

Name: _____ Date: _____

Preparing to Write: The Myth of Icarus

The writing prompt on page 15 says:

In Scene 4, Athena says: “It is a wise man who knows his limits—and does not attempt to reach beyond them.” How is this idea developed throughout the play? How does the poem offer a different point of view? Answer both questions in an essay. Use text evidence.

Follow the directions below to help you write your essay.

Let’s start with the first question, which asks how the idea that humans should know their limits and not attempt to reach beyond them is developed in the play.

1. Find lines in the play that show that Daedalus and Icarus do not know their limits or attempt to reach beyond them. In other words, lines that reveal the characters showing great pride or doing things that the gods might see as too ambitious. In the space below, summarize these lines or quote them directly. Be sure to note the scenes and page numbers. We’ve provided two ideas for you.

Scene 2:

- Daedalus is celebrated at a party thrown by King Minos of Crete. Pasiphae, the queen of Crete, thanks Daedalus for the “glorious new palace” he built and notes that the statues he built are “so lifelike we had to tie them down to keep them from wandering off” (11).
- A sea captain praises the sails that Daedalus created (11).

2. In addition to the quote from Athena in the writing prompt, what else does Athena say or what else happens that develops the idea that humans should know their limits? Summarize or quote lines that answer this question below.

Now work on the second part of the question: How does the poem offer a different point of view?

3. Jot down your ideas about how the poem “Reconsidering Icarus” offers a different point of view to Athena’s statement that a wise man knows his limits and does not try to go beyond them. Be sure to include details from the poem to support your ideas.

Now you’re ready to write the first draft of your essay. Be sure to make it clear how your text evidence supports your ideas.