



HISTORY BITES

LITTLE NIBBLES OF HISTORY

Daedalus – Who was he?

Daedalus was a famous character from Greek mythology, He was a skilful architect and craftsman, who mythology tells us was seen as a figure of wisdom, knowledge and power.

Now as you may have guessed Greek mythology gets a little bit weird now and again and the story of Daedalus is no exception.

It says that he is the father of both Icarus and Lapyx, as well as the uncle of Perdix.



Lapyx

Now I bet you have never heard of Lapyx, but in both Greek and Roman mythology, he was a favourite of Apollo. Apollo wanted him to have the gift of prophecy, but Lapyx, to prolong the life of his father, followed the tranquil art of healing others.

In “The Aeneid”, a Latin epic poem, written by Virgil between 29 and 19 BC, it tells the legendary story of Aeneas. Aeneas was a Trojan who fled the fall of Troy, travelled to Italy and was healed by Lapyx during the Trojan War. He then escaped to Italy after the war, founding Apulia. Apulia is one of the richest archaeological regions in Italy, it was first colonized by Mycenaean Greeks. They called it Apulia after the tribes that lived there at the time.

Perdix

Right, it's Greek Mythology again so it does get somewhat confusing! His sister, Perdix, had placed her son also called Perdix, under Daedalus' charge to be taught the skill of mechanical arts.



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There was a problem though, Daedalus was so proud of his achievements that he could not bear the idea of anyone being cleverer than him. Unfortunately for him, Perdix was a good scholar and a brilliant inventor. For example, on the seashore he saw the spine of a fish, then notched the edge of a piece of iron and invented the saw! He also made a pair of compasses by putting two pieces of iron together, connecting them at one end, and sharpening the other ends.

Now these ideas annoyed Daedalus, so he took him to the top of a tower and pushed him off!

However, he was seen by Athena, who saw Perdix falling and saved him by changing him into a bird, called the partridge. Now Partridges don't like trees, or even lofty flights but live in hedges, and mindful of his fall, avoids high places. Therefore, Athena decided to leave Daedalus with a partridge shaped scar, to remind him of what he did.

Mythology credits Daedalus for:

The wooden bull for Pasiphaë. This is even weirder, to explain. King Minos offended Poseidon, the sea god, who cursed Pasiphae, Minos' wife, with a mad passion for a white bull. Daedalus then built a white wooden cow in which she could disguise herself. Pasiphae then, yes, mated with the creature! She gave birth to the fearsome Minotaur, with the body of a man, but the face of a bull.

The Labyrinth. Daedalus then had to build a Labyrinth under King Minos's palace to keep the Minotaur. It is thought that the Labyrinth had numerous winding passages and turns that opened into one another, seeming to have neither beginning nor end. Ovid, don't ask, in his *Metamorphoses*, suggests that Daedalus constructed the Labyrinth so cunningly that he himself could barely escape after he built it.

The Wings. He created for himself and his son, Icarus, that they used to escape Crete. It was when Icarus flew too close to the sun that the wax holding his wings together melted, and Icarus fell to his death.



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More about Pasiphaë

We mentioned Pasiphaë earlier, who in Greek mythology was a queen of Crete, and was often referred to as goddess of witchcraft and sorcery. She was the daughter of Helios and the Oceanid nymph, Perse, it just goes on and on, so I won't explain them. She was forced to fall in love with the Minotaur as a curse because her husband, Minos, failed to sacrifice the bull to Poseidon. Doesn't it all get very complicated?

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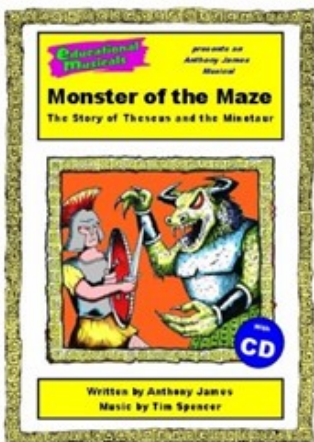
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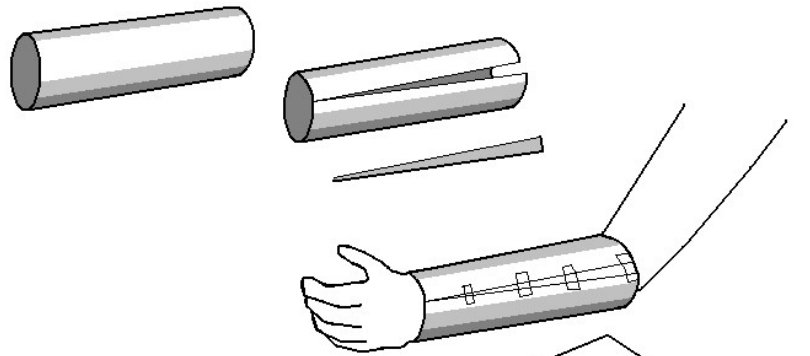
LITTLE NIBBLES OF HISTORY

2 lesson (1 to make and another to paint)

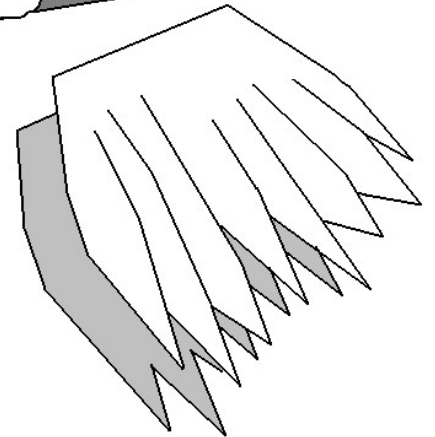
CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

ICARUS WINGS

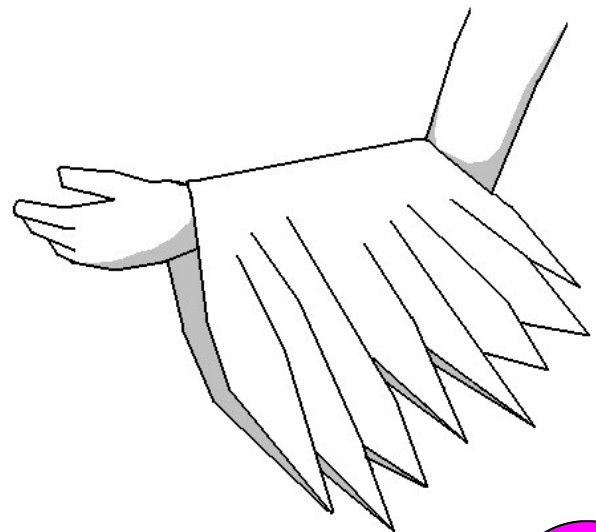
Use a piece of cardboard and roll into a cylindrical shape, measure this on the wearers arm and cut exactly to shape. Try to avoid any overlap as this will just make the tube you are creating difficult to alter. Stick together with wide masking tape as this can be painted later.



Once you have a tube that fits the wearer tightly, but allows them to push their hand through, you can then either cut out a very long triangle or split your joint as in the illustration. Now cut out a matching piece of triangular cardboard to fill the gap, this will ensure the wing can be fitted quickly and will create a gauntlet shape.



Now cut out two large pieces of card in your wing shape. I used the illustrated shape. These two pieces can then be attached to the gauntlet as in the illustration.



Feathers can now be created by folding normal paper in half, cutting out a curved shape then snipping with scissors to create a frayed edge. Use White feathers for white wings. Brown for brown wings.