

School talk: the Hydra of Lerna

How to put it together

1. **Start with a question.** Ask your class: "Who dares to defeat a monster with nine heads?" Then everyone will listen straight away.
2. **Say where Lerna is.** Lerna is near the village of Myloi in Greece, in the Peloponnese, by the sea between Argos and Nafplio. Show it on a map!
3. **Tell the myth.** Tell about Heracles, Iolaos and the Hydra. Make it clear that it's a myth: a story from the ancient Greeks.
4. **Tell what really happened.** Tell about the springs and the House of the Tiles, which is more than 4000 years old.
5. **End with a quiz.** Ask your class two or three questions. Who knows the answer?

Tips

- Practise out loud a few times, for example in front of your parents.
- Draw your own Hydra on the board. Let your class count the heads!
- Five to ten minutes is a good length.
- At the end, say where you got your information from: the Visit Myloi website.

Facts

- Near Myloi, water comes up out of the ground all year round: the springs of Lerna.
- According to the myth, the sea god Poseidon struck a rock with his trident, and that's how the springs came to be.
- According to the myth, the Hydra, a poisonous water serpent, lived in the marsh. Apollodorus wrote that she had nine heads.
- Heracles had to defeat the Hydra. For every head he knocked off, two new ones grew.
- His nephew Iolaos burned the necks shut with a torch. That's how Heracles won after all.
- The Hydra never really existed: it's a myth.
- But this is real: people already lived on a hill by the springs in the Stone Age.
- The House of the Tiles is more than 4000 years old. The archaeologist John Caskey dug it up between 1952 and 1958.

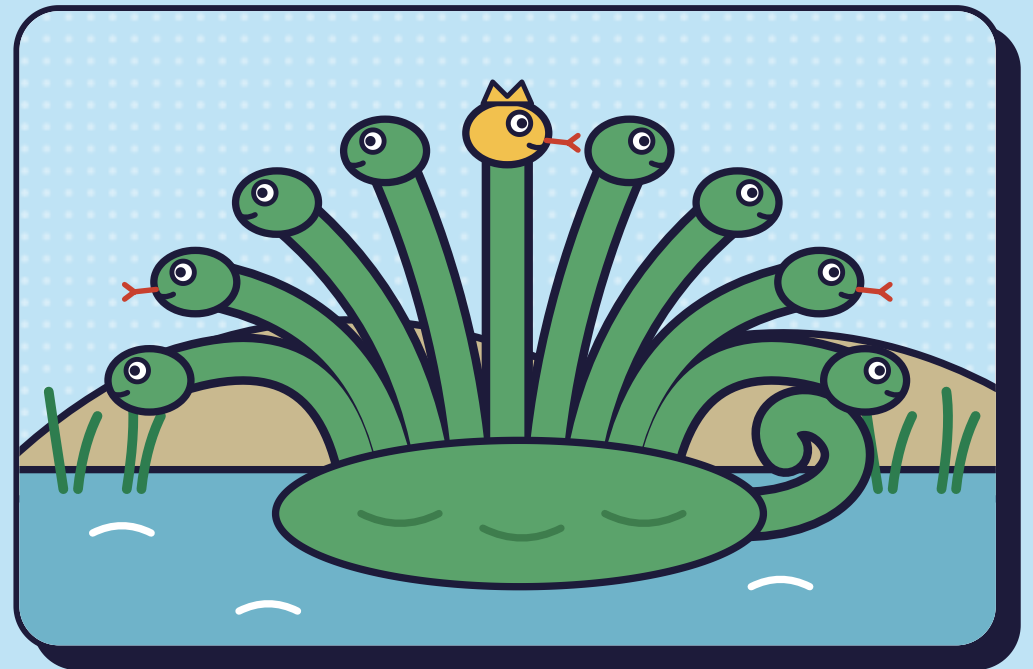
Quiz questions for your class

- What happened when Heracles knocked off one of the Hydra's heads? (Two new ones grew!)
- Who helped Heracles? (His nephew Iolaos, with a torch.)
- Did the Hydra really exist? (No, it's a myth!)

The Hydra of Lerna

A school talk about a Greek myth and a place that really exists: Lerna, near Myloi in Greece.

