



Using

THE MYTH-ADVENTURES  
OF  
THESEUS

in the  
Classroom

[www.runawaytheater.com](http://www.runawaytheater.com)

Thanks for downloading the lesson plans for our production **THE MYTH-ADVENTURES OF THESEUS**.

### **Why are the arts important?**

The arts are intrinsic to our lives, but often arts education is an after-thought or considered non-essential. However the arts are how we define ourselves and put our lives and times in context. For example, think of the 1930's, the 1950's and the 1970's. When you think of these decades, what are the first things that come to mind? The fashion? The music? The design of the automobiles? Guess what? All of these things are "the arts!" Sure, you may have thought of who was President, and maybe a few world events came to mind, but you probably first put those decades into context by the various artistic forms that were prevalent at the time.

### **Why is Greek mythology important?**

Much of our Western culture and thought comes from ancient Greece. Even today our ideas about government, architecture, arts and literature, and our language have been shaped by ancient Greek culture. One of the most enduring parts of the ancient Greek culture is their mythology. In fact, our English word "myth" comes from the Greek word "mythos" which means "a spoken story, legend, or tale." A culture's mythology tells us what the culture finds most important, what behaviors it values, and how it explains natural phenomenon. They also served as morality plays, illustrating the consequences of both good and bad behavior. Since a people's myths are often about what is most important to them, a study of Greek mythology can give us insight into what the Greek people valued. Therefore it is important that our students have some familiarity with ancient Greek culture.

### **Why puppetry?**

For centuries, cultures around the world have entrusted the art of puppetry to explain their most important events, ideals, and morality. From the shadow puppets of Indonesia to the Bunraku puppets of Japan to hand puppets of Europe, puppetry is considered a medium to entertain, but more importantly, to teach young and old alike the traits and values the culture deems most essential. This is also born out in modern times. Studies continue to show that information, when presented by puppets, is often more easily taken in and retained longer than other, more traditional methods of instruction. Often the stories told with the art of puppetry are the myths of a culture. Since mythology usually features characters that are larger than life and fantastic creatures, puppetry is often the art form chosen to best portray these stories.

**Runaway Puppet Theater** has taken one of the most iconic stories found in Greek mythology, the story of Theseus, and adapted it to make it more accessible to a modern audience. While our version isn't the one you'd hear Homer tell or read from Ovid, it still has all the characters and situations found in the original myth. Theseus is still the hero who uses his skill and strength to overcome his obstacles and challenges.

We hope your students enjoyed the show, and we hope that you can use the enjoyment of the show to create interest in your curriculum. Often theatrical performances are used to enhance language arts, reading, social studies, and other "humanities." However, it's also possible to use events and characters from the show to teach math and science as well. To illustrate this, we have included lesson plans on using **THE MYTH-ADVENTURES OF THESEUS** as a springboard for introducing concepts of science, math and geography as well as reading. We have also included other short ideas that can inspire other uses of our performance to create enthusiasm for learning.

## **Lesson Plan for *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus***

### **Science**

**Investigating how light travels and is influenced by various materials.**

#### **Objectives**

Students will understand the terms "transparent," "translucent," and "opaque."

Students will be able to identify materials that are transparent, translucent, and opaque.

#### **Materials**

Clear plastic (report covers, transparency film, etc.)

Colored or frosted plastic (thin plastic tablecloth, back of report covers, etc.)

Thin cardboard (cereal box, gift boxes, etc.)

#### **Anticipatory Set**

Remind students of performance *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus*. Tell the students that the style of puppets used in the production were "shadow puppets." Shadow puppets are performed by placing the puppet onto a screen, then projecting light from behind the puppet onto the screen. Parts of the puppet will appear as clear, black or will have color depending on the material the puppeteer has used. Materials can be described as "transparent," translucent," or "opaque" depending on how light interacts with them.

