

# Chapter 1

## *Ulysses and the sirens*

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### **Summary**

This is about a storytelling activity carried out by students of the fifth year of primary school . It is an interdisciplinary activity involving the following subjects:

- Italian (Fantasy story)
- Ancient History (Greek heroes returning from the Trojan war and Greek mythology)
- Geography (The journey of Ulysses and its places)
- Science (The sirenians)
- Art (Iconographic study of mythological figures and sirens' transformation)
- Technology (use of computers and softwares)

After studying the Trojan war and the Greek Pantheon in class, our students went to the library to do a research into sirens and borrow the Odyssey book.

After that, we went to the beach with our students to read some steps of the Odyssey. The reading took place by the sea, with the same conditions which occurred when Ulysses' ship approached the sirens rocks.

Finally, students drew the sirens just like they are in people's minds, in the likeness of a fish-woman.

Moreover, an iconographic research showing some Greek vases with sirens looking like bird-women had been done in class.

## STORYTELLING: ULYSSES AND THE SIRENS



### **Introduction**

This activity is important because it involves different subjects and it is possible to plan outdoor learning such as reading and drawing activities. In this way a natural environment connects with the environment in which the ancient story takes place. Its significance is due to the educational strategy and methodology based on active researches and images.

## Learning objectives

- To know a Greek Myth
- To listen to a text and turn it into images
- To apply the research method
- To use multimedia tools in a school project.
- To realaborate information
- To compare and complete literary and iconographic sources.
- To compare local coastal landscapes to those of the myth.



## Resources

History school text book, The Odyssey Poem, sketchbooks, pencils, rubbers, colours, computer, softwares, Interactive boards.

All the trips were made by a municipal school bus.



## Activity

1. Study of the Trojan War and realization of a geo-historical map of the ancient Mediterranean Sea.
2. Realisation of a map depicting the stops of Ulysses journey.
3. Transfer to the library to borrow the Odyssey epic poem.
4. Transfer to the beach and reading of the text telling the meeting between Ulysses and the sirens.
5. Graphical representation of the sirens like fish- women.
6. Group works and researches on iconographic and literary figures of the siren in the local library.
7. Follow-up on the Siren of Andersen through the use of interactive whiteboards and internet.
8. Graphical representation of the siren according to the most ancient appearance: the bird- woman.
9. Comparison of literal and visual figures starting from the bird-woman to arrive at the fish-woman.

10. Collection of materials (texts and photos) in a multimedia product.
11. All the students took part in the proposed activities, students with special needs were included. Our student with dyslexia was discharged from the reading but he was included in all the other activities.



### **Comments from the learners' surveys**

The educational activity raised interest and enthusiasm in our students. They learnt how to do a research, how to compare different sources and make personal deductions.

### **Final remarks**

I think that this activity has had a significant impact on the class for both specific learnings and for development of critical thinking and team building.

### **Supplementary material**

*Links to blog, videos, etc.*