**LESSON 18 TEACHER’S GUIDE**

**Tales of Hercules**

by Liz Smithe

Fountas-Pinnell Level U

Myth

**Selection Summary**

This retelling of the Greek myth explains how Hercules became a god after using both his wits and his strength to complete twelve seemingly impossible tasks set forth by a cruel king under the direction of Hercules’s wicked stepmother, Hera.

**Characteristics of the Text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>• Myth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>• Third-person narrative in six chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>• Hercules and his 12 impossible tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Atlas and Hera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A mortal becoming immortal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes and Ideas</td>
<td>• Tasks that may seem impossible can be completed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It is possible to outsmart one’s enemies.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The human spirit can triumph over death.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language and Literary Features</td>
<td>• Descriptive, informal language; details help reader understand heroic character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Distant time and setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Multiple intertwined episodes create suspense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Complexity</td>
<td>• Many simple sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Some complex sentences with introductory phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>• Some key vocabulary can be inferred from context: <em>bitterly, embrace, fury</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>• Some unfamiliar Greek names: <em>Atlas, Cerberus, Hercules, Hydra</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Words with suffixes: <em>poisonous, nervous, powerful</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>• Large, realistic, colorful illustrations on most pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Captions explain illustrations and clarify content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book and Print Features</td>
<td>• Thirteen pages of text</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Lots of white space on most illustrated pages</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Tales of Hercules by Liz Smithe

Build Background
Help students use their knowledge of problem solving to visualize the story. Build interest by asking questions such as the following: What are some tasks you’ve had to do that you at first thought would be impossible to complete? What did you do? Did your approach to the task work? Read the title and author and talk about the cover illustration. Tell students this is story is a myth that tells what a group of people believes about the world.

Introduce the Text
Guide students through the text, noting important ideas and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

Page 2: Explain that this story is about Hercules, a man who did such heroic deeds that the Greeks turned him into a god after he died. Suggested language: Look at page 2. The chapter heading tells us Hercules is a hero. Look at the illustration and read the caption. Why do you think Hercules is so close to the lion? Now read the last sentence. What is a deadly embrace?

Page 4–5: Point out the illustration and have students read the caption. The caption tells us it’s a Hydra. What kind of animal does it look like? Read the last line on page 4. What does fury mean?

Page 6: Read the third line in the second paragraph: Hera was in a somber mood when she heard the news. Ask: What might cause someone to be in a somber, or gloomy, mood?

Page 12: Point out the illustration and read the caption. What things do you notice about Hercules? Now turn back and read from the beginning to learn the amazing tale of Hercules and the incredible things he accomplished.

Target Vocabulary
abandon – leave behind
bitterly – intense resentment and dislike, p. 2
embrace – hold, p. 2
fury – wild fit of anger or violence, p. 4

labyrinth – a winding arrangement of passages intended to confuse those who try to get through
massive – very large, heavy, and bulky

rash – quickly and carelessly, without thinking things through
somber – gloomy, p. 6
steadfast – focused on a goal and can always be counted on
unravels – comes apart, p. 13
Read
Have students read silently while you listen to individual students read aloud. Support their understanding of the text as needed.

Remind students to notice the Infer/Predict Strategy and to use text clues to figure out what the author means or what might happen.

Discuss and Revisit the Text
Personal Response
Invite students to share their personal responses to the text. 
Suggested language: Which of Hercules’ tasks most impressed you?

Ways of Thinking
As you discuss the text, help students understand these points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Within the Text</th>
<th>Thinking Beyond the Text</th>
<th>Thinking About the Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hercules’ stepmother causes him to kill his family and, as punishment, he must work 12 years for a cruel king.</td>
<td>• Difficult obstacles can be overcome with strength and courage.</td>
<td>• Bold red chapter headings set in capital letters introduce the episodes that follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The king gives Hercules a total of 12 difficult challenges, which he accomplishes.</td>
<td>• Creative thinking can help you solve problems and challenges.</td>
<td>• Captions above pictures provide important information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Afterwards, Hera rubs poison that burns like fire on his cloak; to escape it, Hercules kills himself, the gods make him immortal, and he joins them on Mount Olympus.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Story structure is linear, making content easy to follow.</td>
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</table>

Choices for Further Support
• Fluency Invite pairs of students to choose a passage from the text and demonstrate phrased fluent reading. Remind them to pay attention to details about Hercules and to act out his actions, using any clues provided by question marks or exclamations to make their reading livelier and to convey the author’s meaning.

