Welcome to iota, iris’s little cousin! In each issue we explore a different story from the ancient world of the Greeks and Romans, using five exciting sections - gods, monsters, objects, people, and words. Through these you can find clues to piece together the story, as well as pick up all sorts of interesting, unusual, unexpected and astonishing facts along the way!

iota aims to introduce Classics and Latin in a fun and informative way to children. It is written and produced by The Iris Project, an educational charity which promotes Latin and Classics in state schools. iota is exclusively distributed in North America by Ascanius: The Youth Classics Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion of Latin and Classics on the elementary and middle school levels. For more information, please visit www.ascaniusycli.org

4 - God - Bacchus
8 - Monster - Scylla
12 - Person - Catullus
16 - Object - Sword
20 - Words
Catullus, whom you can read about in this iota, fell out with his girlfriend, Lesbia. In fact, he was so angry that he referred to her as being like the sea monster, Scylla. When you learn about Scylla, you will understand how insulting this comparison was!

Scylla’s upper body and face were that of a young woman - but the rest ...

Around her waist hung the bodies of dogs, which had rows of very sharp teeth.

Instead of legs she had the long tail of a dolphin.

The sound she uttered was the soft yelping of a dog, but her bite was definitely worse than her bark!

She lived in a cave above the sea. If a ship was sailing between Italy and Sicily, it had to pass through the Strait of Messina, which is where Scylla had her lair.

She would emerge from her cave and grab sailors from the decks of passing ships. Homer tells us that she devoured six of Odysseus’ crew. She also made a meal of Jason’s Argonauts! She was reputedly slain by Hercules.
The Roman poet Ovid tells us that Scylla was once a very beautiful nymph!

The story goes that a sea god called Glaucus had fallen deeply in love with her, but she ran away to land, where he could not go. He was so distressed that he asked the powerful sorceress Circe for a love potion to melt Scylla’s heart.

As he was telling his sorry tale, Circe then fell in love with Glaucus! He only had eyes for Scylla, however, and Circe was bitterly jealous of Scylla. She made some very powerful poison and poured it into the pool where Scylla bathed. As soon as the nymph entered the water, she was transformed into the terrible monster we know her as now!

| Strength: | 9 |
| Skill:    | 3 |
| Intelligence: | 3 |
| Influence: | 7 |

**Appearance:**
Half woman, part dogs, part dolphin

**Special power:**
Catching sailors

**Occupation:**
Disturbing sea travel by eating sailors

**Family Ties:**
Her father was Phorcys, and her mother was Crataeis
Activities

1. Make a Beware of Scylla sign, perhaps even with a picture of the monster herself! How scary can you make your sign?

2. Can you find out what the name ‘Scylla’ means?

3. Think about how you could protect an ancient boat from Scylla! Can you design a safe boat?

4. Can you find where the Straits of Messina are?

*PRIZE CHALLENGE*

Being a sailor in the ancient world was frightening enough, and many of them believed that they might encounter monsters on their travels, as the world and seas were so unknown and uncharted! Write a description of being an ancient sailor and encountering Scylla. Imagine how terrifying it would be and give your account in as much detail as you can!

Send your stories to us at info@irisproject.org.uk.

The winner will receive a free Classical book!

The phrase ‘between Scylla and Charybdis’ has come to mean being between two dangers, either of which will bring harm.
What did the ancient Greeks and Romans fight with? Here’s your chance to find out!

When you think of a Greek hero, what picture comes into your head? Do you imagine a hero in gold armor? Does he have a kind face or a proud one? Many of the ancient Greek heroes looked different and wore different types of armor, but one thing that almost all of them had in common was the sword.

Swords were quite hard to get in early ancient Greek times. Originally, they were made from bronze and cost a lot of money! Only rich chiefs and great warriors would use them. Bronze was made from copper and tin – tin was really expensive and not found in most of ancient Greece.

All this changed when the Greeks discovered iron. During the Greek ‘Dark Ages’, people stopped sailing in and out of Greece, so the Greeks couldn’t get tin. This meant that they had to look for a different material, and iron actually turned out to be better. Bronze was weaker than

The Latin word for iron is ‘ferrum’, and the symbol for iron nowadays is ‘Fe’.
iron and could bend or snap in battle. Two metals didn’t have to mix to make iron either, so it was cheaper, so more people began to get swords.

Sword-making wasn’t easy to do! Firstly, a forge (a place to heat the metal), would be needed. The metal would be made into a shape using a hammer and an anvil, which was basically a block on which the hot iron would be put. Then it would undergo something called ‘heat-treating’ which is where the sword is heated and cooled. This makes the sword nice and even. Then, it would be ‘quenched’, making the sword harder, then ‘tempered’, making it stronger. Finally, it would be sharpened using a special grindstone. Then it would be sent off to get some form of hilt. Rich people would have paid to get jewels on theirs!

The word ‘gladiator’ comes from the Latin word for sword. It also gives us the name ‘gladiolus’ for a plant with sword-shaped leaves!
Activities

✓ As you have read in this section, some very rich people even decorated their swords with jewels! Can you design and make a sword decorated with jewels, fit for a king? You could make it out of cardboard and use plastic as the gemstones.

✓ Modern fencing nowadays uses three different types of swords. How many different sword types can you discover from the ancient world? Can you find out their original Latin and Greek names?

✓ Here are some objects connected to fighting, and the Latin words for each beneath. Can you write the correct word next to the object? The answers are below, upside down!

hasta
galea
scutum
gladius
sagitta

Gladius = sword, sagitta = arrow
Hasta = spear, galea = helmet, scutum = shield.
We hope you have enjoyed this edition of Iota! If you would like to have regular editions, contact us at:

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If you’ve guessed the theme of this edition, why don’t you ask an adult to email your answer to us at info@irisproject.org.uk!

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