

JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS



**THEMATIC SECTION
NATIONAL MYTHOLOGY EXAM 2016**

Who Am I?

This exercise reinforces information from pages 162-175 of "The Golden Fleece" in d'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths.

1. I am the centaur who raised Jason.

I am _____.

2. I saw a handsome youth walking down a mountain. He helped me cross a river.

I am _____.

3. I wanted to become king of Iolcus so I took the throne from my brother.

I am _____.

4. I guard the golden fleece.

I am _____.

5. Chiron taught me to be a hero.

I am _____.

6. I predicted that a one-sandaled youth would take the throne from Pelias.

I am _____.

7. We are birds with women's heads who devoured and fouled a king's food.

We are _____.

8. I put a piece of sacred oak in the prow of Jason's boat to advise him.

I am _____.

9. While I was searching for my friend Hylas, the Argonauts sailed off without me.

I am _____.

10. My sacrifice to the gods forgot to include Hera so she helped Jason dethrone me.

I am _____.

11. I am the king who ordered Jason to sow the field with dragon's teeth.

I am _____.

12. I am the sorceress who helped Jason get the fleece and escape.

I am _____.



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Sequencing

This exercise reinforces information from pages 162-175 of "The Golden Fleece" in d'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths.

Number these events in the order in which they occurred in the myth.