By: _____



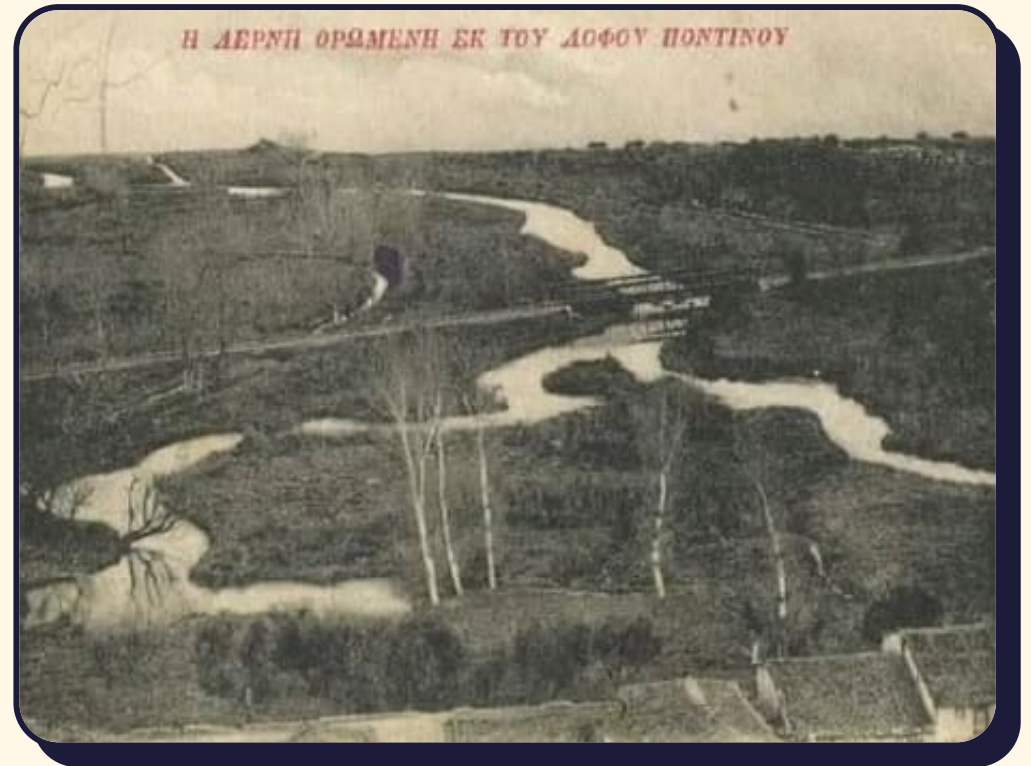
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Where is Lerna?

REALLY HAPPENED

Lerna is near the village of Myloi, in the Peloponnese in Greece, by the sea between Argos and Nafplio.

Water comes up out of the ground there all year round.

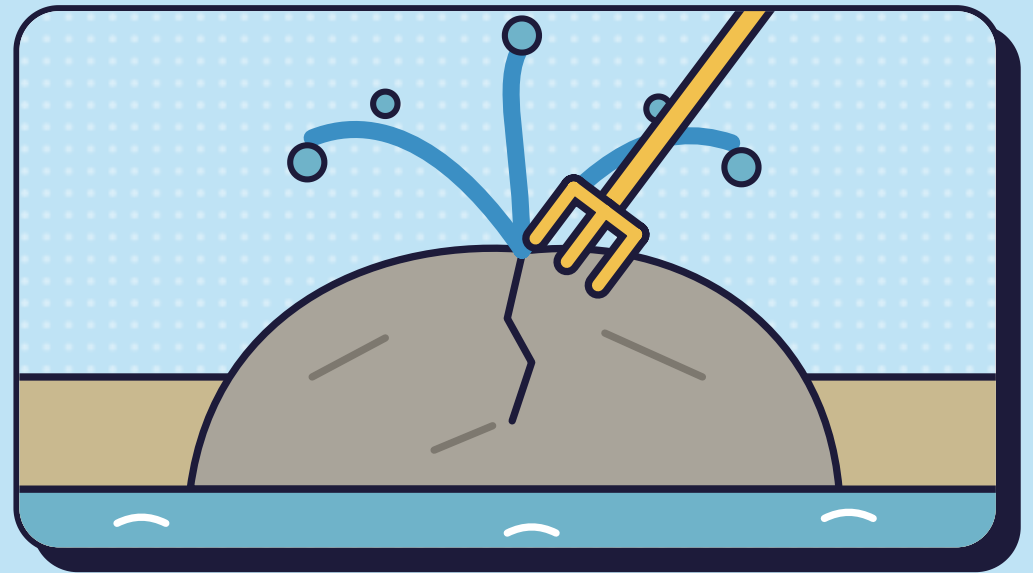


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How the springs came to be

MYTH

The land was bone dry. The sea god Poseidon struck a rock with his trident. Water gushed out: the springs of Lerna!



