

Sisyphos

SPEAKING

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_1024S_EN

LANGUAGE
English



lingoda

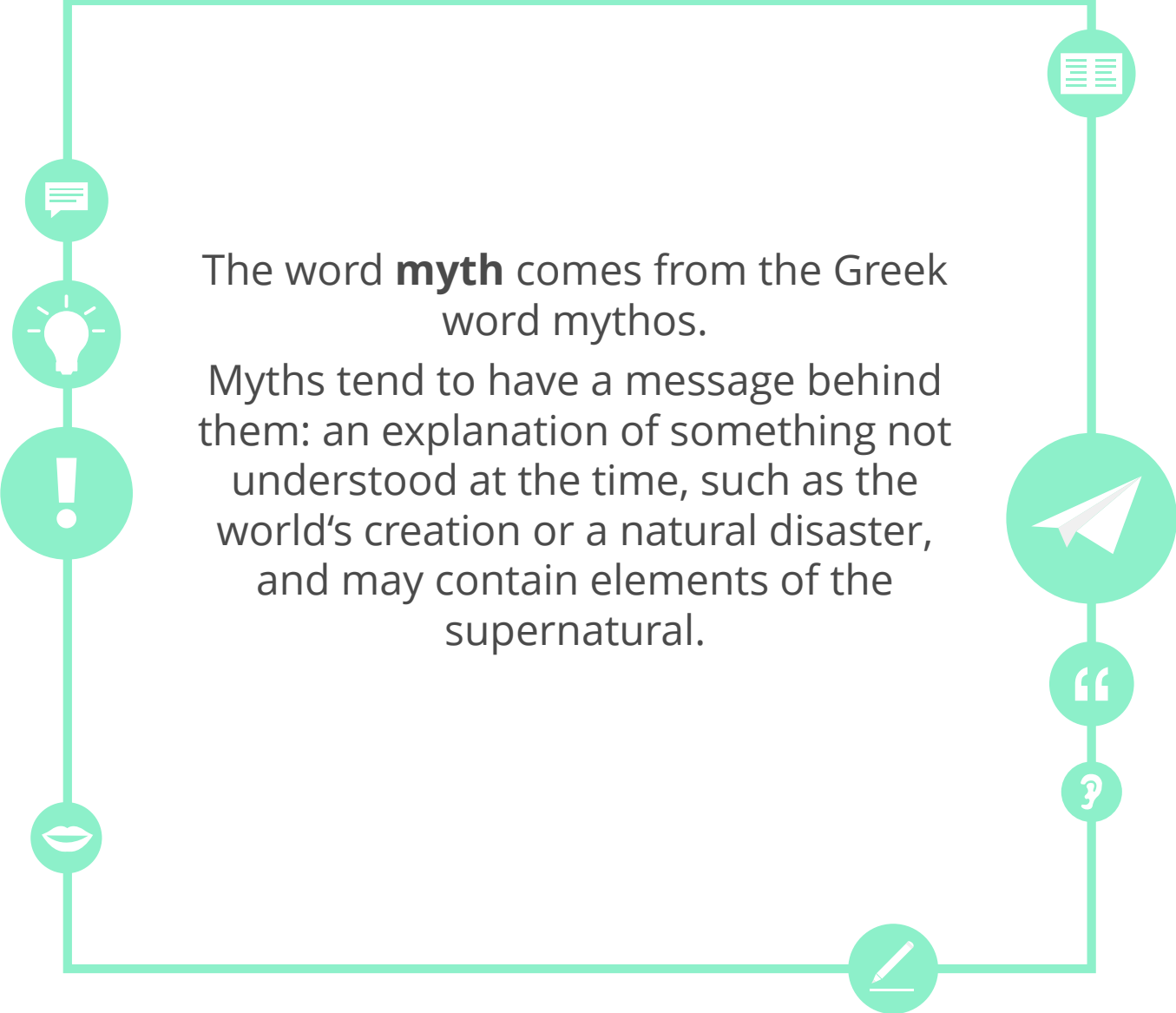




Goals

- Can read, listen to and understand a challenging text about the myth of Sisyphos.
- Can discuss the myth and its connection and explain its relevance to the modern world at length.





The word **myth** comes from the Greek word mythos.

Myths tend to have a message behind them: an explanation of something not understood at the time, such as the world's creation or a natural disaster, and may contain elements of the supernatural.



Warm-up: Greek mythology

**Are you familiar with
Greek mythology?
Which myths do you
know?**



Warm-up: myths and legends

Greek mythology is particularly well-known across the world, but all cultures have their own myths. What are some famous myths or legends from your own country or culture?



Warm-up: cross-culture similarities

There are often similarities between different cultures' myths – for example, many cultures have a tale of a great flood.

Can you find any similarities between those in your group?





