

## Lesson 2

### Icarus

#### A. Warm-up activity

Discuss the following questions.

- Have you read Kazi Nazrul Islam's “Bidrohi” in Bangla? If so, did you come across any myths in the poem? If not, consider it your homework. Now listen to the recitation of the poem by Kazi Sabyasachi <http://surl.li/ycfikq> and discuss it in the class.
- Were any of the myths associated with rebellion?



#### B. Now read the following story about a rebellious mythical character, Icarus, and answer the questions that follow:

On the island of Crete, the fearsome Minotaur, a creature that was half-man and half-bull, terrorized the inhabitants. To contain the beast, King Minos enlisted the help of Daedalus, a masterful architect and inventor. Daedalus constructed an intricate labyrinth so complex that escape was nearly impossible. Once the Minotaur was imprisoned within the maze, King Minos believed he had the perfect trap for his enemies, who would be sent into the labyrinth to meet a gruesome end.



However, King Minos, no longer needing Daedalus, cruelly imprisoned the inventor and his son, Icarus, within the same labyrinth. Yet, Daedalus, familiar with the labyrinth's design, managed to escape with Icarus. After fleeing, they found themselves stranded on the island with no means of escape by sea.

Observing the birds flying above, Daedalus was inspired to craft wings from feathers and wax for himself and his son. He warned Icarus to fly at a moderate height—too close to the sea, and the wings would become heavy with moisture; too close to the sun, and the wax would melt.

Initially, Icarus heeded his father's advice, but soon, overwhelmed by the excitement of the flight, he soared higher and higher, forgetting the warning. As he ascended, the sun's heat melted the wax binding his wings. Helplessly, Icarus plummeted into the sea and drowned, leaving Daedalus to fly on alone, devastated by his son's tragic fate. He eventually reached Sicily, where he mourned Icarus and named the sea where his son fell the Icarian Sea in his memory.

### C. Match the words in Column A with their meanings in Column B

| Column A     | Column B  |
|--------------|---|
| 1. terrorize | a) to pay attention to something, especially advice or a warning  |
| 2. masterful | b) leave (someone) without the means to move from somewhere.  |
| 3. intricate | c) extremely unpleasant and shocking, and usually dealing with death or injury                              |
| 4. labyrinth | d) having a lot of small parts that are arranged in a complicated or delicate way                           |
| 5. gruesome  | e) a complicated irregular network of passages or paths in which it is difficult to find one's way; a maze. |
| 6. stranded  | f) fall or drop straight down at high speed   |
| 7. heed      | g) having great skill in a particular job or activity, or something produced with such skill                |
| 8. overwhelm | h) to overcome by superior force or numbers; to be too much to deal with                                    |
| 9. ascend    | i) rise or move up through the air  |
| 10. Plummet  | j) to make someone feel very frightened by threatening to kill or hurt them                                 |



**D. Read the last two paragraphs of the passage again and fill in the blanks taking appropriate words from there:**

Daedalus was inspired by watching \_\_\_\_\_ fly and used \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to craft wings for himself and his son. He warned Icarus to avoid flying too \_\_\_\_\_ to the sea, where the wings would become heavy, or too \_\_\_\_\_ to the sun, where the \_\_\_\_\_ would melt. Despite following the advice initially, Icarus eventually flew too high, and the heat caused the wax to \_\_\_\_\_. Icarus then fell into the \_\_\_\_\_ and drowned. Daedalus continued his journey to \_\_\_\_\_, mourning his son, and named the sea after him, the \_\_\_\_\_ Sea.

**E. Answer the following questions:**

- i. How did Daedalus and Icarus try to escape from the island?
- ii. How did Daedalus come up with the idea to build wings?
- iii. What advice did Daedalus give to Icarus before flying?
- iv. Why did Icarus fly too close to the sun?
- v. How did Daedalus feel after Icarus' death?

**F. By now, you understand what a 'labyrinth' means. The most well-known collection of Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges is titled Labyrinths. Write a short note on what his writings in this book would be about?**



Landscape with the Fall of Icarus by Pieter Bruegel (1525-1569)

- i. What animals do you see in the painting? Where are they?
- ii. Can you point out some of the activities visible in the painting?
- iii. Can you find out where Icarus is in the painting?

**G. Read this poem by American poet William Carlos Williams and answer the following questions:**

**William Carlos Williams** (1883–1963) was an American poet known for his free verse that made ordinary moments extraordinary. Born in New Jersey, he balanced medicine with writing. His poetry is noted for clear imagery and sensory focus. His early work was traditional, but by *Al Que Quiere!* (1917), his unique style emerged. His famous poem *The Red Wheelbarrow* is part of *Spring and All* (1923). In *Paterson* (1946–1958), Williams explored modern life and industry, blending poetry and prose. He also wrote prose, reflecting his interest in American culture. He died in 1963 and received a posthumous Pulitzer Prize.

**Landscape with the Fall of Icarus**

According to Brueghel  
 when Icarus fell  
 it was spring  
 a farmer was ploughing  
 his field  
 the whole pageantry  
 of the year was  
 awake tingling  
 near  
 the edge of the sea  
 concerned  
 with itself  
 sweating in the sun  
 that melted  
 the wings' wax



unsignificantly  
 off the coast  
 there was  
 a splash quite unnoticed  
 this was  
 Icarus drowning



**H. Listen to the recitation of the poem using this QR code:**

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| pageantry       | Bright and lively events and ceremonies with lots of people wearing colorful clothing. |
| tingling        | A usually slight ringing, stinging, prickling, or thrilling sensation                  |
| edge            | The outside limit of an object, area, or surface.                                      |
| splash          | To fall noisily onto a surface, mainly water   |
| unsignificantly | Something not important enough to have any effect; insignificantly.                    |

**I. Find out five principal verbs from the poem and make a sentence for each word.**

**J. Answer the questions below:**

1. What is the man doing in the field?
2. Where is the farmer's field located?
3. What happens to Icarus' wings?
4. What kind of a day is presented here?
5. What is the poet's major focus here: the fall/ the activities/ indifference of others towards the fall? Why do you think so?

**K. Write a summary of the poem in 150 words.**