#### **Direct instruction**

- Display on smart board or overhead projector the terms "transparent", "translucent," and "opaque."
- Display term "Transparent" with definition: *Transmitting light so that objects lying beyond are entirely visible*
- Hold up the clear report cover or transparency film. Inform the students that this is transparent because light can travel through it easily, and we can see through it.
- Hold transparent material in front of text or picture. Ask students if they can see the text or picture through the material.
- Display term "Translucent" with definition: *Letting only some light through so that what can be seen on the other side is not clear.*
- Hold translucent material up to light source. Inform the students that this material is translucent because light will travel through it, but we cannot see through the material clearly.
- Hold translucent material in front of text or picture. Ask students if they can see the text or picture through the material.
- Display term "Opaque" with definition: *Not allowing light to pass through*
- Hold opaque material up to light source. Inform students that this material is opaque because light will not travel through it.
- Hold opaque material in front of text or picture. Ask students if they can see the text or picture from the material.

#### **Guided Practice**

Display attached picture of the Theseus puppet. Ask students to identify areas on the puppet that would be created by transparent, translucent, and opaque materials.

#### **Conclusion**

Ask students why puppet builders would use different materials in the creation of their puppets. Discuss how the use of transparent, translucent, and opaque materials create the "look" of the shadow puppets.

#### **Independent practice**

Find various materials at home that are transparent, translucent and opaque. Bring them in and share them with the class.

THESEUS



## **Lesson plan for *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus***

### **Math**

#### **Scale/Ratio**

#### **Objective:**

Students will understand the terms "scale," and "ratio."

Students will be able to demonstrate the process to determine ratio and scale using characters from *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus*.

#### **Secondary Objective Art/Design:**

Students will gain insight into use of scale and ratio as it applies to puppetry and theater.

#### **Anticipatory Set**

Remind students of the production *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus*. Puppeteers often use scale and ratio to emphasize size differences. Help students recall that one of the characters Theseus met on his journey to Athens was the giant Sinis. To make Sinis look very tall, **Runaway Puppet Theater** made a smaller Theseus puppet. When the two are seen together, the size difference between Theseus and Sinis is emphasized. But how big would Sinis be if he was a real giant? To determine this, we need to know the ratio between the two puppets and their scale.

#### **Direct Instruction**

- Define scale: *The size of a picture, plan, or model of a thing compared to the size of the thing itself.*
- Define ratio: *The relationship in quantity, amount, or size between two or more things.*
- The Theseus puppet in the scene with Sinis the giant is 12 inches tall. The Sinis puppet is 26 inches tall.
- Instruct the students that we need to find the **ratio** of difference between the Theseus and Sinis puppets.
- To do this we need to find the greatest common factor of 12 and 26.
- Write the factors of 12 on the board
  - 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 12
- Write the factors of 26 on the board.
  - 1, 2, 13, 26
- Ask students what is the largest number that is a factor of both 12 and 26.
- Instruct the students that we will use the greatest common factor of 2 to determine scale.
- Tell the students that if Theseus were a real person he would be 6 feet tall.
- Have the students write "6" on a sheet of paper.
- Instruct the students that we will multiply 6 by the **ratio** of 2.
- Have the students write "x 2" below the "6."
- Draw a line under the "x 2".
- Ask students for the answer to the problem.
- Write "12" below the line.
- Tell students that if Theseus was a 6 foot tall person, Sinis would be 12 feet tall!
- Relate this to a height familiar to the students.



**Guided practice**

Using the same process, determine the length of the turtle that ate Sciron the Robber. The turtle is 6 inches tall and 15 inches long.

**Closure**

Inform students of other places they will see scale and ratio (maps, cooking directions, etc.)

Ask students why puppeteers would use scale and ratio to change the sizes of their puppets during a performance.

**Independent practice**

Instruct students that ratio and scale can also be determined for smaller things. Have the students determine how tall Talos is if the Theseus puppet is 20 inches and the Talos puppet is 5 inches. Remember, Theseus is supposed to be a 6 foot tall person.

## **Lesson plan for *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus***

### **Geography**

#### **Compass Rose**

#### **Objectives**

Students will be able to identify the terms "cardinal directions" and "inter-cardinal directions."

Students will be able to locate items on a map using a compass rose.

Students will be able to plan routes on a map with an understanding of directions and the use of a compass rose.

#### **Materials needed**

Map of Europe (provided)

Map of Ancient Greece (provided)

#### **Anticipatory Set**

Remind students of production *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus*. Help students recall that much of the story involved Theseus traveling from location to location. He first traveled from his hometown of Troezen to Athens. He then sailed from Athens to Crete. When people travel they use maps to help them decide which direction they should go.

