



CLASH OF THE TITANS

Written by Nicole Peterkin
Illustrated by Dean Sherriff

TEXT TYPE: Fiction: Description—Newspaper Article
GUIDED READING LEVEL: W/X

SUMMARY: This text includes two daily editions of ‘The Gazette,’ a fantasy newspaper. Each edition focuses on a wrestling match between Hercules and Gilgamesh, rival members of the ‘Pantheon of Heroes and Gods.’ Most Pantheon members are excited about the match, however, there are concerns about sabotage by the trickster god, Loki. As expected, Loki stirs up trouble by throwing a wall of fire at Hercules and Gilgamesh during their match. Other Pantheon members come to their assistance and Loki is arrested. Hercules and Gilgamesh are seriously injured but recover quickly in hospital, while Loki comments that he was just being true to his nature. This is a unique and engaging take on a newspaper article, and includes many of the various features found in today’s newspapers.

TEXT FEATURES

- newspaper-style layout
- headlines
- titles/subtitles
- bylines
- highlighted and enlarged text quote
- masthead
- section highlights sidebar
- captions
- text boxes
- bios section
- bullets
- acronym (‘CEO’)

VISUAL LITERACY

- illustrations

TEXT SUPPORTS

- topic of interest to students
- humour used in article
- bios section
- sequential story

POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES

- combining fantasy elements/mythical characters with newspaper-style layout
- some idiomatic expressions
- some difficult words and terms, e.g., ‘Chief Executive Officer,’ ‘Lernaean Hydra,’ ‘venue’

FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- synthesizing

FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

- making connections: text to self, text to text, text to world
- predicting
- evaluating

ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES

- Ranking Ladder strategy
- discussing with a partner
- discussing with a group
- news report (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

WORKING WITH WORDS

- word solving and building: using meaning connections to solve unfamiliar words

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Observe each student’s ability to:

- summarize main ideas
- sift through the details and ‘get to the point’
- provide a summary that adds new insight
- look at introductory text to help determine main ideas
- identify differences between fiction and non-fiction
- follow up on and adjust predictions

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Select from the following:

- Synthesizing Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

First Session (May 12 news edition)

Making Connections: Text to Self, Text to Text, and Text to World

BEFORE READING

Activate and build prior knowledge

- Engage students in a brief discussion about fantasy stories with superheroes by asking, *What do you know about superheroes?* Ask students to share information about fantasy superheroes from books, comics, movies, television, or games. If not mentioned by students point out that in fantasy stories there are often battles between good and evil. The superheroes and the ‘super villain’ often have extraordinary abilities or magical powers. Both fantasies and myths are often highly imaginative and may have characters who are part animal and part human, or who can shift forms and shapes.

TEACHING TIP:

You might wish to brainstorm and record the characteristics of the fantasy genre with students down one side of chart paper divided into two columns. In the second column, have students record examples from these articles that match these characteristics as they read the articles.

Predicting

- Read the main article’s title, ‘Clash of the Titans,’ and the subtitle, ‘Gilgamesh and Hercules to wrestle.’ Ask students, *When you think about the title and subtitle, and what you know about superheroes and the gods of myths, what would you expect this article to be about?* Have students share their predictions with a partner.

Text Features and Evaluating

Introduce supports and challenges

- Some students may have difficulty following the format of this text as it combines the characteristics of both fantasy and newspaper writing (i.e., characteristics of both fiction and non-fiction). Explain to students that the author wrote a story based on myths, gods and goddesses, and superheroes to entertain readers and chose to put her writing in a newspaper format. Say to students, *When you look at ‘Clash of the Titans’ it looks like a real newspaper in many ways, but there are some big differences. Can you tell me some of the similarities, as well as some of the differences?* List responses offered by students in a two-column chart on the whiteboard. Provide some sample newspapers to students to assist them in their responses.
- Show students a newspaper from their community and ask them to compare it to the ‘The Gazette.’ Draw their attention to the date and the name of the community where the paper is published. Ask students how the date, ‘Friday, May 12, 2032,’ and ‘Myth City’ are similar to and different from their own community’s paper. Tell students that having a mythical or fictitious location and a date set in another era are some of the characteristics of the fantasy genre. Add these points to the fantasy characteristics chart if they have not already been noted by students.

