

Chapter

8

Greek Civilization

The temple of Delphi was very important to ancient Greeks. Many people believed the priestess here could foretell the future. ►

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Where & When?



400 B.C.

399 B.C.

Socrates sentenced to death

300 B.C.

330 B.C.

Alexander the Great conquers Persian Empire

200 B.C.

c. 287 B.C.

Mathematician and inventor Archimedes is born

CONTENTS

The Big Ideas

Section 1

The Culture of Ancient Greece

Studying the past helps us to understand the present. The Greeks made great strides in the arts. Greek poetry, art, and drama are still part of our world today.

Section 2

Greek Philosophy and History

Civilizations are strengthened by a variety of advances. The Greeks' love of wisdom led to the study of history, politics, biology, and logic.

Section 3

Alexander the Great

Conflict often brings about great change. Alexander the Great was only 25 years old when he conquered the Persian Empire. As a result of his conquests, Greek art, ideas, language, and architecture spread throughout southwest Asia and North Africa.

Section 4

The Spread of Greek Culture

As different societies interact, they often bring about change in each other. Greek cities became centers of learning and culture. Greek scientists developed advanced ideas about astronomy and mathematics.

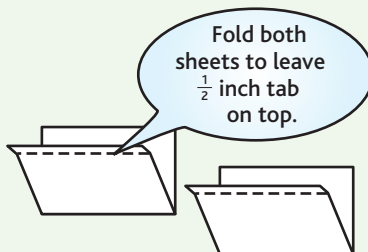


View the Chapter 8 video in the Glencoe Video Program.

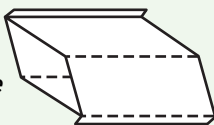
FOLDABLES™ Study Organizer

Organizing Information Make the following foldable to help you organize information about Greek culture and philosophy.

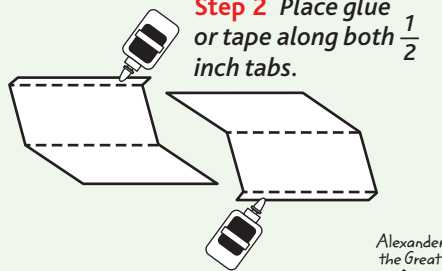
Step 1 Fold two sheets of paper in half from top to bottom.



Step 3 Fit both sheets of paper together to make a cube as shown.



Step 2 Place glue or tape along both $\frac{1}{2}$ inch tabs.



Step 4 Turn the cube and label the foldable as shown.



Reading and Writing
As you read the chapter, list the developments that occurred in ancient Greece. Write the developments under the correct foldable category.

Get Ready to Read

Visualizing



Reading Skill

1 Learn It!

Authors use descriptive language to help readers create pictures of people, places, or events in their minds. Authors also use words to describe feelings or emotions to make the text come alive to the reader. Good readers visualize by forming mental images of the text as they read to help them understand.

As you read, you can visualize more easily by thinking of your five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. Imagine how the text descriptions look, sound, feel, smell, or taste.

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

The Greeks believed that the gods and goddesses controlled nature. According to Greek myth, the god Zeus ruled the sky and threw lightning bolts, the goddess Demeter made the crops grow, and the god Poseidon caused earthquakes.

— from page 377

Reading Tip

Visualizing will help you remember the information that you read.

- Which of the gods or goddesses above can you best visualize? Why?
- How do you picture them in your mind?
- Which of your senses most actively help you visualize each description above?

2 Practice It!

Read the following paragraph. Notice how the author uses the present tense to draw you into the story. Use the underlined details to make a picture in your mind as you read.

The battle for Troy drags on for 10 years. Finally, the Greeks come up with a plan to capture the city. They build a huge, hollow, wooden horse. The best Mycenaean warriors hide inside the horse.

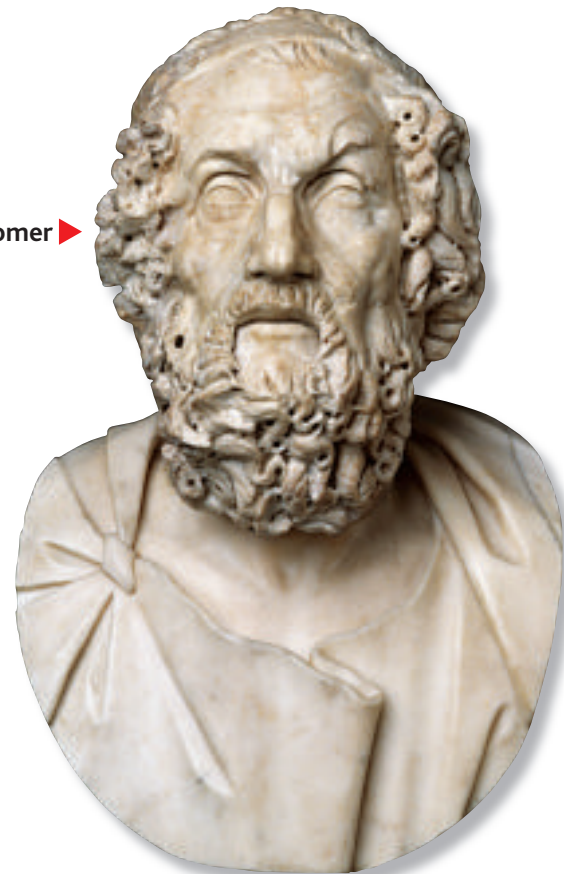
The Trojans, thinking the horse was a gift from the Greeks, celebrate and roll the giant horse into the city. That night, the Greek warriors quietly climb from the horse and capture the city.

—from pages 379–380

Read to Write

Visualizing can help you organize information before you write it down, especially when using graphic organizers. Choose five Greek writers from the chapter. Then create a table that shows their famous works.

Homer ►



After you visualize what this event might have looked like, check the picture on page 379.

- How closely does it match your mental picture?
- Now reread the passage and look at the picture again. Did your ideas change?
- What other words would you use to describe the picture?
- Compare your image with what others in your class visualized. Discuss how your mental picture differed from theirs.

3 Apply It!

As you read the chapter, list three subjects or events that you were able to visualize. Then make a rough sketch or drawing showing how you picture these descriptions.

Section

1

The Culture of Ancient Greece

Guide to Reading



History Social Science Standards

WH.6.4 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of Ancient Greece.

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

You have read that under Pericles, Athens became a center of beauty and culture. During this Golden Age, Greek thinkers, writers, and artists contributed many new ideas to the world.