Jason was born

Hera saw a handsome youth at the riverside

Hera offered to help Jason

Jason went in search of the Golden Fleece

The Golden Ram flew with Phrixus to Colchis

Jason was secretly taken to live with wise Chiron

Jason learned to be a hero

King Pelias feared a youth who came wearing just one sandal

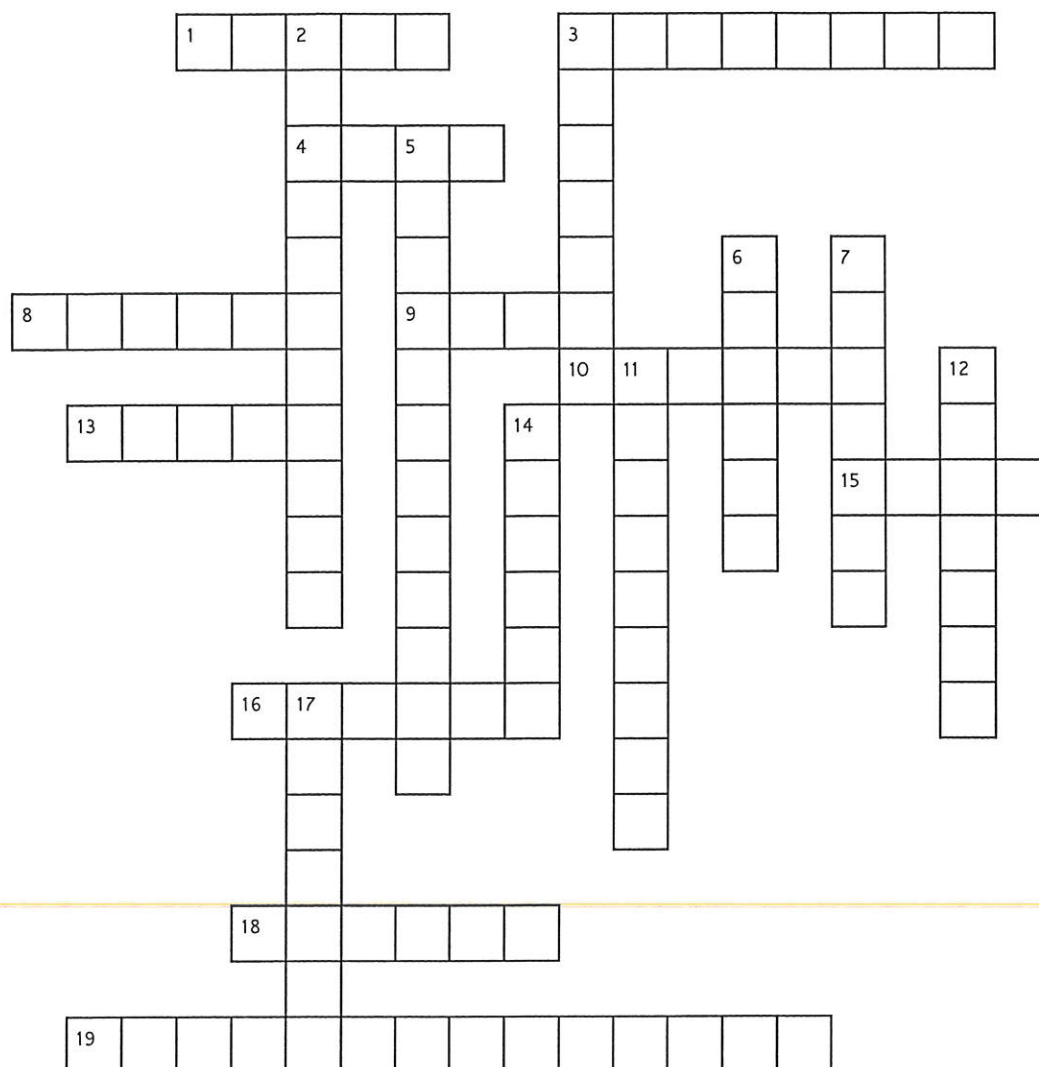
A sandal became stuck in the mud

Jason lost the throne of Iolcus because of Medea's crime

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★ Jason Crossword ★

This exercise reinforces information from pages 162-175 of "The Golden Fleece" in d'Aulaires' *Book of Greek Myths*.



ACROSS

1. Jason's girlfriend
3. Jason's rowing competitor
4. Jason's ship
8. Jason's mentor
9. Jason's flying friend
10. Jason's missing article of clothes
13. Jason's purifier
15. Jason's protectress
16. Jason's hometown
18. Jason's uncle
19. Jason's flying friends

DOWN

2. Jason's seeds
3. Jason's flying enemies
5. Jason's quest
6. Jason's rock-throwing role model
7. Jason's destination
11. Jason's companions
12. Jason's place of death
14. Jason's kingly pursuer
15. Jason's musician

The Beginning of the Golden Fleece

Part 1

Once upon a time, long, long ago in ancient Greece, a young princess named Theophane was swimming in the clear bay near her home in Thrace. Poseidon, god of the sea, fell in love with her and carried her off to an island to protect her from the mortal men who wished to marry her. The suitors followed her to the island, so Poseidon changed Theophane into a sheep to keep them from finding her.

The suitors stayed and stayed on the island, so Theophane lived as a ewe among the sheep. Soon she gave birth to a lamb who had wool of pure gold. This lamb pleased Zeus, the ruler of all the gods. He had his messenger Hermes carry the lamb to the fort of Mycenae on the plain of Argos.

Two brothers, Atreus and Thyestes, were arguing over who would become king of Mycenae. To settle the fight, they went to the Oracle of Delphi who could predict the future and solve problems. The Oracle said, "The true king is the one whose flocks have the lamb with golden fleece." Neither brother knew of this lamb, but Atreus' wife, Aerope, had seen it in their own flock. But she was in love with Thyestes and had the lamb secretly moved to his flock. In the morning, Thyestes was crowned king.

This trick did not please Zeus, so he sent his messenger Hermes to tell Atreus he had been wronged. But Hermes forgot to say it was Atreus' own wife who tricked him. When Atreus told Thyestes what Hermes had said, he was mocked for being a poor loser. But Atreus had seen his wife look lovingly at his brother. He said, "I am as sure there has been a foul trick played as I am that the sun rises in the east."

His brother replied, "If you are the real king, then the sun will rise in the west." The next morning, they looked out their windows and could see strange shadows. They went outside, and sure enough, the chariot of Helios the sun god was rising in the west! Atreus was crowned king of Mycenae, and the golden lamb grew up to be a fine fat ram with magnificent curling horns.

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Part 2

Once upon a time in the kingdom of Boeotia, there was a king, Athamas, who had a wife, Nephele. Together they had two children: a son, Phrixus, and a daughter, Helle. Then Nephele returned to the skies as a cloud. Athamas, as was custom at the time, later took a second wife, Ino, who bore him another son.