#### **Direct Instruction**

- Tell the students that there are 7 continents. We live on the continent of North America. The story of Theseus takes place on the continent of Europe.
- Show students the continent of Europe on a globe or with the map provided.
- Point out countries that the students may have heard of already e.g. Great Britain, France, Germany.
- Point out the country of Greece to students.
- Show students the map of ancient Greece provided.
- Point out the compass rose at the bottom of the map. Instruct students that a compass rose helps determine how to get from place to place on a map. A compass rose shows the "cardinal" directions and "inter-cardinal" directions.
- Define Cardinal directions: *The four main points of the compass; north, east, south, and west.*
- Point out the cardinal directions on the compass rose as you name them.
- Define Inter-cardinal directions: *Any of the four directions midway between the cardinal points, that is, northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest. Also known as quadrantal point.*
- Point out the inter-cardinal directions as you name them.

#### **Guided practice**

Have students find Aegean Sea on the map.

Ask them to find Athens on the map. Tell them that Athens is South of the Aegean Sea and West of the island of Andros. Instruct the student to use the compass rose to help determine which direction to look for Athens.

Ask students to find Troezen. Tell them that Troezen is Southwest of Athens.

Ask students to find Crete. Ask them what direction Theseus would travel if he began in Athens and wanted to travel to Crete.

#### **Closure**

In the show *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus*, Theseus thought that Athens was south of Crete. Was he correct? Do you think Theseus was looking at a map when he decided which way to sail? If he had looked at a map and used the compass rose, which way would he have sailed?

#### **Independent practice**

Instruct students to plot out a route for Theseus from Troezen to Athens. Using the map provided, determine which cities Theseus would travel through on his way to Athens, and which direction he would travel to get there.





Country/Region	Color
Iceland	Pink
Norway	Orange
Sweden	Light Orange
Finland	Yellow
Denmark	Yellow
Estonia	Yellow
Latvia	Light Blue
Lithuania	Pink
Belarus	Light Orange
Poland	Yellow
Ukraine	Orange
Moldova	Light Blue
Romania	Pink
Bulgaria	Light Green
Georgia	Orange
Azerbaijan	Pink
Armenia	Pink
Iran	Light Blue
Turkey	Light Orange
Syria	Orange
Iraq	Yellow
Saudi Arabia	Pink
Israel	Light Orange
Jordan	Light Orange
Lebanon	Light Orange
Cyprus	Light Blue
Malta	Light Blue
Morocco	Light Green
Algeria	Light Orange
Tunisia	Light Blue
Ireland	Light Green
United Kingdom	Light Orange
Netherlands	Yellow
Belgium	Yellow
Luxembourg	Pink
Germany	Light Blue
Czech Republic	Light Green
Slovakia	Light Orange
Hungary	Light Green
Austria	Light Green
Slovenia	Light Green
Croatia	Light Blue
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Light Blue
Serbia	Light Orange
Montenegro	Light Orange
Albania	Light Orange
Macedonia	Light Orange
Greece	Light Blue
France	Pink
Switzerland	Light Green
Liechtenstein	Light Green
Austria	Light Green
Slovenia	Light Green
Croatia	Light Blue
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Light Blue
Serbia	Light Orange
Montenegro	Light Orange
Albania	Light Orange
Macedonia	Light Orange
Greece	Light Blue
Portugal	Orange
Spain	Orange
Andorra	Orange
Monaco	Pink
Italy	Yellow
Vatican City	Yellow
San Marino	Yellow
Russia	Light Green
Kazakhstan	Yellow





## **Lesson plan for *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus***

### **Reading/Language Arts/Writing**

#### **Mythology Compare and Contrast**

#### **Objectives**

Students will become familiar with the traditional myth of Theseus.

Students will be able to tell the myth of Theseus in their own words.

Students will be able to compare the **Runaway Puppet Theater** version of the Theseus myth with the classic version, and be able to cite differences between the two.

Students will gain insight into the reasons a classic myth might be adapted for a play.

