

This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock, an assistant professor at Sam Houston State University. Dr. Brock holds a PhD in Library Science, specializing in children's and young adult literature.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Rick Riordan** ([www.rickriordan.com](http://www.rickriordan.com)) is the author of four #1 *New York Times* best-selling series with millions of copies sold throughout the world: Percy Jackson and the Olympians, the Kane Chronicles, the Heroes of Olympus, and Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard. His collections of Greek myths, *Percy Jackson's Greek Gods* and *Percy Jackson's Greek Heroes*, were #1 *New York Times* best sellers as well. His novels for adults include the hugely popular Tres Navarre series, winner of the top three awards in the mystery genre. He lives in Boston, Massachusetts, with his wife and two sons.



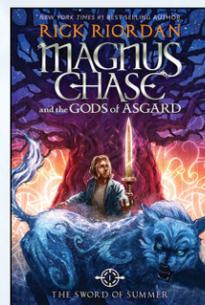
Michael Frost

# RICK RIORDAN

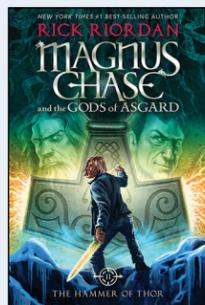
## THE TRIALS OF APOLLO

### BOOKS BY RICK RIORDAN

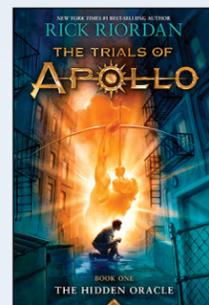
#### Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard



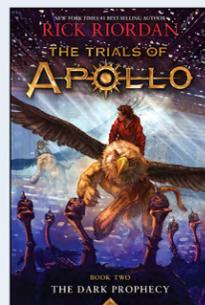
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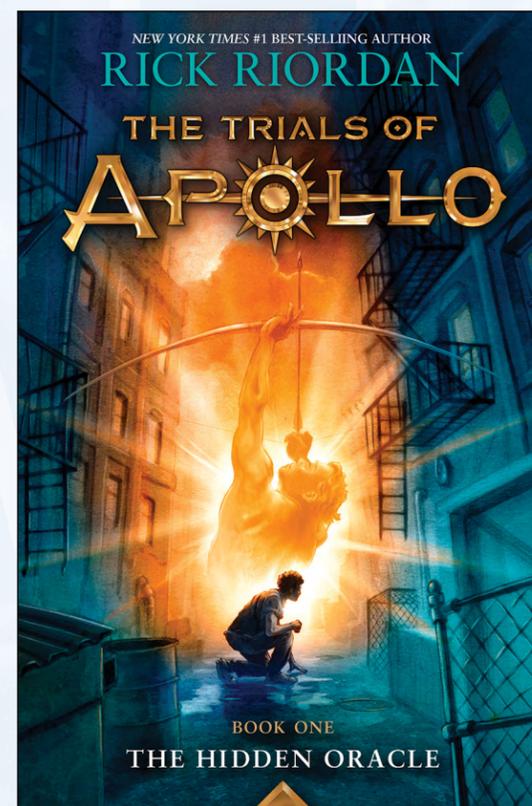


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#### The Trials of Apollo



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This guide is aligned with the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards (CCR) for Literature, Writing, Language, and Speaking and Listening. The broad CCR standards are the foundation for the grade level-specific Common Core State Standards.

### EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

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## ABOUT THE BOOKS

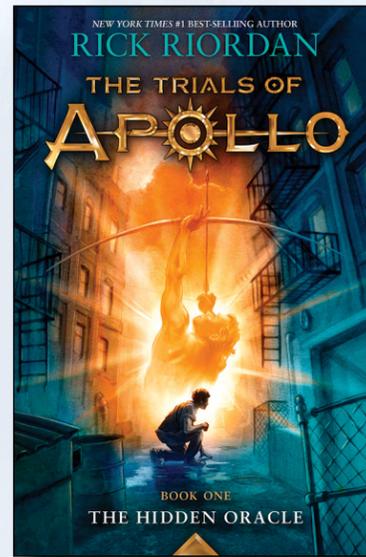
### THE HIDDEN ORACLE

#### The Trials of Apollo, Book One

How do you punish an immortal? By making him human.

