

CHARACTERS, ACTIONS, AND SETTINGS

Artists' pictures tell stories by using characters, actions, and settings (or places). Costumes, hairstyles, and objects help us identify characters. Poses and expressions let us know what the characters are doing and how they feel. Trees, plants, furniture, and architecture are clues that can tell us where a story takes place—for example, inside or outside, on land or at sea.

In a group, **READ** aloud this episode from a famous myth:

As a fourth labor, King Eurystheus ordered Herakles to capture a terrifying boar that was ravaging the surrounding land. Chasing the boar from a thicket, Herakles drove the exhausted animal into deep snow, trapped it, and brought it to the king.

—Adapted from Apollodorus's *The Library*

FIND an object in this gallery that represents the ending of the story above, then

ANSWER the following questions by looking closely at the work of art.

1. Who are the **characters**? How can you tell who's who?

2. Describe the **action**. What is happening in the scene?



3. Describe the **setting**. Where does the story take place? How can you tell?

4. How are the written scene and the artwork similar and different?

SHARE your answers as a group.

TAKE IT A STEP FURTHER

FIND another object in this gallery that depicts a scene from a mythological story. Make a note of the characters or the type of object so that you can do further research on the artwork back at school (find it on www.getty.edu).

Ancient artists sometimes depicted figures and scenes that related to the function of certain objects. For example, they often painted sea creatures on vessels used for carrying water. How might the characters, action, and setting on the artwork you selected relate to its use?

