

Activity Plan. *Heracles and the Erymanthian Boar*.

Objectives

The *Heracles and the Erymanthian Boar* animation is designed to help learners:

- Read and interpret ancient material culture (ancient pottery)
- Understand how myths can be represented by images
- Know who Heracles was and be able to discuss his Labours
- Think about and discuss ways in which myths can communicate values

Activities: After you've watched the Heracles animation together, try one of these activities:

Discuss and Create: This myth and the images on this vase give people messages about what's important. What skills and values do you think they are encouraging? What do you think it means to be a hero? Design your own vase with an image of your idea of a hero.

Discuss and Design: Heracles is the son of a god. Eurystheus is a king. Which of them is the greatest? Heracles had to prove himself through the 12 Labours. Design a 13th labour to test him further.

Storyboard: Create a storyboard to tell this story from a different point-of-view. Who will you pick? The king? Hermes? The queen? The boar? Someone else?

Who was Heracles?

Heracles was one of the most popular heroes in ancient Greece. The Romans liked him too – they called him Hercules, and in India he was called Vajrapāṇi. He was the son of the king of the gods, Zeus, and of a human woman called Alcmena. His great-grandmother was a princess of Ethiopia called Andromeda. The myths say that the gods ordered Heracles to carry out 12 near-impossible tasks, or 'labours'. The horrible king, Eurystheus, chose the labours for him. Many of them involved killing terrifying monsters or capturing ferocious wild animals. Once Heracles had defeated the terrible Hydra monster, the king set him a challenge to capture a huge boar that had been terrorising people: the Erymanthian Boar. It was called the 'Erymanthian Boar' because it lived around Erymanthia in the Peloponnese, in Greece. Capturing it brought Heracles one step closer to completing the 12 Labours. Some say that he was made a god once he had completed them all!

About the Vase

This vase was made in Athens, in Greece, in the sixth century BCE. Its shape is a type called an 'amphora', a two-handled vase used for carrying or storing things like oil, grain, or wine. The vase has been decorated in a style known as 'black figure'. It shows the moment that Heracles arrived back at the king's palace with the Erymanthian Boar. The king is so frightened that he has jumped into a big storage pot in the ground to hide. Heracles is nude, because the ancient Greeks thought that looked very heroic. He has a bow with him and a quiver that he can keep his arrows in. Around his chest he has a sword on a strap. There are other figures there too. On the far left we have the god Hermes, the messenger god. We can tell it's him because of his traveller's hat and cloak, his special messenger's staff, and his magic flying boots. Having him in the scene means that he can act as a witness to Heracles's great deeds! On the far right there's a woman standing with the king. She is probably supposed to be Queen Admete. She acts as a second witness; her arms are up in alarm. The vase is housed in the National Museum in Warsaw, in Poland (number 198042).

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Heracles and the Erymanthian Boar

Based on a black-figure amphora (number 198042) National Museum in Warsaw, in Poland



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