

To be used  
with:  
5.RL.2

# Standards Based Assessment

## Theseus and the Boulder

By: Wim Coleman and Pat Perrin

In Greek mythology, Theseus was a great adventurer. But during his childhood, his mother, Aethra, wouldn't let him leave his home town of Troezen. This short play explains why.

*[The scene is a yard in the town of Troezen. A large round boulder sits in the center of the stage. THESEUS and his mother, AETHRA, enter.]*

**THESEUS:** But this isn't fair, Mother.

**AETHRA:** I don't see what's unfair about it.

**THESEUS:** Every year around this time, you tell me to move this stupid boulder.

**AETHRA:** It's an eyesore, and I want to put a little vegetable garden here.

**THESEUS:** You've been telling me that since I was six! And you started making me try to move it back then! I was way too little.

**AETHRA:** You're not six anymore, Theseus. You're sixteen.

**THESEUS:** I couldn't even budge it last year, and I won't be able to move it now.

**AETHRA:** How will you know until you try? You've been jogging, working out in the gym, and you're the star of the wrestling team. You're getting stronger every day. I'll bet you can move it this time.

**THESEUS:** And I'll bet that I can't. Anyway, the whole thing's silly. It's time I got out of this little town and went to Athens. That's where I can really make my name in the world and get started on some adventures. And Father is the king there.

**AETHRA:** King Aegeus will have to wait until I think you're ready.

**THESEUS:** And when will that be?

**AETHRA:** That's for me to decide. Now be a good son and move this boulder for your mother.

**THESEUS:** Do I have to?

**AETHRA:** You have to.

*[THESEUS sighs and walks over to the boulder, which is almost as tall as he is. He puts his shoulder against it and tries to push it.]*

**THESEUS:** Ugh! There! It didn't move an inch.

**AETHRA:** I'm not so sure. I thought I saw it budge. Try again.

**THESEUS:** But Mother—

**AETHRA:** Go on and try.

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## Theseus and the Boulder

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*[THESEUS pushes against the boulder again.]*

**THESEUS:** Hey! I think I felt it move just a little!

**AETHRA:** Keep on pushing.

*[THESEUS pushes against the boulder again.]*

**THESEUS:** That time it really did move—and I see something under it.

**AETHRA:** Again.

*[THESEUS pushes against the boulder again.]*

**THESEUS:** I see something made of leather, and something made of steel.

**AETHRA:** Just a little more.

*[THESEUS pushes against the boulder, which moves aside. Underneath it are a pair of sandals and a sword.]*

**THESEUS:** What's this? *[crouching down to look at the objects]* A pair of fine sandals and a sharp, shining sword. They look as though they were left here just yesterday.

*[THESEUS pushes against the boulder again.]*

**AETHRA:** Take a look at the name carved on the sword blade.

**THESEUS** *[reading]:* "Aegeus, King of Athens." My father's name!

**AETHRA:** It's your father's sword. He put it and the sandals under the boulder when you were just a baby. He told me to keep you right here in Troezen until you were strong enough to move the boulder and claim them as your own. And now, put on those sandals and strap on that sword. It's time for you to go to Athens and meet your father. Just be sure to have many adventures on your way, do all kinds of heroic things, and become famous by the time you get there. Come on, let's start packing your bag. When you come back to visit, we'll plant that garden I've been talking about.

*[AETHRA starts walking away.]*

**THESEUS:** But Mother ...

*[AETHRA stops and turns toward him.]*

**THESEUS:** Why didn't you ever tell me what was under the boulder?

**AETHRA:** What is life without a few surprises?

*[AETHRA and THESEUS exit.]*

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**Instructions: Read the play titled *Theseus and The Boulder* and answer the questions below.**

1.) Read the following lines from the play:

**THESEUS: I couldn't even budge it last year, and I won't be able to move it now.**

**AETHRA: How will you know until you try? You've been jogging, working out in the gym, and you're the star of the wrestling team. You're getting stronger every day. I'll bet you can move it this time.**

What do these lines from the play reveal about Aethra and Theseus?

- a.) Aethra and Theseus are both sure he will never move the boulder.
- b.) Theseus is trying to move the boulder, but Aethra doesn't believe in him.
- c.) Aethra doesn't believe that Theseus is old enough to leave, and Theseus believes that he is old enough to leave.
- d.) Aethra is trying to help Theseus grow up, and Theseus doubts that he can move the boulder.

2.) How did Theseus's feelings about moving the boulder change throughout the story?

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3.) Identify the conflict of *Theseus and the Boulder*. Explain how the conflict is resolved.

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4.) Write a one-paragraph summary of *Theseus and the Boulder*. Use key details from the passage to write your summary.

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5.) Which of the following is a main theme found in *Theseus and the Boulder*?

- a.) A boy is growing up.
- b.) A woman is leaving home.
- c.) A boy expects to stay home.
- d.) A king is returning home.