After angering his father, Zeus, the god Apollo is cast down from Olympus. Weak and disoriented, he lands in New York City as a regular teenage boy. Now without his godly powers, the four-thousand-year-old deity must learn to survive in the modern world until he can somehow find a way to regain Zeus's favor.

But Apollo has many enemies—gods, monsters, and mortals who would love to see the former Olympian permanently destroyed. Apollo needs help, and he can think of only one place to go . . . an enclave of modern demigods known as Camp Half-Blood.



### THE DARK PROPHECY

#### The Trials of Apollo, Book Two

Zeus has punished his son Apollo—god of the sun, music, archery, poetry, and more—by casting him down to earth in the form of a gawky, acne-covered sixteen-year-old mortal named Lester. The only way Apollo can reclaim his rightful place on Mount Olympus is by restoring several Oracles that have gone dark. What is affecting the Oracles, and how can Apollo/Lester do anything about them without his powers?

After experiencing a series of dangerous—and, frankly, humiliating—trials at Camp Half-Blood, Lester must now leave the relative safety of the demigod training ground and embark on a hair-raising journey across North America. Somewhere in the American Midwest, he and his companions must find the most dangerous Oracle from ancient times: a haunted cave that may hold answers for Apollo in his quest to become a god again—if it doesn't kill him or drive him insane first. Standing in Apollo's way is the second member of the evil Triumvirate, a Roman emperor whose love of bloodshed and spectacle makes even Nero look tame. To survive the encounter, Apollo will need the help of son of Hephaestus Leo Valdez, the now-mortal sorceress Calypso, the bronze dragon Festus, and other unexpected allies—some familiar, some new—from the world of demigods. Come along for what promises to be a harrowing, hilarious, and haiku-filled ride. . . .



## EXPLORING THE TRIALS OF APOLLO THROUGH DISCUSSION AND WRITING

The following questions may be used throughout the study of the Trials of Apollo series as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection. Alternatively these questions can be used as reflective writing prompts.

### The Hidden Oracle Questions:

- 1 As the novel begins, Apollo states, “My name is Apollo. I used to be a god.” By opening the novel this way, what does Apollo help the reader understand? Based on your background knowledge about his character, what do you predict has happened to cause Apollo to lose his godly status?
- 2 Consider the things Apollo credits himself for. Which did you find most interesting or amusing?
- 3 Apollo asks, “Is anything sadder than the sound of a god hitting a pile of garbage bags?” How does this question capture his bewilderment at being punished by his father, Zeus?
- 4 Apollo thinks, “Zeus needed someone to blame, so of course he'd picked the handsomest, most talented, most popular god in the pantheon: me.” In what ways does his statement fully capture Apollo's sense of self at the novel's beginning? In what ways does having to become Lester Papadopoulos overwhelm him? Do you predict the experience will be a worthwhile one?



- 5 How is this, Apollo's third punishment of being made mortal, differ from his previous experiences?
- 6 How does Apollo ascertain that his mugging in the alley is the work of a god? Why might this be important?
- 7 Describe the meeting of Apollo and Meg. How does their initial interaction set the stage for their relationship? In what ways does their relationship change throughout the course of the series?
- 8 After Apollo accuses Meg of enslaving him, she counters by saying, "It's more like mutual cooperation." Do you agree with her assessment of their relationship? Why or why not?
- 9 Though they've had a tumultuous relationship in the past, Apollo chooses to go to Percy Jackson for help. Why do you think he does? Is his choice a wise one? If so, in what ways?
- 10 When Meg remains vague about her family, Apollo thinks, "My highly advanced people-reading skills told me she was hiding something, but that was not unusual for demigods. For children blessed with an immortal parent, they were strangely sensitive about their backgrounds." What are possible other reasons for Meg to be evasive?



