GRADE 6, MODULE 1: UNIT 1, LESSON 1

Quote from "Shrouded in Myth" (For Teacher Reference)
Quick Write: Studying a Quote and Image

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

Name:	
Date:	

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.

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?

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Shrouded in Myth

Ancient Mycenae was located in the Peloponnesus (south-central Greece), on a large piece of land known since antiquity as the Argolid. The Mycenaeans built their settlement on a high hill overlooking the surrounding countryside. In order to protect themselves and their great wealth from invaders, they used gigantic stone blocks to construct a high, thick wall around Myceane, creating a citadel or fortress. The blocks were so large that later Greeks believed humans could not have built these walls. They believed that the stones must have been moved into place by the mythological, one-eyed giant known as the Cyclops. Hence, he Greeks called them the Cyclopean walls.

It was a common belief among the ancient Greeks that mythical their people founded their cities. Because written records did not exist in these very early times, later generations often did not know for certain how their cities came to be. In order to feel proud about where they lived, the ancient Greeks looked for ways to draw connections between their hometowns and the heroic characters they believed to be real. According to Greek mythology, Mycenae was founded by Perseus, a great and fearless adventurer...

A LONG, LONG TIME AGO, EVEN BEFORE PERSEUS WAS CONCEIVED, 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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SHROUDED IN MYTH. By: Neidl, Jessica Fisher, Calliope, 10507086, Sep2002, Vol. 13, Issue 1

- 1. What makes Acrisios sure he will never have a grandson?

✂ ----------

- 2. Why was Zeus so drawn to Danae? How did Zeus get to her?

✂ ----------

- 3. Is this a realistic story? Why or why not?

✂ ----------

- 4. How was the prophecy from the beginning of the story fulfilled?

✂ ----------

- 5. Is Perseus a hero? What evidence supports your opinion?