



# HILL WEST *Primary*

FOUR OAKS

## Home Learning Pack

Year 5;

Week Beginning 14.12.20



## Home Learning Links

### Oak National Academy

Oak National Academy is an online classroom and resource hub. It provides high-quality video lessons and resources to support teachers, parents and pupils.

[www.thenational.academy](http://www.thenational.academy)

### BBC Bitesize

With BBC Bitesize it is easy to keep learning at home. You can access regular daily lessons in English, maths and other core subjects.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

### World Book Online

World Book online have just made their fabulous collection of over 3,000 e-books and audiobooks available for free for children to access at home. They have books suitable for all ages. Click on the following link to access them.

<https://worldbook.kitaboo.com/reader/worldbook/index.html?usertoken=Mjk5MzQ6MTpJUjA5MjAxNjoyOmNsaWVudDE2OTc6MTY5NzoyMjE2Mjg4OjE6MTU4NDM4MDExMzA2Mjp1cw%3D%3D>

### Read Works.org

Read Works offers access to 3000+ comprehension for all age groups. Just sign up for a free account to access fantastic texts.

<https://www.readworks.org/>

### Tutortastic

An online platform with tutorials and videos for home learning.

<https://www.tutortastic.co.uk/blog/homelearning>

### Education Quizzes

A series of short quizzes for children to complete related to the National Curriculum subjects. Just select KS1 for Reception, Year 1 & Year 2 and select KS2 for Years 3-6.

<https://www.educationquizzes.com/ks1/>

### Top Marks

A range of activities here but especially good interactive activities for maths.

<https://www.topmarks.co.uk/>

### Classroom Secrets

Classroom Secrets Kids is offering free access to everyone until the end of April 2020. The platform is aimed at primary aged children and covers subjects such as maths, reading, grammar and spelling. The platform is really child-friendly so that they're able to access it on their own. There are a load of games and interactive activities from phonics to SATs

<https://kids.classroomsecrets.co.uk/>

### National Geographic

National Geographic is a great platform for learning and it's totally free. There are online games, resources and competitions, too.

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/teacher-category/primary-resources/>

**Reading Eggspress**

Reading Eggspress has lots of reading activities including comprehension and retrieval questions to have a go at. Your child's Username and Password should be written in their Homework Book.

[https://readingeggspress.co.uk/?\\_ga=2.107706762.961348329.1601363904-660844018.1598947512](https://readingeggspress.co.uk/?_ga=2.107706762.961348329.1601363904-660844018.1598947512)

**Top Marks – Division**

We have been learning about division this week, mostly looking in-depth at partitioning and we will transition into using the short method for division. Here are some great maths games to play on Laptops or iPads.

<https://www.topmarks.co.uk/Search.aspx?q=division>

**Times Tables Rockstars**

This is a great times tables game, practice all of the tables up to 12 x 12. Log- in should be in Homework book/ Reading diary.

<https://trockstars.com/>



## Next Week at Hill West

**Key Question:** What was the 13<sup>th</sup> Labour of Hercules?

**Key Text for Linked Learning:** The Usborne Book of Greek Myths

**Linked Learning:** English, History

In English, children will read Perseus and Medusa and consider the similarities and differences between this and the 12 labours of Hercules, using a story mountain to plot out events (considering the opening (setting the scene), build up/problem, climax, resolution, ending, moral). They will then plan a 13<sup>th</sup> Labour for Hercules, using a story mountain and will consider how dialogue can be used to enhance the action within their narrative. They will consider the vocabulary and structures that are typical of formal and informal speech, and will include vocabulary that is appropriate for the genre, in both the narrative and any speech included. In History, children will learn the Ancient Olympic Games and some of the original sports which Greeks participated in, they will compare this to the modern Olympics and think about what might become a sports in future Olympics.

**Maths:** This week, children will use their knowledge of Subtraction to solve problems which are presented in various forms. Children will build upon their knowledge from Year 4 to enable them to subtract numbers with 6 digits together. They will look at difficult 2-step problems which require addition and subtraction skills in order to further their learning. Children will also identify information from statistical data to be used in their number work to enhance their statistical understanding. Children will use their knowledge of rounding, addition and subtraction to estimate amounts before performing calculations.

**Science:** Children will learn about the effects of air resistance, water resistance and friction. They will investigate the effect of air resistance on falling objects and how we can use parachutes to slow the fall of these objects. Children will create parachutes which will steady the fall of an egg, using their skills and practice to perfect their designs.

**History:** See above

**PDW/R.E:** Children will combine their knowledge of healthy eating, healthy bodies and healthy minds to create a poster to promote healthy lifestyles across school. These will be created with the aim to put up the best few in a display in KS2 corridor/Entrance.

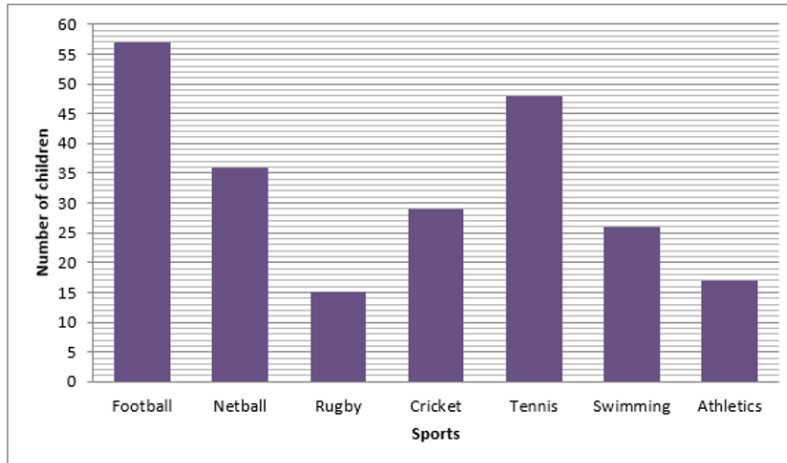
**P.E:** Children will combine their skills acquired in throwing and catching to play small sided games of dodgeball in a competitive tournament including exhibition matches and adapted play-styles.

