



Center for

EUROPEAN STUDIES

at the University of Florida

Euro Bookclub

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A Short Border Handbook:
A Journey through the Immigrant's Labyrinth
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Day One: Greek Vocabulary/Mythology

Objectives:

- To develop an understanding of the importance of textual context.
- To develop specific contextual understanding of this text.
- To make connections between ancient Greek culture and modern lives.

PA Standards Addressed:

CC.1.2.11-2B

CC.1.2.11–12.G

CC.1.3.11–12.F

CC.1.5.11–12.A

[PA Core Standards ELA 6-12](#)

This lesson will set the historical/cultural stage for the text. This information will also aid students in understanding future lessons.

Resources/Materials:

The following links will provide you with essential background information. You will also be using some of these in the lessons:

- *A Short Border Handbook: A Journey through the Immigrant's Labyrinth*
- Computers or chrome Books for accessing an article
- Meaning of Xenia: [Xenia – Mythology Unbound](#)
- Map of Greece/Albania area: [Albania Map and Satellite Image](#)
- Historical context of Albanian immigrants in 1991: [Thousands of Albanians Flee to Greece - The New York Times](#)
- Reading Guide: [Reading Guide: Thousands of Albanians Flee to Greece](#)
- Greek immigration policies: [Greece's new immigration law to go into effect on 1 January 2024](#); [Greece | migrationpolicy.org](#); [Immigration Law in Greece](#)

Procedures:

Recommendation is to present this lesson pre-text. Work through the following discussion questions:

1. We often hear the term *xenophobia*, but we don't always understand its roots. What does it mean to be xenophobic? In what relation do you hear this term used? Is your family, school, or local community impacted by this concept? Is your state or nation impacted?
2. Explain the history of *xeno* in relation to ancient Greece: [Xenia – Mythology Unbound](#). It's important to note that the king of the gods (Zeus) oversaw the concept of the host/guest relationship; that's how important it was in the ancient world.
3. What is your response to the cultural policy of *xeno*?
4. Do you believe that the host/guest relationship is as central to our culture as the ancient Greeks?
5. What are reasons people might be xenophobic? What are the connotations behind the statement, and what are the implications regarding refugees?
6. What do you think of current immigration policies and how foreigners are accepted or not? What are some of the nuances that impact people's feelings?
7. Have students read the following article to inform them on the historical aspect of the text regarding the 1991 flight of Albanians to Greece. [Thousands of Albanians Flee to Greece - The New York Times](#).
8. Students should use the study guide to help with their understanding: [Reading Guide: Thousands of Albanians Flee to Greece](#)
9. Discuss.

Reflection

- How did the lesson go?
- Did you successfully address the objectives?
- Did you successfully address the standards?
- What struggles did you or the students encounter?
- What were the highlights of the lesson?

Day 2: Greek Vocabulary/Mythology

Objectives:

- To develop an understanding of the word labyrinth and its literal and metaphorical meaning.
- To establish the context of the labyrinth's place in Greek mythology.
- To make connections between mythological labyrinths and their monsters and those that are very much part of our lives.
- To create a bridge between the ancient Greek labyrinth, personal labyrinths, and the concept of labyrinth in the text.
- To experiment with creative writing.

Standards Addressed:

CC.1.3.11–12.F

CC.1.3.11–12.G

CC.1.3.11–12.K

CC.1.4.11–12.L

CC.1.4.11–12.O

CC.1.4.11–12.W

CC.1.5.11–12.A

[PA Core Standards ELA 6-12](#)

Resources/Materials:

- *A Short Border Handbook: A Journey through the Immigrant's Labyrinth*
- Defining the difference between a maze and a labyrinth:
<https://www.usi.edu/media/qw3h3vgo/mazes-vs-labyrinths2.pdf>
- Theseus myth, G-rated video: [Theseus & Minotaur | Greek Mythology Series \(English\)](#)
- Theseus myth, PG-13-rated (and more accurate) video: [The Legend of Theseus and the Minotaur | Greek Mythology Explained](#)
- Theseus myth in text version: [Story: Theseus and the Minotaur – It's All Greek to Me!](#)
- [Ariadne's thread \(logic\) - Wikipedia](#)
- Labyrinth assignment: [What's in your Labyrinth?](#)
- Grid paper and writing implements for drawing a labyrinth or maze.