Focusing on the Main Ideas

- The Greeks believed that gods and goddesses controlled nature and shaped their lives. (page 377)
- Greek poetry and fables taught Greek values. (page 379)
- Greek drama still shapes entertainment today. (page 382)
- Greek art and architecture expressed Greek ideas of beauty and harmony. (page 384)

Meeting People

Homer (HOH • muhr)

Aesop (EE • SAHP)

Sophocles (SAH • fuh • KLEEZ)

Euripides (yu • RIH • puh • DEEZ)

Locating Places

Mount Olympus (uh • LIHM • puhs)

Delphi (DEHL • FY)

Content Vocabulary

myth (MIHTH)

oracle (AWR • uh • kuhl)

epic (EH • pihk)

fable (FAY • buhl)

drama (DRAH • muh)

tragedy (TRA • juh • dee)

comedy (KAH • muh • dee)

Academic Vocabulary

grant

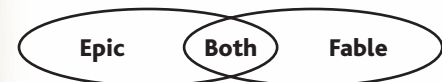
generation (JEH • nuh • RAY • shuhn)

tradition (truh • DIH • shuhn)

conflict (KAHN • FLIHKT)

Reading Strategy

Compare and Contrast Create a Venn diagram showing similarities and differences between epics and fables.



Where & When?



700 B.C.

c. 700s B.C.

Homer writes the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

600 B.C.

c. 550 B.C.

Aesop writes a series of fables

500 B.C.

c. 500s B.C.

Greek architects begin using marble columns



WH6.4.4 Explain the significance of Greek mythology to the everyday life of people in the region and how Greek literature continues to permeate our literature and language today, drawing from Greek mythology and epics, such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and from Aesop's *Fables*.

Greek Mythology

Main Idea The Greeks believed that gods and goddesses controlled nature and shaped their lives.

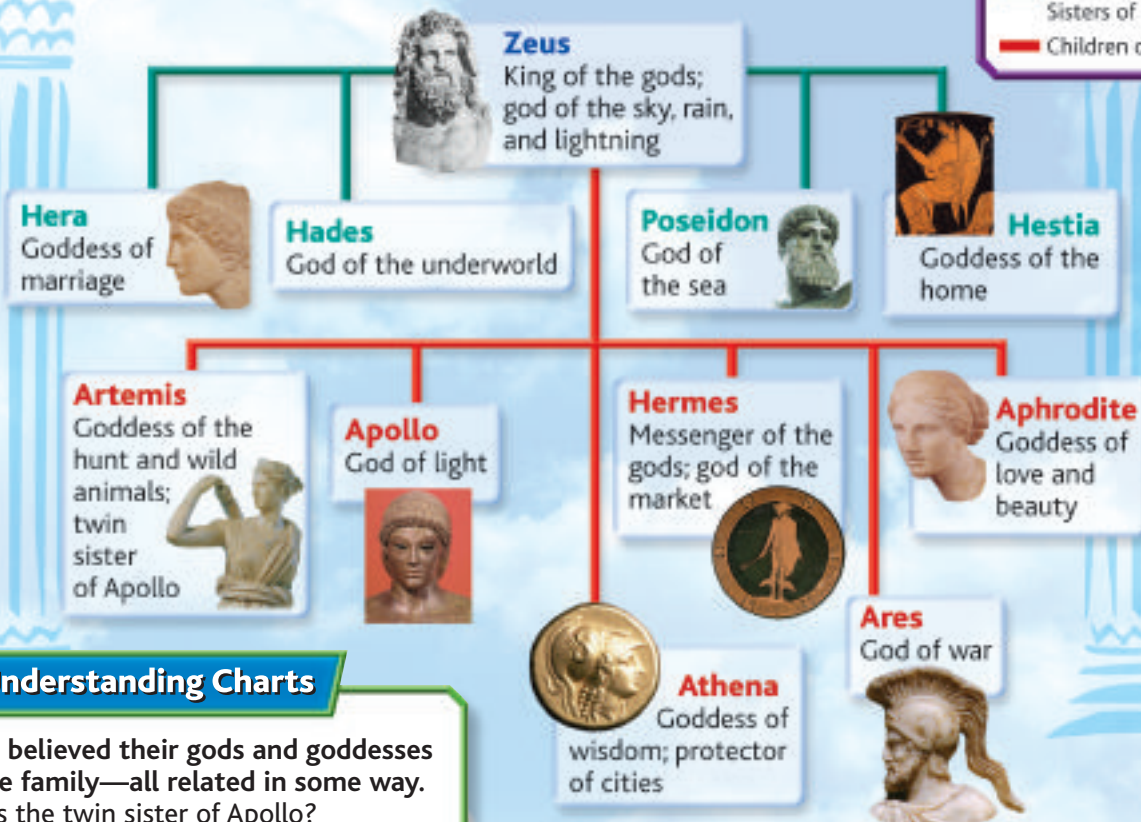
Reading Connection Have you ever wondered why crops grow or why the sun rises and sets? To get the answer, you would read a science book. Read to learn how the Greeks used religion to explain nature.

Myths (MIHTHS) are traditional stories about gods and heroes. Greek mythology expressed the Greek people's religious beliefs. The Greeks believed in many gods and goddesses. They believed gods and goddesses affected people's lives and shaped events. That is why the most impressive buildings in Greek cities were religious temples.

Greek Gods and Goddesses The Greeks believed that the gods and goddesses controlled nature. According to Greek myth, the god Zeus ruled the sky and threw lightning bolts, the goddess Demeter made the crops grow, and the god Poseidon caused earthquakes.

The 12 most important gods and goddesses lived on **Mount Olympus** (uh•LIHM•puhs), the highest mountain in Greece. Among the 12 were Zeus, who was the chief god; Athena, the goddess of wisdom and crafts; Apollo, the god of the sun and poetry; Ares, the god of war; Aphrodite, the goddess of love; and Poseidon, the god of the seas and earthquakes.

Greek Gods and Goddesses



Understanding Charts

The Greeks believed their gods and goddesses were a large family—all related in some way.

1. Who was the twin sister of Apollo?
2. **Explain** How were Ares and Zeus related?



▲ This painting shows a Greek man at the oracle at Delphi receiving a prophecy. **Why were these prophecies often confusing?**

But Greek gods and goddesses were not thought to be all-powerful. According to Greek myths, even though gods had special powers, they looked like human beings and acted like them. They married, had children, quarreled, played tricks on each other, and fought wars.

Because Greeks sought their gods' favor, they followed many rituals. A ritual is a set of actions carried out in a fixed way. As part of their rituals, the Greeks prayed to their gods and also gave them gifts. In return, they hoped that the gods would **grant** good fortune to them. Many Greek festivals honored the gods and goddesses. Festivals dedicated to Zeus were held at Olympia.

