

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Recognizing Allusions

An **allusion** is a brief, indirect reference to a person, place, thing or quality, often from a story. Many stories, and even everyday conversation, **allude** to characters from Greek mythology to communicate something about a person or a situation. Read about the well-known mythological characters below. Then see if you can identify four allusions in the story. Underline each allusion that you find.



**Zeus** was the king of the Greek gods on Mount Olympus, and the most powerful. He is often pictured throwing bolts of lightning and thunder.

**Achilles** was a great warrior who was almost invincible. His only weakness was a small spot on the back of his heel.

**Hercules** was the son of Zeus (a god) and Alcmene (a human). He is famous for his incredible strength. To prove himself he had to perform 12 seemingly impossible tasks.

**King Midas** was granted one wish from the god Dionysus as a reward. King Midas wished that everything that he touched would turn to gold.

## The School Play

Mr. Kirk was reading out the assignments for the class play. Jerry held his breath in anticipation. He really wanted to play the lead role. But Mr. Kirk said, "Jerry. Set design." Jerry stared at him in shock. Set design! What did he know about putting on plays? He hadn't even read any plays, let alone seen one. How was he supposed to know what a set should look like? "Mr. Kirk! You've made a mistake!" Jerry cried. Mr. Kirk's glance struck Jerry like a thunderbolt. "There is no mistake," Mr. Kirk said. Jerry was worried. He was brilliant at most subjects. But art was Jerry's Achilles heel. Give me a tough math problem any day, Jerry grumbled. But it turned out that he wasn't responsible for the set design by himself. There were half a dozen kids on the team, and Jerry started to feel better. Jerry took responsibility for making measurements. Chad's Herculean strength made him perfect for moving materials around. The three girls drew the designs and painted the sets that Rory made with the help of his father and some power tools. The play was a great success. I discovered something else that I am good at, Jerry thought to himself on opening night – being part of a team! That night, he felt like everything he touched turned to gold!

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## Recognizing Allusions

Rewrite the sentence in which each allusion appears without using the allusion, to show that you understand the meaning.

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