

LESSON 1

Engaging the Reader

Close Reading Part 1 of “Shrouded in Myth”

Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on ELA CCSS)

- I can cite text-based evidence to support an analysis of literary text. (RL.6.1)
- I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about sixth-grade topics, texts, and issues. (SL.6.1)

Supporting Learning Targets

- I can get the gist of the text “Shrouded in Myth.”
- I can identify unfamiliar vocabulary in “Shrouded in Myth.”
- I can collaborate effectively with my peers.

Ongoing Assessment

- Quick Write: Responding to a Quote and Picture
- Students’ annotated texts of “Shrouded in Myth”
- Exit Ticket: Reflecting on the Learning Targets

Agenda

1. Opening
 - A. QuickWrite: Responding to a Quote and Picture (10 minutes)
 - B. Unpacking Learning Targets (5 minutes)
2. Work Time
 - A. Read Aloud: “Shrouded in Myth” (5 minutes)
 - B. Rereading for Gist and to Identify Unfamiliar Vocabulary: “Shrouded in Myth” (20 minutes)

3. Closing and Assessment
 - A. Fist-to-Five: Reflecting on the Learning Targets (5 minutes)
4. Homework

Finish annotating “Shrouded in Myth” for Gist.

Teaching Notes

- These first two lessons are designed to engage students in the world of mythology before they begin the novel *The Lightning Thief*. Lesson 1 begins with a “mystery” quote and picture to allow students to uncover the focus of the module. Do not reveal the topic to them in advance.
- This lesson introduces simple routines, or “protocols,” that will be used throughout the modules to promote student engagement, collaboration, and self-assessment. Review the Cold-Call, Think-Pair-Share, and Fist-to-Five protocols in the Appendix.
- Note that time is spent deconstructing the learning targets with students at the beginning of this lesson. This gives students a clear vision for what the learning will focus on for each lesson. This research-based strategy particularly supports struggling learners. Using learning targets is also a powerful way to teach academic vocabulary.
- This lesson also introduces close-reading practices that will be built on throughout this module: reading to get the gist, annotating the text, chunking a text, and recognizing unfamiliar vocabulary.
- “Gist” is an early or emerging understanding of a chunk of text. When we ask students to come up with a gist statement, we are asking them simply to share their initial thinking of what a text is “mostly about.” It is a check for understanding and an entry point to complex text—the first step to see whether the students are even in the same room as you. Gist notes are simple and could be wrong; envision them as the sort of initial annotations a student might scribble in the margins as he or she is trying to get a toehold into a complex text. A gist statement might be, “It’s about bears,” or, “Three bears are in the woods and something happens.” Gist notes serve as a preliminary, tentative, low-stakes way to begin to process a complex text. Gist statements happen along the way and support student focus and engagement.
- Help students distinguish the gist from the main idea and the central idea, which are synonymous and refer to the main point of an informational text or chunks of that text. The CCSS specifically uses the term *central idea*, so it is important to teach students that term. An informational text can have several central ideas; in grades 5 and beyond, standards call for students to be recognizing that. Central ideas emerge once students have read and thought carefully about the entire piece. Gist, by contrast, is very preliminary thinking.
- Note that in many lessons, the teacher reads a portion of the text aloud. During these read-alouds, students are expected to be looking at the text and actively reading in their heads. The teacher reads aloud slowly, fluently, and without interruption or explanation. When done in this fashion, this read-aloud process promotes fluency for students. They are hearing a strong reader read the text aloud with accuracy and expression and are simultaneously looking at and thinking about the words on the printed page.

- Post the learning targets where all students can see them.
- Post both the quote from “Shrouded in Myth” and the image of Perseus (see Supporting Materials) so all students can see both documents.

Lesson Vocabulary

learning target, gist, annotate; prophecy, fate, imprisoned, stunning, dreaded, writhing

Materials

- Quote from “Shrouded in Myth” (charted or projected)
- Image of sculpture of Perseus and head of Medusa (one large copy or projected)
- Quick Write: Responding to a Quote and Picture Recording Form (one per student)
- “Shrouded in Myth” (one per student and one to display)
- Document camera
- Fist-to-Five chart

