist of *Theseus* may have looked to Picasso for inspiration.





◆ What do you make of Theseus’s “victory” over the Minotaur. Note his body language as he walks away from the scene of the battle on page 43. How do you think he defeated the Minotaur? Is it a “victory” in the traditional sense? Why or why not?

Throughout the storyline, the artist emphasizes a lot of similarities between Theseus and Minotaur. It’s hard to tell whether Theseus really “defeated” the Minotaur or not. In some ways, he may have helped put the Minotaur out of his lonely misery. Regardless, Theseus certainly does not feel deserving of praise (page 47). By the end, although he has saved the lives of many young Athenians, his actions have cost him several close relationships, and his death count has become quite high. Is Theseus really less of a murderer than the Minotaur? How clear are the lines of good and evil in this story?



## Further Research

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4-5.6

Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, and describe how a speaker’s point of view influences the description.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4-5.9

Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4-5.1

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4-5.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4-5.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4-5.7

Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.



◆ Ask students to look at the map in the back of the book (page 54) that shows Theseus’s path to Crete. How does it compare to a modern day map of that area of the world? What has changed? How would Theseus’s journey be different if he travelled from Troezen to Knossos today?

◆ Ask students to write two separate accounts of everything that happened between Ariadne and Theseus, one from each point of view (in the form of journal entries). How are the accounts different? Why are they different? Then, select two students to play the parts of Ariadne and Theseus. Have them act out a conversation in which they explain their respective points of view to each other.

◆ Have students split into groups and write/present an account of Theseus’s journey to Crete and his homecoming, as if they were news reporters updating the citizens of Athens. They should focus on chronology, and be sure to address instances of cause and effect (e.g. how Theseus’s forgetfulness leads to Aegeus’s death). Be sure to use appropriate tone when reporting each event; is it anxious, excited, tragic, or triumphant?



◆ Have students choose an aspect of Ancient Greece from Theseus and the Minotaur that interests them. Is it the characters' clothing? Greek weddings or burials? Classical architecture? Ancient ships? Have students use web and book sources to research their topic of interest and write a report to be presented in class.

◆ Readers' Theater: Have students read various scenes aloud in class. Pay attention to their inflection. If possible, have each student play multiple roles and be sure that they adjust their performance accordingly. Ask them to try to incorporate visual information from the images into their performance. Remember to refer to the pronunciation keys at the bottom of each page.

◆ Ask students to write an alternate ending to Theseus and the Minotaur. A good place to begin may be when Ariadne gives Theseus the magical string. What would happen if Theseus did not have the string? Would he still defeat the Minotaur? Students are encouraged to follow the comics format, including paneled illustrations, speech balloons, sound effects, etc. Remind students to think about the ways they can use graphic cues to direct their reader.



◆ Ask students to imagine that they, like Daedalus, were given the task of designing a building from which no one can escape. How would they have done this in ancient times, and how would they do it today? What sort of materials would be available in each era? Have students write an essay describing their thoughts and strategies. Students may want to draw their own pictures, diagrams, and blueprints as well.

*Activities by Genevieve Bormes,  
Educational Outreach Consultant.*

◆ Give each student a blank family tree and a blank timeline. Give each student in class a number, either 1 or 2. As they read in small groups, the 1s will fill out the family tree for this story together. Similarly, as they read in small groups, the 2s will fill out the timeline. Display student story-based family trees and timelines somewhere where all students can see them. Ask each group to explain their graphic organizer and their decisions. After all of the groups have shared their ideas, have the students work together on an "ultimate" class family tree and timeline.

*Activity by Dr. Katie Monnin,  
Associate Professor of Literacy at the University of North Florida.*