• Comprehension Based on your observations of the students’ reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas.

• Phonics/Word Work English words come from many different word origins. The word Hercules comes from the Greek name Heraklees, which is made up of the roots hera and kleos. Hera means “hero” and kleos, means “glory.” Since Hercules was a glorious hero, his name suits him perfectly.

Writing about Reading

Critical Thinking
Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 18.7.

Responding
Have students complete the activities at the back of their book, using their Reader’s Notebook. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill

Story Structure \( \text{TABET C\( \text{R\( \text{E}

Remind students to look at story structure to examine details about character, setting, and plot. Model how to add details to the Graphic Organizer, using a “Think Aloud” like the one below:

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Think Aloud}

Page 2 describes the three major characters in the story: Hercules, Hera and the cruel king. Page 8 describes the golden apples and Atlas. The main conflict is between Hera and Hercules. Hera hates Hercules and repeatedly tries to kill him or have him killed. These details of character, setting, and conflict provide structure to the story.
\end{quote}

Practice the Skill
Have students share examples of the story structure in another book in which a larger-than-life character like Hercules accomplishes amazing and heroic feats of courage.

Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text
Have students write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use their personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

Assessment Prompts
- The first paragraph on page 2 is about
- What does the word \textit{rash} on page 16 mean?
- Why is the paragraph on page 5 important to the book?
English Language Development

**Critical Thinking**

Read and answer the questions. Possible responses shown.

1. Think within the text: What did Hercules do with the Hydra's immortal head?
   - He cut it off and buried it under a rock.

2. Think within the text: Who was Atlas?
   - The god who held up the sky.

3. Think beyond the text: Was Hercules's punishment fair? Explain your answer.
   - Hercules's punishment was not fair. He performed incredible tasks and he was not told that he had to complete them without any help. He used his resources to complete each task.

4. Think about the text: Why would the Greeks consider Hercules a hero? Do you think he was a hero?
   - They called him a hero because he was brave, strong, and cunning. He never backed down from a task. Because of those reasons, I agree that he was a hero.

**Making Connections**: Hercules is considered a hero. Compare or contrast him to other heroes you have read about. How is he similar? How is he different?

Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.

Name ______ Date ______

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Tales of Hercules

Thinking Beyond the Text
Think about the question below. Then write your answer in one or two paragraphs.

Remember that when you think beyond the text, you use your personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

On page 14, we learn that after the body of Hercules was destroyed by fire, the gods made him immortal so he could live with them on Mount Olympus. Imagine you could talk with the gods and find out why they chose to make Hercules a god. What reasons might they give for their decision?

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Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

1. **Think within the text** What did Hercules do with the Hydra’s immortal head?

2. **Think within the text** Who was Atlas?

3. **Think beyond the text** Was Hercules’s punishment fair? Explain your answer.

4. **Think about the text** Why would the Greeks consider Hercules a hero? Do you think he was a hero?

**Making Connections** Hercules is considered a hero. Compare or contrast him to other heroes you have read about. How is he similar? How is he different?

Write your answer in your Reader's Notebook.
### Tales of Hercules • LEVEL U

**Behavior Code Error**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Error</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read word correctly</td>
<td>📚</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated word, sentence, or phrase</td>
<td>🔎</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td>🤔</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

**Selection Text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>page</th>
<th>Selection Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hercules traveled to the island of Crete to capture a wild bull. Then he drove away some man-eating horses. When Hercules visited the queen of the Amazons, she gave him the belt that he needed to bring back. For his tenth task, Hercules rounded up a herd of cattle that belonged to a giant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>After all this work, Hercules thought he had reached the end of his punishment. However, the king said that two of his tasks did not count. Hercules had gotten help from his nephew in killing the Hydra.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Accuracy Rate**

\[
\text{Accuracy Rate} = \left( \frac{\# \text{ words read correctly}}{92} \right) \times 100 \%
\]

**Total Self-Corrections**

8