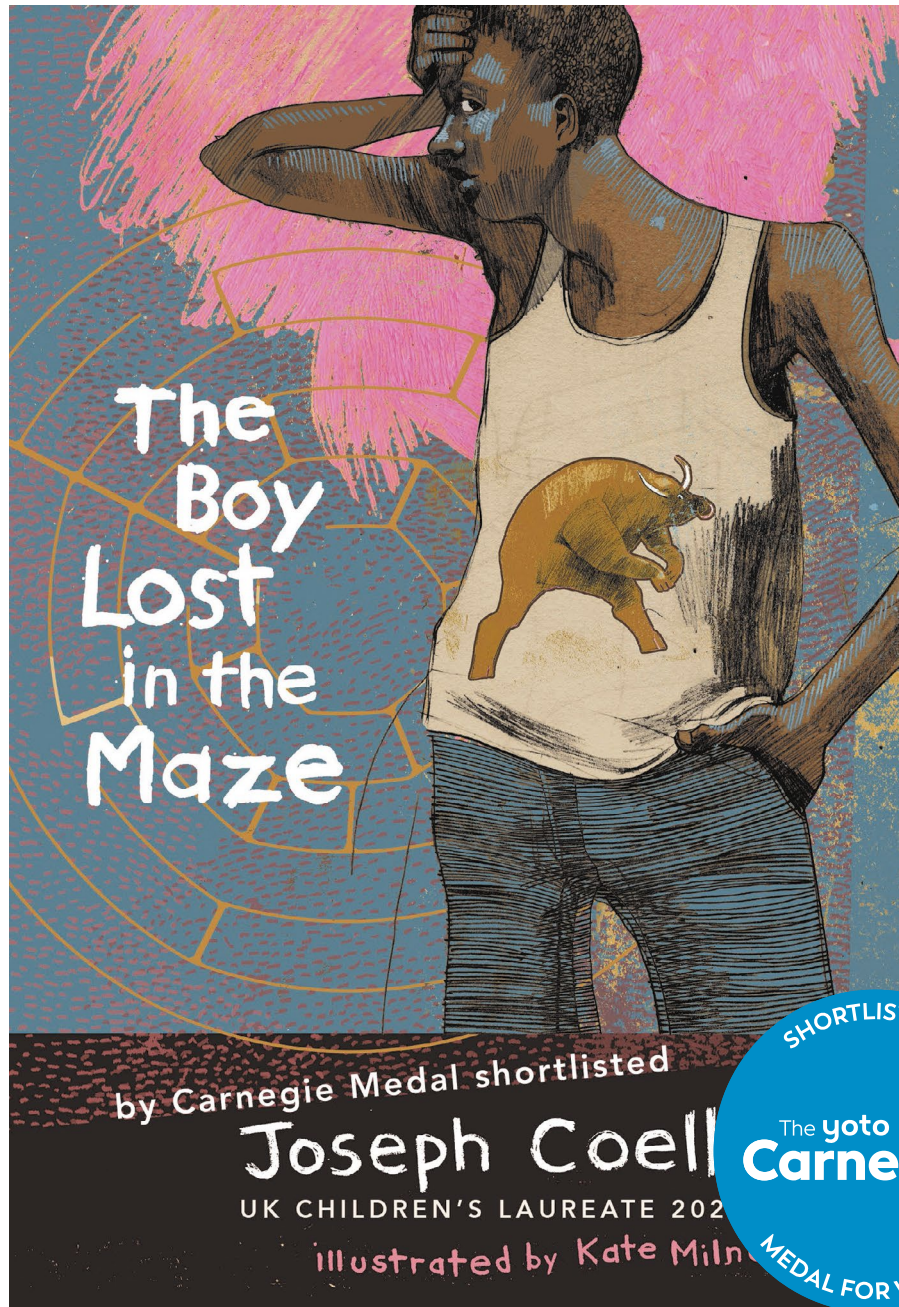
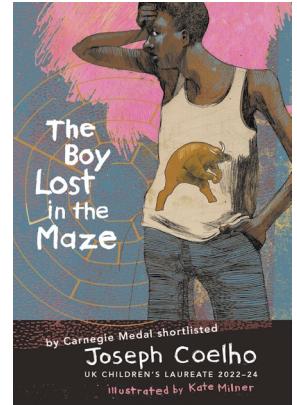


