



KS2 lesson plan for literacy

Background Work: To read and study this story, it will be helpful if children are already familiar with some Greek and Roman myths and legends, in particular the concept of differences between immortal and mortal beings; they should know a little bit about who Hercules is and what his labours were.

For the best start, visit www.snailtales.org/book and check out our *Hercules* or *Ancient Greeks* programmes!

Section	Activity	Assessment criteria/aims
Shared reading, listening and speaking 10 mins	Read the story as far as Hercules' visit to Nereus, then play a shape-shifting warm up game. In pairs, the children take it in turns to be the shapeshifter say names of random creatures or objects in quick succession. They are not allowed to repeat a word or to pause for more than a slow count of three. Their partner is 'Hercules' and must provide the count and listen for repeats. If the shapeshifter makes a mistake, Hercules has won the round and the pair swap over. Time each turn with an amount of time that seems fair for age and ability of the players (about 30 seconds). If the shapeshifter makes no mistakes in that time, they have won the round.	Children should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show inventiveness by improvising words in quick succession Listen carefully to what their partner is saying
Shared reading/writing 10 mins	Read on until the end of the paragraphs about Prometheus ('no problem') and then ask: how can Hercules persuade Atlas to fetch the apples for him? Take the part of Atlas yourself and invite children to role-play Hercules, asking them, "Why should I do this for you?" and putting in objections according to their ability (eg "But it's stealing!" "But I have to hold up the sky!") With the class, make a list of Atlas's possible objections on one side of the board, and Hercules' possible replies on the other side.	Children should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role-play within the genre and background of the story Get clues from the text to help their arguments Speak persuasively Use clues from the text to draw conclusions about each character
Independent work 20 mins	Children create a possible argument between Atlas and Hercules, deciding for themselves what eventually persuades Atlas to fetch the apples. According to ability, and to your own aims and writing focus, they could do this in the form of a list, play script, written conversation or avoid writing at all by putting on a short sketch in pairs.	Children should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write in a specified genre Create convincing arguments and replies Some children may be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use their knowledge of Greek/Roman myth and of each character to create likely arguments
Guided activity with a focus group 20 mins	Read on with a focus group a little further in the story, until Atlas has returned with the apples but doesn't want to take the sky back from Hercules. Discuss the problem with the group and ask what Hercules could say now. Role play in pairs or as a group again, then as a group produce a piece of guided writing (see options above) to show what happens.	Children should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think of persuasive arguments in character
Plenary 10-15 mins	Feed back by asking some children to perform or read their arguments between Atlas and Hercules. Continue the story by asking your guided group to explain what happens next and then share their work. Finally, reveal the real ending to the story by reading the rest of the passage, and ask which ending and arguments the children preferred - did any of them come up with a better idea than Hercules? Ask them to give reasons for their preference.	Children should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State a preference and give reasons to support their choice.

Further ideas and cross-curricular activities

Curriculum area(s)	Age range	Activity
Speaking and listening	KS2	Some discussion points after having read the whole story: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look back at Eurystheus' reasons for not counting two of the labours. Do you think Hercules deserved to have this labour counted? Why/why not?• Is Hercules a kind or unkind character? Why? (This question may be particularly interesting if your children have experienced the Snail Tales Hercules workshop!)
Maths/science	KS1,KS2	Use the story as a background for an investigation into the strongest shape. Explain to the children that they are going to make a prop for Atlas to hold the sky up. Find a heavy 'sky' (eg a big book, wrapped in blue paper) and provide the children with card, sellotape, scissors and some nets for 3D shapes (or, for younger children, some previously made shapes or some everyday shapes like cereal boxes, kitchen roll holders etc.) As a class, devise a test to find the best shape for holding up the sky, then challenge the children in pairs to make or choose the one that they think will work best and test it.
Music/dance/PE	KS1	Ask the children in groups to come up with sounds and rhythms for various animals - they could use their voices or instruments for this, and you could include actions and/or movements if you wish. Then, have each group perform as Nereus the shapeshifter by calling out each animal in turn and encouraging a quick, smooth transition between the sounds or movements.
Art	KS1,KS2	Look back through the story to find all the information about the Garden of the Hesperides (guarded by a hundred-headed dragon, contains golden apples, owned by daughters of a giant), then draw, paint, sculpt or collage the garden the way you imagine it!

Want to hear more Hercules stories?

Want to witness your children learning how to create and tell their *own*?

Then visit www.snailtales.org/book and check out our Hercules programme!