Opening

A. Quick Write: Responding to a Quote and Picture (10 minutes)

- Explain to students that today they are launching into a new and exciting study. Ask them to read the quote and look at the picture, which give clues as to what they will be studying in the weeks to come. Display **the quote from “Shrouded in Myth”** and the **image of the sculpture of Perseus** holding the head of Medusa in view of the whole class.
- Distribute the **Quick Write: Responding to a Quote and Picture Recording Form** to each student. Explain to students that a Quick Write is exactly what it sounds like: The goal is to just get their ideas down in a couple of minutes without worrying at all about spelling and mechanics.
- Instruct students to first read the quote and then Quick Write for 2 minutes.
- Circulate to observe students’ reading of this complex text and responding in writing. Make note of students who easily begin to work independently and those who may need more support in future activities.
- After 2 minutes, ask students to stop where they are with their writing and then turn and talk to a peer:
 - “Where do you think this quote came from? Why do you think that?”
- Encourage students to refer to specific words or sentences in the text to support their thinking.
- Invite students to first look at the image and then Quick Write for 2 minutes. Ask:
 - “How is this image related to the quote you just read? What do you see that makes you think that?” Again, ask students to discuss with a peer, and then invite whole-class shares. Encourage students to be specific, relating a detail in the image to a detail in the text.

- Finally, ask for brief whole-group discussion:
 - “Based on this quote and this image, what do you think we will be studying in the weeks to come?”
- Congratulate students on their entry into the world of mythology and their effort to discuss a text using specific evidence from the text to support their thinking. Tell them that both of these—the topic of mythology and the skill of using evidence when discussing reading—lie at the heart of their learning for the next several weeks, including the reading of a novel and several classic myths as well as the writing of their own myths. Here we go!

Meeting Students’ Needs

- “Shrouded in Myth” is a complex text. In this and future lessons, student will be supported in reading this myth many times. For this engagement experience, consider pulling select students into a small group for greater support or shared reading.
- Many students will benefit from seeing questions posted on the interactive whiteboard or using a document camera, but reveal questions one at a time to keep students focused on the question at hand.
- Consider pairing up English language learners who speak the same home language when discussion of complex content is required. This can allow students to have more meaningful discussions and clarify points in their native language.

B. Unpacking Learning Targets (5 minutes)

- Direct students’ attention to the learning targets for today’s lesson. Tell students that *learning targets* are helpful tools in understanding their own learning goals. Targets will be part of every lesson. They are “I can . . .” statements that they are striving to be able to do in any given lesson or series of lessons.
- Read aloud as students read along with today’s learning targets:
 - “I can get the gist of the text ‘Shrouded in Myth.’”
 - “I can identify unfamiliar vocabulary in ‘Shrouded in Myth.’”
 - “I can collaborate effectively with my peers.”
- Define *gist* as the initial, preliminary sense of what a text is mostly about. Tell students they will talk about this more later in the lesson.
- Explain the process of Think-Pair-Share if it is unfamiliar to the class. This is a simple protocol they will use often in which you will pose a question or prompt and they will:
 1. Take a few seconds to think about the question or prompt.
 2. Pair up with someone next to them, regardless of who it is—just a “next-door neighbor,” not someone “around the block” from them—and take turns sharing their thinking about the question or prompt.

3. Share with the whole class any thoughts they had, conclusions they came to, questions they still have, or anything else related to the protocol.
- Ask students to Think-Pair-Share:
 - “Based on these learning targets, what do you think your learning today will be?”
 - Listen for responses like these: “We will be talking to each other,” or, “We will be trying to get a basic sense of a myth.”

Meeting Students’ Needs

- Use thoughtful grouping.
- ELL language acquisition is facilitated by interacting with native speakers of English who provide models of language.
- Provide an illustrated anchor chart of question words (e.g., for the word *when*, use a picture of a clock) to assist students needing additional support with learning the structure to ask questions.

Work Time

A. Read Aloud: “Shrouded in Myth” (5 minutes)

- Distribute “**Shrouded in Myth**” to each student. Tell students that this is the text in which you found the quote they read at the beginning of the lesson. It is a retelling of the myth of Perseus. Ask students to read in their heads as you read this myth aloud. (This promotes fluency.)
- After reading, explain to students that often the first time they read a text is just to get the flow of it and become familiar with its structure from beginning to end.
- Invite students to Think-Pair-Share:
 - “What do you notice about this text? What do you wonder?”
- Listen for general “notices” and “wonders,” which at this point likely will be about the text’s topic, plot, and perhaps structure. Tell students they will continue to dig into this text during the next few days.

B. Rereading for Gist and to Identify Unfamiliar Vocabulary: “Shrouded in Myth” (20 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will now reread this text independently with new purposes: to get the *gist* and to identify unfamiliar vocabulary that they encounter. Go into more detail about what it means to “get the gist.”
- Say: “Getting the gist’ means just getting your very first sense of what smaller sections of text are mostly about. It’s a way to just keep track of your early thinking about a text: your initial sense of what it is mostly about. It helps to write ‘gist notes’ in the margins to keep track of this early thinking. This is just your first ‘scratching the surface’ understanding.”