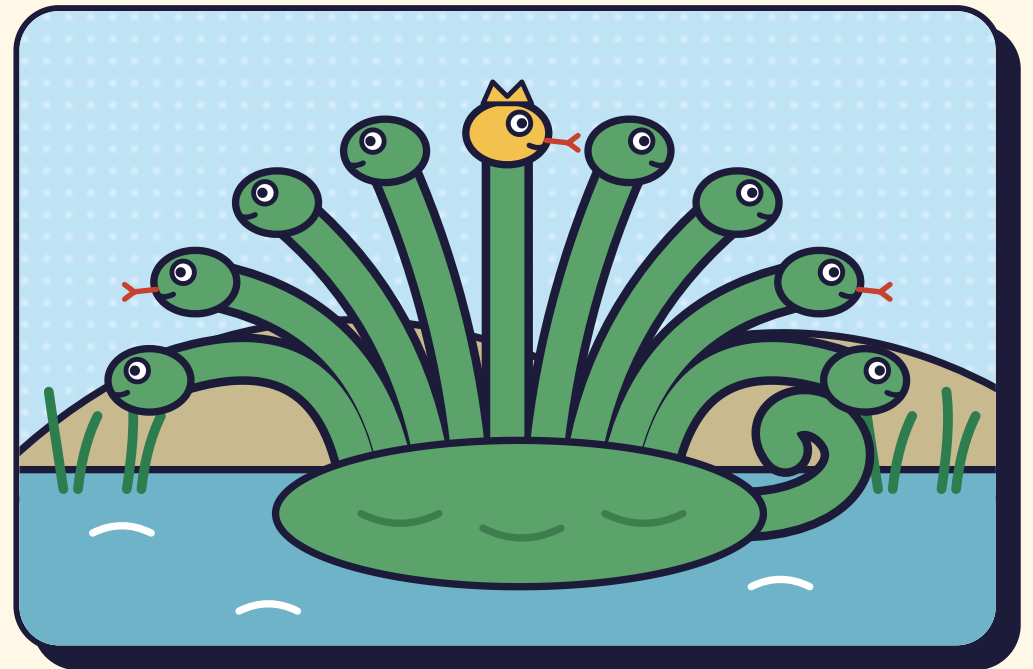
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The monster in the marsh

MYTH

The Hydra lived in the marsh: a poisonous water serpent.

According to Apollodorus, she had nine heads. One head could never die.



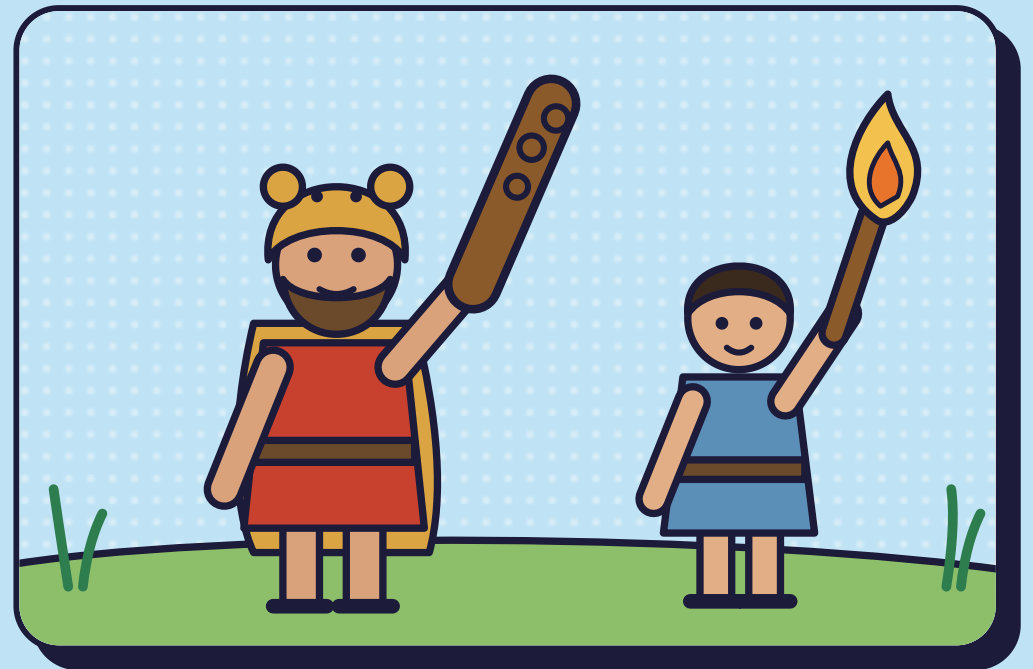
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Heracles and Iolaos