The Greeks also believed in an afterlife. When people died, the Greeks believed their spirits went to a gloomy world beneath the earth ruled by a god named Hades.

What Was a Greek Oracle? The Greeks believed that each person had a fate or destiny. They believed that certain events were going to happen no matter what they did. They also believed in prophecy. A prophecy is a prediction about the future. The Greeks believed that the gods gave prophecies to people to warn them about the future in time to change it.

To find out about the future, many Greeks visited an **oracle** (AWR•uh•kuhl). This was a sacred shrine where a priest or priestess spoke for a god or goddess. The most famous was the oracle at the Temple of Apollo at **Delphi** (DEHL•fy). The oracle chamber was deep inside the temple. The room had an opening in the floor where volcanic smoke hissed from a crack in the earth.

A priestess sat on a tripod—a three-legged stool—in the oracle chamber and listened to questions. The priests translated her answers. State leaders or their messengers traveled to Delphi to ask advice from the oracle of Apollo.

The priestess in the oracle often gave answers in riddles. When one king, named Croesus (KREE•suhs), sent messengers to the oracle at Delphi, they asked if the king should go to war with the Persians. The oracle replied that if Croesus attacked the Persians, he would destroy a mighty empire. Overjoyed to hear these words, Croesus declared war on the Persians. The Persian army crushed his army. The mighty empire King Croesus had destroyed was his own!

Reading Check Explain Why did the Greeks have rituals and festivals for their gods and goddesses?



WH6.4.4 Explain the significance of Greek mythology to the everyday life of people in the region and how Greek literature continues to permeate our literature and language today, drawing from Greek mythology and epics, such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and from Aesop's *Fables*.

Greek Poetry and Fables

Main Idea Greek poetry and fables taught Greek values.

Reading Connection Do you have favorite stories? Are the characters in the stories brave and clever? Read about the characters of the best-loved stories in early Greece.

Greek poems and stories are some of the oldest in Europe. For hundreds of years, Europeans and Americans have used these early works as models for their own poems and stories. Shakespeare, for example, borrowed many Greek plots and settings.

The earliest Greek stories were **epics** (EH•pihks). These long poems told about

heroic deeds. The first great epics of early Greece were the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The poet **Homer** (HOH•muhr) wrote these epics during the 700s B.C. He based them on stories of a war between Greece and the city of Troy, which once existed in the region that is today northwestern Turkey.

In the *Iliad*, a prince of Troy kidnaps the wife of the king of Sparta. The kidnapping outrages the Greeks. The king of Mycenae and the brother of the king of Sparta lead the Greeks in an attack on Troy.

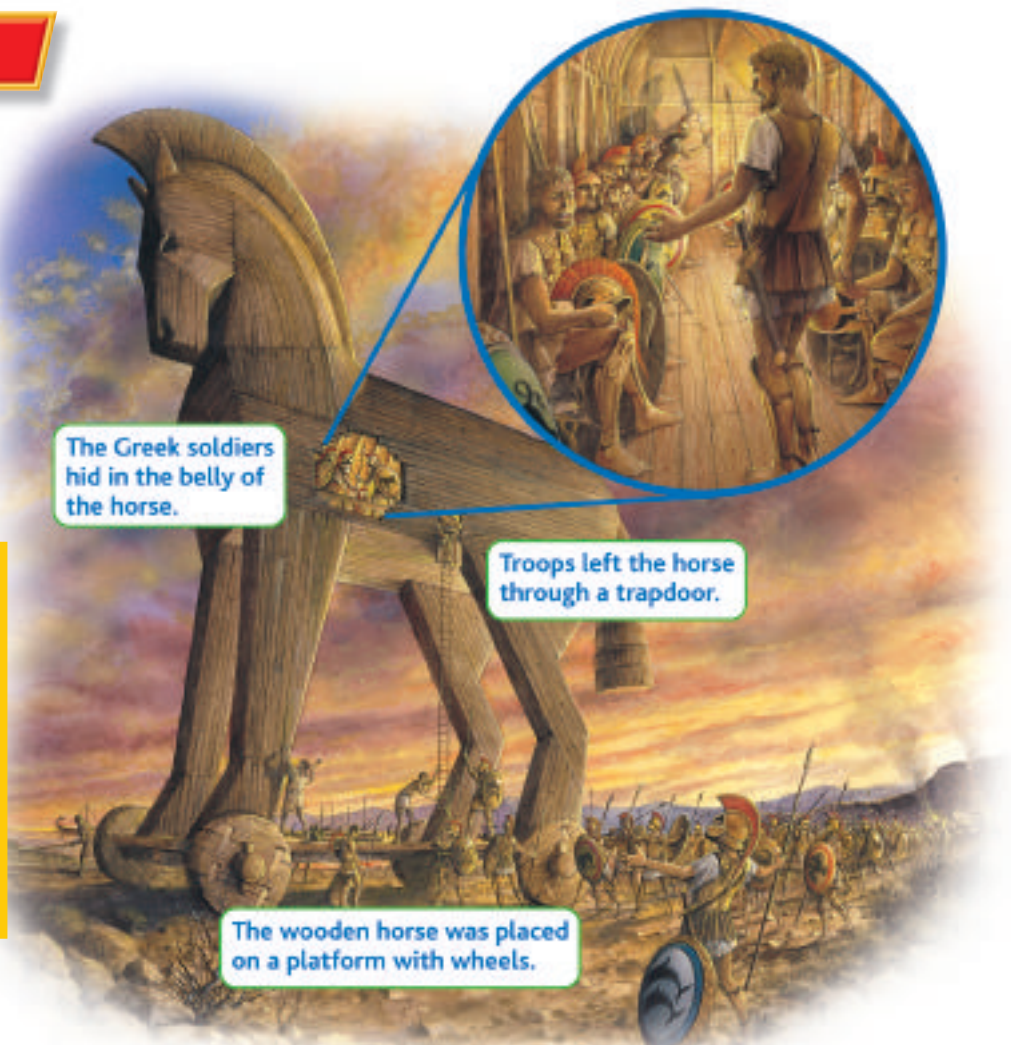
The battle for Troy drags on for 10 years. Finally, the Greeks come up with a plan to capture the city. They build a huge, hollow, wooden horse. The best Mycenaean warriors hide inside the horse.

The Trojan Horse

After building the Trojan horse, the Greeks returned to their ships and pretended to retreat. Despite warnings, the Trojans brought the horse within their city as a war trophy. The Greeks inside the horse opened the city gates for their fellow soldiers and captured the city. **What epic included the story of the Trojan horse?**



▲ Clay carving of the Trojan horse



Aesop



▲ According to legend, Aesop was freed from slavery and became an adviser to Greek rulers. **What is a fable?**

The Trojans, thinking the horse was a gift from the Greeks, celebrate and roll the giant horse into the city. That night, the Greek warriors quietly climb from the horse and capture the city.