**MFL:** Children will Continue to introduce themselves in French – recapping vocabulary from Year 3 and 4 (*Bonjour! Je m'appelle... J'habite à Four Oaks*) and will learn how to say how they are feeling (e.g. *Je suis très bien..., Je suis bien..., Je suis mal..., Je suis triste..., Comme ce, comme ça...*). They will combine these into sentences to say hello and how they are feeling in French.

## Maths - To compare data using bar charts.

### (Monday)

A graph to show which sport children voted as their favourite



1. 74 children like football and which other sport?

2. What is the difference between the total of children who prefer athletics and swimming and the number of children who prefer football?

3. Rugby has 21 fewer children prefer it than another sport. What is this other sport?

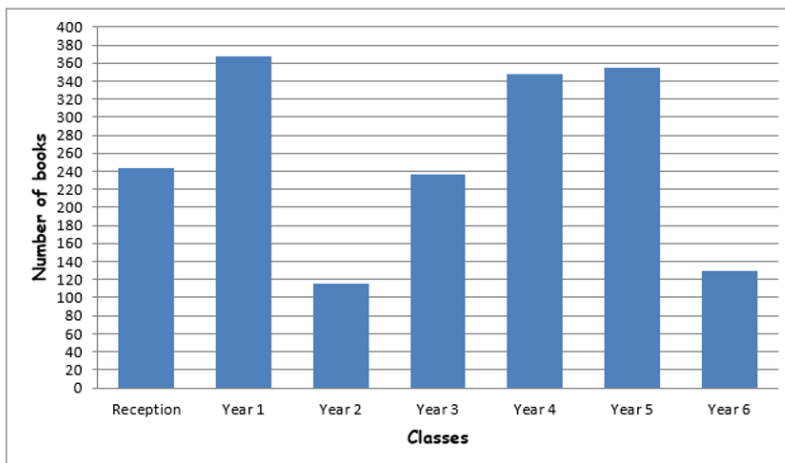
4. What is the difference between the total of the two most popular sports and the total of the two least popular sports?

5. The least popular sport has 33 fewer votes than which sport?

### Have a go at some of these:

## Main Activity

A graph to show the number of books each class has read



1. Miss Key wanted her class to read 450 books. How many more books did Year 3 need to read?
2. What was the total number of books read by Year 6 and Reception?
3. What is the sum of books read by Year 1 and Year 2? How many more books did Year 1 read?
4. Year 4 and 5 read 703 books. What is the difference between their total and the total of books read by both Year 3 and Year 6?
5. Did Year 1 read more books than the total of books read by Year 6 and Year 2? What is the difference between the two totals?
6. How many fewer books did Year 2 read than Year 3?

# Maths – To solve 2-step word problems using addition and subtraction.

## Tuesday

### Word Problems

The cinema has 700 seats – 113 adults and 276 children come to see the film. How many empty seats are there?

What's the most important information?

What is the question asking us to do?

How many steps are there?

Try these:

1. On Sunday I spent 114 minutes on my art project, and 45 minutes on my numeracy homework. On Thursday evening spent a total of 86 minutes on my history project and 39 minutes reading.  
What is the difference in minutes between the amount of homework I did on Sunday and Thursday evening?  

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2. Dad drives a truck. Last week he drove 267 kilometres on Monday, 186 on Tuesday and 198 on Wednesday. This week Dad drove 279 kilometres on Monday, 148 on Tuesday and 288 on Wednesday.  
What is the difference in kilometres between this week and last week?  

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6. At the fabric shop I buy 378 metres of orange fabric, 107 metres of yellow fabric and 467 metres of purple fabric. I have used 16 metres of the orange fabric, 27 metres of yellow fabric and 12 metres of purple fabric.  
How many metres of fabric do I have left in total?  

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7. I got £78.50 for my birthday. I spent £12.50 on Saturday and £22.80 on Sunday.  
How much spending money have I got left?  

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10. I walk 6000m every day.  
How many days would it take me to walk 276km?
























**Maths - Maths investigation**  
**Wednesday**

Each of the following shapes has a value:

 = 7       = 17

The value of the red shapes changes in each of the following problems.

Can you discover its value in each problem below, if the values of the shapes are being added together?

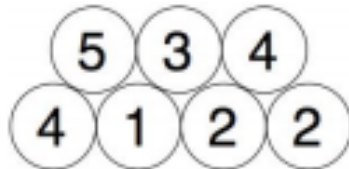
- (a)    = 25
- (b)     = 51
- (c)       : = 136
- (d)    = 48
- (e)        = 100
-

Try this:

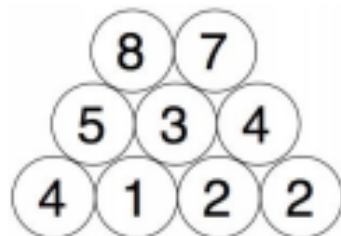
We start with any four numbers (not zero!):



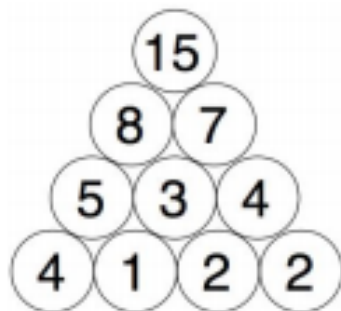
We then add them in pairs and place the total above each pair:



And we then add in pairs the new numbers:



We do the same with those two numbers to get our final number:



You need to find four starting numbers to place at the bottom so that when you get to the top you reach 15.

