

The Story of Achilles

Achilles, according to Greek mythology, was half-immortal (from his mother Thetis, an immortal sea-nymph) and half-mortal (from his mortal father Peleus, the King of Pythia, in Thessaly). To make her child completely immortal, Thetis tried various things - like totally immersing her son into the water of the Styx, river of the Underworld. Wherever the water covered her baby, Thetis believed, he would be protected from injury. There was a slight problem, however. Thetis could not completely bathe her son in the water. To do so, she would have had to let go of him.

In the end, Achilles was protected by the river everywhere on his body except for the heel where his mother held him. Because of that vulnerable heel, which would prove to be her son's undoing, Thetis failed in her efforts to insure her son would never die.

Many years later, the Greek king's wife, Helen, who was said to be the most beautiful woman who ever lived, was stolen away by Paris, a prince of Troy. As a result, the king declared war on Troy, and the entire Greek army sailed to Troy to do battle. Achilles was one of the king's most valuable warriors. In fact, in a vision, the king had been told that unless Achilles fought for him, the king would not win the Trojan War.

For ten years the Greek army battled against the Trojans, but they could not defeat them or even break through the wall that surrounded the City of Troy. Achilles led many other victories, though. In one, he captured a woman named Briseis. The Greek king thought Briseis was beautiful and stole her from Achilles. This angered Achilles so much that he refused to fight anymore.

Patroclus, Achilles's friend and cousin, saw that the army was not willing to fight without the brave Achilles to lead them. So, Patroclus dressed in Achilles's armor and led the Greeks into battle. While Patroclus may have looked like Achilles, he was not able to fight like him. Consequently, Patroclus was killed during the fight by Hector, the Trojan prince who was leading Troy's army.

Now, Achilles was enraged, so he immediately set out to kill Hector and avenge his cousin's death. The two soldiers were closely matched, and Hector fought bravely. In the end, though, Achilles killed Hector. Heartbroken, Hector's father, the King of Troy, sought to end the war once and for all. He offered to let Achilles marry his daughter, Polyxena as a way for the two sides to settle their differences.

Achilles fell in love with Polyxena and agreed to marry her. He even revealed his weakness, his vulnerable heel, to her. Polyxena shared the secret with her family. Paris plotted against Achilles, and when Achilles came to the temple of Apollo to offer a sacrifice before his wedding to Polyxena, Paris shot him in the heel with a poison arrow. Thus, the mighty warrior Achilles was killed.



Name _____
Period _____
Date _____

Achilles – Cause and Effect Practice

Part One Directions:

Fill in the blank using a signal word from the list below. Each word is used just once.
(HINT: Use your knowledge of capitalization rules to help you determine which word to use.)

Cause and Effect Transitions (Signal Words)

as a result	Consequently	if... then	so (so that)
because	Due to	In order to	therefore
	For this reason	Since	

1. Thetis, the goddess mother of Achilles, wanted to make her son immortal;
_____ she dipped him into the River Styx.
2. _____ to submerge him into the river without losing hold of Achilles, his mother gripped him by his heel as she dunked him underwater.
3. _____ his heel was not dipped into the river, Achilles was defenseless there.
4. The king of Greece declared war on the Trojan people _____ the prince of Troy stole his wife, Helen.
5. In a vision, the king learned that _____ Achilles did not fight for him, _____ the king would not win the Trojan War.
6. The king stole Briseis away from Achilles, and _____ Achilles refuses to fight anymore.
7. Patroclus disguises himself by putting on Achilles's armor, _____ the Greek army will fight against the Trojans.
8. Patroclus is killed. _____, Achilles fights Hector, and kills the Trojan prince.
9. The broken-hearted Trojan king agrees to let Achilles marry Polyxena to end the war.
_____ her loyalty to her people, though, Polyxena tells Paris about Achilles's weak spot, and Paris shoots Achilles there with a poison arrow.
10. _____ Achilles was killed, not by a fierce blow in battle, but by a single arrow in his heel.

Part Two Directions:

Complete the graphic organizers by writing in the causes and/or effects left blank.

ONE CAUSE / ONE EFFECT

Cause:

Although his mother, Thetis, is a goddess,
his father, Peleus is just a mortal.

Effect:

ONE CAUSE / MULTIPLE EFFECTS

Cause:

Effect:

The Greek King
declares war against
the Trojans.

Effect:

The Greek army sails to
Troy to invade the city.

Cause:

The army refuses to fight without
Achilles to lead them.

CHAIN OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

Effect / Cause:

Effect:

Patroclus is killed during a battle with
Hector, leader of the Trojan army.

MULTIPLE CAUSES / ONE EFFECT

Cause:

Cause:

Effect:

Achilles dies from a
poison arrow in the heel
of his foot.

Achilles Cause and Effect Practice ANSWER KEY

1. therefore
2. In order to
3. Since
4. because
5. if... then
6. as a result
7. so (that)
8. Consequently
9. Due to
10. For this reason

ONE CAUSE/ONE EFFECT

Achilles is not immortal.

ONE CAUSE/MULTIPLE EFFECTS

Paris stole Helen, the Greek king's wife, away to Troy.

CHAIN OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

Patroclus disguises himself as Achilles by putting on his armor.

MULTIPLE CAUSES/ONE EFFECT

(Any two are correct.)

Achilles has a weak spot, his heel, where he can be killed.

Achilles tells Polyxena about his weakness.

Polyxena shares Achilles's secret with Paris.

Paris knows about the weakness and shoots him there.