The *Odyssey* tells the story of Odysseus, another Greek hero. It describes his journey home from the Trojan War. Odysseus faces storms, witches, and giants before returning to his wife. Because it took Odysseus 10 years to get home, we use the word *odyssey* today to mean a long journey with many adventures.

Greeks believed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were more than stories. They looked on the epics as real history. These poems gave the Greeks an ideal past with a cast of heroes. **Generations** of Greeks read Homer's works. One Athenian wrote, "My father was anxious to see me develop

into a good man . . . [so] he compelled me to memorize all of Homer."

Homer's stories promoted courage and honor. They also taught that it was important to be loyal to your friends and to value the relationship between husband and wife. The stories showed heroes striving to be the best they could be. Heroes fought to protect their own honor and their family's honor. Homer's heroes became role models for Greek boys.

Who Was Aesop? About 550 B.C., a Greek slave named **Aesop** (EE•SAHP) made up his now famous fables. A **fable** (FAY•buhl) is a short tale that teaches a lesson. In most of Aesop's fables, animals talk and act like people. These often funny stories expose human flaws as well as strengths. Each fable ends with a message, or moral.

One of the best-known fables is "The Tortoise and the Hare." In this fable, a tortoise and a hare decide to race. More than halfway into the race, the hare is way ahead. He stops to rest and falls asleep. Meanwhile, the tortoise keeps going at a slow but steady pace and finally wins the race.

The moral of the story is "slow and steady wins the race." Some of the phrases we hear today came from Aesop's fables. "Sour grapes," "a wolf in sheep's clothing," and "appearances often are deceiving" are examples.

For about 200 years, Aesop's fables were a part of Greece's oral **tradition**. This means they were passed from person to person by word of mouth long before they were ever written down. Since then, countless writers have retold the stories in many different languages.

Reading Check Describe What are the characteristics of a fable?



WH.6.4.4 Explain the significance of Greek mythology to the everyday life of people in the region and how Greek literature continues to permeate our literature and language today, drawing from Greek mythology and epics, such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and from Aesop's *Fables*.

HOMER

c. 750 B.C.

Homer ▶

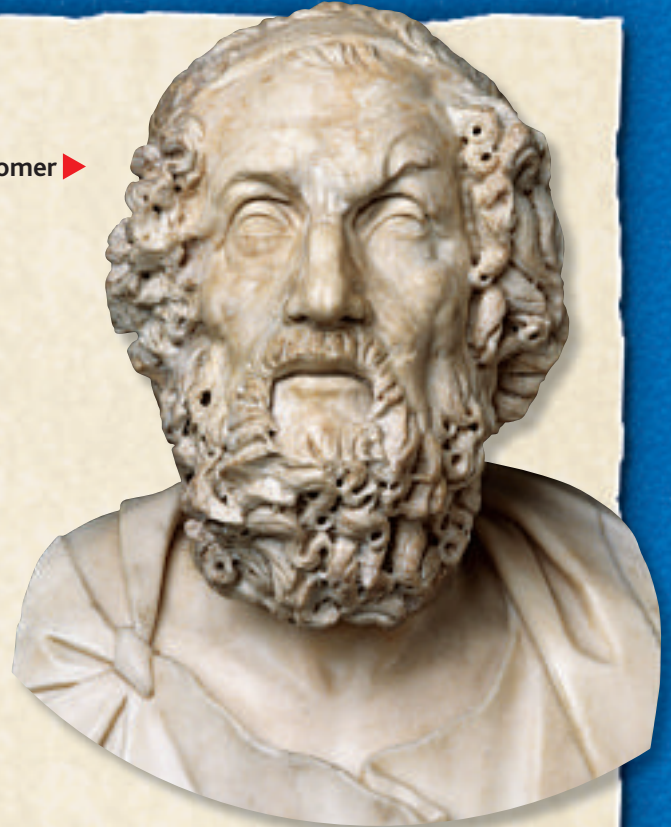
Homer's epic poems—the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—are famous, but until the 1900s, historians believed that Homer never existed. Historians now know Homer was a real person, but they still debate whether he wrote his poems alone or with the help of other poets.

Many historians have speculated, or made educated guesses, about Homer's personal life. Some say that Homer came from Ionia and seven cities claim to be his birthplace. Some believe that he was blind. Others believe that he wandered from town to town.

Legends tell of Homer's strong influence on his readers. For example, as a young child, Alexander the Great is said to have slept with a copy of the *Iliad* under his pillow.

Homer used the term *aoidos* for a poet. This word means "singer," which tells us that the poetry created during Homer's time was memorized and recited, not written down. Usually, short, simple poems that were easy to remember were told to an audience as entertainment.

Homer created a different style of poetry that influenced all Western literature that followed. His epics are long and involve complex characters, dramatic action, and interesting events. Because each section of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* has these characteristics, most historians today think that only one poet could have created both epics. Whoever Homer was, his two epics have influenced readers for nearly 3,000 years.



**"I hate as I hate [Hades']
own gate that man who
hides one thought within
him while he speaks
another."**

—Homer, the *Iliad*

Then and Now

Review the characteristics of an epic. Then do research to identify a modern epic.



WH6.4.4 Explain the significance of Greek mythology to the everyday life of people in the region and how Greek literature continues to permeate our literature and language today, drawing from Greek mythology and epics, such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and from *Aesop's Fables*. **WH6.4.8** Describe the enduring contributions of important Greek figures in the arts and sciences (e.g., Hypatia, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Thucydides).

Greek Drama

Main Idea Greek drama still shapes entertainment today.

Reading Connection Think about your favorite movie. How would you describe it? Is it a tragedy? Is it a comedy? Read to find out how Greek plays still influence our entertainment.

What is **drama** (DRAH•muh)? Drama is a story told by actors who pretend to be characters in the story. In a drama, actors speak, show emotion, and imitate the actions of the characters they represent.

Today's movies, plays, and television shows are all examples of drama.

Tragedies and Comedies The Greeks performed plays in outdoor theaters as part of their religious festivals. They developed two kinds of dramas—comedies and tragedies.

In a **tragedy** (TRA•juh•dee), a person struggles to overcome difficulties but fails. As a result, the story has an unhappy ending. Early Greek tragedies presented people in a struggle against their fate. Later Greek tragedies showed how a person's character flaws caused him or her to fail.