Try to find as many starting numbers as you can.

Think about good ways of doing this. You may want to use a system!

**Maths - Estimation**  
**Thursday**

Look at each question and estimate your answer BEFORE you solve it.  
Is your estimate accurate? What strategies did you use?

$$\begin{array}{r} 7) \quad 382,385 \\ - \quad 32,239 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 8) \quad 973,501 \\ - \quad 46,817 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9) \quad 152,667 \\ - \quad 85,465 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 10) \quad 813,970 \\ - \quad 99,068 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 11) \quad 227,438 \\ - \quad 31,709 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 12) \quad 748,349 \\ - \quad 14,382 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

**Maths - Friday - Merry Christmas!!**  
**Review the 9-times tables!**

**English - To recognise the author's decisions and choices when writing a text**

*All of the texts for this week can be found further on in the pack*

**Monday**

**Read: The Great Bull of Crete**

**Main Task: Explain the authors choice**

1. Why has the author called it 'The Great Bull of Crete'?
2. A) Why does the author end each story with the King jumping back into the brass pot? B) What kind of character is King Eurystheus?
3. Why does Heracles say "Don't go to sleep. I think they plan to kill us."?
4. What does the author mean when he says 'they drove the horses down to the beach'?
5. How does the author show that Heracles didn't like King Diomedes?

**Challenge: Describe the man-eating horses.**

English - To retrieve information from a text  
Tuesday

**Read: The Amazon Queen's Belt**

**Main Task: To answer retrieval questions.**

1. How does the author describe the Amazon women?
2. How did Hera make it harder to obtain the Amazon Queen's belt?
3. What word is a synonym for 'voyage'?
4. Where did King Geryon live?
5. What was King Eurytheus complaint at the end of today's text?

**Challenge:** Explain how Helios helped Heracles to complete the task 'The Cattle of Geryon'.

## Reading Skills

Read: the Quest of Medusa's Head

# The Quest of Medusa's Head

### Introduction

Perseus had been sent on a journey to capture the gorgon, Medusa's head. This trophy was to be exchanged for his mother's freedom from having to marry the evil king. Anyone looking at the face of the gorgon would be turned to stone so the challenge was dangerous and difficult. But, Perseus had help. The Maidens of the West had given him a sword, a shield, a magic pouch and a cap of invisibility to protect him. Once Perseus had completed his mission and with Medusa's head safely in his magic pouch, he headed for home to save his mother.

### The Great Sea Beast

As Perseus made his way over the vast oceans, he came across a strange sight. He saw a beautiful girl chained to a rock by the seashore and far away a huge sea beast was swimming towards her to devour her. Quick as blink, he flew down and spoke to her.

Perseus removed his cap and stood by her on the rock. When the girl saw him with his long hair and wonderful eyes, she thought him the handsomest young man in the world.

"Oh, save me! Save me!" she cried as she reached out her arms towards him.

Perseus could see the sea monster coming closer so he took the Gorgon's head out of his magic pouch, held it up high and the inevitable happened.

Then, Perseus slipped the Gorgon's head back into the pouch and hastened to speak with the young girl. She told him that her name was Andromeda and that she was the daughter of the king and queen of that land. Andromeda told Perseus that she was being sacrificed to the sea monster as a punishment for her mother's vanity. As the pair talked, the king, queen and many people of the land came to see what was happening. As a reward for saving his daughter, the king agreed to let his daughter marry Perseus. Forgetting his quest, Perseus stayed happily with Andromeda and her family for many months.



## **The Timely Rescue**

But, Perseus had not totally forgotten his mother. So, one fine summer day, he and Andromeda sailed in a beautiful ship to his own home. The ship came to land at the very spot where the wooden chest had been cast so many years before and Perseus and his bride walked through the fields towards the town.

Now, the wicked king of that land had never ceased trying to persuade Danae to become his wife but she would not listen to him. The more he pleaded and threatened, the more she disliked him. At last, when he found that she could not be made to marry him, he declared that he would kill her.

So, as Perseus and Andromeda came into the town, they were greeted with the scene of his mother fleeing to the safety of the altar of Zeus with the king following, intent on killing her. When Perseus saw the king rushing like a madman after his mother, he again took the head of Medusa from his magic pouch.

"I promised to bring you a present and here it is!" he cried.

The king saw it and was turned into stone, just as he stood, with his sword uplifted and a terrible look of anger on his face.

With his mother safe, Perseus decided that they should all return home to Argos. So the three of them set sail the following day.