Word Solving and Building

Synthesizing

- Continue comparing the newspapers, drawing students' attention to the article's title, subtitle, and section highlights sidebar (i.e., 'Sports,' 'Entertainment,' 'Food'). Engage students in a discussion on how these section highlights help the reader know what information is available and where to find it in the newspaper. Ask students to show where an article begins and ends, how a reader proceeds from one column to the next, and how to continue on to another page.
- Show students the highlighted and enlarged text quote at the top of page 2, 'We're planning an exciting family event.' Ask students why this part of the article is highlighted in this way.
- Ask students if they are familiar with the word 'Titans.' If some are not familiar with the word, write 'Titanic' on the whiteboard and ask, *How might you use what you know about the word 'Titanic' to solve the meaning for 'Titans'?*

Set a purpose for reading

- Tell students they will be reading a newspaper article about an upcoming wrestling match between Hercules and Gilgamesh. They are to read the article with the purpose of finding out the main details readers should know about the upcoming match.

ESL NOTE: You may need to provide some details as to what is meant by a wrestling match for the benefit of your ESL students.

Provide for early finishers

- Any students who finish early can begin to flag/record each of their main detail findings using sticky notes.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- Encourage students to pause before turning to the second page of the first article to reflect on what they have learned about the wrestling match.
- Prompt students with questions such as: *What have you learned about the match so far? Does this seem like important information? What seems to be the most important thing you have learned about the match? Can you sift through the details to come up with three or four of the most important pieces of information?*

ESL NOTE: Keep your ESL students in mind at this stage, being sure to monitor for their comprehension of the task, word solving, and how well they are maneuvering through the layout of the text.

Synthesizing

Observe

- Observe and listen for evidence that students are sifting through details to get to what they believe are the most important ideas.

AFTER READING

Revisit the purpose for reading

- Give students a few minutes to individually select four things that are important to know about the match. Have students use one sticky note to highlight each important idea.
- Ask students to work in pairs to exchange their ideas. Students should think about what they can leave out as they need to agree on the six most important ideas between them. Then ask students to look for what else they can leave out to narrow down to what they think are the three most important things readers should know about the match. Finally, ask each pair to share their decisions and rationale with the rest of the Guided Reading group. This can be done as a Ranking Ladder activity (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*).

Check on outstanding challenges

- Review and discuss any challenges students may have encountered with the text layout. What part did they read first/last? Did the bulleted biographical information make up for any lack of familiarity they might have had with regards to those mentioned in this article? Was this feature an effective way of explaining who the characters are?
- Discuss and clarify any other outstanding challenges students experienced with comprehension and word solving. For example, ask, *How can we figure out what 'Athena, Pantheon CEO' means?*

Note successful strategy use

- As each pair shares their rationale for selecting the most important things they've learned about the match with the rest of the group, draw attention to how they were effective in synthesizing what they read. For example, *Lee and Ben explained how the article suggests that there are often different ways of looking at the same thing by using the example that most Pantheon members support the match and think it will be exciting, but someone else thinks it is too risky. Well done you two! This is a good example of synthesizing what you have read into something that offers a new insight into the text.*

TEACHING TIP:

Help students become aware of instances where they have arrived at an original idea by offering prompts such as: *A superhero match is bound to be exciting because...*

Second Session (June 20 news edition)

BEFORE READING

Synthesizing

Activate and build prior knowledge

- Ask students to revisit their notes about the most important things readers should know about the ‘Clash of the Titans.’ Tell students they will now be reading a second article from ‘The Gazette’ newspaper, and it is going to describe what happens at the wrestling match.

Predicting

- In partners, ask students to share their predictions about what they think they will find out in this new article. After predictions have been shared read the article’s title, ‘Match of the Century Ruined.’ Show the picture with the accompanying caption, ‘Athena turns Loki over to the police.’ Ask students to think about how this may confirm or prompt them to revise their prediction.

Text Features

Introduce supports and challenges

- Tell students that several new characters are mentioned in this article. Ask, *Does there seem to be any sort of guide or reference in this or the May 12 article that might provide us with information on any of these new characters?* Students may want to go back and read the bios section in the May 12 article when a new or unfamiliar character is introduced or simply to refresh their understanding of any the characters found in the continuation of this story.

ESL NOTE:

You may find it beneficial for your ESL students to quickly discuss the bios of new or unfamiliar character that are introduced, or review the bios for characters already known, to ensure their comprehension.