Linking Past & Present

The Theater

PAST Tragedies and comedies were staged at a theater on the slopes of the Acropolis in Athens. The plays included music and dance. Greek actors wore costumes and held large masks. The masks told the audience who the actor was supposed to be—a king, a soldier, or a god. All the actors were men, even those playing female parts.

▼ A modern-day play



▲ Ruins of a Greek theater

PRESENT Actors today include both men and women—and even children and animals. Special effects and makeup have replaced handheld masks. Music in modern theater is sometimes just as important as the actors' words. *If you watched a Greek play, what might it tell you about life in ancient Greece?*

In a **comedy** (KAH • muh • dee), the story ends happily. Today we use the word *comedy* to mean a story filled with humor. The word actually means any drama that has a happy ending.

Greek stories dealt with big questions, such as:

- What is the nature of good and evil?
- What rights should people have?
- What role do gods play in our lives?

The three best-known writers of Greek tragedies were Aeschylus (EHS • kuh • luhs), **Sophocles** (SAH • fuh • KLEEZ), and **Euripides** (yu • RIH • puh • DEEZ). The best-known writer of Greek comedies was Aristophanes (ar • uh • STAH • fuh • NEEZ).

Early Greek tragedies had only one actor who gave speeches and a chorus that sang songs describing the events. Aeschylus was the first to introduce the idea of having two actors. This let the writer tell a story involving **conflict** between the two people. Aeschylus also introduced costumes, props, and stage decorations—all items we still use today.

One of Aeschylus's best-known plays is a group of three plays called the *Oresteia* (ohr • eh • STY • uh). Aeschylus wrote the plays in 458 B.C. They describe what happens when the king of Mycenae returns home from the Trojan War. The *Oresteia* teaches that evil acts cause more evil acts and suffering. In the end, however, reason triumphs over evil. The moral of these plays is that people should not seek revenge.

Sophocles, a general and a writer of plays, developed drama even further. He used three actors in his stories instead of one or two. He also placed painted scenes behind the stage as a backdrop to the action. Two of Sophocles' most famous plays are *Oedipus Rex* (EH • duh • puhs REHKS) and *Antigone* (an • TIH • guh • nee). In *Antigone*, Sophocles



▲ This artwork shows actors preparing for a play. **When and where were Greek plays performed?**

◀ Comedy and tragedy masks

asks the question “Is it better to follow orders or to do what is right?”

Euripides, a later playwright, tried to take Greek drama beyond heroes and gods. His characters were more down-to-earth. Euripides' plots show a great interest in real-life situations. He questioned traditional thinking, especially about war. He showed war as cruel and women and children as its victims.

The works of Aristophanes are good examples of comedies. They make fun of leading politicians and scholars. They encourage the audience to think as well as to laugh. Many of Aristophanes' plays included jokes, just like popular television comedies do today.

✓ **Reading Check Summarize** What two types of drama did the Greeks create?



Greek Art and Architecture

Main Idea Greek art and architecture expressed Greek ideas of beauty and harmony.

Reading Connection Do you consider any building in your neighborhood a work of art? Read on to find out about buildings that people have admired as art for centuries.

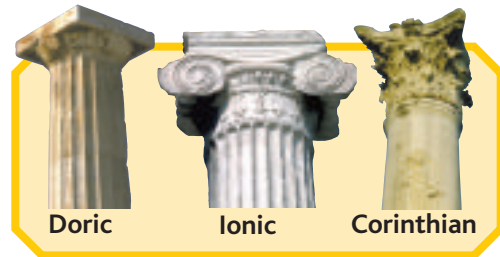
Artists in ancient Greece believed in certain ideas and tried to show those ideas in their work. These ideas have never gone out of style. Greek artists wanted people to

see reason, moderation, balance, and harmony in their work. They hoped their art would inspire people to base their lives on these same ideas.

We know that the Greeks painted murals, but none of them have survived. However, we can still see examples of Greek painting on Greek pottery. The pictures on most Greek pottery are either red on a black background or black on a red background. Large vases often had scenes from Greek myths. Small drinking cups showed scenes from everyday life.

The Parthenon

Standing at almost 230 feet long and 100 feet wide, the Parthenon was the glory of ancient Athens. It was built between 447 and 432 B.C. **What was the purpose of the Parthenon?**



▲ The Greeks used three different styles of columns in their buildings.

Treasure Room
Held the city's gold

Athena
The statue of Athena, covered in ivory and gold, was about 43 feet high.



▲ Today the Parthenon still rises above Athens.


Festival
Athenians came to honor Athena every four years.

In addition to making pottery, the Greeks were skilled architects. Architecture is the art of designing and building structures. In Greece, the most important architecture was the temple dedicated to a god or goddess. The best-known example is the Parthenon. Temples, such as the Parthenon, had a walled room in their centers. Statues of gods and goddesses and the gifts offered to them were kept in these central rooms.

Large columns supported many Greek buildings. The first Greek columns were carved from wood. Then, in 500 B.C., the Greeks began to use marble. Marble columns were built in sections. Large blocks of marble were chiseled from stone quarries and brought by oxen-drawn wagon to the building site. The sections

were stacked on top of each other. To keep them from toppling, the column's sections were joined with wooden pegs. Today, marble columns are common features of churches and government buildings. Some of the best-known buildings in our nation's capital, such as the White House and the Capitol, have Greek columns.

Many Greek temples were decorated with sculpture. Greek sculpture, like Greek architecture, was used to express Greek ideas. The favorite subject of Greek artists was the human body. Greek sculptors did not copy their subjects exactly, flaws and all. Instead, they tried to show their ideal version of perfection and beauty.

 **Reading Check Identify** What was the most important type of building in Greece?

Section 1 Review

History online
Study Central Need help understanding Greek culture? Visit ca.hss.glencoe.com and click on Study Central.

Reading Summary

Review the Main Ideas

- The Greeks believed gods and goddesses influenced their lives. They believed oracles spoke for the gods and goddesses.
- The Greeks wrote long poems, called epics, and short tales, called fables, to pass on Greek values.
- The Greeks created the ideas of tragedy and comedy that are still used in drama today.
- Greek art forms, such as painting, architecture, and sculpture, expressed Greek ideas of beauty, harmony, and moderation.

What Did You Learn?