## The Deadly Quoit

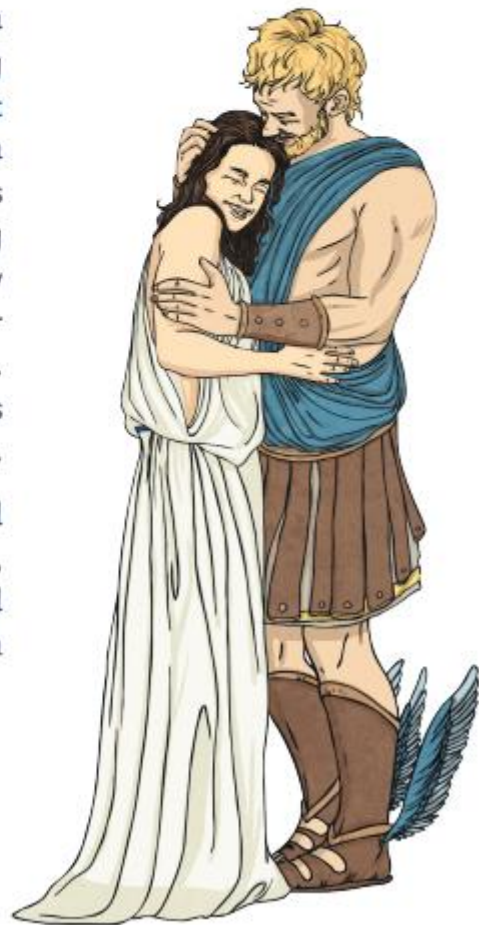
When Danae's old father, the king of Argos, heard that a strange ship was coming over the sea with his daughter and her son on board, he was in great distress; for he remembered what the Pythia had foretold about his death. So, without waiting to see the vessel, he left his palace in great haste and fled.

"My daughter's son cannot kill me if I keep out of his way," he said.

But, Perseus had no wish to harm him and was distraught when he heard what the old man had done. With his grandfather gone, the people of the kingdom wanted Perseus to rule over them, which he did willingly in memory of the man he had never known.

A while later, Perseus was taking part in challenges and games with neighbouring kingdoms. He threw a heavy quoit a great deal further than any had been thrown before. It landed in the crowd of spectators and struck a stranger who was standing there. As Perseus ran to help him, he saw that he was dead. The man was none other than Danae's father, the old king of Argos. He had fled from his kingdom to save his life, and in doing so had only met his death.

Perseus was overcome with grief and had no wish to continue as ruler of the kingdom, so he and Andromeda left the country and lived happily in the neighbouring kingdom of Mycenae for many years.



7. Why do you think the altar of Zeus was a safe place for Perseus' mother?

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8. If the King of Argos thought that Perseus wanted to kill him, should he have run away or stayed to face him? Give reasons for your answer.

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Do you think the King of Argos deserved to die?

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## English - To plan a short story using a story mountain.

Wednesday

Read: The Cattle of Geryon

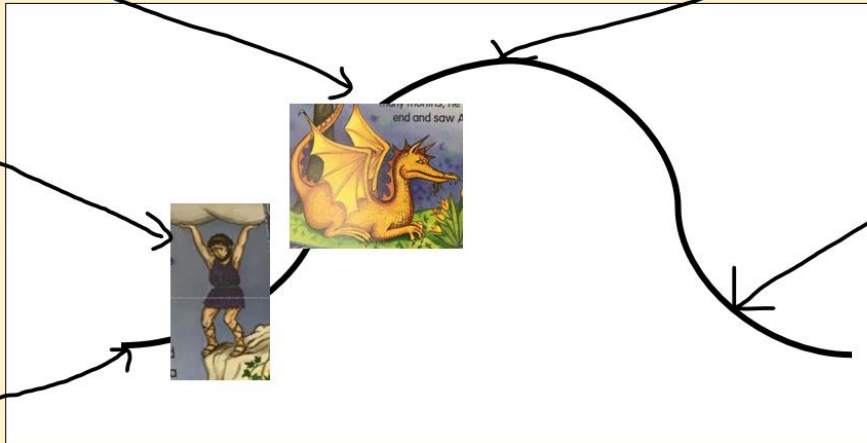
### Example: Creating a story mountain

Heracles kills the dragon.

#### The Golden Apples

What was the biggest problem for Heracles?

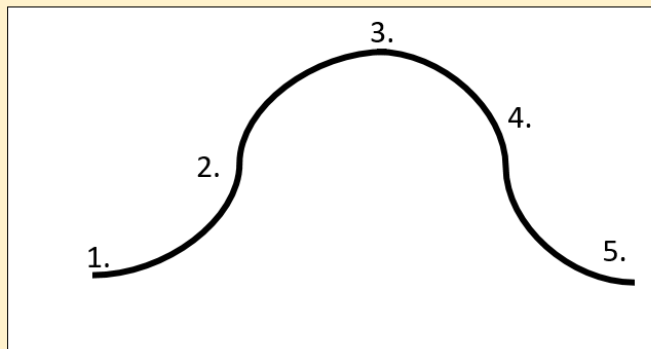
Heracles asked Athene to help him.



Heracles returns the apples to the King

### Main Task: Create your own 13th Trial of Heracles

1. Include a section from King Eurystheus and describe the task.
2. How he will get there (By Boat, Horse, Etc).
3. What will be the main issue during the task?
4. How will this get resolved?
5. Return back to the king, how will the king react?



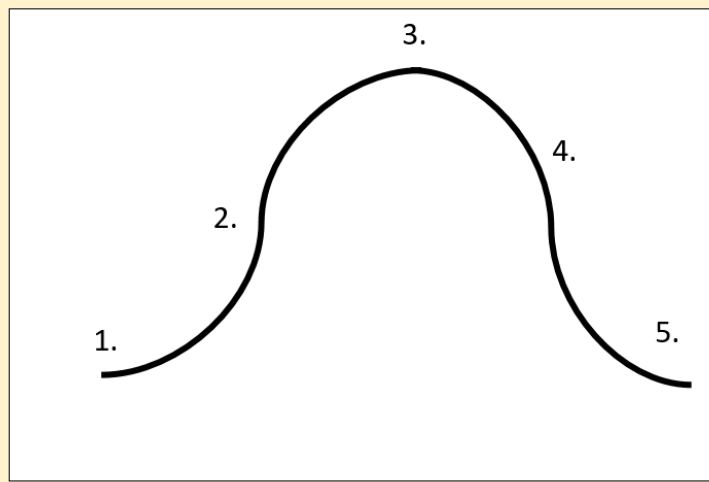
**Challenge:** Can you include 3 examples of Personification/ Hyperbole?

