



Dear Family Member,

Today, your child heard a read-aloud about the most famous hero in Greek mythology, Hercules. Over the next several days your child will hear more about the twelve labors of Hercules, specifically his fight with the Nemean lion and his search for the golden apples of the Hesperides. Your child will also hear about the riddle of the Sphinx and the story of Atalanta, a swift-footed huntress who refused to marry.

Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about Greek myths over the next several days.

### 1. Hercules

Have your child share with you what s/he has learned about Hercules. Share with your child that the name “Hercules” is actually the better-known Roman pronunciation of this mythical hero. In Greek “Hercules” is pronounced “Heracles” [HER-uh-kleez]. You may wish to search at the library or online for text or more details about Hercules’ other labors to share with your child.

### 2. Sayings and Phrases: Back to the Drawing Board

Your child will learn the saying “back to the drawing board” in relation to the myth of Hercules and the golden apples. Hercules does not know where these apples are, but has heard stories that they can be found to the west. He travels to the west but does not find the apples. As a result he has to start his search all over again or has to go “back to the drawing board.” Talk with your child about other situations where one might say “back to the drawing board” when something doesn’t work out at first.

### 3. The Riddle of the Sphinx

Talk with your child about the riddle of the Sphinx, a winged, mythical creature with the body of a lion and the face of a woman. Have your child tell you the riddle and share the answer with you after you have guessed. If you know of any other riddles, share them with your child, or brainstorm with your child to create new riddles about the Greek myths s/he has heard.

#### 4. Atalanta

Ask your child to tell you about Atalanta, the swift-footed huntress. Discuss with your child how the goddess Aphrodite helped one of Atalanta's suitors trick her, sharing that the Greek gods and goddesses were believed to have often interfered in the lives of mortals. Share with your child other myths you may know of where the Greek gods or goddesses interfered in the lives of others.

#### 5. Words to Use

Below is a list of some of the words that your child will be learning about and using. Try to use these words as they come up in everyday speech with your child.

- *labors*—Hercules had to complete twelve difficult labors or tasks.
- *reputation*—Hercules cleared his reputation, or the people's opinion of him, as ill-tempered after he completed those twelve labors.
- *posed*—The Sphinx posed her difficult riddle to any traveler who walked the road to Thebes.
- *resist*—Atalanta was unable to resist the golden apples.

#### 6. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important that you read to your child each day. Please refer to the list of books and other resources sent home with the previous family letter, recommending resources related to Greek myths and the ancient Greek civilization.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has learned at school.