













In this topic, we explore the idea of heroes in Ancient Greece and Rome, with a focus on Heracles (more commonly known as Hercules). We will examine the twelve labours of Heracles, and his importance to Ancient Olympia. For the Roman element we will study Hercules' victories over Achelous and Nessus as told by the poet Ovid. We will also learn about Hercules' victory over Cacus through a section of Virgil's Aeneid. We will also compare and contrast the importance of Hercules to the Greeks and Romans.

The Twelve Labours of Heracles

1	Slay the Nemean Lion	After realising the skin of the lion was impregnable to arrows, Heracles strangled the lion to death. Heracles presented Eurystheus with the lion's skin which he had to remove from the lion using the lion's claw as his own knife would not work on it.	
2	Slay the Lernaean Hydra	Heracles asked his cousin, Iolaus, for help and each time he removed a head, Iolaus would seal the neck with a flaming torch. Heracles removed the immortal head of the Hydra and buried it in the ground, and used its venom for his own arrows.	
3	Capture the Golden Hind of Artemis	This was not quite the same danger as the previous two tasks but was hard because of the speed of the animal. After tracking it for one whole year, he was able to capture it, bind its legs and carried it back to Mycenae. He would later return the animal.	
4	Capture the Erymanthian Boar	Like the Golden Hind, the boar was much larger than normal boars and was terrorising the countryside of Arcadia. Heracles wore the boar down through the thick winter snow. When it tired, Heracles caught it, bound it and took it back to Mycenae.	
5	Clean the Augean Stables	Heracles had to clean the stables of an enormous herd of cattle in one day. It would have been impossible had Heracles cleverly diverted the rivers Alpheios and Peneios through the stables, cleaning them instantly.	
6	Slay the Stymphalian Birds	The birds had been ravaging the lands, some suggested they ate the residents too. To rouse the birds from the marshes, Heracles used a rattle made by Hephaistos from Athena. As the birds flew into the air, he shot them all down with his venomous arrows.	
7	Capture the Cretan Bull	The bull had been destroying homes and farmland in Crete. Heracles crept up behind it and strangled it to the point of death where upon he released it and it came under his control. He rode it back to Mycenae, which includes across the sea (I), and back to Mycenae.	
8	Steal the Mares of Diomedes	The king kept a set of horses that were crazed due to them being fed on the limbs of defeated enemies. Heracles stole the horses and Diomedes sent soldiers after him. Heracles would end up feeding Diomedes to his own horses before taking the horses back to Mycenae.	
9	Obtain the Belt of Hippolyte	Hippolyte's belt was given to her by father, Ares, and Heracles had to steal it. Hippolyte gave him her belt because she greatly admired his work in previous labours. Yet, Hera intervened and disguised as an Amazonian, persuaded them that Heracles was going to steal the Queen herself. It resulted in a battle in which Heracles kills Hippolyte.	
10	Steal the Cattle of Geryon	Heracles stole Geryon's cattle but whilst stealing them, he was attacked by Geryon who had three heads and three sets of arms and legs. Heracles would eventually club Geryon to death and take the cattle back to Mycenae.	
11	Steal the Golden Apples of Hesperides	A monumental task that sees Heracles fight the river god, Achelous, set Prometheus free from his eternal punishment on Mount Caucasus, and steal the golden apples from Hesperides, the daughter's of Atlas. To do this final part, he would trick Atlas into doing it, and then trick Atlas again to return to his eternal punishment of holding up the skies.	
12	Capture and bring back Cerberus	His final task was to bring Cerberus from the Underworld. After winning Persephone's favour, Hades suggested that if Heracles could tame Cerberus, he could take him to Mycenae. Heracles used the stranglehold used so successfully on the Nemean Lion and the Cretan Bull.	

