

The Story of Icarus

King Minos looked out of the window and spotted the boat that his messenger had just mentioned. He had been told about a man who was on board. The man was a genius who could invent anything you asked for.

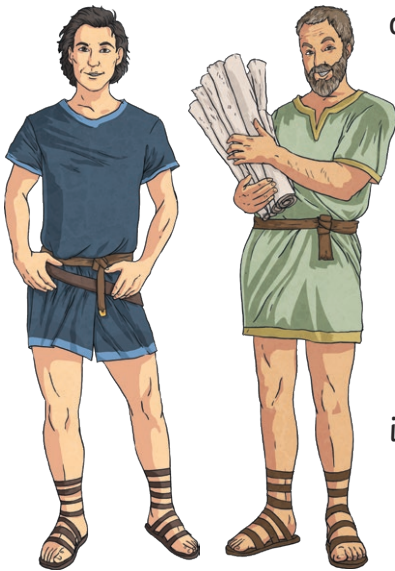


When Daedalus arrived on the island of Crete, he was taken to the palace and asked to become the King's master craftsman. "I need you to invent something for me," said the King. "I need a prison that can trap a Minotaur."

Immediately, Daedalus started work. Helped by his son, Icarus, they built a giant maze. When it was finished, the Minotaur was captured and locked away inside. The people of Crete celebrated and thought that Daedalus and Icarus were heroes.



Then, a man called Theseus asked Daedalus for help. He explained that he wanted to slay the Minotaur but that he would need Daedalus to guide him through the maze. Thinking that slaying the Minotaur would make him famous, Daedalus agreed to help. The two completed their mission and escaped the maze. Immediately, Theseus fled back to Athens. Daedalus was surprised by the hero leaving and began to worry that he had made a terrible mistake.



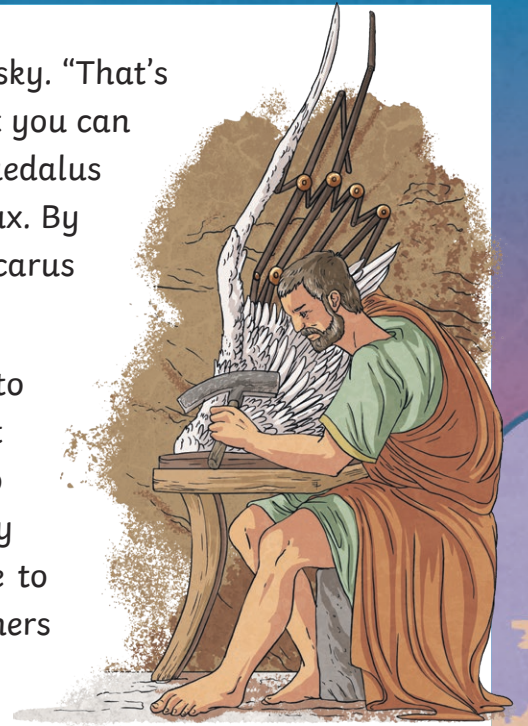
Meanwhile, King Minos was furious that Daedalus had broken into the maze so he locked Daedalus and Icarus inside. Daedalus was now trapped inside the maze that he had created. As he hadn't planned his route, it was impossible to find the entrance again.

One day, Daedalus saw some birds flying high in the sky. "That's it!" he shouted to Icarus, "Bring me every feather that you can find." When Icarus had collected enough feathers, Daedalus carefully stuck them to large wooden frames using wax. By the next day, Daedalus had made both himself and Icarus a huge pair of wings.

"Before we escape," warned Daedalus, "I need you to listen carefully. There are two rules that you must follow. The first is that you must not fly too close to the sea. If the feathers get wet, they will be too heavy to fly. The second is that you must not fly too close to the sun. If you do, the wax which holds the feathers together will melt. Do you understand?"

Icarus nodded and the two began to beat their wings. Higher and higher they rose. Daedalus looked at his son, who was flying like an eagle, and felt proud. They had escaped.

Icarus looked around and realised that he was closer to the gods than any human had ever been. Amazed by this thought, he forgot his father's warning and began to fly higher. He was now too close to the sun. The wax began to melt. With no feathers, Icarus began to spiral down towards the sea. Suddenly, he hit the surface with a crash and was never seen again.



Questions

1. What does King Minos ask Daedalus to invent? Tick one.

- a boat
 a toy
 a prison
 a throne

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- Daedalus builds a giant maze.
 Daedalus and Icarus escape using wings.
 Daedalus arrives in Crete.
 Theseus asks Daedalus to help him to slay the Minotaur.

3. Draw four lines and complete each sentence.

Daedalus has a son called...	Minotaur.
Daedalus was asked to become the King's...	master craftsman.
Icarus flew too close to the...	Icarus.
The giant maze trapped the...	sun.