1. How and why did the Greeks honor their gods?
2. What values did the epic poems of Homer teach Greeks?

Critical Thinking

3. **The Big Ideas** What are the main themes of Euripedes' plays? Would they be popular today? **CA 6RL3.6**
4. **Summarizing Information** Draw a table like the one below to describe the characteristics of Greek architecture and pottery. **CA 6RC2.4**

Greek Architecture	
Greek Pottery	

5. **Contrast** How do Greek tragedies and comedies differ? **CA 6RL3.1**
6. **Evaluate** Why did Greek artists include the ideas of reason, moderation, balance, and harmony in their works? **CA 6RC2.3**
7. **Expository Writing** Greek literature tells us about Greek society. Choose a modern book or movie. Write a paragraph to explain what it would tell others about our society. **CA 6WA2.2**
8. **Reading Visualizing** Write a description of Greek architecture. Give details so readers can visualize them. **CA 6RC2.4**

DAEDALUS AND ICARUS

Retold by Geraldine McCaughrean

Before You Read

The Scene: This story takes place on the Greek island of Crete in the legendary time when both humans and gods lived in ancient Greece.

The Characters: Daedalus is the master architect for King Minos of Crete. Icarus is the son of Daedalus.

The Plot: King Minos summons Daedalus and Icarus to build him a palace and then keeps them captive in their own creation. Daedalus plans to escape.

Vocabulary Preview

labyrinth: an extremely complicated maze

luxurious: characterized by comfort or pleasure

astonishment: sudden wonder or surprise

taunt: to mock in an insulting manner

daub: to cover with a sticky matter

plume: a large and showy feather of a bird

Have you ever known someone who ignored warnings and did something dangerous? This is the story of a young boy who does not listen to his father and suffers the consequences.

As You Read

Keep in mind that a myth is a special kind of story, usually involving gods or goddesses. Greek myths, like this one, were told and retold over many hundreds of years. Try to figure out why the Greeks told this story. What lesson does it teach?

The island of Crete was ruled by King Minos,¹ whose reputation for wickedness had spread to every shore. One day he summoned to his country a famous inventor named Daedalus.² “Come, Daedalus, and bring your son Icarus,³ too. I have a job for you, and I pay well.”

King Minos wanted Daedalus to build him a palace, with soaring towers and a high, curving roof. In the cellars there was to be a maze of many corridors—so twisting and dark that any man who once ventured in there would never find his way out again.

“What is it for?” asked Daedalus. “Is it a treasure vault? Is it a prison to hold criminals?”

But Minos only replied, “Build my labyrinth as I told you. I pay you to build, not to ask questions.”

So Daedalus held his tongue and set to work. When the palace was finished, he looked at it with pride, for there was nowhere in the world so fine. But when he found out the purpose of the maze in the cellar, he shuddered with horror.

For at the heart of that maze, King Minos put a creature that was half man, half beast—a thing almost too horrible to describe. He called it the Minotaur,⁴ and he fed it on men and women!

Then Daedalus wanted to leave Crete at once, and forget both maze and Minotaur. So he went to King Minos to ask for his money.

“I regret,” said King Minos, “I cannot let you leave Crete, Daedalus. You are the only man who knows the secret of the maze and how to escape from it. The secret must never leave this island. So I’m afraid I must keep you and Icarus here a while longer.”

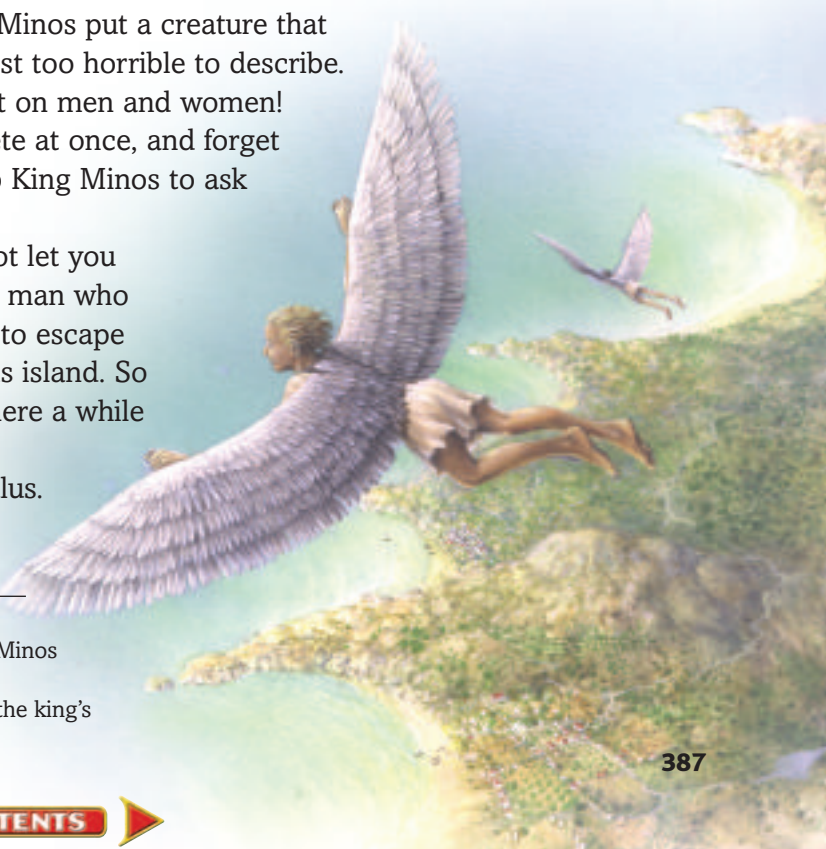
“How much longer?” gasped Daedalus.

¹**King Minos:** the king of Crete

²**Daedalus** (DEH • duhl • uhs): architect for King Minos

³**Icarus** (IH • kuh • ruhs): son of Daedalus

⁴**Minotaur:** the half man, half beast that lived in the king’s palace



"Oh—just until you die," replied Minos cheerfully. "But never mind. I have plenty of work for a man as clever as you."

Daedalus and Icarus lived in great comfort in King Minos's palace. But they lived the life of prisoners. Their rooms were in the tallest palace tower, with beautiful views across the island. They ate delectable food and wore expensive clothes. But at night the door of their fine apartment was locked, and a guard stood outside. It was a comfortable prison, but it was a prison, even so. Daedalus was deeply unhappy.

Every day he put seed out on the windowsill, for the birds. He liked to study their brilliant colors, the clever overlapping of their feathers, the way they soared on the sea wind. It comforted him to think that they at least were free to come and go. The birds had only to spread their wings and they could leave Crete behind them, whereas Daedalus and Icarus must stay forever in their luxurious cage.

Young Icarus could not understand his father's unhappiness. "But I like it here," he said. "The king gives us gold and this tall tower to live in."

Daedalus groaned. "But to work for such a wicked man, Icarus! And to be prisoners all our days!...We shan't stay. We shan't!"

"But we can't get away, can we?" said Icarus. "How can anybody escape from an island? Fly?" He snorted with laughter.

