Clues from Legends

Use nearby details to unlock myth-based phrases.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.4 "Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each phrase that hints at a character from mythology. Then underline the nearby words that show what the phrase means in this story.

The Playground Clean-Up

1. On Saturday, Maya joined neighbors at the old playground. A storm had scattered branches across the path and bent the fence. Clearing the area took a Herculean effort. Maya dragged wet limbs while adults lifted heavy boards. By noon, everyone was muddy and tired, but the path was safe for children to use again that day.

2. At the gate, Maya spotted Leo painting a faded sign. He had a Midas touch with colors. When he mixed blue and yellow, the dull wood became a bright green welcome sign. His careful brushstrokes made the letters clear, and even the chipped edges looked fresh and neat by the time he finished painting the sign.

3. Still, the work had an Achilles heel. The playground's water fountain leaked, and nobody knew how to fix its broken pipe. Without water, the volunteers had to carry bottles from home. Maya called a plumber, who promised to repair the fountain before the next community clean-up. It was the one problem left to solve.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does “Herculean effort” mean in paragraph 1? Name two actions that give you clues.

2. What does “Midas touch” tell you about Leo? Use details about the sign in your answer.

3. What is the playground's “Achilles heel”? Explain what the phrase means in this paragraph.

4. How are “Midas touch” and “Achilles heel” different in meaning in this passage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly two sentences about a person, team, or object. Use one of these mythology allusions: Herculean effort, Midas touch, or Achilles heel. Include context clues that show what the phrase means.

ANSWER KEY

Clues from Legends

GRADE 4 · RL.4.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each phrase that hints at a character from mythology. Then underline the nearby words that show what the phrase means in this story. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does “Herculean effort” mean in paragraph 1? Name two actions that give you clues.	**It means a very hard, large effort. Maya dragged wet limbs, and adults lifted heavy boards.**
2	What does “Midas touch” tell you about Leo? Use details about the sign in your answer.	**Leo is very skilled with colors or painting. He changed dull wood into a bright green sign, and the chipped edges looked fresh and neat.**
3	What is the playground's “Achilles heel”? Explain what the phrase means in this paragraph.	**The leaking water fountain is the Achilles heel. The phrase means the one weak problem that is still difficult to solve.**
4	How are “Midas touch” and “Achilles heel” different in meaning in this passage?	**A Midas touch is a special strength or skill, while an Achilles heel is a weakness or problem.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The robot team's Achilles heel was its loose wheel. During the race, the wheel kept falling off, so the robot could not finish.

Accept responses that use one listed allusion correctly and include clear context clues for its meaning. The response must have exactly two sentences.