#### **Anticipatory Set**

Remind students of the **Runaway Puppet Theater** production, *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus*. Explain that the performance they saw was an adaptation. This means the **Runaway Puppet Theater** changed parts of the story to suit their needs and to tell the story their own way. Explain that the class will read a classic version of the myth of Theseus to see what changes **Runaway Puppet Theater** made in their version of the myth. Tell the class that this kind of analysis of the things that are similar and different in similar stories is called "compare and contrast."

#### **Direct Instruction**

- Ask students to recall the plot of *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus*.
- Call on several students to describe the various characters and situations Theseus encounters, and how he interacts with them.
- Share a classic version of the Theseus myth to the students. A version can be found at: [http://www.greekmythology.com/Myths/The\\_Myths/Theseus\\_Adventures/theseus\\_adventures.html](http://www.greekmythology.com/Myths/The_Myths/Theseus_Adventures/theseus_adventures.html)
- Ask students to identify characters common to both stories.
- Ask students what is similar in Theseus' interactions in both versions of the story. Eg. Theseus meets Periphetes, who attempts to rob him. Theseus defeats him and continues his journey.
- Have several students tell how Theseus' interactions with characters are different in each tale. For example: how did Theseus overcome Sinis in the classic tale and in **Runaway Puppet Theater's** version?

#### **Guided Practice**

Share the myth of Bellerophon with the class. A version of this myth can be found at:

<http://www.greekmythology.com/Myths/Heroes/Bellerophon/bellerophon.html>

Ask the students to identify some of the characters in this myth and some of the situations that Bellerophon finds himself in. Have the class brainstorm some ways they could adapt parts of the myth of Bellerophon, while keeping the theme and basic plot intact.

#### **Closure**

Ask the students why **Runaway Puppet Theater** might have adapted the myth of Theseus. Some answers could include: making the story more accessible to a wider range of ages, difficulty in staging some of the scenes from the original myth, adding humor to keep the audience's attention longer.

#### **Independent Practice**

Have the students take a specific incident of the Bellerophon myth and adapt it. It can be humorous or not, but the basic elements and plot must remain.

## **Other possible lesson ideas based on *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus***

Most often myths are told to explain the natural world or to impart moral values. Read the myths of the abduction of Persephone (a version can be found at: <http://www.greek-gods.info/greek-gods/demeter/myths/demeter-persephone/> ), and the myth of King Midas (a version can be found at <http://www.greekmyths-greekmythology.com/myth-king-midas-gold/> ). Which of these explain the natural world and which imparts a moral value? Read other myths from Greece and other cultures. Try to determine which myths explain the natural world and which imparts moral values. Create a mythological figure and write a myth that explains a natural phenomenon, a human emotion, experience, activity, or an advancement.

Many of our English words are derived from Greek mythology. Check out the blog *The Language Journal* for a run down of some of English words that we get from Greek myths.  
<http://www.thelanguagejournal.com/2011/07/gift-from-greek-gods-et-al.html>

Have students read myths about why the sun travels across the sky, what causes earthquakes, where the wind comes from. Then investigate our explanations of how these things happen. Compare and contrast the two. How did the Greeks come up with these explanations of natural phenomenon.

Look at a map of Greece and locate Troezen and Athens. Find out how far they are apart in miles. Determine how long it would take for Theseus to walk from Troezen to Athens.

Read other myths of Greek heroes such as Perseus, Herakles (also known as Hercules,) and Jason. Point out to students that these myths have many elements in common (hero having to leave home, hero meeting a mentor, hero having to undertake a quest or task, hero facing obstacles in trying to complete quest.) Find similarities in these myths and the myth of Theseus. Tell students that this story structure is still used today. Ask students to name current movies, books, or other media that follow this pattern (examples include Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, most Pixar films, Iron Man, etc.)

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions or comments about this study guide, we'd love to hear from you! If you have questions on other ideas on how to use *The Myth-Adventures of Theseus*, shadow puppetry, or puppetry in the classroom and how to use it to teach your curriculum, get in touch with us! You can reach us from our website, [www.runawaytheater.com](http://www.runawaytheater.com). You can also email us at [ed@runawaytheater.com](mailto:ed@runawaytheater.com) or call us at (931) 622-9229.