Daedalus did not answer. He scratched his head and stared out of the window at the birds pecking seed on the sill.

From that day onward, he got up early each morning and stood at the open window. When a bird came for the seed, Daedalus begged it to spare him one feather.

Then each night, when everyone else had gone to bed, Daedalus worked by candlelight on his greatest invention of all.

Early mornings. Late nights. A whole year went by. Then one morning Icarus was awakened by his father shaking his shoulder. "Get up, Icarus, and don't make a sound. We are leaving Crete."

“But how? It’s impossible!”

Daedalus pulled out a bundle from under his bed. “I’ve been making something, Icarus.” Inside were four great folded fans of feathers. He stretched them out on the bed. They were wings! “I sewed the feathers together with strands of wool from my blanket. Now hold still.”

Daedalus melted down a candle and daubed his son’s shoulders with sticky wax. “Yes, I know it’s hot, but it will soon cool.” While the wax was still soft, he stuck two of the wings to Icarus’s shoulder blades.

“Now you must help me put on my wings, Son. When the wax sets hard, you and I will fly away from here, as free as birds!”

“I’m scared!” whispered Icarus as he stood on the narrow window ledge, his knees knocking and his huge wings drooping down behind. The lawns and courtyards of the palace lay far below. The royal guards looked as small as ants. “This won’t work!”

“Courage, Son!” said Daedalus. “Keep your arms out wide and fly close to me. Above all—are you listening, Icarus?”

“Y-y-yes, Father.”

“Above all, don’t fly too high! Don’t fly too close to the sun!”

“Don’t fly too close to the sun,” Icarus repeated, with his eyes tight shut. Then he gave a cry as his father nudged him off the windowsill.

He plunged downward. With a crack, the feathers behind him filled with wind, and Icarus found himself flying. Flying!

“I’m flying!” he crowed.

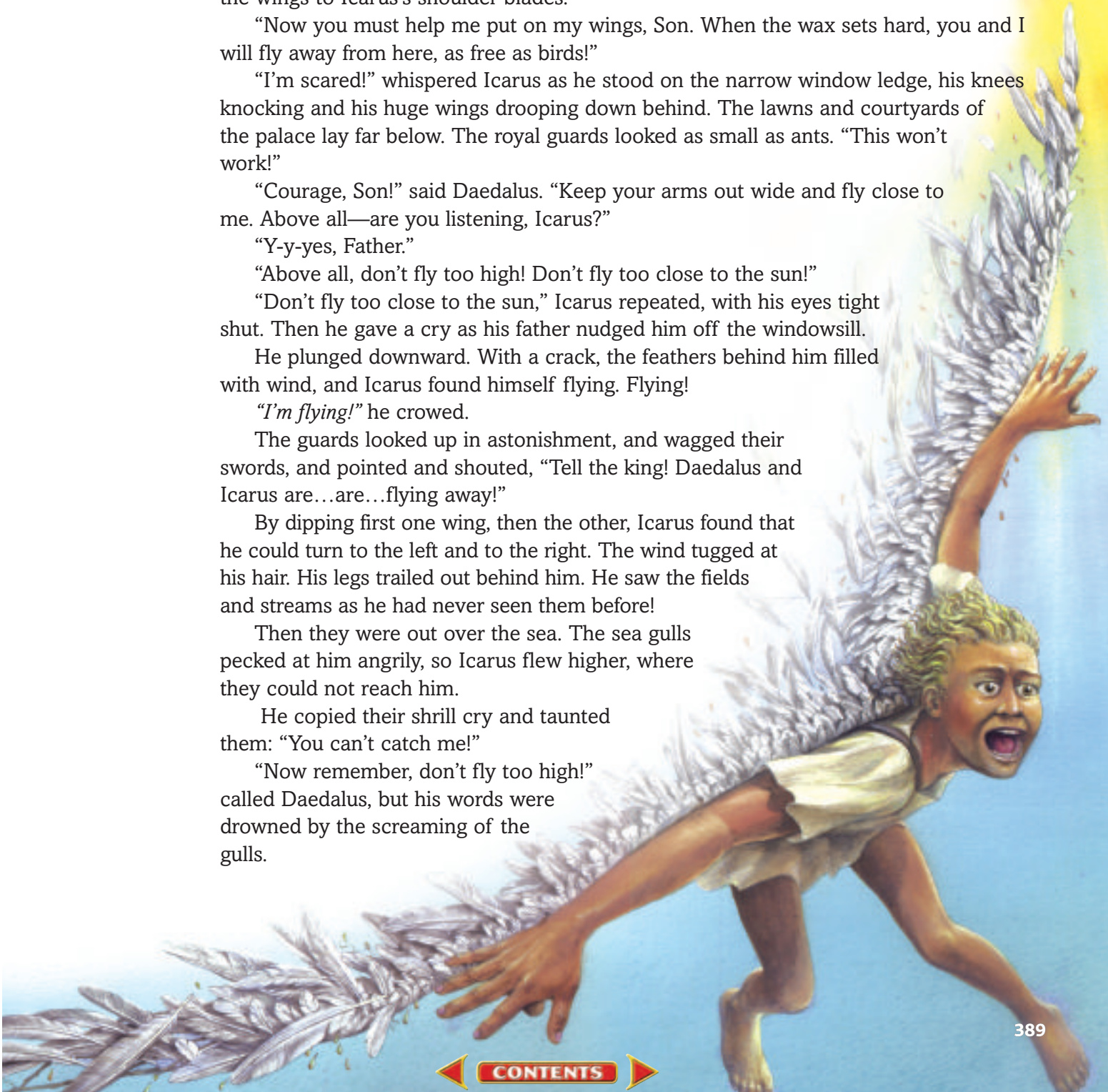
The guards looked up in astonishment, and wagged their swords, and pointed and shouted, “Tell the king! Daedalus and Icarus are...are...flying away!”

