Perseus and Medusa

**Student A**
There was once a king in Greece who did a very cruel thing. An oracle had foretold to him that he would be killed by his own grandson. He was determined that this should not come to pass, so he tried to cheat the gods. He placed his beautiful daughter and her baby son in a chest, and threw them into the sea, thinking that by doing this he would never see them again, and need never fear his little grandson.

But the waves were kind to the princess and her child. The chest floated lightly upon the water, and at last came to rest upon the sandy beach of an island. Here it was found by a fisherman, and the princess and her child were received and cared for by the ruler of the island. They lived there for many years, while the boy, who was called Perseus, grew to be a strong and active youth. For some time the people were very kind to them; but at last the ruler of the island became vexed (or angry) at the mother of Perseus, and made her his slave. Then, because Perseus had become such a strong young man, the king began to be afraid that he would try to avenge (take revenge) the injury which had been done to his mother. So he sent him far away on a dangerous journey, to the very ends of the earth.

**Student B**
There dwelt a terrible woman called Medusa, the Gorgon. The hair of the Gorgon was a mass of living snakes; and she was so hideous to behold, that just to look upon her turned one to stone. Perseus was commanded to bring home the head of this woman; and although he set out obediently, he did not know at all where to find her. But while he was wandering helplessly about, the god Hermes and the goddess Athena came to his aid, and gave him courage for his dreadful task. They told him that he must have a pair of winged sandals to help him on his way, and also a helmet which would make him invisible. Putting these on, he soon reached the cave of Medusa, and found her lying asleep on the ground. But he did not dare to approach her face to face, for fear lest he should be turned to stone. Then it was that the goddess Athena came to his aid, and gave him her bright shield to use as a mirror. Holding this before him, Perseus walked backward, not looking upon Medusa, but only upon her reflection in the shield. When he was near enough, he struck off her head with a curved sickle (sword) which Hermes had given him, and, still without looking at it he thrust the head into a bag, and hurried away.
Student C

Then Perseus went across the sea to find the grandfather who had been so afraid of him when he was a little child. When the old king learned that his grandson had not been drowned after all, and that he was alive and coming to see him, he was more afraid than ever.

Now he was sure that the oracle would come true, and that this young man would kill him for what he had done so long ago to him and his mother. So he fled from his city, and hid himself. But Perseus followed him and found him, and showed him that he came only to do honor to him. Then his grandfather welcomed him, and ceased (stopped) to fear him, and caused games to be held to celebrate the coming of this strong and noble grandson who had come to him in his old age. But in the midst of the games a dreadful accident happened. One of the games was hurling (throwing) round, flat pieces of iron; and as Perseus was throwing it, it slipped from his grasp, and struck his grandfather so that he fell dead. So the oracle was fulfilled at last.

Perseus was so sorry for what he had done, that he would not accept the throne of his grandfather, though the people wished him to do so. He exchanged this kingdom for another one, where he would not always be reminded of what he had accidentally done.