

Deception

THE TROJAN HORSE



The Trojan War took place more than 3,000 years ago. Yet the events of that struggle still spice our language. Today the term “Trojan horse” means a deadly ploy or deception. The warning to “beware of Greeks bearing gifts” also comes from the Trojan War. It means to watch out if someone gives you something that appears too good to be true.

² The story of the Trojan War is a legend. We don’t know for sure that it took place. It was said to be a war between the Greeks and the Trojans, resulting in the destruction of the Trojans’ city of Troy. In 1870, experts uncovered ruins from Troy. So we know Troy was a real place. It is also quite likely that the Greeks and the Trojans did fight a war. They would have been natural rivals for control of the Aegean Sea. Beyond that, however, everything we know about the Trojan War comes from epic Greek poems.

³ According to the poems, the Trojan War began as a love story. A Trojan prince named Paris fell in love with a beautiful Greek woman named Helen of Sparta. Sparta was a powerful city in Greece. This was a legendary time when gods mixed

Helen of Troy and Priam from a detail on a Greek cup. Priam was the father of 50 sons, one of whom was Paris, Helen’s abductor.

freely with humans. The gods did favors for humans they liked and punished those they didn't. The goddess Aphrodite liked Paris, so she promised to help him win the love of Helen.

⁴ There was a problem, however. Helen already had a husband. She was married to Sparta's King Menelaus. Still, Aphrodite urged Paris to go after Helen. She helped him set sail for Sparta. When Paris arrived there, King Menelaus welcomed him.

Soon, though, the king was called away. The king told his wife to entertain their guest. Instead, Helen fell in love with him. The two lovers then fled to Troy.

⁵ Menelaus was enraged when he heard what had happened. With the help of some goddess friends of his own, Menelaus rallied the Greeks to get his wife back. He pulled together 1,186 ships and more than a hundred thousand men. Thus it was said that Helen was so lovely that "her face launched a thousand ships."

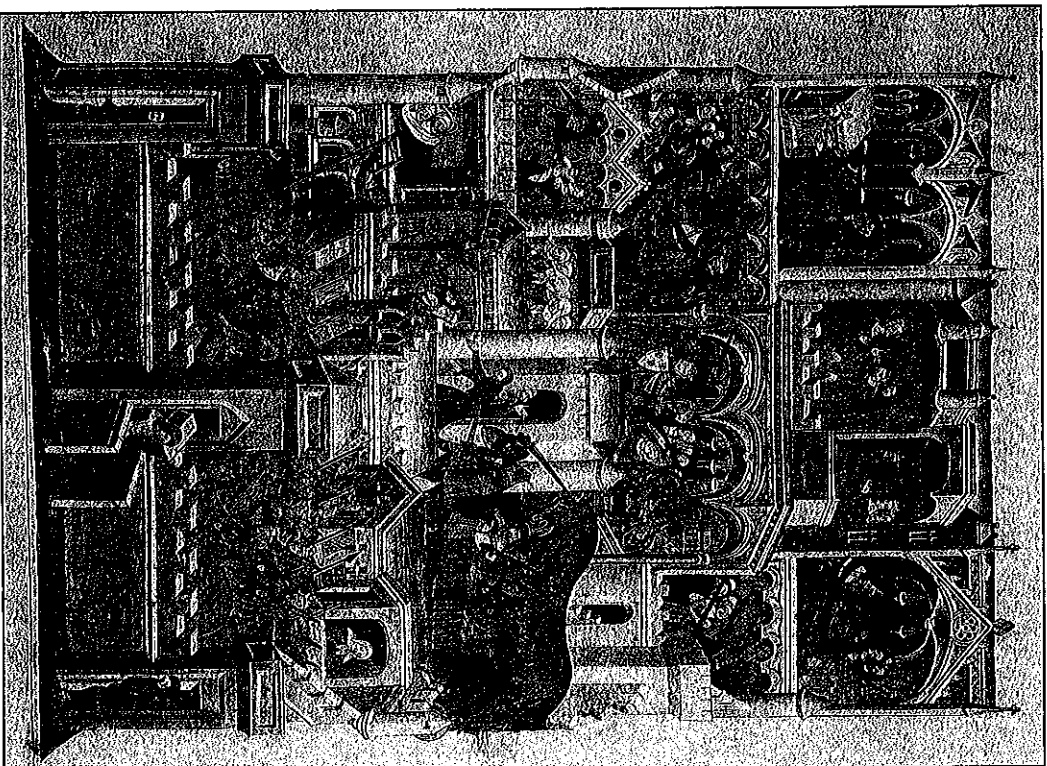
⁶ Menelaus's group included several famous Greek heroes. There was Agamemnon, leader of

the army. There was Achilles, the greatest of the Greek warriors. And there was the clever Odysseus.