4. When Icarus is flying, what did Daedalus think that he looked like? Tick one.

- an eagle
 a god
 a blackbird
 a hero

5. Look at the first paragraph. Find and copy one word which means the same as **really clever**.

6. Why did the feathers fall from Icarus's wings?

7. Would you like to try a pair of Daedalus's wings? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. What does King Minos ask Daedalus to invent? Tick one.

- a boat
- a toy
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- 1** Daedalus arrives in Crete.
- 3** Theseus asks Daedalus to help him to slay the Minotaur.

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- a god
- a blackbird
- a hero

5. Look at the first paragraph. Find and copy one word which means the same as **really clever**.

genius

6. Why did the feathers fall from Icarus's wings?

The feathers fell from Icarus's wings because he flew too close to the sun and the wax that was holding them together melted.

7. Would you like to try a pair of Daedalus's wings? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would not like to try a pair of Daedalus's wings because I think that it would be too difficult to stay away from the sun; therefore, it would be very dangerous.

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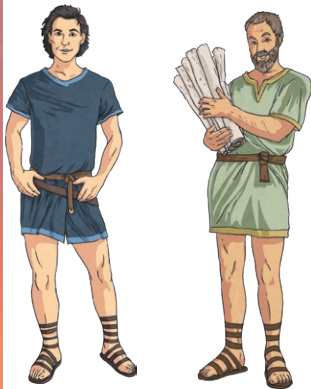


King Minos looked out of the window and spotted the boat that his messenger had just mentioned. Ordinarily, he was not interested in those entering or leaving Crete but one of the passengers had been banished from Athens. All reports described him as a genius. He had even fooled Hercules with his inventions. The King smiled; this man was going to be very useful.

A short while after Daedalus had arrived on the island of Crete, he was taken to the palace and asked to become the King's master craftsman. "I have a way to use your skills," explained the King. "There is a Minotaur who terrorises Crete and we have been unable to contain it. I need you to build a maze that it will not be able to escape from."



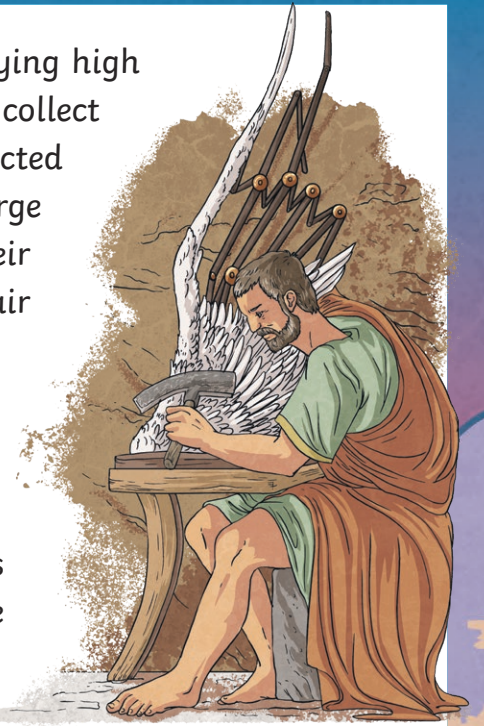
Pleased that his reputation had followed him, Daedalus set to work. Helped by his son, Icarus, the pair designed and built an incredible labyrinth. When it was finally finished, the Minotaur was captured and locked away. The people of Crete celebrated and thought that Daedalus and Icarus were heroes.



Weeks later, Daedalus was approached by a man named Theseus. He explained to Daedalus that he planned to slay the Minotaur but that he needed Daedalus's help to navigate the labyrinth. Unable to ignore the idea that this was a truly heroic act, Daedalus agreed. King Minos's daughter joined them and the three completed their mission before escaping the labyrinth. Immediately, Theseus fled back to Athens with King Minos's daughter beside him. Daedalus was surprised by the hero's sudden departure and began to worry that he had made a terrible mistake.

Less than an hour had passed before the furious King had locked Daedalus and Icarus within the labyrinth. He was outraged that Daedalus would dare to put his daughter in danger. Without having planned his route this time, Daedalus was lost in the labyrinth. Days went past and he couldn't think of how to escape.

One day, Daedalus was distracted by a flock of birds flying high in the sky. "That's it!" he shouted to Icarus, "Go and collect every feather that you can find." When Icarus had collected enough feathers, Daedalus carefully attached them to large wooden frames using wax from the candles which lit their prison. By sunrise, both Icarus and Daedalus had a pair of wings.



"Before we go," warned Daedalus, "I need you to listen carefully. While I'm sure that these wings will work, there are two rules which you must follow. The first is that you must not fly too close to the sea for the feathers will absorb the water and become too heavy to fly. The second is that you must not fly too close to the sun for, if you do, the wax which holds the feathers together will melt. Do you understand?"