Procedures:

1. Note that the subtitle of the text mentions “labyrinth.”

2. Ask the class what a labyrinth is. What makes it different from a maze? Discuss the idea of a labyrinth and maze. The following link easily defines the difference:
<https://www.usi.edu/media/qw3h3vgo/mazes-vs-labyrinths2.pdf>
3. Review the idea of a maze:
 - A puzzle with only one way in and out
 - Something to solve
4. Review the idea of a labyrinth:
 - A maze-like structure that allows for contemplation and prayer.
 - Currently seen as a path of pilgrimage
5. There is a famous labyrinth in Greek mythology which involves the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur.
6. Watch the Theseus myth video of your choice.
7. Read the Theseus myth and discuss:
 - What is different between the written and video versions?
 - Which presentation best puts forward the importance of:
 - i. Setting
 - ii. Character
 - iii. Theme
 - iv. Conflict
 - Discuss how these literary elements are presented in the video vs. the text. Examine how in both, plot is predominant. Why might this be? Does it make the myth more or less accessible and applicable?
8. Is Theseus in a maze or a labyrinth?
 - Was there contemplation and prayer? (Theseus' journey through the labyrinth could be contemplative for a warrior in that he had to face a monster and be rid of it to survive.)
 - Was it a puzzle he solved? (Very much so).
9. How did he solve the puzzle? Ariadne's help, her thread: [Ariadne's thread \(logic\) - Wikipedia](#)
10. Essential to the Theseus myth is not just brute strength but also the application of logic. This point will be important for the next day's discussion as our protagonist had to navigate a labyrinth, and it was intelligence/language acquisition that allowed him to do so.
11. Now imagine that your life is a labyrinth. It is filled with opportunities to contemplate, but it is also filled with bumps, pitfalls, and even monsters. Discuss some of these; they could even lurk in this classroom.
12. Hand out grid paper and have students draw their own labyrinth or maze.

- If they draw a maze, they will be putting themselves in the middle and trying to get out.
- If they draw a labyrinth, they will be putting themselves on the outside and trying to find the center.

13. Share “What’s in Your Labyrinth” paper: [What’s in your Labyrinth?](#) This paper should be assigned as homework, or if there is time, students may work on this in class.

Assessment

The assessment includes a rubric for easy grading.

[What’s in your Labyrinth?](#)

Reflection

- How did the lesson go?
- Did you successfully address the objectives?
- Did you successfully address the standards?
- What struggles did you or the students encounter?
- What were the highlights of the lesson?

Day Three: Close Textual Study

Objectives:

- To apply historical and mythological context to the text.
- To develop skills in close examination of authorial style.
- To develop an understanding of the concept of dualities in the text.

Standards Addressed:

CC.1.3.11–12.K

CC.1.5.11–12.A

CC.1.5.11–12.C

[PA Core Standards ELA 6-12](#)

This lesson will introduce the text and set the stage. Once it is concluded, the teacher should proceed with the text, breaking it up into desirable chunks. Below is a possible reading schedule broken up by pagination, but teachers should modify this depending on their schedule and the needs of the class. Teachers are responsible for their own comprehension evaluations, discussion questions, and activities. If all these lessons are followed, there is a comprehensive written evaluation included in the next lesson.