⁷ The Trojans, meanwhile, had also lined up some brave men to fight on their side. The Trojans were led by Paris and the courageous Hector. Although the Greeks outnumbered the Trojans, they couldn't defeat them. The best the Greeks could do was put the city of Troy under siege. The siege dragged on for nine long years. Despite help from the gods, neither side could gain and keep the upper hand.

⁸ The situation changed in the tenth year. An argument broke out between Achilles and Agamemnon. Achilles refused to fight anymore. The Greeks began to lose heart. Achilles's friend Patroclus tried to rally them. He put on Achilles's armor, hoping to inspire the Greek troops to keep fighting. Instead, Patroclus died at the hands of Hector.

⁹ Ashamed and upset by the death of his dear friend, Achilles rejoined the battle. He killed Hector with a spear, then shouted, "So shall all dogs die!"



The story of Helen of Troy and the Trojan War has captured the imaginations of people throughout history. This scene was painted in the 14th century.

Hector's body was dragged around the walls of Troy three times. Everyone was shocked by such brutal treatment of a fallen foe.

¹⁰ The gods, too, were stunned by these latest events. The god Apollo leaped into the battle on the side of the Trojans. He guided a poison arrow fired by Paris. It struck Achilles in the heel, his only weak spot, killing him. Later, Paris was himself killed by an arrow. As the fighting raged back and forth, it seemed the war would never end. Then, suddenly, it did.

¹¹ One morning when the Trojans looked over their walls, everything was calm. They were astonished to see that all the Greeks were gone. Nothing was left but an empty camp. Even the Greek ships were gone. Then the Trojans spotted the one thing that the Greeks had left behind. It was a gigantic wooden horse. The horse was mounted on a platform with wooden wheels. On the side of the horse there was a message to the goddess Athena. It was a prayer for the safe return of the Greek army to Greece.

¹² At first, the Trojans suspected some kind of trick. But they changed their minds after talking to Sinon, a Greek warrior whom the Greeks had left behind. Sinon let the Trojans capture him; then he told them that the horse was a peace offering to the goddess Athena. He explained that the Greeks felt they had insulted her and now wanted to express

their sorrow. The Trojans tortured Sinon, but he stuck to his story.

¹³ Most of the Trojans believed Sinon. One priest, named Laocoön, didn't. "Have no faith in the horse!" he shouted. He then threw a spear at the side of the horse. It made a hollow sound. To silence Laocoön, the gods who favored the Greeks sent two sea serpents to strangle him.

¹⁴ Cassandra, the daughter of the Trojan king, also tried to warn her people. But she lived under a curse. Cassandra had once angered the god Apollo. As punishment, Apollo had doomed her always to tell the truth, but never to be believed. So although she saw the deception clearly, no one would listen to her.

¹⁵ The Trojans decided to pull the horse inside the city to a spot near the palace. It would make a fine monument, they thought, to their victory over the Greeks. It had been a long time since the Trojans had had anything to celebrate. Now, at last, the siege was over and the war was won—or so they thought. Trojan warriors danced and sang around the horse. They drank wine late into the night. At last, even the guards fell asleep.

¹⁶ It was then that the Greeks struck. In truth, they had not sailed away at all. Instead, they had hidden their ships and army behind an nearby island. Now, under the cover of darkness, they gathered outside the walls of Troy. Meanwhile,

Sinon crept over to the wooden horse and opened a secret trap door in the belly of the horse. Out poured the bold Greek warriors who had hidden inside. They opened the gates of Troy and the rest of Menelaus's army streamed in.

¹⁷ The battle that then took place was a slaughter. The sleepy Trojans had no chance to regroup. Almost all the Trojans were killed, including the king. The city was completely destroyed—the temples, the altars, all the buildings. Meanwhile, Menelaus captured Helen. He intended to punish her for all the bloodshed she had caused. But he didn't. When he saw her, his heart softened. Realizing he still loved her, he took her back with him to Sparta, where she lived out the rest of her days. ❧

If you have been here while reading this article, check your reading time below. Add them to the words per minute table on page 21 and look up your reading speed on page 21 (minutes). Enter your reading speed on the graph on page 12.

Reading Time Lesson 3

Minutes Seconds

A Finding the Main Idea

One statement below expresses the main idea of the article. One statement is too general, or too broad. The other statement explains only part of the article; it is too narrow. Label the statements using the following key:

M—Main Idea B—Too Broad N—Too Narrow

- _____ 1. In a classic deception, the Greek warriors hid in a giant horse and fooled their enemies, the Trojans, into letting them into their city.
- _____ 2. Though the Trojans were suspicious about the giant horse their enemies had left behind, a Greek soldier named Sinon convinced them that the horse was a gift to a goddess.
- _____ 3. The Greeks and the Trojans were natural enemies, both wanting control of the Aegean Sea area.