Sequencing

- Give students both daily editions of ‘The Gazette’ and ask them to comment on the ways they are different from each other. Ensure that students notice the change of date and how this shows the passage of time.

Self-monitoring

- On a whiteboard, write the following sentence from the top of the second column:

‘With security of the superhero kind posted at the entrances, around various areas of the stadium, and high up in the rafters, questions are being asked about how Loki came so close to taking out Gilgamesh and Hercules.’

Read the first part the sentence (up to ‘rafters’) to students and ask them: *What is the author telling us here? Did you have a picture in your*

mind as I read this? Now, let's slow things down and go to the next part of this sentence and read: 'questions are being asked about how Loki came so close to taking out Gilgamesh and Hercules.' Ask students, Is the author suggesting something here? Does this part of the sentence seem a little more serious? I wonder what she wants us to think now? Engage students in a discussion about what they can do to make sure they understand what they are reading, e.g., visualize, slow down, reread the sentence.

ESL NOTE: Keep in mind that this conversation involving reading strategies is a pertinent one, as it provides directions for students (ESL students in particular) to monitor their comprehension of text.

Synthesizing

Set a purpose for reading

- Ask students to use sticky notes to highlight the most important ideas or events as they read, and ask that they be prepared to discuss these with the rest of the group later on. Students should pay particular attention to sentences that begin and conclude paragraphs in this article to determine if main ideas and summary points can be taken from them.

Provide for early finishers

- Any students who finish early can rank their sticky notes in order of importance.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- Listen to individual students read to you. Ask, *What information have you noticed? What might be important about this? How is this character important? Is that what you would expect? Does looking at the first or last sentence in this paragraph provide you with important information?*

Observe

- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Synthesizing Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*.)

AFTER READING

Revisit the purpose for reading

Synthesizing

- Ask students, *Did paying close attention to introductory and closing sentences help you to capture some of the more important ideas in the second article? After this discussion ask students to share their sticky*

note findings with the rest of the group. List these on the whiteboard or on chart paper and have the group come to a consensus on the most important summary points that readers can take away from this article.

Check on outstanding challenges

- Invite students to share their thought processes on how they arrived at the information and points that they thought were more important.
- Ask students to note examples of unfamiliar or interesting expressions they encountered while reading, such as, ‘Trouble with a capital L,’ ‘scrambled for the exits,’ or ‘a swift carriage of justice.’ Discuss these as a group, trying to elicit the meaning of these expressions from students.
- Did students have difficulties with fantasy and mythology content being presented in a modern newspaper format? Were they able to identify the similarities and differences between these newspaper articles and real ones provided in the previous session?

Note successful strategy use

- Describe an example of fluent reading that you observed. For example, *I noticed how Tyrone went back and reread the part where Loki said, ‘You shouldn’t be surprised. Like the scorpion said to the turtle, ‘It is in my nature.’ Tyrone made his voice sound just like a super villain’s. This is a great example of reading with expression that is well-suited to the nature of the text being read. Well done, Tyrone!*

FOCUSED REREADING

Three options are provided for focused rereading in the next Guided Reading lesson. Choose an activity that meets the needs of your students, or you might select a Reader Response activity from the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*.

Written

- Students can work in pairs to publish another daily edition of ‘The Gazette.’ Paired students can write a third article, describing what happens while Loki is in prison for arson and attempted murder. They can create a new section highlights sidebar and include information that would link their fantasy paper to real-life, current events.

Artistic

- Have students design a ‘Wanted’ poster for Loki, who has escaped from his cell. Students will need to include information that reflects what the public should know about Loki and why Loki is wanted (i.e., students can list the crimes Loki has perpetrated as covered in the articles).

**Synthesizing and Making
Connections: Text to World**

Synthesizing

**Synthesizing and Making
Connections: Text to Text**

Synthesizing

Students can use the biographical information found in the first session's article as a starting point and research further if they wish to add additional information on the wanted fugitive.

- Students can design a magazine advertisement for a personal computer game that incorporates what students have learned about fantasy stories and the mythical characters presented in these articles.

Oral/dramatic

- In groups of three or four, students can write a script and present a television news report based on the events described in 'Clash of the Titans.' Students should include the expressions and tone commonly seen in TV news reports. Students can perform their news report for other classmates. Encourage participating students to synthesize the most important events and details from the story, as air time is limited and reporters must 'get to the point' to provide their audience with a complete and succinct picture.