Resources/Materials:

- *A Short Border Handbook: A Journey through the Immigrant's Labyrinth*
- Copy of pages 1-2 for students to annotate.
- Tentative schedule: [Reading Schedule](#):

Procedures:

1. Have the class share their labyrinth/maze examples and explain their monsters.
2. Discuss.
3. Hand out copies of pages 1-2 of *The Short Oder Handbook*.
4. Tell students to annotate their pages as we read. They can look for anything, but here are some suggestions:
 - Vocabulary to define or words/terms that are interesting and unique.
 - Voice and tone: how does the narrator sound?
 - White space and font choice.
 - Use of headings.
 - Stylistic devices: fragments, quotation marks, semicolons, colons, dashes, parallel structure, etc.

- What do you learn about the narrator(s)?
 - What do you learn about the setting(s)?
 - What do readers anticipate will come next?
 - How does the first chapter introduce possible themes?
5. Read through the piece slowly, once. Remind students to annotate. Discuss what they discovered. Don't spend too long on this discussion, as you will be diving more deeply in the next read.
 6. Read through the piece slowing again, or place students in small groups and have them read the text.
 7. Discuss what they discovered. Address the following items:
 - The narrator(s) is nameless. Why?
 - What is the message the narrator(s) communicates?
 - What differences do you notice between the two voices?
 - i. Different voices for different fonts. One adult, historical, intellectual, will tell the story; one more casual, yet didactic.
 - What stylistic devices does the author use and why might they be important?
 - i. Use of fragments shows fragmented story and life.
 - ii. Use of semicolons shows independent clauses, split story, split life.

Upon the conclusion of the book

1. These concepts can all be revisited once the text is complete. In addition, discuss the following:
 - What names (or lack of names) do you encounter in the text? What are the implications?
 - Why are the chapters so short, and why is there so much white space?
 - What are some of the dualities encountered while reading? And how does the concept of dualities comment on theme?
 - Double voices
 - Two font choices
 - Two time frames
 - Two sets of expectations (ancient and modern Greece)
 - Two cultures
 - Torn between two locations, sets of expectations
 - Two ages of protagonists
 - Looking back at the concept of the labyrinth, what are monsters that the narrator encounters?
 - Looking back at the concept of the labyrinth, what was the example of Ariadne's thread that eventually led to his release?

Reflection

- How did the lesson go?
- Did you successfully address the objectives?
- Did you successfully address the standards?
- What struggles did you or the students encounter?
- What were the highlights of the lesson?

Day Four: The Idea of Walls, Borders, and Boundaries

Objectives:

- To examine the concept of walls, borders, and boundaries.
- To familiarize students with the poetic form of iambic pentameter.
- To discuss literary devices in poetry: plot, setting, character, theme, etc.
- To tie in cultural similarities and differences when it comes to xenophobia, boundaries, walls, and borders.
- To write a succinct and insightful synthesis and analysis of the concept of *xeno*, xenophobia, boundaries, walls, and borders.

Standards Addressed:

CC.1.4.11–12.D

CC.1.4.11–12.E

CC.1.4.11–12.F

CC.1.4.11–12.H

CC.1.4.11–12.L

CC.1.5.11–12.A

CC.1.5.11–12.B

[PA Core Standards ELA 6-12](#)

Resources/Materials:

- Paper copies of “Mending Wall: by Robert Frost: [Mending Wall by Robert Frost](#)
- Iambic pentameter: [Iambic Pentameter | Academy of American Poets](#)
- Mending Wall analysis questions: [Mending Wall: Analysis Questions](#)

Procedures:

1. Hand out printed copies of “Mending Wall.”
2. Explain the concept of iambic pentameter: [Iambic Pentameter | Academy of American Poets](#) and provide your own examples.
3. Discuss elements of annotation:
 - Meaning
 - Metaphor
 - Meter
 - Character

- Setting
 - Theme
 - Vocabulary
4. Read the poem aloud slowly while students follow along and annotate.
 5. Ask if there are plot-based questions: who, what, when, where, why.
 6. Encourage students to think more carefully about poetic and literary elements the second time through.
 7. Read the poem aloud slowly again.
 8. Review the plot of the poem with students. Have them ask and answer questions based only on the plot.
 9. Split the class into small groups and have them access the analysis questions. Students will need 30 minutes to properly work through all of them: [Mending Wall: Analysis Questions](#).
 10. Bring the class back together and discuss the questions.