The myth of Sisyphos



The tale of Sisyphos finds its **roots** in Greek mythology. Sisyphos was King of Ephyra, which is thought to be modern-day Corinth in Greece.

There are various accounts of what Sisyphos did during his life to have deserved the fate that he met, but all agree that he was **deceitful** and **treacherous**, with a penchant for killing those who dared to disagree with him. Sisyphos **met** his punishment upon his death.



The myth of Sisyphos



Having assumed himself in life to be even cleverer than the god Zeus himself, he was punished in death. In the **Underworld**, Zeus gave Sisyphos the task of rolling an enormous boulder up a steep hill.

However, rather than ever reaching the top, Zeus' **enchantment** caused the boulder to roll away from the King shortly before arriving at the **summit**, landing back at the **foot** of the hill. This forced him to begin again each time, committed to the same task for eternity.



New vocabulary: discuss

roots

deceitful

treacherous

to meet (a fate)

Underworld

enchantment

summit

foot (of a hill)

boulder



Put the ideas from the text back in order, and re-tell the story in your own words



What do you think the king did in life to deserve such a fate? Consider, or, if you know the facts, tell the class about them.



Discussion: futility is part of life

The myth of Sisyphos gave birth to the term Sisyphean, meaning something that is futile and laborious.

Consider things you spend your time doing (whether at work, school or home). Tell the class about them and what makes them futile. Could they be seen as a punishment? Why do you continue to do them?



I find vacuuming the house to be pretty Sisyphean. It takes forever and the results only last a day at most before having to go back and do it again.

I agree, but it's not as bad as ...



What about ...? I seem to spend my whole life doing...



Getting what is deserved

Many cultures and religions have a concept of getting what one deserves, whether good or bad, in this life or the next. Describe one or more that you are familiar with, or use the ideas below.



karma

heaven/hell

rebirth/reincarnation



Get ready to listen



The next few slides will focus on
training your listening comprehension



Fill in the gaps

As you listen, fill in the gaps in the sentences below. Watch out for the false friends, which were never in the text to begin with!

1. One could ask how Sisyphos could bear such a _____, having realised that the task would never _____, and that the chance of success was very low.
2. Although he knows his _____ will never end, he is _____ to it. Having now _____ himself from his human life, Sisyphos accepts that the rock is his _____ to bear, brought about by his actions on Earth.

resigned

talent

collude

torment

developed

conclude

burden

distanced

bundle

fate



Correct the mistakes

This text is very similar to what you just heard, but with eight incorrect phrases, which lead to a very different understanding of the myth!
Correct the errors.

One could ask how Sisyphos could bear such a **treat**, having realised that the task would never conclude and that the chance of succeeding was **very high**. In his essay *The Myth of Sisyphos*, the famous **Italian** writer, Albert Camus comes up with a suggestion as to why: the time spent traversing back **up** the mountain towards the boulder is Sisyphos' time of **frustration**. This is his breathing space that **robs him of** the strength to continue. Although he knows his fate will never end, he is **happy about** it. Having now distanced himself from his human life, Sisyphos accepts that the rock is his, brought about by his **inaction** on Earth.





Mythology in the English lexicon

Words derived from Greek mythology have had a tremendous impact on the lexicon of the English language and are used by many in everyday conversation, regardless of their history.

Discuss with your teacher what you think the following words mean and where they come from.





Is mythology still relevant?

**Read the quote below and decide whether you agree or disagree.
Debate this with your teacher or group.
Use the sticky notes for inspiration, but come up with your own ideas
to supplement them.**

“

Modern life is dominated by science; mythology has no place in a world where everything can be explained.

”

More
approachable
than science

Religion

Teaches morals



Warm-down: modern mythology

Do you think the modern world is
conducive to the creation of new
myths?

Consider: urban legends, fake
news, clickbait, etc.



Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





Transcription

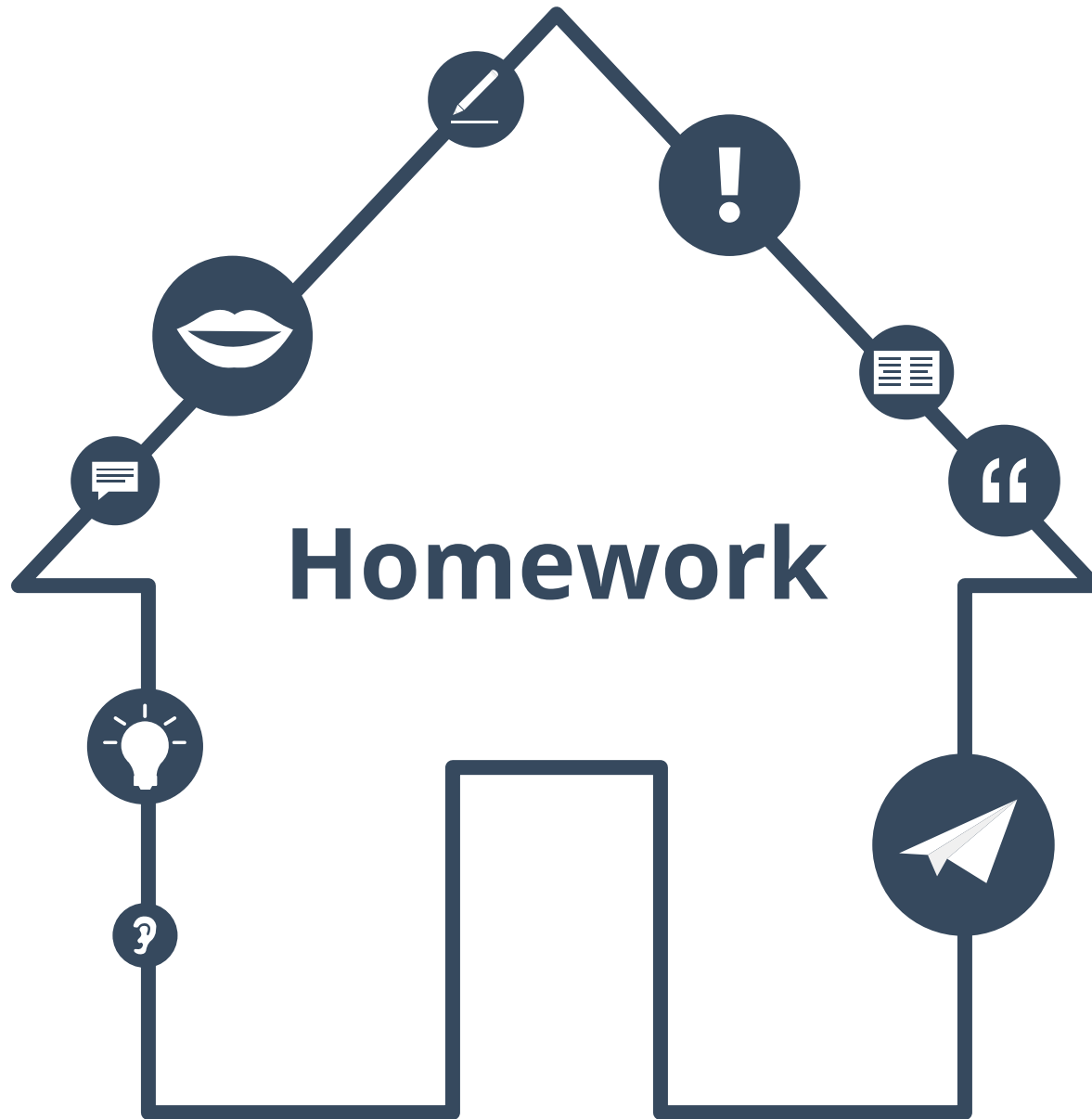
One could ask how Sisyphos could bear such a torment, having realised that the task would never conclude and that the chance of success was very low. In his essay *The Myth of Sisyphos*, the famous French writer, Albert Camus, comes up with a suggestion as to why: the time spent traversing back down the mountain towards the boulder is Sisyphos' time of reflection. This is his breathing space that gives him the strength to continue. Although he knows his fate will never end, he is resigned to it. Having now distanced himself from his human life, Sisyphos accepts that the rock is his burden to bear, brought about by his actions on Earth.



Answer key

Exercise p. 14 Fill in the gaps:

1. torment; 2. conclude; 3. fate; 4. resigned; 5. distanced; 6. burden





Homework: heaven or hell?

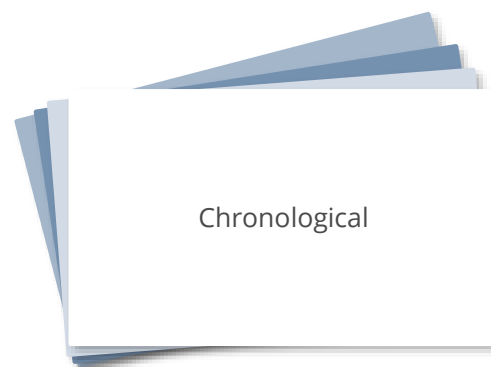
Was Sisyphos' torment a real punishment? Would you consider it to be heaven, hell, or something in the middle? Write a few sentences on the topic.

○	
○	
○	
○	
○	
○	
○	
○	
○	
○	
○	
○	
○	
○	
○	



Vocabulary review

Review the vocabulary which comes from Greek mythology. Can you think of any more? Are there equivalents in your own language, whether from Greek or any other mythology?





About this material

Find out more at
www.lingoda.com

This material is provided by

lingoda



lingoda Who are we?



Why learn English online?



What kinds of English classes do we offer?



Who are our English teachers?



How do our English certificates work?



We also have a language blog!