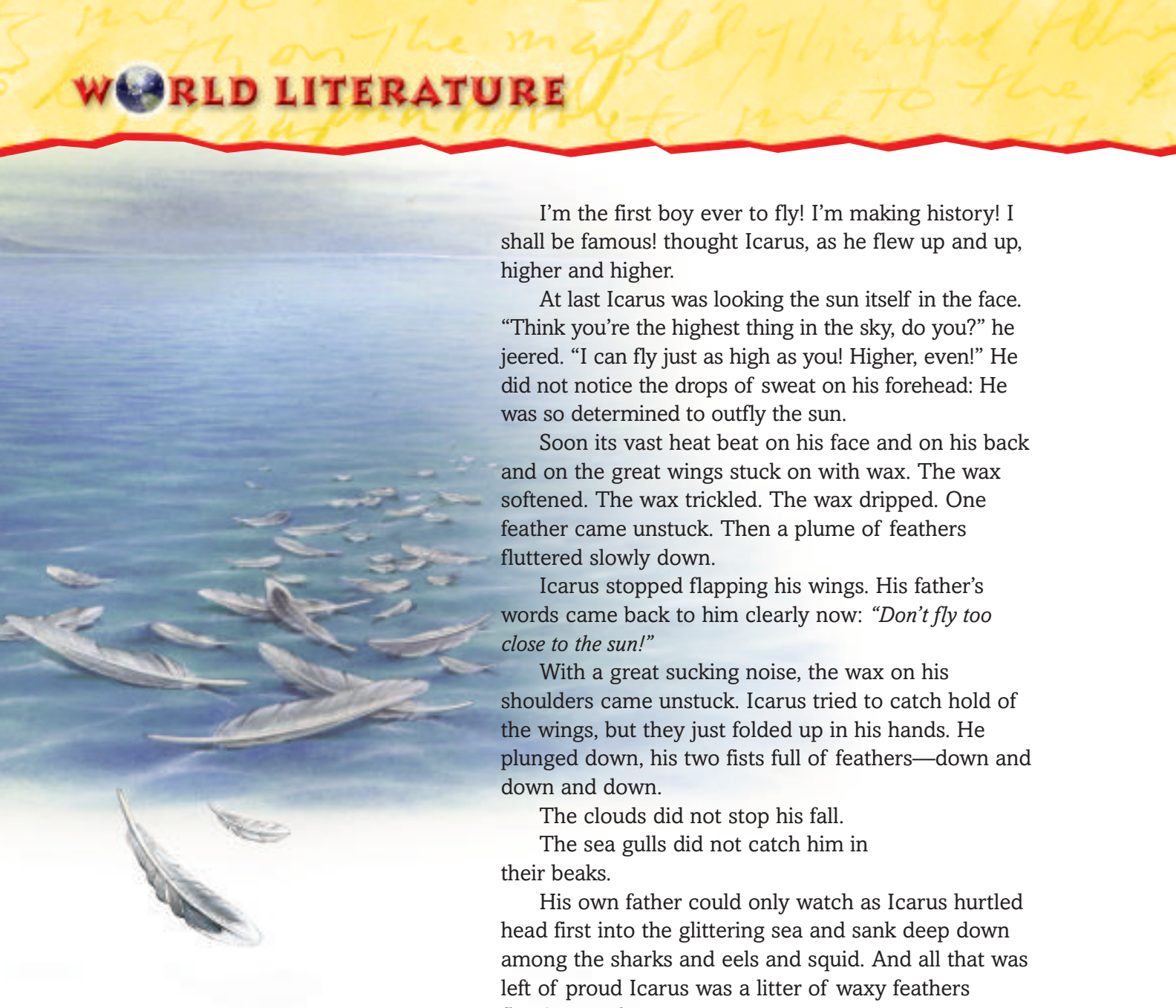
By dipping first one wing, then the other, Icarus found that he could turn to the left and to the right. The wind tugged at his hair. His legs trailed out behind him. He saw the fields and streams as he had never seen them before!

Then they were out over the sea. The sea gulls pecked at him angrily, so Icarus flew higher, where they could not reach him.

He copied their shrill cry and taunted them: “You can’t catch me!”

“Now remember, don’t fly too high!” called Daedalus, but his words were drowned by the screaming of the gulls.





I'm the first boy ever to fly! I'm making history! I shall be famous! thought Icarus, as he flew up and up, higher and higher.

At last Icarus was looking the sun itself in the face. "Think you're the highest thing in the sky, do you?" he jeered. "I can fly just as high as you! Higher, even!" He did not notice the drops of sweat on his forehead: He was so determined to outfly the sun.

Soon its vast heat beat on his face and on his back and on the great wings stuck on with wax. The wax softened. The wax trickled. The wax dripped. One feather came unstuck. Then a plume of feathers fluttered slowly down.

Icarus stopped flapping his wings. His father's words came back to him clearly now: *"Don't fly too close to the sun!"*

With a great sucking noise, the wax on his shoulders came unstuck. Icarus tried to catch hold of the wings, but they just folded up in his hands. He plunged down, his two fists full of feathers—down and down and down.

The clouds did not stop his fall.

The sea gulls did not catch him in their beaks.

His own father could only watch as Icarus hurtled head first into the glittering sea and sank deep down among the sharks and eels and squid. And all that was left of proud Icarus was a litter of waxy feathers floating on the sea.



Responding to the Literature

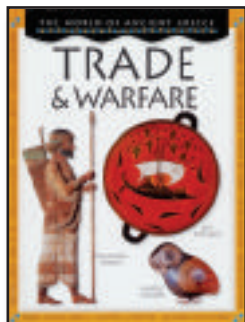
1. What does Daedalus build for King Minos?
2. What does King Minos do to keep Daedalus and Icarus from escaping from Crete?
3. **Drawing Conclusions** Do you think Daedalus is a concerned father? Why or why not? Support your opinion with examples. **CA 6RL3.2**
4. **Analyze** How does the setting of the story influence the plot? Support your ideas with details from the story. **CA 6RL3.3**
5. **Read to Write** Imagine you are Icarus. Would you listen to your father's advice? Write two or three paragraphs explaining what you would have done and why. **CA 6WA2.4**

Reading on Your Own...



From the California Reading List

Do you want to learn more about the ancient Greeks?
If so, check out these other great books.



Nonfiction

Trade and Warfare by Robert Hull explores the history of Greece through trading and conflict. It looks at the different types of ships the Greeks used and the battles on both land and sea. *The content of this book is related to History–Social Science Standard WH6.4.*

Biography

Archimedes and the Door of Science by Jeanne Bendick follows the life of the Greek scientist Archimedes. Learn about the different discoveries and inventions of one of the greatest minds of the ancient world. *The content of this book is related to History–Social Science Standard WH6.4.*



Mythology

Adventures of the Greek Heroes by Mollie McLean and Anne Wiseman is a book written by two teachers who love the tales of action and adventure in ancient Greece. Exciting tales give the reader a glimpse into the lives of heroic Greeks. *The content of this book is related to History–Social Science Standard WH6.4.*

Mythology

D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths by Edgar and Ingri D'Aulaire is a retelling of the most significant stories of ancient Greece. The book is filled with adventures and stories of the gods and goddesses and men and women who influenced Greek mythology. *The content of this book is related to History–Social Science Standard WH6.4.*