MYTH

For every head Heracles knocked off, two new ones grew!

His nephew Iolaos burned the necks shut with a torch. That's how they won.

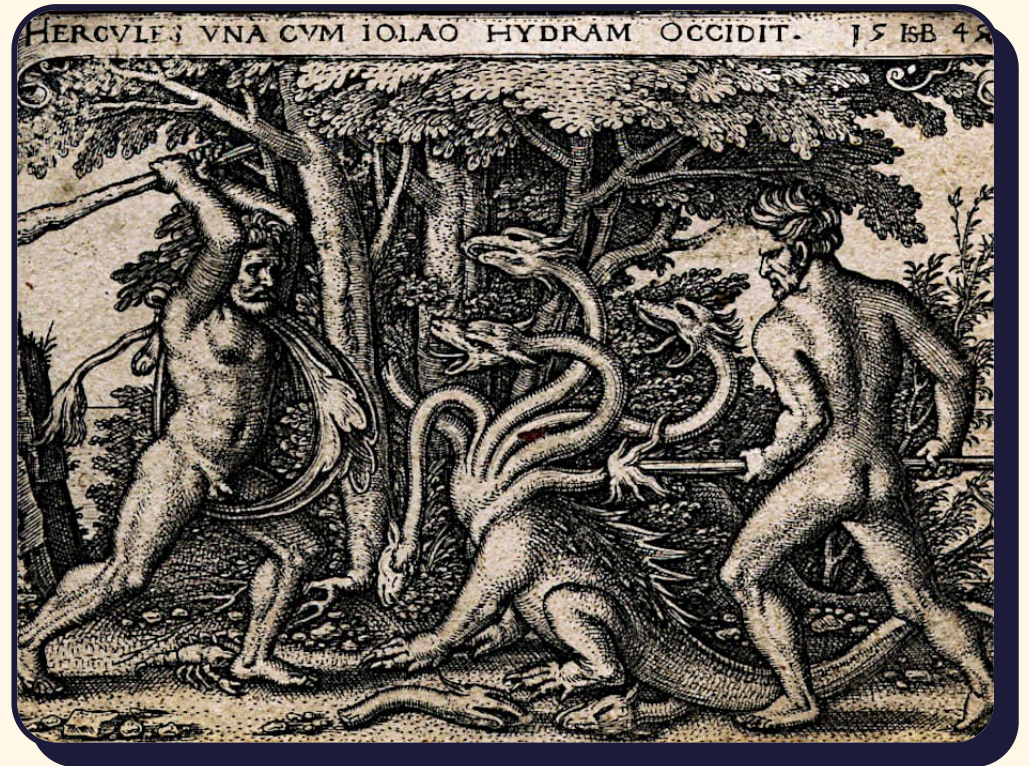


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A drawing from 1545

This is how an artist drew the fight with the Hydra, almost 500 years ago.

Can you count the heads?