Icarus nodded and the two began to beat their wings. Higher and higher they rose until the labyrinth was just a speck below them. Daedalus looked at his son, who was soaring like an eagle, and felt proud. They were free.

Icarus looked around and realised that he was closer to the gods than any human had ever been. Amazed by this thought, he forgot his father's warning; he began to soar higher until the heat from the sun became too much for the wax that held the feathers in place. With no feathers, Icarus began to spiral down towards the sea. He hit the surface with a crash and was never seen again.



Questions

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- Icarus helps his father to create a giant labyrinth.
- King Minos's daughter heads to Athens.
- King Minos receives a message about a genius inventor.
- Icarus forgets his father's warnings.

2. Why does Theseus ask Daedalus for help? Tick one.

- He is scared of the Minotaur.
- He needs Daedalus to guide him through the labyrinth.
- The Minotaur is strong and needs two people to slay it.
- He wants to trap Daedalus inside the labyrinth.

3. Draw four lines to show how Daedalus is feeling at each point in the story.

Daedalus is asked to be the King's master craftsman.	inspired
Daedalus sees Icarus flying.	pleased
Daedalus sees a flock of birds.	worried
Daedalus sees Theseus flee back to Athens.	proud

4. Why did King Minos lock Daedalus and Icarus away in the labyrinth? Tick one.

- Daedalus had broken a promise to him.
- Daedalus had put the King's daughter in danger.
- Icarus had helped to slay the Minotaur without the King's knowledge.
- Icarus had taken the King's daughter to a dangerous place.

5. Look at the paragraph beginning **Less than an hour...** Find and copy **two** words which show that the King is unhappy.

6. What two warnings does Daedalus give to Icarus?

1. _____

2. _____

7. Describe Daedalus's character. Explain your answer.

8. Most Greek myths have a message or moral in them. What do you think the message or moral is in this story? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 2 Icarus helps his father to create a giant labyrinth.
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- Icarus had taken the King's daughter to a dangerous place.

5. Look at the paragraph beginning **Less than an hour...** Find and copy **two** words which show that the King is unhappy.

furious
outraged

6. What two warnings does Daedalus give to Icarus?

- 1. Daedalus warns Icarus not to fly too close to the sun because the heat will melt the wax.**
- 2. Daedalus warns Icarus not to fly too close to the sea because the water will make the wings become too heavy.**

7. Describe Daedalus's character. Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Daedalus is proud of the work that he does. I also think that Daedalus is big-headed because he thinks that helping Theseus will make him a hero and he doesn't stop to think about whether it is a good idea or not.

8. Most Greek myths have a message or moral in them. What do you think the message or moral is in this story? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the moral of this story is that you should always listen to adults because Icarus ignores his father's warnings and ends up falling straight into the sea.

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King Minos was intrigued. He peered out of the window and watched as the boat drew closer. Ordinarily, he paid no attention to those entering or leaving Crete but the messenger had forewarned him: this man had been exiled from Athens yet all reports described him as a genius. It was rumoured that he had even fooled Hercules with his inventions. An idea sparked in the King's mind; maybe this man was the answer to all of his problems.



A short while after Daedalus had landed on the island of Crete, he was kneeling at the base of a large throne and vowing to become the King's master craftsman. "I require your skills," demanded the revered King. "There is a Minotaur who runs rampant around here. Despite our best efforts, we have been unable to contain it. I require you to build a maze that it will be unable to escape from."



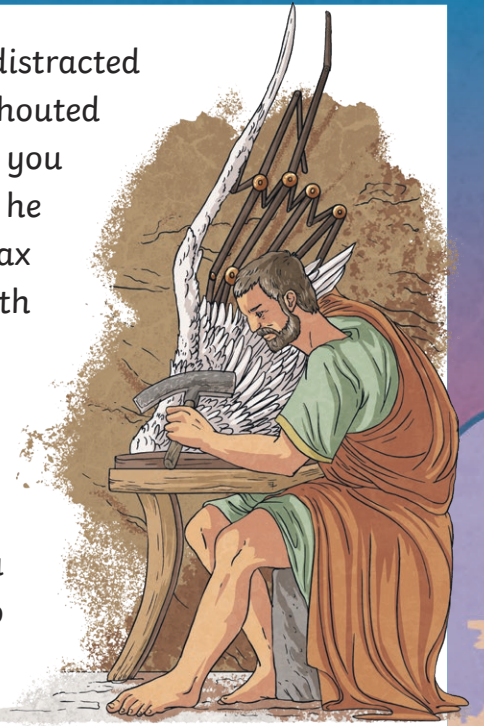
Pleased that his reputation as a skilled inventor had followed him, Daedalus set to work. Aided by his son, Icarus, the pair spent the next few months constructing an incredible and intricate labyrinth. When the time of its completion arrived, the Minotaur was captured and locked away. The people of Crete rejoiced and saw Daedalus and Icarus as heroes.