_____ Score 15 points for a correct M answer.

_____ Score 5 points for each correct B or N answer.

_____ Total Score: Finding the Main Idea

B Recalling Facts

How well do you remember the facts in the article? Put an X in the box next to the answer that correctly completes each statement about the article.

1. According to legend, the Trojan War began when
 - a. the Greeks entered Troy in a giant wooden horse.
 - b. Trojan prince Paris ran away with Helen, the wife of King Menelaus of Sparta.
 - c. the Greeks put the city of Troy under siege.
2. Paris was aided by the goddess
 - a. Helen.
 - b. Agamemnon.
 - c. Aphrodite.
3. Because Laocoön did not trust the wooden horse, the gods silenced him by
 - a. sending sea serpents to strangle him.
 - b. cursing him with never being believed.
 - c. killing him with an arrow.
4. After the Trojans pulled the horse into their city, they
 - a. inspected it thoroughly.
 - b. destroyed it.
 - c. celebrated late into the night.
5. When Menelaus finally recaptured Helen, he
 - a. forgave her and took her back to Sparta with him.
 - b. punished her for the bloodshed she had caused.
 - c. divorced her.

_____ Score 5 points for each correct answer.

_____ Total Score: Recalling Facts

C Making Inferences

When you combine your own experience and information from a text to draw a conclusion that is not directly stated in that text, you are making an inference. Below are five statements that may or may not be inferences based on information in the article. Label the statements using the following key:

C—Correct Inference F—Faulty Inference

- _____ 1. In ancient times, stealing someone's spouse was more acceptable than it is today.
- _____ 2. At the time of the Trojan War, the best way to transport soldiers between Sparta and Troy was by ship.
- _____ 3. Paris was a kind ruler who thought only of the safety of his citizens.
- _____ 4. The Greek soldiers were able to stay quiet for many hours.
- _____ 5. Helen was unusually attractive to men.

Score 5 points for each correct answer.

_____ Total Score: Making Inferences

D Using Words Precisely

Each numbered sentence below contains an underlined word or phrase from the article. Following the sentence are three definitions. One definition is closest to the meaning of the underlined word. One definition is opposite or nearly opposite. Label those two definitions using the following key. Do not label the remaining definition.

C—Closest O—Opposite or Nearly Opposite

- 1. They would have been natural rivals for control of the Aegean Sea.
 - _____ a. citizens
 - _____ b. allies
 - _____ c. competitors
- 2. With the help of some goddess friends of his own, Menelaus lallied the Greeks to get his wife back.
 - _____ a. fired up
 - _____ b. reminded
 - _____ c. discouraged
- 3. Thus it was said that Helen was so lovely that "her face launched a thousand ships."
 - _____ a. sank
 - _____ b. brought back
 - _____ c. sent forth
- 4. Everyone was shocked by such brutal treatment of a fallen foe.
 - _____ a. kind
 - _____ b. unfeeling and cruel
 - _____ c. surprising

5. The sleepy Trojans had no chance to regroup.

- _____ a. become confused again
 _____ b. organize again
 _____ c. go back to sleep

_____ Score 3 points for each correct C answer.

_____ Score 2 points for each correct O answer.

_____ Total Score: Using Words Precisely

Author's Approach

Put an X in the box next to the correct answer.

- The author uses the first sentence of the article to
 - a. entertain the reader with a look at a famous battle.
 - b. describe the qualities of the Greeks.
 - c. inform the reader of when the Trojan War took place.
- What does the author mean by this statement about Helen: "her face launched a thousand ships"?
 - a. A large navy was called upon to rescue her.
 - b. She christened about 1,000 ships.
 - c. Her picture was placed on 1,000 ships.
- What is the author's purpose in writing "The Trojan Horse"?
 - a. To encourage the reader to study the maps of Greece
 - b. To entertain the reader with an exciting romance
 - c. To describe a situation in which deception was used to win a war
- Which of the following statements from the article best describes the way most Trojans felt when they saw the wooden horse?
 - a. "Cassandra, the daughter of the Trojan king, also tried to warn her people."
 - b. "The Trojans tortured Sinon, but he stuck to his story."
 - c. "At first, the Trojans suspected some kind of trick."

Enter the four total scores in the spaces below, and add them together to find your Reading Comprehension Score. Then record your score on the graph on page 73.

Score	Question Type	Lesson 3
_____	Finding the Main Idea	_____
_____	Recalling Facts	_____
_____	Making Inferences	_____
_____	Using Words Precisely	_____
_____	Reading Comprehension Score	_____

CRITICAL THINKING

_____ Number of correct answers

Record your personal assessment of your work on the Critical Thinking Chart on page 74.