# English - To write a short story about the 13th trial of Heracles.

## Thursday

### Review your plans to refresh your memories (Share ideas between class)

1. Include a section from King Eurystheus and describe the task.
2. How he will get there (By Boat, Horse, Etc).
3. What will be the main issue during the task?
4. How will this get resolved?
5. Return back to the king, how will the king react?



### Main Task: Write your short story

1. Include a section from King Eurystheus and describe the task.
2. How he will get there (By Boat, Horse, Etc).
3. What will be the main issue during the task?
4. How will this get resolved?
5. Return back to the king, how will the king react?

#### What to include:

- Figurative language (Similes, Metaphors, Hyperbole and Personification)
- Accurate direct speech (Punctuated eg: "Hello!")
- High-level adjectives and adverbs.

**Challenge: Include 3 Fronted adverbials.**

English - To finish and edit a short story  
Friday

## Purple Pens!!!!!!!

Read back through your work and check your capital letters and full stops!!!!

Have you included a comma after your fronted adverbials??????

“Have you included your punctuation inside the brackets for your speech?????”

Have you spelt **EURYSTHEUS** and **Heracles** correctly?????

## Main Task: Finish your short story

1. Include a section from King Eurystheus and describe the task.
2. How he will get there (By Boat, Horse, Etc).
3. What will be the main issue during the task?
4. How will this get resolved?
5. Return back to the king, how will the king react?

### What to include:

- Figurative language (Similes, Metaphors, Hyperbole and Personification)
- Accurate direct speech (Punctuated eg: "Hello!")
- High-level adjectives and adverbs.

**Challenge: Can you include personification?**

## Main Task: Personification.

Pick out the personification words used in these sentences:

1. In the morning my car complained as the key was roughly turned in its ignition.
2. My alarm clock yells at me to get out of bed every morning.
3. At night the moon plays hide and seek with the clouds.
4. The wildfire ran through the forest at an amazing speed.

Challenge: Now write your own four sentences using words of personification.

Hyperbole: Choose whether the phrase is hyperbole or not.

<p>I am so hungry I could eat a horse.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>B</td> </tr> <tr> <td>hyperbole</td> <td>not hyperbole</td> </tr> </table>	A	B	hyperbole	not hyperbole	<p>I am angry.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>B</td> </tr> <tr> <td>hyperbole</td> <td>not hyperbole</td> </tr> </table>	A	B	hyperbole	not hyperbole	<p>The car went faster than the speed of light.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>B</td> </tr> <tr> <td>hyperbole</td> <td>not hyperbole</td> </tr> </table>	A	B	hyperbole	not hyperbole
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## Science - To investigate air resistance.

Have a look at this clip about air resistance:

### Air Resistance

#### Task:

Design and make a parachute that will lower an egg safely to the ground.

What variables will stay the same?

- The container for the egg?
- The distance from the ground?
- The material of the parachute?

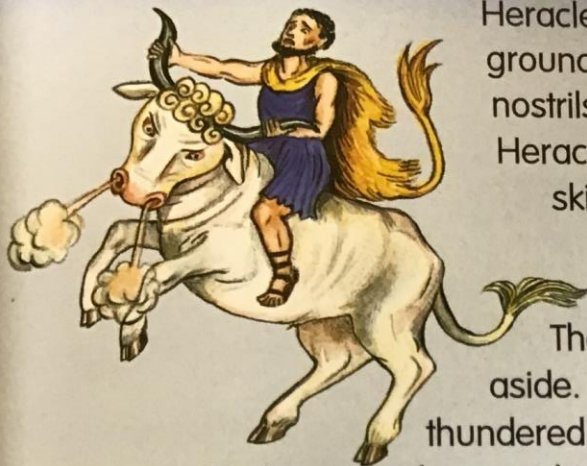
Please do this experiment outside!

## The Great Bull of Crete

King Eurystheus thought the next task he gave to Heracles would take him away for a long time. "Go to the island of Crete," he ordered. "There is a huge, white, fire-breathing bull. It is running wild, destroying the farms and killing the people. You must capture it and bring it back here, alive."

Heracles strode down to the port and found a ship and a crew willing to sail to Crete. The sea voyage was a long one but, at last, they saw the tall cliffs of the island. Once ashore, Heracles was met by King Minos. "You are welcome here," said the King, and invited Heracles to his palace. Heracles explained why he had come and the King was very pleased that he would be rid of the terrible beast. "But be warned," he said. "It's no ordinary bull."

Next morning, Heracles began his search. He found the bull quite close to the city. He hid among some olive trees and watched it for a few minutes. He had never seen a bull that was so enormous or so fierce. Then he stepped out into the open.



The bull looked up, saw Heracles and pawed the ground, snorting fire from its nostrils. Then it charged. Heracles wrapped his lion skin around him and waited until the bull was almost on him. Then he quickly stepped aside. As the great beast thundered past, Heracles grabbed one of its horns and swung himself on to its back.

The bull tried to toss him off but Heracles clung on. It pranced and snorted, raced around and bucked, but it couldn't throw Heracles off its back. Growing tired at last, it came to a trembling standstill. Heracles jumped down, dragged it back to his ship and sailed away.

King Eurystheus was so frightened when he saw the bull, he jumped into his brass pot again.



## The Man-Eating Horses

When King Eurystheus climbed out of his pot, he said to Heracles, "Your next task is to go to King Diomedes and bring back his four wild horses. They're not very nice. They eat people."

