

## Learn About It

Writers often use words or phrases that give readers a better understanding of what they are reading. An **allusion**, or a reference to a person, place, or event from history or mythology, is one way they do this. Writers expect their readers to recognize the allusion and learn more about the events from it.

Read the passage. Look for a reference that helps you know more about the story.

The last mile of the hike was absolute torture. Tom had been walking for hours, and he was tired. His feet hurt, and the uphill trail seemed to be never-ending. All he could think about was how much he wanted a cold drink and a place to rest, back at the campsite. He felt like Odysseus at the end of his years of travel, longing to get back home.

Allusion	Meaning
Odysseus/odyssey	<u>The Odyssey</u> is a poem about a long journey taken by Odysseus. Odysseus faced many hardships on the journey. Any long journey is referred to as an odyssey.
Midas touch	King Midas had the power to turn everything he touched to gold. If someone has the Midas touch, it means that whatever he or she does turns out well.
Hercules	The Greek half-god, Hercules, had to perform twelve tasks so difficult that they seemed impossible. By the end of these tasks, Hercules was a hero to the people.

# Try It

Read the passage. Underline the allusion and the events it tells about. Use the questions to help you.

## Lucky Day

Henry woke up early. The morning sunshine was streaming in through his bedroom windows. This was a good sign because the fair he was going to today was being held outdoors. He had been looking forward to this day for weeks and it was finally here!

Henry went downstairs to find that Dad was making his favorite breakfast—pancakes. He counted this as another lucky sign. Before he ate, he checked his rabbits, Sam and Pam. They both looked perky and healthy. More good luck!

“So far, I am having a lucky day,” he thought. “I know what that means. Today, I have the Midas touch. I will have a great day at the fair. My rabbits are bound to win in their category.”

He went through the rest of the morning happily preparing for his big day at the fair. He did his regular chores around the farm, got washed and dressed, and got his rabbits ready to go. He wasn't worried. He knew his luck would hold out. Everything seemed to be going his way.

That afternoon, he cleaned and brushed Pam and Sam and put them in the back of the truck. Then, he and his brother drove to the fairgrounds. For the entire ride, Henry was excited and felt sure that his luck would continue.

When they got there, the place was empty, except for a few tired-looking tents and a clean-up crew, picking up litter from the fair. He had remembered incorrectly and missed the fair by a day.

So much for the Midas touch.

What are some of the events that make Henry believe that it is his lucky day?

The writer refers to a Midas touch. What does this allusion mean?



What might be another reason why things are going so well for Henry?

## Apply It

Read the passage. Look for the allusions and the events they help explain. Answer the questions on the next page.

### Saturday's Task

Saturday morning is clean-up time in Dave's house. Everyone has a specific task, and they have to finish it before they can take off for the afternoon.

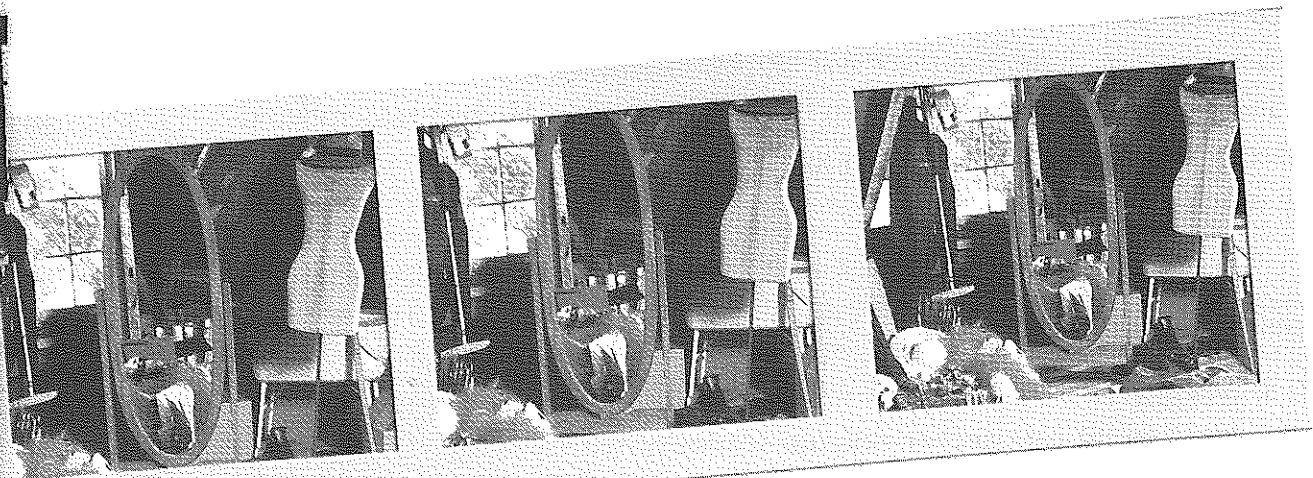
This past Saturday, Dave was chosen to clean the attic. The attic was the messiest room in the house! Cleaning it was truly a Herculean task. Some stuff was stored neatly in a corner, but the rest of it, like all the boxes of junk and broken toys, had to be sorted or thrown away.

Dave started on his task and worked steadily for about an hour. He made neat piles of stuff to toss, save, or ask Mom and Dad about. Then, he looked around at what he still had to do. This made him feel even more like Hercules, facing his twelve impossible tasks. It seemed like he would never finish!

Then, Dave found a box he had put up there when he was younger. Inside was a model airplane he had started years ago. Unfortunately, it had proved to be too difficult at the time, so he had given up on it. Sitting in the attic, holding the half-finished model, brought back many memories.

Dave sat down and began to work on it, thinking about how great it would look when it was done. He was sure that Dad would be impressed.

Dad came up to check on how the attic cleaning was going. Even though he was impressed by the model, it didn't make any difference. Dave still had to finish his cleaning duties. Like the other superheroes, Dave had to complete his task.



Answer these questions about "Saturday's Task." Write your answers in complete sentences.

1. When and where does the passage take place?

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2. What are the details of the task Dave has to perform?

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3. Which details in the passage tell you that Dave did a lot of work in the attic?

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4. What is similar about Dave and Hercules?

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5. How does the allusion to Hercules help you understand how Dave feels about his task?

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