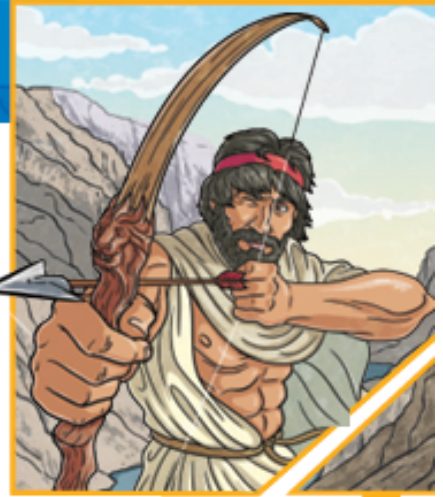


The Labours of Hercules

Thousands of years ago, there lived a man named Hercules. He was a demi-god and had the power of incredible strength.

When Hercules was younger, a curse was put on him by the goddess, Hera. This curse forced him to do awful things that he felt terrible about. When the curse was broken, he asked for forgiveness and was told to visit King Eurystheus. There, he would be given 12 difficult labours to complete to earn forgiveness.



For the first two tasks, Hercules was asked to defeat the Nemean lion and the Lernaean hydra. These were two powerful beasts who had been terrifying villagers. Hercules used his incredible strength to defeat both of the beasts.



Next, King Eurystheus challenged him to catch an incredibly fast deer called the hind of Ceryneia. It took Hercules a whole year to capture the animal but he was eventually successful and asked for the next task.

After completing the fourth labour which was to catch a giant boar, Hercules was told to clean the filthy stables of a huge herd of cattle. Immediately, he began to dig and change the route of two nearby rivers so that they flowed through the stables. The water cleaned the stables and the task was complete.

Hercules next defeated a flock of vicious birds that were destroying crops and villages. Then, he was asked to bring back an enormous bull that had been rampaging around the island of Crete. When he arrived at the island, the king of Crete was more than happy for Hercules to capture the bull and take it to King Eurystheus.



Amazed that Hercules had made it this far, King Eurystheus sent Hercules to capture four terrifying, man-eating horses. Hercules dug a trench around the horses that filled with sea water. This imprisoned them and the horses were eventually calmed and captured as they had nothing but grass to eat.

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Hercules' ninth task was to bring back a magic belt from an Amazonian named Hippolyte. Hippolyte was happy to help Hercules but Hera spread the rumour that Hercules was really there to harm Hippolyte. When a fight threatened to break out, Hercules stole the belt and sailed away.

Hercules' tenth task was to steal a herd of cattle from a monster named Geryon. After that, he was sent to pick some golden apples. He asked the god Atlas for help and in return, Hercules offered to carry the weight of the world for a while. Atlas agreed and Hercules returned with the golden apples.

For his final task, King Eurystheus sent Hercules to the underworld to steal a three-headed hound. Hercules asked the god of the underworld if he could borrow the dog. Hades said that if he calmed the dog, he could take him. After wrestling for a long time, Hercules was able to wear the beast out and carry it to King Eurystheus.



Terrified that the beast of the underworld was in front of him, King Eurystheus hid and told Hercules that everything in his past had been forgiven.

Questions

1. Who put a curse on Hercules? Tick one.

- ☐ Hera
- ☐ King Eurystheus
- ☐ Hippolyte
- ☐ Geryon

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

- ☐ Hercules collected some golden apples.
- ☐ Hercules defeated the Nemean lion.
- ☐ Hercules stole Hippolyte's magic belt.
- ☐ Hercules cleaned the stables of a huge herd of cattle.

3. **Then, he was asked to bring back an enormous bull that had been rampaging around the island of Crete.**

What does the word **rampaging** tell you about the way that the bull had moved around Crete?

4. What was Hercules' final task?

5. Fill in the missing words.

King Eurystheus challenged Hercules to catch an incredibly fast _____ called the _____ of Ceryneia.

6. What do you think Hercules did after completing all 12 tasks? Explain your answer.

7. Which task do you think Hercules found the most difficult? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Hercules found capturing the hind of Ceryneia the most difficult because it says that it took him a whole year to complete and no other tasks were described as having taken that long.

8. Using 15 words or fewer, explain why Hercules had to complete 12 tasks.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Hera had cursed Hercules to do terrible things and he wanted to be forgiven.