This time, Heracles took four brave friends with him. When they arrived at Diomedes's palace, the King pretended he was very pleased to see them, but Heracles was suspicious. He didn't trust King Diomedes.

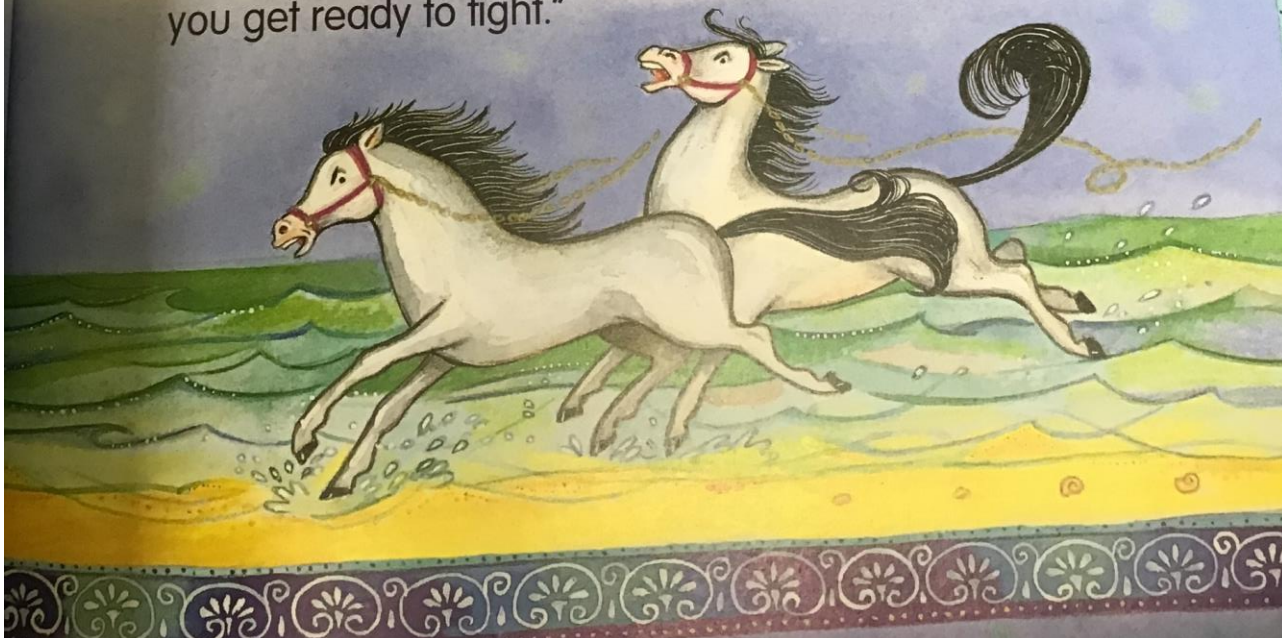
After a grand feast that evening, Heracles and his friends went to bed. "Don't go to sleep. I think the King plans to kill us," Heracles



whispered. "I've heard he feeds his guests to his horses." No one came near them in the night and, just before dawn, Heracles and his friends climbed out of their bedroom windows and crept silently to the stables.

They knocked out the sleepy guards and broke open the stable doors. The horses, which were chained to a wood beam, stamped and snorted at the strangers. Heracles chopped down the beam to free them. "Hurry back to the ship," he shouted, and they drove the horses down to the beach.

Before they reached the ship, they saw King Diomedes and his soldiers racing straight for them. "You hold the horses," Heracles shouted to one of his friends. "The rest of you get ready to fight."




The battle was short but very fierce. When it was over, King Diomedes and his men lay dead. Heracles ran back to the horses, only to find they had eaten his friend. In a furious rage, he fed the King to them. The horses then became calm and very docile. He led them to the ship and sailed back to King Eurystheus.

King Eurystheus was terrified of the horses. "Take the horrid things away," he screamed. Heracles led them out of the palace and set them free in the mountains.



Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December



## The Amazon Queen's Belt

"My daughter," King Eurystheus said to Heracles, "wants the belt Queen Hippolyta always wears around her waist. Go and get it for her."

When Heracles's friends heard he was going to the Amazons, they all wanted to go with him. The Amazons

were a race of fierce women warriors who lived on the Black Sea. Everyone had heard stories about them but no one had ever seen them.

Heracles chose a band of the bravest men and they boarded a ship one morning, setting sail for a long voyage. At last they saw land. "Arm yourselves, men," shouted Heracles, "and be ready to fight."

When the ship reached the shore, Heracles and his men were surprised to see a group of women walking along the sand, smiling and waving. "You are very welcome here," cried the leader. "I am Queen Hippolyta. Come to my palace for food and wine." Heracles and his men were delighted not to have to fight a battle.

At the palace, Heracles told Hippolyta why he had come. "You may have my belt as a present," she said, smiling at him. The goddess Hera was watching, and was furious that this task was to be so easy for Heracles. She whispered in the other women's ears, "Beware, Heracles has come to harm Queen Hippolyta."

The Amazon women believed her and, snatching up their

swords and spears, they attacked Heracles. His men fought bravely and, in the thick of the battle, Heracles killed Hippolyta.


"Run back to the ship," he shouted to his men and, grabbing Hippolyta's belt, Heracles raced to the beach. The Amazon women chased them but they managed to sail away safely. Heracles had the precious belt, but he was very sad that he had killed Hippolyta for it.

Eurystheus's daughter was delighted with the belt, but the King growled at Heracles, "You have more tasks to do."