- 11 Apollo calls Meg a "feral demigod." In your opinion, is this a fitting description of her? Using textual evidence, support your position.
- 12 Upon their meeting, Will Solace tells Apollo that "Meg seems cool. She's already poked Conner Stoll in the eyes and kicked Sherman Yang in the crotch." Why does Will believe that Meg will "get along just fine here"? Do you agree?
- 13 Why does meeting each other feel so odd for Apollo and Will Solace? How does Will react to discovering that his father has been punished by Zeus and now is a teen boy named Lester?
- 14 In your opinion, what are the greatest lessons Apollo learns from his time at Camp Half-Blood? Do you believe this experience has changed him in any way? If so, how?
- 15 In what ways is the Grove of Dodona so important? To what lengths will Apollo and the demigods go to protect it?
- 16 Consider Apollo's response to learning of Meg's relationship with Nero. Do you think it's appropriate? Why or why not?

### *The Dark Prophecy Questions*

- 1 The first chapter of *The Dark Prophecy* begins with a haiku:  
*Lester (Apollo)*  
*Still human; thanks for asking*  
*Gods, I hate my life*  
 How does this opening set the tone for Apollo's state of mind? What makes being a mortal so difficult for him? What do you believe are the greatest lessons he will learn from this experience?
- 2 Consider the quest Leo, Cal, and Apollo have embarked upon. What do you believe will be the biggest challenges faced by the trio?
- 3 Apollo tells Calypso, "Well, excuse me, sorceress! Perhaps if *you* had helpful visions, I'd listen to you more often!" What does the banter between the two of them indicate about their relationship?
- 4 Think about the order Apollo heard Nero give Meg: *Go west. Capture Apollo before he can find the next Oracle. If you cannot bring him to me alive, kill him.* How does his relationship with Meg complicate matters?
- 5 Consider the past relationship of Apollo and Hemithea (Emmie). Do you feel Apollo is justified in feeling uneasy? In what ways are Emmie and Josephine helpful hosts at the Waystation? How do they show their support?
- 6 In your opinion, does the relationship between Leo and Cal change over the course of *The Dark Prophecy*? If so, in what ways?

- 7 Consider the Waystation. What makes it so important to demigods, monsters, and Hunters of Artemis? Why is Commodus determined to destroy it?
- 8 The importance of preserving and protecting the Oracles is a significant part of the Trials of Apollo series. Given what you've learned in *The Dark Prophecy*, why are the Oracles so important? What are the consequences of not protecting them?
- 9 Apollo states, "Commodus blames me for his death . . . Probably because I killed him." In regard to his understanding of this world, what is the best way to describe Apollo/Lester?
- 10 Using the phrase, "This is a story about . . ." supply five words to describe *The Dark Prophecy*. Explain your choices.
- 11 The characters in *The Dark Prophecy* exhibit a variety of strengths. Who most impresses you with their skills/gifts? Explain your choice.
- 12 Commodus tells Apollo, "You're damp and speckled with bat poop, Lester. You're a pathetic child who has been dragged through the darkness. That darkness is still in your mind. I see the fear in your eyes. This *is* your true form, Apollo! You're a fraud!" What is the significance of Commodus calling Apollo by his godly name? What does Apollo's blasting the room with radiance likely mean?
- 13 Consider the discovery of Grover Underwood at the conclusion of *The Dark Prophecy*. What do you predict will be the adventures and obstacles in store for the characters in *The Burning Maze*, the next installment of the Trials of Apollo?

*Correlates to Common Core Standards: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3.*



Meg

## CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

### READING, WRITING, AND RESEARCHING EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Before starting each book, have students complete an anticipation guide structured in the following manner:

BEFORE READING	AFTER READING	STATEMENTS
		It is best to trust in the wisdom of those older or more experienced than you.
		If you know yourself well enough, you cannot be influenced by others.
		No matter the situation, you should always trust your family.
		There are consequences for every action an individual takes.