The yoto Carnegies



The Yoto Carnegie Shortlist 2024 Shadowing Resources

Activities for The Boy Lost in the Maze by Joseph Coelho



Content warning

Coercion, family breakdown, grief

General Activities for all books

- Lego Fun: Create a scene from one of the books using Lego or other building materials/toys.
- Shadowing Scrapbook: Document your journey through the 2024 Shadowing period. This can be used to record books and activities discussed in each session, as well as offer a creative space for reviews, reflection and anything else you might like to add.
- Take the title or first line from each of the shortlisted books and create a poem or story by combining them with words and phrases of your own.
- Carnegie Washing Line: Cut out shapes of clothes (e.g. socks, tops, trousers etc) using cardboard and write quotes from the Medal for Writing books and pictures from Medal for Illustration and hang on a washing line with pegs to display. Group members could do this as an activity in the session if time allows or asked to do at home and then to bring to the next session.
- Think of some questions you would like to ask the shortlisted authors and share them on social media using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies24**
- When Worlds Collide: Select two characters, each from a different shortlisted book. Imagine what they would say to each other, if they met. How would they behave? You could improvise this, or write a script or short story that describes the encounter. E.g, Erik from Crossing the Line meets Growls from Steady for This.
- Carnegie Touch and Taste:
 - Touch: Curate a selection of items inspired by the shortlists, place them into a drawstring bag and have shadowers try to identify each item using touch. As time goes on, and shadowers become more familiar with the shortlisted books, you can expand the game to include guessing the title of the book based on the collection of items in the bag.
 - Taste: Mine the shortlisted titles for references to food and use this to spark discussions about food they like and dislike. You could encourage everyone to bring a snack each week, focusing each session around one of the titles. Alternatively, you could throw a shortlist celebration party and have everyone contribute a dish inspired by one of the shortlisted books. and then offer them to try different foods from the shortlisted books. Make sure you have a conversation about allergies and dietary requirements well in advance!
- The Shadowing Tree: ask shadowing group members to write very short reviews or info about characters on leaf shaped cutouts or sticky notes. The cutouts could be hung on an artificial tree, or a real one, depending on your setting, whilst sticky notes could be arranged on a poster and displayed in the library.
- Think about who would play the main characters in a film or TV adaptation of one or more of the shortlisted titles. Create a cast list and explain your choices.

- Rewrite the ending of one of the shortlisted books. What have you changed, and why? Does it alter how you feel about the story?
- Have a go at creating spine poetry by using the titles of the shortlisted books as phrases/words. Share your creations online using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies24**
- Create your own playlist to accompany a shortlisted book - you might want to highlight a particular theme, tap into the geography or time period of the book or create a playlist that reflects a particular character.
- Choose a character from one of the shortlisted books and reinvent them in the art style of your choosing. You could create your character digitally, draw them by hand, paint them or even make a sculpture. You could try creating the same character in a variety of styles - Manga, Pop Art, Disney - using different materials.
- Create your own book trailer for one of the books, or work together to make a trailer for the entire shortlist. This could be a TikTok style 'sell' of the book or a more traditional thematic video.

Book Activities

1. In *The Boy Lost in the Maze*, Joseph Coelho takes as his inspiration the Greek legend of Theseus and the Minotaur. Ancient myths and legends fired the imagination of Shakespeare and have also inspired acclaimed adult authors like Pat Barker, Madeline Miller and Jennifer Saint. Is there a particular myth, legend or folktale which inspires you, or which you would like to read more about?
2. There is an interactive “choose your own adventure” element to *The Boy Lost in the Maze* as the reader is invited to make their own choices which mirror Theseus’/Theo’s trials. Discuss with your shadowing group whether this is effective. Can you select a particular poem without an interactive thread and provide your own?
3. Joseph Coelho explains in his afterword that myths are not set in stone and can have many interpretations and variations. Listen to, or watch, an extract from Harrison Birtwhistle’s opera *The Minotaur* and discuss this concept with your shadowing group.
4. *The Boy Lost in the Maze* is illustrated throughout in black and white by Kate Milner. What do her illustrations add to the text? Is there synergy between the two? Choose a favourite illustration; explain why it has meaning to you and how it fits with Theo’s story.
5. Monsters abound in ancient myth and legend and in more modern stories, like Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. In *The Boy Lost in the Maze*, the Minotaur is not written purely as a monster. Discuss how Joseph Coelho gives him humanity, and invites our empathy, through both poetic technique and character development.
6. In the poem “Snapshot”, Theo meets his father and they look at family photos together. Choose a photo of your family, or a family member. Write a short paragraph about what it means to you.
7. Discuss the importance of the speira (spiral) in *The Boy Lost in the Maze* (it recurs in the chapter headings, Theo’s helmet and outfit and even on Moth’s face p. 125). Design your own version of the speira in your chosen medium.
8. The poem “Theseus” (p. 38) is a septet in which a letter in each line is highlighted to form the hero’s name. Try writing your own acrostic poem, using the letters of your name at the beginning of each line. Think about what personality traits, skills and interests your poem could reveal about you.