Follow-up

How does Frost's poem address the themes seen in *A Short Border Handbook*?

How are walls, boundaries, and labyrinths similar and different?

To conclude the unit, hand out the assignment Walls, Boundaries, Labyrinths: [Walls, Boundaries, Labyrinths](#)

Reflection

- How did the lesson go?
- Did you successfully address the objectives?
- Did you successfully address the standards?
- What struggles did you or the students encounter?
- What were the highlights of the lesson?

Reading Guide: *Thousands of Albanians Flee to Greece*

The following reading guide is structured to pull relevant facts from the article, though there are many other resources available to learn about Albanian refugees. This document contains suggested answers. Teachers may copy this and create their own reading guide without answers.

1. What is the date of this article?
January 2, 1991
2. One Greek border guard near Filiates estimates how many Albanians crossed the border in one night?
3,500
3. What is the ethnic Greek population of Albania and what is the overall population of Albania?
 - 350,000
 - 3.3 million
4. How are the ethnic Greek refugees treated differently from those who are Albanians?
 - Ethnic Greeks are given temporary residence permits.
 - Albanians who are not of Greek origin are bused to a United Nations refugee camp near Athens.
5. According to Mayor Pantelis Koufalias, this year how many refugees crossed the border to the town of Filiantes?
4,000
6. What is the population of Filiantes?
5,000
7. How is Filiantes trying to solve the problem of handling the influx?
A four-member local committee
8. How many Albanians crossed to Filiantes in 1988, 1989, and 1990?
 - 1988: 7
 - 1989: 17
9. This article focused on one border town, Filantes. How might the border look in other towns? Speculate as to the issues towns are facing with the influx of refugees?

Reading Schedule:

A Short Border Handbook: A Journey through the Immigrant's Labyrinth

Day 1:

Pages 1-2

Day 2

3-28

Day 3

29-55

Day 4

56-87

Day 5

88-116

Walls, Boundaries, Labyrinths

At this point you have examined the concept of xeno, xenophobia, cultural aspects of xeno, elements of belonging, walls and borders, and the idea of labyrinths, mazes and monsters. You have accessed videos, visuals, informational texts, poetry, narratives, and you created your own monster myth (so to speak). Now it's time to synthesize what you have learned and present your opinions.

Using *A Short Order Handbook*, the myth of Theseus, and “Mending Wall,” delve into the idea of xeno, borders, walls, and labyrinths. Identify where these elements exist in any part of our world, discuss their impact on our culture, and proffer your opinions upon one, some, or all of them. Use textual evidence to support your ideas and assertions, and present this evidence via MLA citations. This piece is fairly informal, in that you may use personal pronouns, but it is formal in its use of thesis, development, organization, conventions, and stylistic elements. This paper should be two pages or more.

Following are some helpful parameters:

- Assume that your reader has read the texts. **No plot summary will be accepted.**
- Include literary elements in your analysis.
- Making connections between the text and life is acceptable, even expected; however, limit your musings and be mindful to include helpful references to the texts. Do not ramble on about a connection to take up time and space.
- Typed, double-spaced, 12 point Times font, traditional margins.
- Submitted before class begins.
- Either double-space between paragraphs OR indent: not both.
- Each paragraph should have a topic sentence, and paragraphs should be developed, so more than one sentence.
- Evidence in the text that the assignment was carefully and thoughtfully read. A good reflection provides insight, analysis and quotations (properly cited—use MLA).
- Novel titles are in italics; sections of books, short stories, and short poems are in quotation marks.
- When you write about literature, refer to the author by last name only and write in present tense (the text is always alive and interacting with the reader).
- Do not use a lot of white space. This includes making your title HUGE!

What not to say: some fluff and sloppy words and phrases to avoid

the fact that	it is important to note	needless to say	it seems
I think/believe	kind of /kinda	sort of	in my opinion
in a way	things	a lot/alot	stuff
what this quote means			

Other elements to consider:

Vary your sentence structure.