Instruct students to complete the guide by placing a "+" sign in the box next to the statements they agree with, and a "0" next to those they disagree with. They must commit to agreement or disagreement—there can be no conditional responses. Reassure students that there are no correct or incorrect positions.

Once all students have had the opportunity to complete the anticipation guide, have them consider and discuss (providing their rationale) for their positions on these statements.



## LANGUAGE ARTS

### YOU, TOO, CAN HAIKU!

In *The Hidden Oracle* and *The Dark Prophecy*, each chapter is introduced with a clever and fitting haiku. A haiku is a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables, in three lines of five, seven, and five, traditionally evoking images of the natural world.

#### The Hidden Oracle, Chapter 1

*Hoodlums punch my face  
I would smite them if I could  
Mortality blows*

#### The Dark Prophecy, Chapter 1

*Lester (Apollo)  
Still human; thanks for asking  
Gods, I hate my life*

Like Apollo, you too can write haiku. Select a favorite character or scene from *The Hidden Oracle* or *The Dark Prophecy* and create an original haiku that offers an overview of that event or captures the spirit of the selected character. Remember, haiku has a structure, but beyond that, you can play with words and have fun!

5 syllables \_\_\_\_\_

7 syllables \_\_\_\_\_

5 syllables \_\_\_\_\_

5 syllables \_\_\_\_\_

7 syllables \_\_\_\_\_

5 syllables \_\_\_\_\_

## CONSIDERING CHARACTER

### CREATE AN "I AM" POEM

The purpose of this strategy is to help students demonstrate knowledge of a character from the Trials of Apollo books by following written prompts to complete a poem about the individual. They should structure their poems as follows:

#### FIRST STANZA:

I am (name the character)  
I wonder (something the character is actually curious about)  
I hear (a sound the character might hear)  
I see (a sight the character might see)  
I want (something the character truly desires)

#### SECOND STANZA:

I pretend (something the character actually pretends to do)  
I feel (a feeling the character might feel)  
I touch (something the character might touch)  
I worry (something that really bothers the character)  
I cry (something that makes the character very sad)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

#### THIRD STANZA:

I understand (something the character knows is true)  
I say (something the character believes in)  
I dream (something the character might actually dream about)  
I try (something the character really makes an effort to do)  
I hope (something the character actually hopes for)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

## UTILIZING THE TRIALS OF APOLLO FOR LANGUAGE DISCOVERY

Greek and Roman mythology’s influence is evident in our daily language. It’s difficult to imagine reading or writing without drawing upon myth-oriented adjectives or idioms. As part of your everyday curriculum or as part of a separate word-study unit, ask your students to research the histories of words that come from the Greek and Roman myths. For instance, ask them what it means to have an “Achilles heel.” To provide clarity, share the myth with them or allow them to research Achilles’s story. Next, ask them to speculate on the meaning of the following modern-day expressions:

- Labyrinth
- Atlas
- Herculean effort
- Midas touch
- Panic
- Tantalize
- Titanic

Pair students up and ask them to find as many Greek or Roman myth language connections as they can. To extend the activity, have students use the collected words as a bank to create a myth of their own creation.

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

All the characters in the Trials of Apollo series mature and grow over the course of the novels. Ask students to decide, based on their observations, which character they believe demonstrates the greatest growth. Have each student compose a short persuasive essay offering his or her position on this issue. While considering the selected character’s experiences, they should use textual evidence to provide specific examples supporting their case.



*Peaches*

## ESSENTIAL QUOTES ANALYSIS

Instructions for students: Reflect on some of the book’s salient ideas—points the author seems to be making that might get at the heart of the book’s intended meaning for readers. Select four quotes from the Trials of Apollo series that seem to signify main ideas or “life lessons” he is trying to express to readers. The quotes might be spoken by characters or could be part of the narration. When selecting your top four “essential quotes,” look for examples that have relevance to your own and others’ lives, as though the author is speaking directly to you through the novels. (Remember to include page numbers.) Next, explain why each quote seems to be so significant. How does it contribute to the book’s “message” or deeper meaning? What meaning does it have beyond the characters and situations of the book—what is its universal application to readers’ lives?

