KS2
SATS
ENGLISH

PRACTICE PAPERS

READING

YEAR 6
AGE 10–11

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The answers can be found in the middle of this book.

Test 1

The Story of the Minotaur

King Minos of Crete was a powerful man, feared by the rulers of the lands around him. But his demands on Athens became too much for them to bear.

King Minos had a great palace built for himself. Inside this palace, Minos had built a giant maze, a labyrinth, and at the centre of the maze he kept a terrifying creature, the Minotaur. Now this was no ordinary animal; it was a monster, half man and half bull.

It was powerful and savage and it loved to eat the flesh of the humans who had been shut into the labyrinth by King Minos.

As for Athens, Minos demanded that every year the king send him seven young men and seven young women.

'Why do we send these young people to Crete every year?' Theseus asked his father, the King of Athens. 'And why is it that none of them ever return?'

'Because if we did not send them, Minos would wage war on us and it is a war that we would not win,' said King Aegeus. 'And they do not return because they do not go to Crete as slaves. They go as food for the Minotaur.'

'Father, this is terrible,' shouted Theseus, 'we cannot let this go on. We cannot sacrifice any more of our young citizens to this tyrant. When it is time to send the next tribute, I will go as one of them and I vow that it is the last time the Minotaur will be fed with the flesh of any of our people.'

'Then I wish you good luck, my son,' cried his father, 'I shall keep watch for you every day. If you are successful, take down these black sails and replace them with white ones. That way, I will know you are coming home safe to me.'

As the ship docked in Crete, King Minos himself came down to inspect the prisoners from Athens.

Theseus stepped forward. 'I will go first. I am Theseus, Prince of Athens, and I do not fear what is within the walls of your maze.'



Standing behind the king, listening, was his daughter, Ariadne. From the moment she set eyes on Theseus, Ariadne fell in love with him and decided that she would help him.

'Theseus, take this,' she whispered. She threw him a great ball of string and he tied one end of it to the entrance. He smiled at her, turned and began to make his way into the maze, the string playing out behind him as he went.

Turning a corner, with his hands held out in front of him feeling his way, Theseus suddenly touched what felt like a huge bony horn.

He was picked up between the Minotaur's horns and tossed high into the air. When he landed on the hard cold stone, he felt the animal's huge hooves come down on his chest.

But Theseus was no ordinary man. He was the son of the king, he was brave and he was stubborn.

He grabbed the animal's huge horns, and kept on twisting the great head from side to side. The creature's neck snapped, it gurgled its last breath and fell to the floor with an enormous thud.

As Theseus neared the entrance of the labyrinth, the darkness began to fade and he made out the figure of Ariadne, waiting for his return.

'You must take me back to Athens with you,' she cried. 'My father will kill me when he finds out that I have helped you.'

Quickly and quietly, they unfurled the great black sails of their ship and headed for home.

'I cannot believe how my life has changed,' said Ariadne, as they sailed across the calm seas towards Athens. 'To think that I am free of my cruel father and that I will soon be married to a great prince.'

'Married?' said Theseus. 'Oh, yes, that will be … er … wonderful.' But in truth, Theseus did not really find her attractive.

So, when their ship docked at an island on their way home to collect fresh water, Theseus sent Ariadne off to find bread and fruit. The moment she was gone, he set sail and left her on the island. Now, you might think that this was a bad way to reward someone who had helped him and had saved him from certain death.

The gods clearly thought the same thing, for they had a further horror in store for him, as a punishment for his ungrateful treatment of the young girl.

In his haste to get away, Theseus forgot to change his sails to white. King Aegeus, waiting on the headland, saw the ship approaching with its black sails flying in the wind. 'My son has failed and he is dead,' he cried. And in despair, he flung himself from the cliff into the raging waters below.

Name:	Class:	Date:	Total marks: /50

1 *Inside this palace, Minos had built a giant maze, a labyrinth, and at the centre of the maze he kept a **terrifying** creature.*

Which word is closest in meaning to *terrifying*?

Tick **one**.

- mighty ☐
- petrifying ☐
- amazing ☐
- powerful ☐

1 mark

2 The story explains that King Minos demanded that people from Athens be sent to him to feed the Minotaur.

What does this tell you about the character of King Minos?

Write **two** features of his character.

1. _____

2. _____

2 marks

3 *It was powerful and savage and it loved to eat the flesh of the humans who had been shut into the labyrinth by King Minos.*

What is this a description of?

_____

1 mark

/4

Total for this page

4 Read the paragraph beginning: *Father, this is terrible ...*

What is the **main** reason for Theseus's decision to go to Crete?

1 mark

5 *'We cannot sacrifice any more of our young citizens to this **tyrant**.'*

This means that King Minos ...

1 mark

Tick **one**.

- was unfriendly. ☐
- was serious. ☐
- was cruel. ☐
- was caring. ☐

6 How does the final paragraph link back to the paragraph beginning: *'Then I wish you good luck, my son,' cried his father*?

2 marks

/4

Total for this page

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