About These Resources

All of these resources are designed to be completed in small discussion groups, ideally your school's Yoto Carnegie Shadowing Group. However, they can easily be done individually. Instead of talking about the tasks, you can write down and keep a record of your ideas.

Before Reading

10-20 minutes

- Discuss what you think *The Boy Lost in the Maze* will be about based on these extracts. You should structure your discussion around the questions below.
 - What other novels do you think it will be like?
 - What genre of novel do you think it will be?
 - What sense do you get of where and when it will be set?
 - If you had to identify three likely themes, what would they be?

Extract 1

There is a stone in my chest
when I think of my father.
A stone I cannot lift.
A stone that settles its weight
when I visit the barber's alone,
when my body blooms.
There is a stone in my chest
that I cannot lift.

Extract 2

Pine-Bender

A scream
unlike anything

it sliced through the air
Theseus heard

The scream
a cracking
an unzipping
a flaying

a ripping
spine
of body
of flesh

Extract 3

I battle the bull handles of my bike,
following my phone's blue dot breadcrumbs:
past Trafalgar Square,
the slalom of Leicester Square,
through the curves of Regent Street
and banking the crosses of Oxford Street
before sliding down into Soho.

The logo on the buzzer is of two trees,
feels wrong for an internet-search business.

Extract 4

The Labyrinth's centre has me
and there it shows me things
worlds laid upon worlds
time laid out
like a corridor I can clop

like a valley I can scramble
I see all things here
past and present and future
combining as one.
Spiralling one atop and inside the other.

Extract 5

My words spoken in my way,
come gushing forth,
shouted words of the estate,
forbidden words of the playground,
words spat by my grandmother
and sworn by my mother,
words of strength and power.

Extract 6

As my coursework emerges from
the new computer and printer
my mother enters my bedroom
to watch the spectacle.

“Is this for school?”

she says, lifting the pages with fearful wonder.

I tell her it's my coursework.

“But these are poems,”

she says

During Reading

Read up to the section listed and then answer the questions. You will probably need to spend about 5-10 minutes answering each set of questions. You can use the questions in a number of ways. For example, you might like to:

- Discuss them in small groups
- Role play answering them in pairs, with one of you asking a question and the other answering as an expert reader
- Keep a personal reading journal to record some of your responses

Do not read the questions before you have read each section

The page numbers are based on the Otter-Barry hardback edition of the book, first published in the UK in 2022.

Read the Prologue ‘The Oracle’ on page 7

- What do you notice about the way the book is written? How is it different or similar to other books you have read?
- What impression of the story does the prologue give you? What are your expectations?
- What do we learn about the setting of the story at the beginning?
- What do we learn about the characters the story will follow?

Read Chapter 1 ‘Theo’ and Chapter 2 ‘The Minotaur’s Story’ from page 9-35

- What do we learn about the character Theo? How does this compare to your predictions from reading the prologue?
- From what we learn about Theseus in this chapter, why do you think Theo becomes so interested in him and decides to write his coursework about his story?
- Going to the barber and getting his haircut is an important part of Theo’s identity. It also reminds him of his father. Why do you think this is?
- Consider the titles of two of the poems in this chapter – ‘There is a Stone in my Chest’ and ‘Theo’s Journey to the Rock’. Why do you think the writer uses this imagery of heaviness? Can you find other words or images within these poems that connect to this idea?
- Look at the illustration on page 31. Why do you think the writer ends the first chapter with this image?
- Chapter 2 is also told in the first person, but from the perspective of the Minotaur, a creature from Ancient Greek mythology. How does this chapter compare to Theo’s perspective in Chapter 1? Can you make any links between the characters?

