Vocabulary: Into the Burning Sun

1. discreet (dih-SKREET) adjective; To be discreet is to be careful about what you say and do, making sure not to attract attention or let out any private information.

For example, Joe doesn't want everyone to know he is auditioning for his first school play; it adds too much pressure. He tells only his friend Sara. Sara is careful not to mention the audition when other people are around and sends Joe private text messages of encouragement throughout the week. Sara is being discreet.

2. gaunt (gawnt) adjective; Someone who is gaunt is very thin and bony as a result of hunger, illness, or old age.

3. hubris (HYOO-bris) noun; Hubris is excessive pride and ambition. In other words, being too confident. Hubris might cause a top athlete to feel like they don't have to practice as much as other players on the team. In Greek mythology, hubris is seen as a foolish and dangerous quality that often leads to a character's ruin.

4. hulking (HUHL-king) adjective; Hulking means "very large or heavy."

5. incur (in-KUR) verb; Incur means "to experience or receive as a result of one's own behavior or actions" or "to bring down upon oneself." In other words, incur means to have something unpleasant or unwelcome happen to you because of something you did. If you don't turn in your library books on time, you might incur late fees. A hockey player might incur a one-minute penalty for a foul.

6. intricate (IN-trih-kit) adjective; Something that is intricate is very complicated or detailed. A car engine has an intricate design, with many parts that are connected in complex ways. A mystery novel with an intricate plot might be difficult to follow at first.
7. **opulent** *(op-yuh-luhnt)* adjective; Opulent means “rich and luxurious.” Opulent things or places look grand and expensive. A throne made of gold and decorated with diamonds is opulent. A simple wooden stool is not opulent.

8. **wield** *(weel)* verb; Wield means “to hold and be ready to use,” as in “The knight wielded his sword, ready to fight.” It can also mean “to control and use an item with competence,” as in, “Luke Skywalker wields a lightsaber with great skill.”

Wield can also mean “to have and to use one’s power or influence,” as in “Despite Tara’s best efforts, her babysitter wielded his authority and made her go to bed.”

**Directions:** Below or on the back of this page, list any other words from the play or poem whose definitions you are not sure about. For each word, use context clues to try to figure out the meaning. Then look up the word in a few different dictionaries. Discuss the meaning of the word with your teacher or another adult. Then write a definition for the word and one example sentence.
**Vocabulary Practice**

*Into the Burning Sun*

**Directions:** Underline the boldfaced word in each pair that best completes the sentence.

1. The **hulking**/intricate puzzle has more than 1,000 pieces.

2. Ava turned down her music so that she wouldn’t **incur**/wield her neighbor’s anger.

3. Cam reminded Haley to be **opulent**/discreet when handing out invitations to the surprise party.

4. The **intricate**/opulent theater has red velvet seats, crystal light fixtures, gold-plated walls, and angels in the sky painted on the ceiling.

5. The movie we watched last night was full of **gaunt**/hulking zombies. They were so thin, they looked like skeletons.

**Directions:** Choose the best answer to each question.

6. Which place is opulent?
   - a camping tent
   - a palace

7. Which sentence uses **incur** correctly?
   - “I didn’t realize you could incur so many charges with the new app; I deleted it after getting a bill for $100.”
   - “I incur my allowance every Saturday.”

8. In which situation might a person try to be discreet?
   - when opening a birthday present
   - when telling a friend he has food in his teeth

**Directions:** Choose the word or phrase that is most similar in meaning to each word in bold.

9. **wield**
   - A forget
   - B possess

10. **intricate**
    - A elaborate
    - B simple

11. **hulking**
    - A massive
    - B miniature

12. **hubris**
    - A pride
    - B respect
Genre Exploration: *Into the Burning Sun*

This story belongs to two genres: drama and myth. In this activity, you will focus on what makes it a myth.

**Directions:** The graphic organizer below gives some common characteristics of myths. *Into the Burning Sun* does not have all these characteristics, but it has many of them. We've filled in how the play shows one of these characteristics. Choose FOUR more characteristics and briefly explain how the play shows those characteristics.

- Has nonhuman or immortal characters
  - Includes the characters of Athena and Poseidon, who are immortal gods

- Has imaginary creatures or beasts

- Has heroes or heroines with superhuman abilities

- Reflects a culture's values

- Comes from long ago

- Explains events in nature

- Explains the creation of the world

- Teaches lessons about human emotions and behaviors

**MYTH**

*Into the Burning Sun*
Directions: Answer the questions below.

1. What other stories, plays, or movies have you read or seen that belong to the myth genre?

2. Many Greek myths and dramas contain a tragic hero—a main character who makes an error in judgment that leads to his or her downfall.