- Display “Shrouded in Myth” using a **document camera** (or chart the first paragraph). Tell students that in a narrative, or story, like this one, they can divide the text into smaller chunks of one to two paragraphs. Advise them that if they are struggling with a text, dividing it into smaller chunks can make the reading more manageable.
- Reread the first chunk of “Shrouded in Myth” from “A long, long, long time ago . . .” to “. . . had other plans.” Tell students that after reading a chunk of text, readers often annotate a text for the gist in the margin. Define the word *annotate* as “to make notes on the text.” Point out the word root, *note*.
- Ask students to Think-Pair-Share:
 - “What was the gist of this section? What is your initial sense of what this part of the text was mostly about?”
- Listen for such answers as: “A king was given a prophecy, so he locked up his daughter.” Model writing the gist of this first chunk in the margin of the text. Write: “A king locks up his daughter” in the margin, emphasizing that not every detail is noted in the gist.
- Tell students that as they reread, they have a second purpose as well: to identify and circle unfamiliar vocabulary. Go back to the first section of the text. Tell students that in a text like this one, some words are difficult because they are complex vocabulary; other words are difficult because they are names of people and places.
- Remind them that names of people and places are proper nouns and can often be identified because they begin with a capital letter. Identify some of these “people and places” words, such as *Acrisios*, *Argos*, and *Danae*. Tell students that it is not important to determine the meaning of these words; they should try their best to read and pronounce them and then move on.
- Explain to students that for other complex words, it is important to notice these words (instead of avoiding them) and then try to determine their meaning: These often are the types of words that will show up in other texts they read. For now, as they reread, they should just pay attention to the words they don’t know and circle them. In the next lesson, they will learn more about determining their meaning. Model circling words, such as *fate* and *imprisoned*.
- Give students the remaining 10 minutes to continue independently, reading a chunk, annotating for gist, and circling unfamiliar works. Tell students that it is fine if they do not finish annotating the entire text; they will complete it for homework tonight. Continue to reassure them that jotting notes about the gist is just a way for them to start making sense of the text.
- Circulate to observe which students are annotating and circling words; encourage them with these important practices that will support them in close reading. Check students’ annotations, guiding them toward short, general statements of important events in the text.
- If students are not making any annotations, probe by asking, “What is your basic sense of what this chunk is mostly about?” Remind them it’s fine if their gist is short, or even wrong—it’s just a start. Model annotating as needed, and help students realize that even strong readers make annotations so that later they can quickly reread and find key passages. If students are not circling words, point

out a complex vocabulary word and ask students for the meaning. If students are not able to define the word for you, then point out, “It’s fine if you don’t know that word yet. That’s what I want you paying attention to for now: just noticing which hard words you don’t know.” Remind them of the importance of circling these words.

Meeting Students’ Needs

- Select students may benefit from a version of the text that has already been broken into chunks, making it explicit when to stop and annotate for gist. (See Supporting Materials.)
- Select students may need more frequent checks for understanding and guided practice when annotating for gist for the first time. Consider pulling these students into a small group, checking in with them periodically, and discussing the gist of a section before they write it.
- Select students may find it helpful to determine the gist of smaller chunks of the text at a time. Consider calling this “bite-size” reading: “When we are having trouble eating something, we take smaller bites of it before moving on.”
- For students who struggle with reading grade-level text, consider chunking the text for them on separate sheets of paper. This makes the reading of complex text more manageable and allows them to focus on one small section at a time.
- Asking students to identify challenging vocabulary helps them monitor their understanding of a complex text. When they annotate the text by circling these words, it can also provide a formative assessment for the teacher.
- To further support ELL students, consider providing definitions of challenging vocabulary in the student’s home language. Such resources as Google Translate and bilingual translation dictionaries can assist with one-word translations.

Closing and Assessment

A. Fist-to-Five: Reflecting on the Learning Targets (5 minutes)

- Ask a student volunteer to read each learning target aloud. Prompt all students to raise their hands to represent how they feel about their ability to meet each learning target at this moment, using the Fist-to-Five protocol. Refer students to the **Fist-to-Five Chart** to cue their hand raising. This self-assessment helps students rate themselves on a continuum from 0 (fist), meaning far from the target, to 5 (five fingers), meaning they have solidly met the target.
- Describe to the students any patterns that you notice in this early self-assessment. (Example: “I see that a number of students are holding up 2s or 3s for ‘getting the gist.’ This is right where I expected us to be, because this is something that takes practice. We will revisit getting the gist throughout the module, so we are likely to gain confidence in this area.”)