### Essential Quotes from *The Hidden Oracle* and *The Dark Prophecy*

QUOTE	BOOK # PAGE #	RELEVANCE IN NOVEL	MESSAGE TO READERS (UNIVERSAL APPLICATION)

*Correlates to Common Core Standards for Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details C.C.S.S.E.L.A. Literacy. R.L. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas C.C.S.S.E.L.A. Literacy. R.L. 4.7, 4.9, 5.7, 5.9, 6.7, 6.9; Writing: Production and Distribution W. 4.4, 5.4, 6.4.*

## ADDITIONAL CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

In the Trials of Apollo books, the complexities of the Greek and Roman deities, their relationships, and the situations in which they find themselves provide students opportunity to dig deep into the Greek and Roman myths. Have them examine and answer one of the following prompts:

1 As Triumvirate Holdings leaders, Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus play significant roles in the Trials of Apollo series. Select one of these infamous Roman emperors and, using library and Internet resources, investigate your selected individual to learn more about his role in history. Be sure to discover the following:

- Dates of birth and death
- Family's rise to power
- Years as emperor
- Achievements

Share what you've learned with your classmates.

2 Ancient Greece and ancient Rome are two of the most fascinating civilizations in world history. The lifestyle, architecture, and language were all reflections of the power of the Greeks and Romans and the tremendous influence of the gods they worshipped. In order to better understand references to these historical periods in the Trials of Apollo series, an examination of the period itself and the daily life of the ancient Greeks and ancient Romans is needed. According to your interest, select one of the following aspects to research.

- Political and economic activity
- Daily life
- Culture
- Religion, funerals, and the afterlife
- Intellectual achievements

Using the digital tool of your choice, create a digital poster showcasing what you've learned. Once it's completed, display and share the unique features of your poster with your class or online.

3 Part of the legacy of ancient Greece and ancient Rome are the monuments these civilizations erected. Choose one of the great monuments (the Parthenon, the Acropolis, or the Colosseum, for example) and research the conservation efforts being made to preserve it. Consider the following:

- What is the current structural condition of your chosen monument?
- What specific conservation efforts are being made or have been made in recent history?
- Who are the invested parties in these endeavors and what is the prognosis of these efforts?

Using Smore or another digital presentation tool, share your findings with the class.

4 The creatures that colored the mythology of ancient Greece and ancient Rome were fearsome and fascinating beasts, and many appear in the Trials of Apollo series. Using library and Internet resources, select a specific creature featured in the books and conduct research to share with your peers.

5 Consider the gods and goddesses featured in the Trials of Apollo books. What are common characteristics of these deities? In what ways are their personalities and the challenges they face similar to those of people today? Using what you learned, decide which of the gods or goddesses you are most like. Create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting yourself with the Greek or Roman god or goddess of your choice.

6 In small groups, select a favorite scene from the Trials of Apollo series and create a graphic novel for that scene. You can draw illustrations manually or use a digital comic strip creator (<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix> or <http://infinitecomic.com>, for example) to create a storyboard for your group's selected scene. Alternatively, have each member of your group assume the role of one of the characters (keeping in mind each one's personality and voice) and interact with one another in an extension of a scene from the book.

7 Though the stories of the major players in the Trials of Apollo books were created in ancient Greece and ancient Rome, if these characters lived in our time, they would likely use the same social media that is popular now. Select a Greek god or goddess and create a faux Facebook page for that character, being sure to complete all pertinent information, such as education, relationships, groups to follow, and pages to like. Also include two to three status updates.