Tragic heroes often:

- fall from greatness, honor, or a high position in society
- have a tragic flaw—a character trait that leads to their downfall
- choose one thing over another in what turns out to be a life-changing mistake
- don’t listen to other characters’ warnings
- receive a punishment that seems too harsh for their crimes, making the audience feel sad
- come to an understanding of what went wrong and accept the truth

Consider Daedalus. In what ways is he a tragic hero?
Exploring Mood

Mood is the feeling you get from reading a piece of writing. Another way to describe mood is atmosphere. When you walk into a place, it has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way; when you “walk into” a story, it too has an atmosphere that creates a feeling. Writers create mood through word choice, imagery, dialogue, setting, and plot.

In this activity, you will consider the mood of Scene 1 of Into the Burning Sun.

Scene 1
The Tower, the Island of Crete
SD1: In a dark room with stone walls, Daedalus crouches over a table piled high with feathers. A few candles burn nearby, casting eerie shadows.
SD2: As Daedalus works, his teenage son, Icarus, lies half-awake on a thin mat. Both are gaunt and pale.
SD3: A feather floats down through a high window. Daedalus snatches it and returns to his work.
Daedalus (to himself): Just a few more feathers, and we will be free.
Icarus (groggily): What did you say, Father?
Daedalus: Nothing. Try to sleep, my son.
Icarus: When was the last time you slept?
Daedalus: There will be time for sleep later. If I don’t finish making these wings, we are both dead men.
SD4: Icarus watches a rat scurry across the floor.
Icarus: Are we not dead already? Surely, this cold, dark prison is our grave.
Daedalus: You will feel the warmth of the sun again.
Icarus: I hardly remember the sun. It’s been many years since King Minos locked us in this tower.
SD1: A pained expression flashes across Daedalus’s face.
SD2: He returns to his work, using melted candle wax to glue the feathers together. The lights fade.

Mood Words
hopeful, bleak, violent, peaceful, suspenseful, relaxed, despairing, playful

1. Describe the mood of Scene 1. Choose two or three words from the box above or come up with your own two or three words.
2. Explain what creates the mood by answering the questions below.

A. How does the plot help create the mood? In other words, how does what is going on in this scene help create the mood you identified?

B. How does the text structure contribute to the mood? Think about when the events of Scene 1 take place chronologically—that is, in relationship to the rest of the play. How does this help create the mood you identified?

C. How do the details about the setting help create the mood? Think about how the playwright describes this place to create an atmosphere that makes the reader feel a certain way.

3. On the back of this page, rewrite the scene, but change the mood, creating a totally different atmosphere that will cause your readers to feel a different way. You can choose one of the moods you did not pick from the Mood Words box on page 1, or come up with your own. You may change the setting, the plot, and/or the descriptive details in any way you choose.
Critical-Thinking Questions

Into the Burning Sun

1. Based on what happens to Icarus, what big idea or message do you think the myth conveys?

2. Answer the question in the caption on page 14: Do you think Daedalus and Icarus deserved their fate?

3. A tyrant is a ruler who has complete power and who uses that power in a way that is cruel and unfair. On page 13, Daedalus calls Minos a tyrant. Is this a fair description?
Into the Burning Sun Quiz

Directions: Read Into the Burning Sun. Then answer the questions below.

1. Which literary device is used in Scene 1?
   A) flashback  
   B) symbol  
   C) flash-forward  
   D) alliteration

2. In Scene 2, SD3 says, “Minos plasters a smile on his face.” This detail helps readers understand that Minos is
   A) grateful to have Daedalus as his Master Craftsman.  
   B) pleased with his new palace.  
   C) trying to conceal his worry.  
   D) a kind and generous ruler.

3. In Scene 3, King Minos talks to Daedalus about containing the Minotaur, saying, “But be discreet. No one can know about it.” Which line helps readers understand why Minos doesn’t want anyone to know about it?
   A) Athena: Little mortals! Do you not know the path of hubris? It leads only to destruction!  
   B) Daedalus: The gods are watching us now.  
   C) Minos: You are certain the beast cannot escape?  
   D) Minos: Daedalus, you have built me more than a cage for a monster. You have built a prison for my enemies.

4. Which lines from Scene 4 foreshadow events to come? Choose TWO answers.
   A) Daedalus: Well, I was going to say that the Minotaur would be trapped forever.  
   B) Icarus: Is it not possible that one day you could make us fly?  
   C) Icarus: How awful! What are you going to do?  
   D) SD3: Icarus takes a small mechanical bird from his pocket. He pulls the tail and the wings flap.

5. Which detail would be LEAST important to include in a summary of the play?
   A) Pasiphae greatly admires Daedalus’s statues.  
   B) Minos locks Daedalus and Icarus in a tower so that they can’t reveal the Labyrinth’s secret.  
   C) The gods curse King Minos with a deadly beast called the Minotaur.  
   D) Daedalus builds wings so that he and Icarus can fly out the window of their prison cell.

6. Which is NOT a concept explored in the play?
   A) pride  
   B) friendship  
   C) human limitations  
   D) obeying elders

Constructive-Response Questions

Directions: Write your answers in a well-organized response.

7. Hubris is excessive pride and ambition. What message does the play send about hubris? Support your answer with text evidence.