Use stylistic enhancements (properly): colons, semicolons, parallel structure, quotations.

Have someone proofread your work.

What's in your Labyrinth?

Theseus was the cool guy who got through the labyrinth unscathed. He was placed in this situation and had to fight his way out, with the ultimate goal being release from a prison. It was an amazing adventure, but a bit short as there was only one monster to handle: the Minotaur. The nameless protagonist of our book encountered many monsters on his way through the refugee labyrinth.

Let's look at our own possible labyrinths, those that have many monsters, some physical, some mental, some you can't control, some self-generated. What will you encounter and how will you escape?

To do this you need to create the following:

1. Draw your own labyrinth or maze.
2. Create a situation that you have to get through.. Your labyrinth/maze could be physical (the hallways of the high school, your messy room, your neighborhood, etc.) or emotional (your parents' moods, teenage drama, etc.).
3. Create a quest: what awaits you at the end? What wonderful thing will you attain? For Theseus it was freedom and a good woman, for our nameless narrator it was immigration to Greece. For you, what will it be? Might it be to meet up with friends in a central? Maybe it's getting through your morning routine?
4. Generate some monsters--not just one like the Minotaur, but more like our protagonist's experience. Create at least four monsters of varying shapes and sizes. Monsters can include things like traffic, your little sister, apathy, even the spinach on your plate: it just depends on your labyrinth or maze. Place drawings of these monsters in your labyrinth or maze.
5. Now write about your adventure. This paper should be at least 1 page, and keep in mind that the labyrinth, quest, and monsters can be real or imaginary; they can be funny or serious. Write it from the first person, as if you are actively working through your adventure.

Drawing of labyrinth and monsters: 10 points

Situation/labyrinth: 3 points

Quest: 3 points

Four monsters: 10 points

Organized: 2 points

Grammatically clean: 6 points

Excellent title: 1 point

Total: 35 points

Mending Wall

By Robert Frost

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing: 5
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made, 10
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go. 15
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
'Stay where you are until our backs are turned!'
We wear our fingers rough with handling them. 20
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:

There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across 25
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
'Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it 30
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall, 35
That wants it down.' I could say 'Elves' to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed. 40
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, 'Good fences make good neighbors.' 45

Mending Wall: Analysis Questions

Once you have the basic plot of the poem down, answer the following questions. You will be submitting your answers as a group in Classroom, so please expand upon your answers and don't be minimalist. You should be working in your research paper groups, but you will only need to submit one version. That's why it is ESSENTIAL that you put everyone's name on this document so everyone gets credit.

1. The poem is—on the surface—about two men who get together to repair a wall. Who initiates the annual wall repair project between the two farms?
2. How would you describe the speaker of the poem? What kind of land or farm does he own? Why would this kind of farm be noteworthy? Provide a few adjectives to describe him.
3. How would you describe his neighbor? What kind of farm does he own? Why would this kind of farm be noteworthy? Provide a few adjectives to describe him. Point out lines where the speaker of the poem describes him and his movements.
4. There are two philosophies in this poem towards walls and their use. What are these philosophies? Point to a few lines that present them.
5. Much of the poem is in iambic pentameter but at times it switches. When? Why? Are these switches always significant? Ever significant?
6. Look at the repetition in lines 14 and 15. What's with that?
7. What does the poem's title suggest to you? Notice that it is not called "Mending the Wall." Can a wall be "mending"?
8. The poem mentions gaps. What is a gap (not The Gap), in both a literal and figurative sense?
9. What does it mean in line 43 that "He will not go behind his father's saying"? Why is this significant?
10. At the poem's conclusion, is the wall mended? Literally and figuratively? How so?
11. The line "Good fences make good neighbors" is quoted again and again. When it is quoted, what are those speakers saying about fences and neighbors? In the context of this poem, how does the narrator feel about fences?