## The Cattle of Geryon

"Go to King Geryon, the three-headed ogre, and bring his cattle back here," ordered King Eurystheus. Next day, Heracles sailed across from Greece to North Africa. Trudging along the coast, he grew so hot,



he angrily fired an arrow at Helios, the god of the sun. Helios was amused by such boldness, and cooled down the sun's rays. When Heracles reached the place where he had to cross the sea, Helios sent down a huge golden bowl that floated on the water. Heracles climbed in the strange boat and drifted across to Geryon's kingdom.

He pulled the golden boat up the beach and went in search of the cattle. Soon he saw them high up on a hill. As he climbed up to them, a huge dog with two heads leapt out at him, snarling and growling. Heracles waited until it was close, raised his club and killed it with one mighty blow.

He was driving the cattle down the hill when King Geryon came rushing after him, shouting angrily. Heracles fitted an arrow into his bow and shot Geryon, killing him instantly. Heracles drove the cattle down to his golden bowl boat, loaded them on board and sailed away.

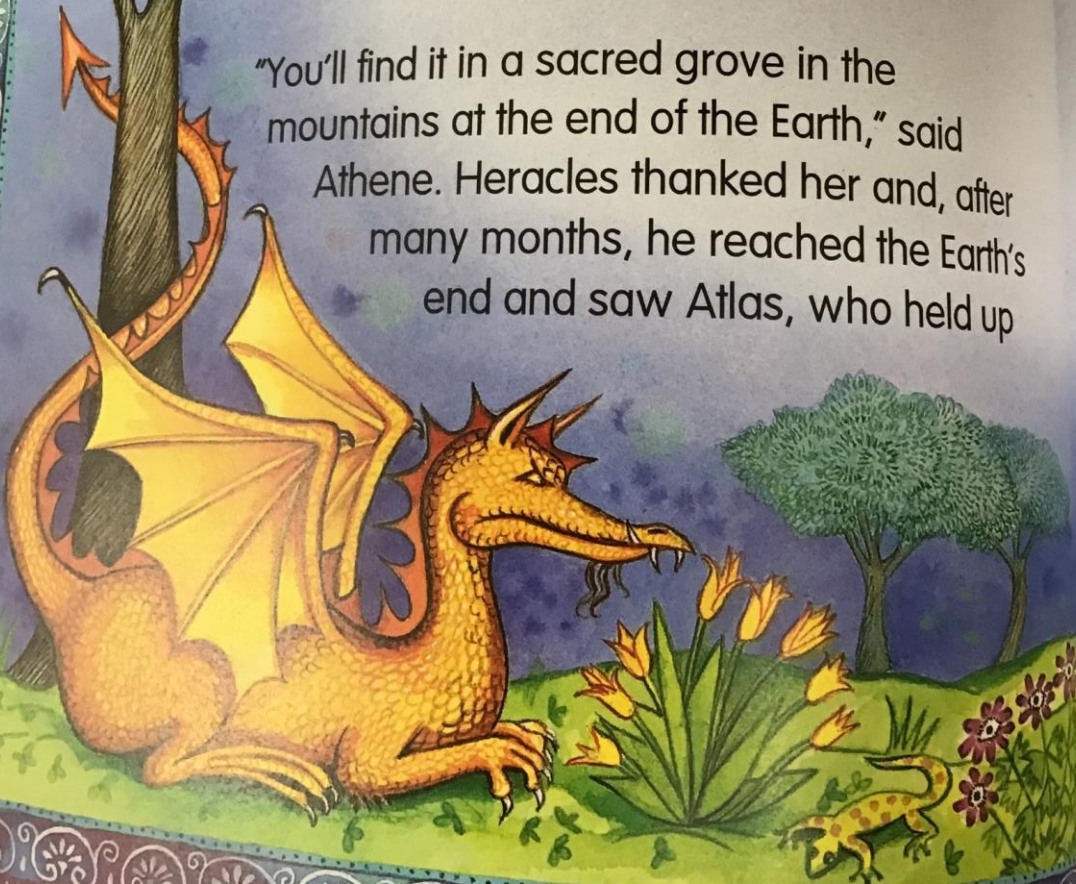
When, many weeks later, Heracles drove King Geryon's cattle into the palace yard, King Eurystheus took no notice of the cattle and just complained that Heracles had been away far too long.

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December

## The Golden Apples

"You must now bring me three golden apples from the Tree of Hesperides," King Eurystheus commanded Heracles. Heracles had no idea where the Tree was and begged the goddess Athene to help him.