Read Chapter 3 ‘Theseus in Troezen – The First Labour’ and Chapter 4 ‘Theo’ from page 37-81

- What is your impression of Theseus in Chapter 3?
- What does Theseus’ story have in common with Theo’s? What is different about it?
- Why do you think the writer includes the question ‘Would his father be proud?’ on page 52? What does it reveal about Theseus’ true feelings and does it change your view of his violent actions in this chapter?
- What connections can you make between Chapter 3 and Chapter 4? These might be big connections about the character’s stories, or they might be smaller connections in the words and images the writer uses.
- On page 62, the poem is titled ‘What Does it Mean to be a Man?’ Think about what you think the answer to this question is. Why do you think the illustration on page 63 follows this poem?
- What do you think the writer means by ‘A library contains/ a thousand lives/ in every book a life is lived.’? How does this idea connect Theo and Theseus’ journeys to find their fathers?
- What is your impression of the man outside the Arndale shopping center on page 74?
- Chapter 4 ends ‘having gained ninety pounds.’ What do you predict will happen next in the story for Theo? How do you think this will link to Theseus’ story?

Read from Chapter 5 ‘The Minotaur’s Story – A Toddler’ to the end of Chapter 8 ‘The Minotaur’s Story – A Boy’, page 83-145

- What do you notice so far about how the novel is structured? Why do you think the writer chose to structure the story in this way?
- What do you notice about the development of the Minotaur’s story on page 84 and then on page 144? Why do you think the writer includes this story amongst Theo and Theseus’ journeys to

find their fathers?

- In Chapter 6, Theseus encounters Sinis and his daughter Perigune. Look at the description of these characters on page 90 and 91. What is your impression of them? Choose a line of the poem you are particularly drawn to and explain why.
- What do you notice about the format of the poem on page 91? How does this stand out from the rest of the novel so far and how did you find reading this page?
- In Chapter 6, the reader is presented with choices that will change how they move forward through the story. Reflect on the choices that you made and the path this took you on through the chapter.
- What do you think of the final poem of Chapter 6? Do you agree with Perigune's statement that 'A son should believe in his father'?
- What similarities are there between Theo and Theseus' encounters with new characters in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7?
- Look at the poem on page 128 and 129. How does this relate to your life? Is this true for everyone?
- How do you feel when Theo is 'spat out into the rain' and the 'cracked-smile villain' does not help him, despite taking his ninety pounds?
- What do you think the introduction of a new character, Moth, suggests about the direction of Theo's story? What do you think the description of 'a moth in the rain' is symbolic of?

Read Chapter 9 'Theseus and the Demon Pig' and Chapter 10 'Theo and the Croydon Sow' from page 147 to page 175.

- What do you think the title of the poem on 148, 'Not all Monsters...' suggests?
- What do you think of the choice you are presented with on page 154? What do you think of Phaia's 'form of justice'?
- At the end of Chapter 9, Theseus describes how 'Mother's words flow through my head', why do you think the writer references something his mother told him? Is there anything else in the poem that suggests his mother is important to him?
- Why do you think Theo decides to keep the letter to his father formal?
- What do you think of the relationship between Theo and his teacher? What other father figures has the writer included in the novel so far and why do you think these men are included in the story?
- What is your impression of Waddon, described on pages 162 and 163? Does the person Theo finds at the house fit with the setting?
- A 'sow' is an adult female pig. Why do you think the writer named the poem and character the 'Croydon Sow' How does her character compare to Phaia in the previous Chapter? Which character do you find more sinister? Why?
- What do you notice about the format of the poem 'Lair' on pages 165-169? Why do you think the writer chooses to write it in this way?
- How is Theo's relationship with his mother presented in this chapter? Has it changed throughout the book? Why or why not?
- Using the final poem of Chapter 10, 'The Fourth Labour', make a prediction as to what will follow in either Theseus or Theo's journey.

Read from Chapter 11 'The Minotaur's Story - a Teen' to the end of Chapter 13 'Theo and Sciron the Lawyer', from page 177-207

- What do you think the writer wants us to understand about the Minotaur in Chapter 11? How do you feel towards his character?
- In Chapter 12, Theseus meets Sciron and is disappointed when he turns out to be not what he thought. Why do you think Sciron is the way he is? What do you think the writer is teaching us about good vs. bad?
- How does the lawyer, Sciron, in Theo's story compare to the old man in Chapter 12?
- Why do you think the writer repeats the phrase 'I'm on this journey alone' so many times in the poem on page 202 and 203?
- On page 205, the writer describes Theo's words as 'feminine and masculine and my own.' What do you think this means? How are ideas about femininity and masculinity explored in this novel so far?
- Theo's teacher describes how a sestina is a form of poetry that 'hides a spiral'. How does this form fit with the telling of this story?