Ino knew that by local tradition Phrixus, being the elder son, would one day inherit Athamas' crown, and this upset her greatly. She so much desired to see her own son, Melicertes, rise to the honor. Thus she began to plot against the two children of Nephele. She started by secretly parching the seed grain of the city, thus making it sterile and unable to grow. Then, as the resulting famine occurred (as she knew it would), she deceived Athamas into believing that he must sacrifice his older children in order to restore his crops and save his people. Reluctantly Athamas set the day and place.

The Beginning of the Golden Fleece (continued)

However, such an evil sacrifice upset the gods greatly, and just as Phrixus and Helle were to be killed, down from Olympus swooped a most magnificent beast, a golden ram who had the ability to fly. Onto his broad golden back jumped the two children, and away from Boeotia they flew toward the morning sun. Excited and somewhat frightened by the whole escapade, Helle unfortunately did not hold on to the ram's fleece as well as she should and plummeted into the narrow strip of water linking the Aegean to the Euxine Sea. To commemorate her, it became known as the Hellespont.

Phrixus, however, continued on to the land of Colchis where Aeetes was the king. Aeetes, marveling at the lad's story of escape, welcomed him warmly and offered him Princess Chalcioppe in marriage. As thanks to the gods who had saved him, Phrixus sacrificed the golden ram which Zeus then placed in the heavens as the constellation Aries; as thanks for his new sanctuary, Phrixus gave the ram's fleece to Aeetes. He hung it upon a branch of an oak tree in a grove that was sacred to Ares, god of war. Never again did Phrixus return to Boeotia.

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Part 3

After Jason and his men set forth from Iolcus in the *Argo*, they sailed first to Lemnos, an island inhabited completely by women. The story goes that the women of the island, having offended the gods, developed an obnoxious odor which made their husbands look for other brides. In retaliation, the women, led by Queen Hypsipyle, killed all the men, save one: Hypsipyle's father. Him they put into a chest which they launched into the sea. Fortunately for Jason and his men, the women's anger had left and they welcomed the Argonauts in a kindly fashion.

Their next major stop was the realm of King Cyzicus, aptly named Cyzicus after him. At the Argonauts' arrival, they found that the king and his people were being bothered by giants from the mountains. Jason and his men aided Cyzicus and his people by killing these creatures, and in return Cyzicus gave fresh supplies to the Argonauts to see them on their way. All would have been pleasant except that a rogue storm blew the *Argo* back to the very same shores at night. Fearing a new enemy, Cyzicus and his people attacked the ship and in the battle, before recognition of the Argonauts took place, Cyzicus was slain. In mourning, Jason and his men departed once again.

A competition between Jason and Heracles led to a broken oar and a stop to replace it at Cios. Here, while Heracles was searching for appropriate replacement material, his young armor-bearer Hylas was enticed into a pool by a water nymph. Unable to find his companion, Heracles decided to voyage with Jason no further. He had other labors ahead.

This loss of Heracles might have been disastrous at the *Argo's* next stop had the boxer Pollux not been aboard. In this land of the Bebryces, the King Amycus demanded a fight with any who dared to stop in his land. Fortunately, Pollux's strength was superior, and he was able to overcome the king. Thus the Argonauts were able to continue on their quest.

The Beginning of the Golden Fleece (continued)

The next stop in Salmydessus, the land of King Phineus, was a vital one for Jason and his men. Here, by ridding the blind king of the Harpies, they were able to ascertain how to proceed through the next part of their voyage, the dangerous passage between the Symplegades, or "Clashing Rocks." Phineus advised Jason that timing was the most important factor and that by watching the flight of a dove, he might be able to get the *Argo* through safely as well. Jason heeded Phineus' advice, and not only did the *Argo* make it through this hazard with minimal damage, by her passage she broke the spell of the rocks, thus leaving the sea lane perpetually open to ships.

Between the Symplegades and Colchis, there were other stops of less importance. However, the Argonauts did pass by the land of the Amazons, the women warriors, and they ventured near the Caucasus mountain on which Prometheus was bound. It was a most eventful voyage.

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Sources

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