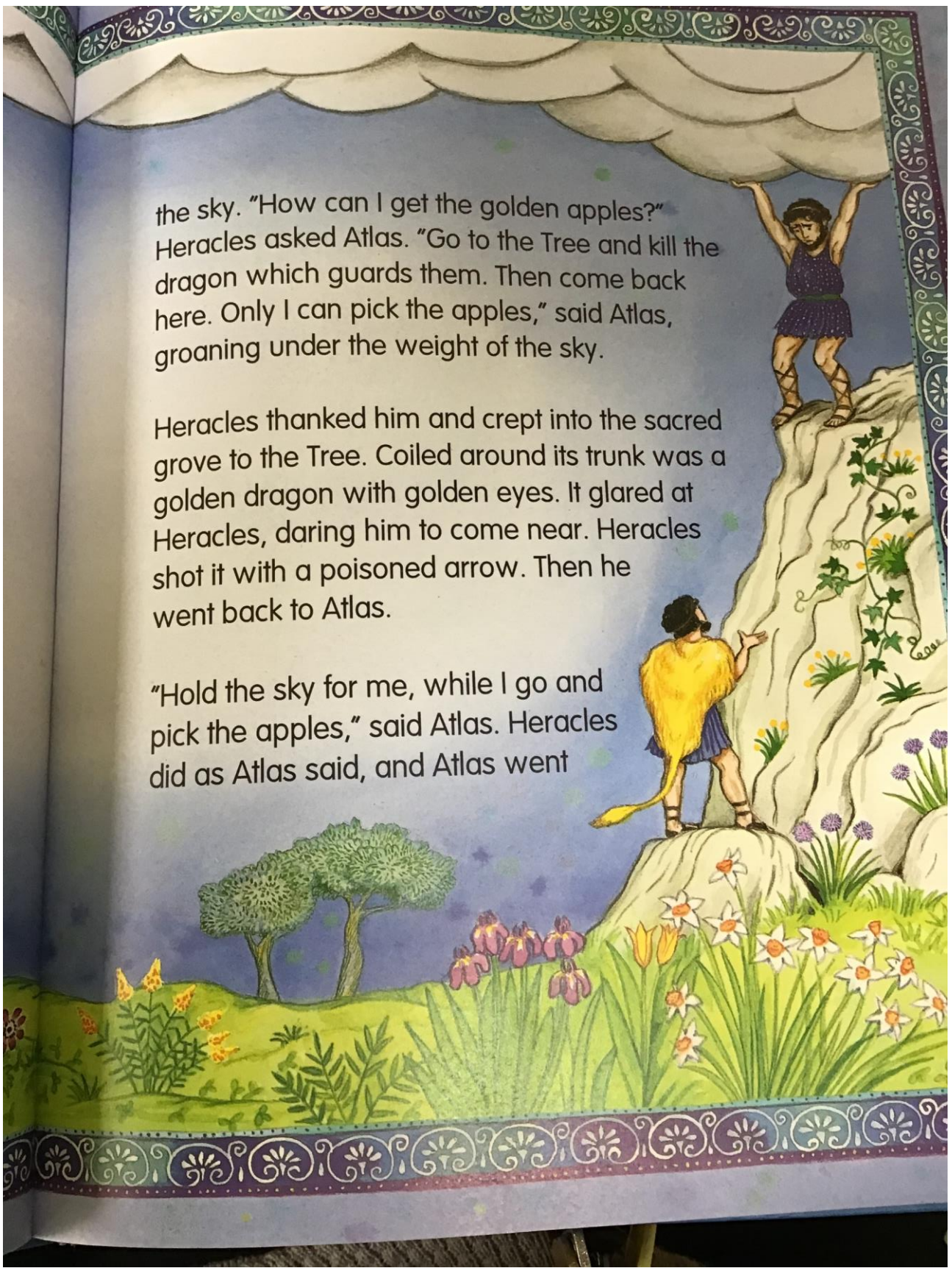
"You'll find it in a sacred grove in the mountains at the end of the Earth," said Athene. Heracles thanked her and, after many months, he reached the Earth's end and saw Atlas, who held up



the sky. "How can I get the golden apples?" Heracles asked Atlas. "Go to the Tree and kill the dragon which guards them. Then come back here. Only I can pick the apples," said Atlas, groaning under the weight of the sky.

Heracles thanked him and crept into the sacred grove to the Tree. Coiled around its trunk was a golden dragon with golden eyes. It glared at Heracles, daring him to come near. Heracles shot it with a poisoned arrow. Then he went back to Atlas.

"Hold the sky for me, while I go and pick the apples," said Atlas. Heracles did as Atlas said, and Atlas went



away and came back with three golden apples. "Hang onto the sky a bit longer and I'll take them to King Eurystheus for you," said Atlas. Heracles suspected a trick; he thought Atlas would never return and he'd have to hold up the sky forever.

"Thank you," said Heracles, "but, before you go, could you just help me to make the weight more comfortable. Take it for a moment while I settle my cloak on my shoulders." And he passed the sky to Atlas. When he was free, Heracles picked up the three golden apples, said goodbye to Atlas, and hurried back to King Eurystheus.



## Guard Dog of the Underworld

"Your last task is the most difficult of all," King Eurystheus said to Heracles. "Go to the Underworld and bring back Cerberus, the fierce three-headed dog which guards its gates."

Heracles knew he couldn't find his way to the Underworld on his own. He again asked the goddess Athene for help and she sent Hermes, the gods' messenger, to guide him. Together, they walked through tunnels to the black River Styx which you had to cross to get into the Underworld.

There Charon, an old boatman, refused to take them across. "You know I can only take dead people," he said grumpily. Heracles argued with him for so long that Charon agreed to ferry him across, but not Hermes.

On the other side of the river, Heracles walked through more misty tunnels, past drifting ghosts of the dead. At last, he saw Hades, the King of the Underworld, and Persephone, sitting on their misty thrones. "Please may I take Cerberus away with me?" he asked.

"You may take the dog, but you must return it unharmed," said Hades. Heracles thanked Hades and hurried to the Underworld's gates where Cerberus stood guard. The dog's three heads barked and growled at him.

Heracles crouched, waiting. When Cerberus leapt at him, he wrestled with the dog until it lay still, exhausted.

Then he dragged the dog back to the River Styx, into the boat, and then all the way back to King Eurystheus's palace.

When the King saw the dog, growling and snarling, he screamed with fright and jumped into his pot again. "There," shouted Heracles, "I've completed my tasks. I'm no longer your slave. I am free," and he dragged Cerberus back to the Underworld.

Then he went to the temple of the gods and knelt in front of the priestess. "Heracles," she said, "you have proved you are strong and very brave. You are forgiven for killing your children."

Heracles thanked her and quietly left the temple. The gods and goddesses were so pleased with Heracles, they invited him to Mount Olympus. Zeus, his father, greeted him. "You have done well," he thundered. Heracles stayed in his palace for a while before leaving for many more adventures.

