

## Core Skills Analysis

### Language Arts

Elijah examined the etymology of the word "barbarian," identifying its Greek roots "barbaros" and recognizing how the term evolved in English usage. He learned how ancient Greeks used the word to label non-Greek speakers, and how later cultures adapted the meaning to convey uncivilized or savage connotations. This analysis helped Elijah practice determining the meaning of complex vocabulary in historical contexts, a key skill for interpreting literary and informational texts.

### History

Elijah discussed the historical origins of "barbarian," connecting the term to Greek perceptions of foreign peoples during the Classical period. He discovered how the label was applied to groups such as the Persians and later the Germanic tribes during the Roman Empire, illustrating the power of language in shaping cultural bias. By tracing these shifts, Elijah gained insight into how societies construct identity and otherness over time.

### Tips

To deepen Elijah's understanding, have him research another historically loaded word (e.g., "savage" or "civilized") and compare its evolution across cultures. Encourage a debate where he argues from both the perspective of the labeler and the labeled, reinforcing empathy and critical thinking. Finally, create a mini-museum exhibit where Elijah curates artifacts, images, and short write-ups that illustrate how language has been used to justify social hierarchies.

### Book Recommendations

- [The Story of English in 100 Words](#) by David Crystal: A lively exploration of how everyday English words, including "barbarian," have traveled through history and culture.
- [The Greeks and the Irrational](#) by John M. Rist: Provides context on Greek attitudes toward outsiders, helping readers understand the origins of terms like "barbarian."

### Learning Standards

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4 – Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.7 – Integrate information from multiple sources to develop a coherent understanding of a topic.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.2 – Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, including historical terminology.

### Try This Next

- Create a two-column worksheet: left column lists ancient terms (e.g., "barbaros," "philos"), right column requires students to write modern equivalents and brief historical notes.
- Design a short quiz with multiple-choice and short-answer questions that ask students to trace the semantic shift of "barbarian" from Greek to modern usage.