Read Chapter 14 'The Minotaur's Story - Becoming a Man' to the end of Chapter 16 'Theo and the Wrestler', from page 209-259

- Chapter 14 is the last chapter told from the perspective of the Minotaur. What do you think of his story and how has the character developed throughout the novel?
- In Chapter 15, Theseus meets Cercyon and is challenged to a riddling battle. Hopefully you had a go at the riddles with Theo as you read! How have the power of words been presented in the novel?
- What is the impact of the experience on the stage for Theseus? What are your impressions of him at the end of Chapter 15?
- Why do you think Theo experiences so much anger in Chapter 16? What images does the writer use to convey Theo's feelings?
- Consider the titles of two poems in Chapter 16: 'Theo/Minotaur' and 'Theseus Meets Theo'. In these poems, Theo is connected to the other protagonists. Why do you think this happens at this point in the story? What could the Minotaur and Theseus represent in Theo's story?
- What do you think of Mr Addo's reaction to Theo's behaviour in the canteen? Why do you think he reacts like this?
- What language does the writer use in the final poems of the chapter to hint at who Theo is going to meet?
- What do you think of the developing relationship between Moth and Theo? What do you predict will happen between them as the story continues?

Read Chapter 17 'Theseus and Procrustes, the Bed-Stretcher on the Plain of Eleusis' and Chapter 18 'Theo and the Bed-Stretcher', from page 261-293

- What do you notice about the rhyme and rhythm of the poem 'Procrustes – Bed Stretcher'? What is the effect?
- What do you think the writer means when he says 'Life puppeteered by his shadow' on page 266?
- Theseus meets one final character before being united with his father. What is your impression of Medea? Why do you think the writer offers a choice to the reader at this moment?
- Was Theseus' father the man you expected him to be? How does your reaction to the character compare to Theseus'?
- What do you think of the poem 'An Unthinkable Task'? Why do you think the writer ends Chapter 17 in this way?
- In Chapter 18, Theo is united with his father too. How does this compare to the meeting of Theseus and his father in the previous chapter? How are the fathers similar and different?
- How are ideas about family explored in this chapter? Why do you think Theo says 'How when a family is broken / so much can be lost'?

Read Chapter 19 and 20

- How is the Minotaur presented in Chapter 19? What does he have in common with Theo and Theseus? You could look in particular at the poem 'Theseus, Theo and the Minotaur in the Dark Place'
- In the original Greek myth, Theseus kills the Minotaur. Why do you think the writer of *The Boy Lost in the Maze* chooses to tell a different version of this story?
- Were your predictions that you made at the end of Chapter 18 correct? How do you feel about the ending of the story?
- Why do you think the illustration on the final page was chosen to end the story?

Read the author's note 'About Theseus in Greek Mythology'

- What key themes did the writer want to highlight from the story of Theseus?
- What do you think about this re-casting of the story?
- If you could ask Joseph Coelho a question at the end of the book, what would it be?

After Reading

Initial Thoughts

Spend 10-15 minutes discussing the questions below:

- What are your overall impressions of this novel?
- Which moments stick most in your memory and why?
- Which characters do you like best and why?
- Which other novels does it remind you of and why?
- How gripping did you find the story?
- What are your thoughts about how the book was written?
- Based on reading *The Boy Lost in the Maze*, how likely are you to read other novels by Joseph Coelho?

What's *The Boy Lost in the Maze* about?

Spend 15-20 minutes on the following activity:

- Spend one or two minutes writing down a single sentence that begins: '*The Boy Lost in the Maze* is about ...'
- If you are working in a group, share your different sentences and discuss.
- Next read the ideas below that give further ideas about what the novel is about.
- If you are working in a group, spend 5-10 minutes sorting the ideas, from the one you agree with most to the one you agree with least.
- Finally, decide on the idea you agree with most. It can be one from the list or your own. Write down a few ideas about how *The Boy Lost in the Maze* relates to your chosen idea.

The Boy Lost in the Maze is about...