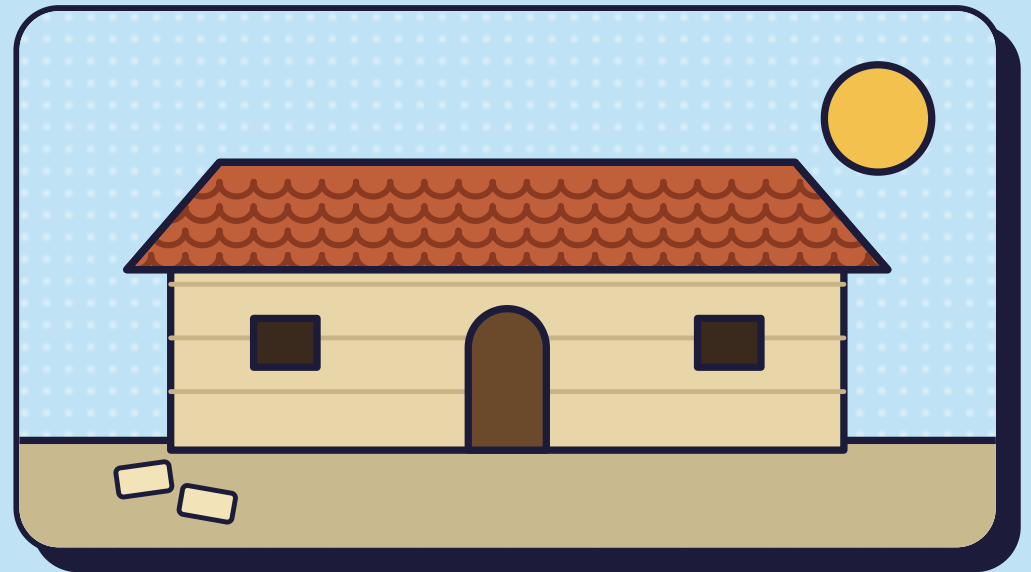


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The House of the Tiles

REALLY HAPPENED

By the springs stands a house more than 4000 years old, with a roof of baked roof tiles. The archaeologist John Caskey dug it up between 1952 and 1958.



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The springs in the old days

REALLY HAPPENED

This old photo shows five children by the water of the springs.

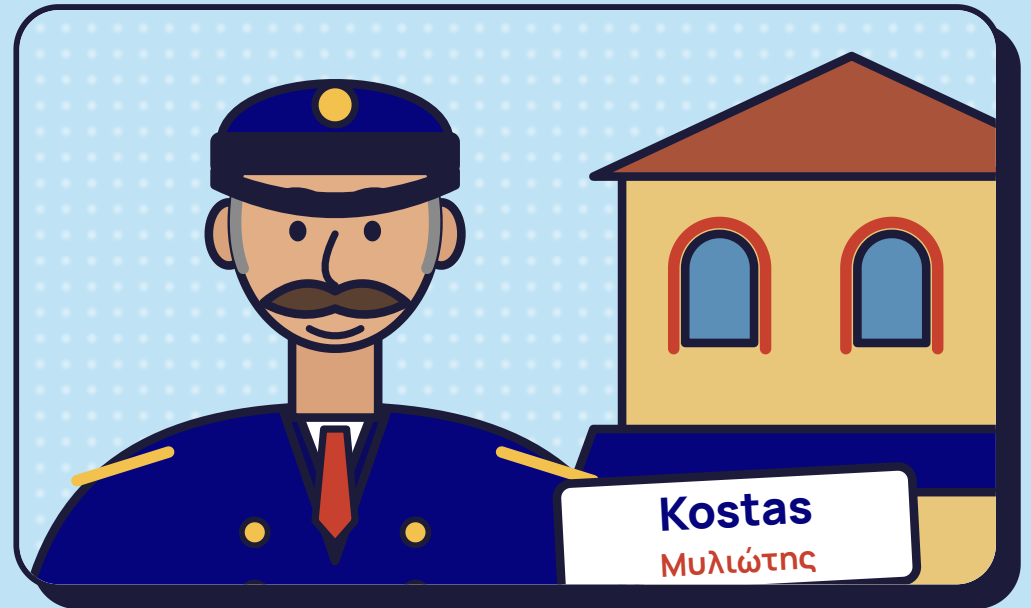
It was taken between 1940 and 1955.



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Quiz!

- What happened when Heracles knocked off one of the Hydra's heads?
- Who helped Heracles?
- Did the Hydra really exist?



Sources

Information: Visit Myloi (visitmyloi.gr), pages about the mythology of Lerna and ancient Lerna; Apollodorus; Pausanias.

Photos: Visit Myloi; engraving from 1545: public domain. Drawings: Visit Myloi Junior.