The Birth and Early-Life of Heracles

13	Parents	Heracles has a human mother, Alcmena, and a divine father, Zeus. Alcmena thought she was sharing her bed with her husband, Amphitryon because Zeus disguised himself as him. Yet, Alcmena was also pregnant with Amphitryon's baby meaning she would have two children.
14	Hera's Wrath	Just before the boys were born, Zeus boasted that as he ruled the skies, his son would rule the Earth. Hera was angry at Zeus' affair so made him vow that which ever son was born first would rule. Hera even tried to have Heracles and Alcmena die during the birth. Eurystheus was born first and became King of Mycenae; Heracles had no official power.
15	The Snake Plot	Hera was furious that her plan to have Heracles killed at birth failed, so she sent two snakes to poison Heracles as a baby. Heracles strangled the snakes in his cot showing his immense, and god-like, strength.
16	Athena the Protector	Following the failed snake plot, and frightened by Hera's anger, Alcmena abandoned Heracles in the woods where he was recovered by Athena. She took him to Mount Olympus but he was sent away by Hera. From this point onwards, Athena would be his protector and he was returned to his mother.
17	Hera's Revenge	When he became a man, Heracles married Megara, the daughter of the King of Thebes. Still engorged by Zeus' affair and her hatred of Heracles, she sent the goddess of madness, Mania, to infect Heracles. In his madness he killed his wife and children.
18	Oracle of Delphi	In his depression, Heracles exiled himself from Thebes and consulted with the Oracle of Delphi as to what he should do. It advised Heracles should serve his half-brother, King Eurystheus, for twelve years completing tasks to atone for his crimes. Little did he know, Hera had taken over the oracle of Delphi and this was her plan.
19	The Twelve Labours	To atone for his crimes, King Eurystheus (guided by Hera) set Heracles 10 tasks to complete which he believed would be impossible and see Heracles die. However, it was extended to 12 tasks as during two of them, Heracles received either help or payment.

Heracles and Ancient Olympia

20	Ancient Olympia	Ancient Olympia is the home of the Olympic Games, which were founded in 776BC. Olympia is in the ancient province of Elis. This is the place where Heracles carried out his fifth labour: The Augean Stables.
21	The Temple of Zeus Metopes	Heracles and the Olympic Games will be forever linked due to his twelve labours being represented on the Temple of Zeus with 12 metopes. Six are above the entrance and six over the back entrance.

Roman Hercules: Stories of Cacus, Achelous and Nessus

22	Roman Hercules	The Romans inherited their ideas about Hercules from the Greeks but they do have their own stories about him: The battle with Cacus, the battle between Hercules and Achelous, the battle with Nessus, and his death.
23	Hercules and Cacus	The story of Hercules and Cacus happens during his tenth labour, the Cattle of Geryon. When he was driving the cattle back to Mycenae, he stopped at Pallantium on the River Tiber, where Rome would later be founded. It was here that Hercules heard that Cacus had been terrorising the people of Pallantium. Whilst resting, Cacus would steal Hercules' cattle. This would lead to a fight where Hercules would be triumphant.
25	Cult of Hercules	This led to the cult of Hercules in Rome. This led to an annual sacrifice at the Great Altar of Hercules, which later would become the location of the Temple of Hercules in the Forum Boarium in Rome.
26	Hercules and Achelous	The story of Hercules and Achelous is a fight over who should marry the princess Deianira of Aitolia. Achelous was a river god and both refused to back down so whoever won the fight would marry the princess. Again, Hercules would prove to be triumphant in a fight between the two.
27	Hercules and Nessus	Hercules' confrontation with the centaur, Nessus, would eventually lead to his death. Hercules would kill Nessus for capturing his wife. The arrow used by Hercules contained venom from the Hydra and seeped into Nessus' shirt which he tricked Hercules' wife into accepting as a gift.
28	The Death of Hercules	Juno in her hatred of Hercules continued to spread lies and create problems for Hercules. She spread rumours about how Hercules did not love his wife but another, a princess called Iole. Deianira placed Nessus' cloak around Hercules in the hope it would revive his love for her. The cloak though was cursed and during the heat of a sacrifice it burnt and stuck to Hercules' skin causing him to die.
29	Hercules becomes a God	Upon his death, Jupiter gave a speech to the other Olympian Gods and asked that Hercules be allowed onto Olympus for all his heroic deeds on Earth. All agreed, including Juno, so Hercules shed his mortal skin and became an immortal god.