- Growing up and learning who you are.
- The importance of family.
- The complexity of human relationships.
- What it means to be a man.
- The consequences of the choices we make in life.
- Fathers and sons.
- Being misunderstood.

Exploring The Book Further

Different Paths

The book offers you a chance to make choices to help Theseus and Theo find their true path to the future. Go back to each of the following pages in the book and read the poems again, trying out a different path to the one you first took:

- Page 96
- Page 104
- Page 134
- Page 148
- Page 198
- Page 252
- Page 268

Talk or think about:

- How your experience of the story changed when you took a different path.
- Why Joseph Coelho might have chosen to give the reader these choices.

Spend 10-15 minutes on this activity.

Other Characters

Theseus and Theo encounter many different characters on their journeys to finding their fathers. Coelho describes how these characters 'are flawed humans with their own histories and their own labyrinths to weave.'

Write two or three sentences in the voice of 3-4 of these characters, expressing their thoughts and feelings about Theo or Theseus. You could write in the form of a poem, like *The Boy Lost in the Maze*.

- Mr Addo
- Theo's Mum
- Moth
- Sciron (the old man or the lawyer)
- Phaia
- Cercyon
- Procrustes
- Theo's Dad

Spend 15-20 minutes on this activity.

An Adaptation

As Joseph Coelho writes at the end of the book, the story of Theseus' journey has been interpreted many times and in many ways over time. He was interested in following the 'thread' of 'the story of a boy searching for his father'.

- Research Theseus' story for yourself and note down 3-4 alternative threads you might follow if you were going to write a new adaptation of this story. You can start each thread with: The story of...

Spend 15-20 minutes on this activity.

Reading the Reviews

The extracts, below, are all from reviews of *The Boy Lost in the Maze*.

- Read all of the reviews and discuss which comes closest to your own view of the book.
- Working individually, write your own paragraph expressing your views about the novel.
- If possible, share your reviews with a group.

You can submit your reviews to the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme website. This can be accessed at: <https://yotocarnegies.co.uk/medals/>

Give yourself 30-60 minutes to complete this activity.

A.

An all-consuming tale of the quests of two boys told in verse... thanks to Coelho's mesmerising way with words and bold imagination, the two worlds are bridged effortlessly... Coelho allows each boy's life to complement the other while reminding us that the answers to the stories' central question - what is a man? - remain the same, in myth and modernity.

The Times – Children's Book of the Week

B.

This was a surprisingly sweet story, and I really need to read more novels in verse. The POV switches from modern day Theo to Theo's take on the mythological Theseus, both in search of their father and what it means to be a man.

I loved the parallels between the two boys and was never confused when the POV switched. The Greek myth stories were one of the easiest to keep up with (as I notoriously do not know a thing about them) too.

Interspersed throughout is the story of the Minotaur, seen here as a tragic story of a boy who was just like Theo and Theseus, but looked different, and was treated as a monster by his family and the people around him. The ending, bringing the three together was so good.

Vee, www.goodreads.com

C.

Theo's story, like Theseus', is told in poetry, giving it an epic quality, while the ending, in both words and pictures, is incredibly moving. Coelho has dedicated his life to making poetry accessible to everyone, and in the book's page-turning readability, it can be enjoyed by older children and adults alike.

June Hopper Swain, IBBY UK

D.

Gorgeous artwork inside and out and an interesting premise that didn't quite deliver. I enjoy novels in verse but I didn't find the flow between the two worlds worked. I could see all the devices, but they didn't feel real to me. I liked Theo and was rooting for him but didn't see the point in reimagining Ariadne in the mythical storyline. I was expecting a parallel story not a reimagined myth and that confused me. Shame. I really wanted to love this book.

Debra, www.goodreads.com

Writing Activities

On your own, or with a partner, complete one or more of these writing activities to help you develop your thoughts about *The Boy Lost in the Maze* further.

You will need 30-60 minutes for each activity.

- Write a poem from the perspective of the Minotaur after Theseus helps him escape from the maze. You could title the chapter 'The Minotaur's Story – A Man'.
- In the voice of Joseph Coelho write a blog giving your thoughts about how to adapt a Greek myth into a new story.
- Choose a chapter in the book and adapt it into a short story, changing it from poetry to prose.
- Write a letter from the perspective of Theo to another character in the book revealing his thoughts and feelings about his encounter with them.

