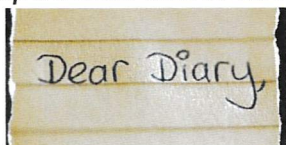







Hello soon-to-be Year 7s!

Your first unit of work in English at IGS will be all about myths and legends! We will be digging into the characters of these famous stories that have influenced so much of our modern world and the literature that we come across today. In particular, we will be focusing on heroes and villains.

For your transition project, we would like you to read the following myth: Medusa. Some of you may already be familiar with it!

After you have read this myth, pick from one of the following creative activities:

<p><i>Write a diary entry from the perspective of Medusa. See if you can make the reader feel sympathetic towards her!</i></p> 	<p><i>Imagine you are Medusa's lawyer. Write a speech in which you argue that Medusa's punishment is unfair.</i></p> 	<p><i>Write a detailed description of Medusa's head. Use your ambitious vocabulary to make it vivid!</i></p> 
<p><i>Write a story from the point of view of one of Medusa's victims!</i></p> 	<p><i>Write/create a video of an interview with Athena.</i></p> <p><i>What were her reasons for punishing Medusa?</i></p> 	<p><i>Create a piece of artwork based on the reflection in Perseus' shield.</i></p> 

Please bring in your project/pictures of your project ready for a discussion in your first lesson.

We are really looking forward to meeting you all!

The English Department at IGS 😊

The Myth of Medusa

Once upon a time, a long time ago there lived a beautiful maiden named Medusa. Medusa lived in the city of Athens in a country named Greece -- and although there were many pretty girls in the city, Medusa was considered the most lovely.

Unfortunately, Medusa was very proud of her beauty and thought or spoke of little else. Each day she boasted of how pretty she was and each day her boasts became more outrageous.

On Sunday, Medusa bragged to the miller that her skin was more beautiful than fresh fallen snow. On Monday, she told the cobbler that her hair glowed brighter than the sun. On Tuesday, she commented to the blacksmith's son that her eyes were greener than the Aegean Sea. On Wednesday, she boasted to everyone at the public gardens that her lips were redder than the reddest rose.

When she wasn't busy sharing her thoughts about her beauty with all who passed by, Medusa would gaze lovingly at her reflection in the mirror. She admired herself in her hand mirror for an hour each morning as she brushed her hair. She admired herself in her darkened window for an hour each evening as she got ready for bed. She even stopped to admire herself in the well each afternoon as she drew water for her father's horses -- often forgetting to fetch the water in her distraction.

On and on Medusa went about her beauty to anyone and everyone who stopped long enough to hear her -- until one day when she made her first visit to the Parthenon with her friends. The Parthenon was the largest temple to the goddess Athena in all the land. It was decorated with amazing sculptures and paintings. Everyone who entered was awed by the beauty of the place and couldn't help but think of how grateful they were to Athena, goddess of wisdom, for inspiring them and for watching over their city of Athens. Everyone, that is, except Medusa.

When Medusa saw the sculptures, she whispered that she would have made a much better subject for the sculptor than Athena had. When Medusa saw the artwork, she commented that the artist had done a fine job considering the goddess's thick eyebrows -- but imagine how much more wonderful the painting would be if it was of someone as delicate as Medusa.

And when Medusa reached the altar she sighed happily and said, "My this is a beautiful temple. It is a shame it was wasted on Athena for I am so much prettier than she is -- perhaps some day people will build an even grander temple to my beauty."

Medusa's friends grew pale. The priestesses who overheard Medusa gasped. Whispers ran through all the people in the temple who quickly began to leave -- for everyone knew that Athena enjoyed watching over the people of Athens and feared what might happen if the goddess had overheard Medusa's rash remarks.

Before long the temple was empty of everyone except Medusa, who was so busy gazing proudly at her reflection in the large bronze doors that she hadn't noticed the swift departure of everyone else. The image she was gazing at wavered and suddenly, instead of her own features, it was the face of Athena that Medusa saw reflected back at her.

"Vain and foolish girl," Athena said angrily, "You think you are prettier than I am! I doubt it to be true, but even if it were -- there is more to life than beauty alone. While others work and play and learn, you do little but boast and admire yourself."

Medusa tried to point out that her beauty was an inspiration to those around her and that she made their lives better by simply looking so lovely, but Athena silenced her with a frustrated wave.

"Nonsense," Athena retorted, "Beauty fades swiftly in all mortals. It does not comfort the sick, teach the unskilled or feed the hungry. And by my powers, your loveliness shall be stripped away completely. Your fate shall serve as a reminder to others to control their pride."

And with those words Medusa's face changed to that of a hideous monster. Her hair twisted and thickened into horrible snakes that hissed and fought each other atop her head.

"Medusa, for your pride this has been done. Your face is now so terrible to behold that the mere sight of it will turn a man to stone," proclaimed the goddess, "Even you, Medusa, should you seek your reflection, shall turn to rock the instant you see your face."

And with that, Athena sent Medusa with her hair of snakes to live with the blind monsters -- the gorgon sisters -- at the ends of the earth, so that no innocents would be accidentally turned to stone at the sight of her.

Medusa and Perseus

The story of how Medusa was killed by Perseus is one of the most thrilling stories in Greek mythology. Perseus was born to the god, Zeus, and mortal woman, Danae, making him a demi-god with great strength and intelligent ingenuity. He would become one of the great heroes in Greek mythology because of his ability to behead the monster, Medusa.

Perseus was born to Zeus and Danae. Danae was the daughter of King Acrisius. When Perseus was born, King Acrisius feared that Perseus would grow up and kill him, so he cast Danae and Perseus into the sea in a wooden chest.

The chest came ashore on the island of Serifos, where a fisherman found them and took them in. The fisherman was the brother of King Polydectes,

who was a malicious king. Perseus would grow into a strong young man with great power and intelligence.

King Polydectes had fallen in love with Danae and made her his slave. Perseus wanted to protect his mother, and Polydectes knew Perseus would protect her at all costs. Some versions of the myth describe Polydectes as requiring Perseus to bring him a gift, while other versions of the myth send Perseus on a dangerous quest to keep him from overpowering the king.

While the versions are different, they have the same outcome; Perseus is ordered by King Polydectes to bring back the head of Medusa.

Perseus, who was the son of Zeus, had help from the gods on his quest to find and behead Medusa. Hades, god of the underworld, gave Perseus the cape of invisibility. Hermes, god of travel, gave Perseus a pair of winged sandals. Athena, god of women, gave Perseus a reflective bronze shield, and Hephaestus, god of fire and the forge, gave Perseus a sword.

Using the gifts from the gods, Perseus locates and enters Medusa's cave. Perseus finds Medusa asleep inside her cave and makes sure not to wake her. Perseus takes the reflective bronze shield from Athena and holds it up to use as a mirror to locate Medusa. Walking backward towards Medusa, Perseus continues to hold the shield in the air to keep a clear view of Medusa, making sure to only look at Medusa in the shield.

As Perseus crept closer to Medusa, he wielded the sword that Hephaestus had given him and beheaded the monster. Perseus threw Medusa's head into his satchel and journeyed home.