One day, Daedalus was approached by a man named Theseus. He explained to Daedalus that he planned to slay the Minotaur and needed his help to navigate the enormous maze. Unable to ignore the idea that this was a truly heroic feat which would cement his name firmly into Crete's history, Daedalus agreed. Joined by King Minos's daughter, the three completed their mission and escaped the labyrinth. However, instead of waiting to receive praise and glory, Theseus fled back to Athens with King Minos's daughter beside him. Daedalus was surprised by the hero's sudden departure and began to consider whether his actions were not heroic after all.

Less than an hour had passed before the King, furious about his lost daughter, had locked Daedalus and Icarus within the labyrinth. Without having plotted his route this time, Daedalus knew that there was no way out. Days went past and Daedalus crafted plot after plot. Icarus began to test each wall to see if they could be scaled but it was no use; the labyrinth had been too well designed and escape was surely impossible.

One day, as he was praying to the gods, Daedalus was distracted by a flock of birds flying high in the sky. "That's it!" he shouted to Icarus, "Go and collect every fallen feather that you can find." When Icarus had collected enough feathers, he carefully attached them to large wooden frames using wax from the candles which lit their prison. By sunrise, both Icarus and Daedalus had a pair of wings.



"Before we go," warned Daedalus, "I need you to listen carefully. While I'm sure that these wings will work, I have only been able to use the tools available within this labyrinth. Therefore, there are two rules which you must adhere to. The first is that you must not fly too close to the sea for the feathers will absorb the water and become too heavy to fly. The second is that you must not fly too close to the sun for, if you do, the wax which holds the feathers together will melt. Do you understand?"

Icarus nodded and the two began to beat their wings in unison. They rose higher and higher until the labyrinth was a mere speck below them. Daedalus looked at his son, who was soaring like an eagle, and felt proud. They had done it; they were free.



Looking upwards, Icarus realised that he was closer to the gods than any mortal had ever been.



Fascinated by this thought, he forgot his father's warning. He began to climb higher and higher until the heat became too much for the wax that held the feathers in place. With no feathers, Icarus began to spiral down towards the sea until he hit the surface with a crash and was never seen again.



Questions

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- Icarus thinks about how close he is to the gods.
- Theseus returns to Athens.
- King Minos hears news of Daedalus's arrival.
- Icarus and Daedalus begin to fly to freedom.

2. Which of the following does Daedalus **not use** when creating the wings? Tick one.

- wax
- feathers
- string
- wood

3. Look at the paragraph beginning **A short while after...** Find and copy one word which means the same as **respected**.

4. Why did Daedalus choose to help Theseus?

1. _____

2. _____

5. Explain what happened when Icarus flew too close to the sun.

6. Argue that it was wrong of Daedalus to agree to help Theseus.

7. Imagine that you are Icarus. What is going through your mind as the feathers begin to drop from your wings? _____

8. Many Greek myths warn people not to think that they are gods. Do you think that this story is one of those myths? Tick one and give reasons for your answer.

Yes

No

Answers

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 4** Icarus thinks about how close he is to the gods.
- 2** Theseus returns to Athens.
- 1** King Minos hears news of Daedalus's arrival.
- 3** Icarus and Daedalus begin to fly to freedom.

2. Which of the following does Daedalus **not use** when creating the wings? Tick one.

- wax
- feathers
- string**
- wood

3. Look at the paragraph beginning **A short while after...** Find and copy one word which means the same as **respected**. **Revered**

4. Why did Daedalus choose to help Theseus? **Daedalus chose to help Theseus because he was unable to ignore the idea that this was a truly heroic feat which would cement his name firmly into Crete's history.**

5. Explain what happened when Icarus flew too close to the sun. **When Icarus flew too close to the sun, the heat melted the wax which held the feathers on his wings together and this meant that the feathers fell off.**

6. Argue that it was wrong of Daedalus to agree to help Theseus. **Pupils' own responses, such as: It was wrong of Daedalus to agree to help Theseus because he did it behind the King's back. The King had been kind to Daedalus because he gave him work doing something that he loved despite having been exiled from Athens.**

7. Imagine that you are Icarus. What is going through your mind as the feathers begin to drop from your wings? **Pupils' own responses, such as: Oh no! I forgot to listen to my father's warning. I got distracted and now I am too close to the sun. Surely, all of the feathers will fall off and I will plummet to the ground.**

8. Many Greek myths warn people not to think that they are gods. Do you think that this story is one of those myths? Tick one.

Accept either 'yes' or 'no' providing that an explanation is also given, such as: Yes, I think that this story does warn people not to think that they are gods because Icarus starts to think that he is closer to the gods than any mortal has been. I think that he starts climbing higher in the sky because he believes that he can be a god.