*These activities correlate to the following Common Core Standards: Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details C.C.S.E.L.A. Literacy R.L. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas C.C.S.E.L.A. Literacy. R.L. 4.7, 4.9, 5.7, 5.9, 6.7, 6.9; Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 5.4, 6.4, 7.4.*



Lester

## WHO SAID IT?

The Trials of Apollo books are filled with great one-liners. See how well you know the characters by identifying who spoke each of these lines.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ "You're gonna be like Aquaman? Get the fish to fight for you?"
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ "I *hate* to study. I've been guaranteed admission with a full scholarship to New Rome University, but they're still requiring me to pass all my high school courses and score well on the SAT. Can you believe that? Not to mention I have to pass the DSTOMP."
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ "I was thrilled that some of my old skill remained intact, but I imagined Chiron would be annoyed if I drove the entire music class into major depression."
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ "I hate bugs."
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ "Peaches. Where is that stupid diaper demon when we need him?"
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ "That pretty much describes my entire life: *Because Poseidon*."
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ "Does that mean the Ares cabin should stick Apollo's head in a toilet?"
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_ "When in doubt, I usually assumed the conversation was about me."
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_ "Suck it up. Winners don't complain."
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_ "You can do it, Dad. You're already good. *Very* good. You've just got to adjust your expectations. Be patient; be brave. You'll get better."
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_ "You call me a TELEMARKETER? We run a full-service PR firm!"
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_ "You cannot die here. You have work to do. You made an oath."
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_ "Showers are good. Perhaps not as good as bacon, but good."
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_ "Peace, Apollo. I don't want to bum you out, but we need to talk."
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_ "Nothing is more tragic than loving someone to the depths of your soul and knowing they cannot and will not ever love you back."
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_ "Zeus did not answer. He was probably too busy recording my humiliation to share on Snapchat."
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_ "Will you be my buddy?"
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_ "Things can turn out differently, Apollo. That's the nice thing about being human. We only have one life, but we can choose what kind of story it's going to be."
- 19 \_\_\_\_\_ "No. No more. You can't give up on Meg. You guys are bound together. Besides, she's one of the good guys."
- 20 \_\_\_\_\_ "Whoa, buddy! We've talked about this. No blowtorching public monuments!"



RHEA

DAPHNE

CONNOR

WILL

LEO

LAUREL

RACHEL

PETE

1. MEG 2. PERCY 3. APOLLO 4. MEG 5. APOLLO 6. PERCY 7. CONNOR 8. APOLLO 9. LAUREL 10. KAYLA 11. PETE 12. DAPHNE 13. APOLLO 14. RHEA 15. APOLLO 16. APOLLO 17. WILL 18. RACHEL 19. PERCY 20. LEO

## APOLLO FACT OR FICTION?

Test your knowledge of the sun god by completing this Apollo trivia handout.

- 1 Apollo is the son of Leto and Zeus. He was born on the island of Delos.  
FACT or FICTION
- 2 Apollo and Athena, his twin sister, share an aptitude for archery.  
FACT or FICTION
- 3 Apollo taught men the art of medicine, so he is often referred to as "The Healer."  
FACT or FICTION
- 4 Apollo defended the oracle at Delphi against Hercules, who was angry at the priestess for having denied him a prophecy.  
FACT or FICTION
- 5 The nine Muses were Apollo's companions; they were goddesses known for inspiring art and music.  
FACT or FICTION
- 6 The pine, used in Greece as a status symbol, was Apollo's tree.  
FACT or FICTION
- 7 Apollo is alternately referred to as the god of darkness and the god of deception.  
FACT or FICTION
- 8 Apollo killed a serpent named Anaconda as a result of a contest; it was conquered by a single arrow.  
FACT or FICTION
- 9 The shark and duck were the animals sacred to him.  
FACT or FICTION
- 10 He had many love affairs with both mortals and goddesses.  
FACT or FICTION
- 11 Apollo is credited with killing the Cyclops in retaliation for its having armed Zeus with the thunderbolt.  
FACT or FICTION

1 FACT • 2 FICTION: Apollo's twin sister is Artemis.  
3 FACT • 4 FACT • 5 FACT • 6 FICTION: The laurel was Apollo's tree.  
7 FICTION: Apollo is alternately referred to as the god of light and the god of truth.  
8 FICTION: Apollo killed Python with a single arrow.  
9 FICTION: The dolphin and swan were the animals sacred to him.  
10 FACT • 11 FACT