Meeting Students' Needs

Reviewing learning targets reinforces key academic vocabulary. Consider creating a word wall with these terms to reinforce them throughout the unit.

Homework

Reread “Shrouded in Myth” and finish annotating for gist if you did not complete it in class. It is fine if you just have a general sense of what each chunk is about. After reading, try representing this story through a drawing or series of drawings that show your understanding.

Quote from “Shrouded in Myth” and Image of Perseus

(Teacher Reference)

Source: Quote from: “Shrouded in Myth” by Jessica Neidl. From Calliope issue: Mycenae & the Mycenaeans, © 2002 Carus Publishing Company, published by Cobblestone Publishing, 30 Grove Street, Suite C, Peterborough, NH 03458. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission of the publisher. www.cobblestonepub.com.

Teacher directions: Use chart paper or a document camera to display this image and quote for the whole class as part of “Engaging the Reader.”



The famous statue by Benvenuto Cellini, “Perseus with the head of Medusa,” in Piazza della Signoria in Florence, Italy. *Source:* Image Copyright Viacheslav Lopatin. Used under license from Shutterstock.com.

When Perseus grew up, Polydectes gave him a series of challenging tasks to complete. Armed with a sword made by the god Hermes, winged sandals, and a shiny bronze shield given to him by the goddess Athena, Perseus slew the dreaded monster Medusa. This hideous creature had writhing snakes for hair, elephant-like tusks for teeth, and blood-red eyes. Whoever looked at her was instantly turned to stone.

Quick Write

Responding to a Quote and Picture

Name: _____

Date: _____

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1. Where do you think this quote came from? Why do you think this?

Study the picture posted at the front of the room.

2. How is this picture of a sculpture connected to the quote? What details made you think this?

Examples of Nonlinguistic Representations of Learning Target Vocabulary



Record

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Discuss

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Notice

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Wonder

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Explain

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“Shrouded in Myth” by Jessica Fisher Neidl

A long, long, long time ago, even before Perseus was born, his grandfather, Acrisios, the king of Argos, was given a *prophecy* that he would someday be killed by his grandson. To protect himself from this *fate*, the terrified king *imprisoned* his only daughter, Danae, in an underground dungeon so that she could never marry or have children. Certain that he would never be a grandfather, Acrisios relaxed. But Zeus, the great father of the gods, had other plans.

Zeus had been watching Danae and thought she was *stunning*—too beautiful to resist. He turned himself into golden rain and poured through the bronze bars in the roof of her elaborate dungeon. As the rain fell upon Danae, its magical powers caused a child to begin growing within her. Nine months later, she gave birth to a son and named him Perseus.

Outraged as well as frightened when he learned of a grandson’s birth, Acrisios enclosed mother and son in a chest, which he flung into the sea. After drifting about for a long time, the chest finally washed up on a distant island. A fisherman found it and brought it to his brother, King Polydectes, who took Perseus and his mother into his palace.

When Perseus grew up, Polydectes gave him a series of challenging tasks to complete. Armed with a sword made by the god Hermes, winged sandals, and a shiny bronze shield given to him by the goddess Athena, Perseus slew the *dreaded* monster Medusa. This hideous creature had *writhing* snakes for hair, elephant-like tusks for teeth, and blood-red eyes. Whoever looked at her was instantly turned to stone.

As success followed success, Perseus began to think about the stories he had heard about his grandfather, Acrisios. So, after a brief visit to his mother, the young hero set sail for Argos. Before he reached it, however, Acrisios got word that his long-lost grandson was coming and fled the city, for he still feared the prophecy.

While waiting for Acrisios to return, Perseus attended festival games being held in a neighboring town. A skilled athlete, Perseus entered the discus contest. As he prepared to throw it, he lost control and the heavy disk went hurtling into the crowd, striking a man and killing him. Alas, the tragic prophecy had proved true—the dead spectator was Acrisios. Perseus was so troubled about the accident that he chose to leave Argos and build his own city—the legendary Mycenae.

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Fist-to-Five Chart

	I completely understand
	I mostly understand
	I understand pretty well
	I could use more practice
	I need help
	I don't understand at all

Things Close Readers Do

(Teacher Reference)

Directions: These bullets are added to the chart during class, with students.

- Get the gist of what a text is mostly about.
- Cite evidence.
- Use context clues to figure out word meanings.