

Greek Mythology - Part II

Internet Lesson Plan

Grade level: 9-12

Teacher Activities

Goal:

To utilize Internet resources to learn about mythology with an emphasis on cultures beyond Greek. Myths, gods and the history and origin of fables and folklore will be explored.

Objectives:

At the end of the unit, the participant will be able to:

- Explain the history behind the names of the days of the week and their relationship to mythology.
- Discuss the role of the snake and the shamrock in Irish mythology.
- Outline the beliefs and attitudes important to a variety of cultures which are reflected in their myths.
- Compare cultural beliefs of his/her own culture to that of another.
- Create a table outlining the gods of Japan.
- Report on the life style of the ancient people of Japan.
- Compare Japanese myths to Greek mythology.
- Develop and write his/her own myths featuring animals as main characters.
- Develop an advertising campaign based on an ancient mythological character.

Duration:

Two weeks, one hour of on-line time each day.

Instructional strategy:

Divide the class into pairs or small groups of approximately 3-4 participants each. Provide each group with a two-pocket folder. Distribute the activities in the left pocket of each folder to encourage problem-solving strategies within the group. Have students utilize the right hand pocket of the folder to record their strategies, take notes, and track project completion. Students should store information they have gathered or printed from the Internet in this pocket as well. Also provide additional resources for students relating to myths, mythology, heroes and legends beyond the realm of Greek mythology.

Prerequisite:

A short introduction to the Internet with information on access and addresses is required before participants go on-line. Ensure that students are familiar with the World Wide Web and the browser you will be utilizing.

Assessment/Evaluation:

The activities in this unit will be evaluated on the basis of student participation and performance. Team folders will include information gathered in the process of completing the activities. Encourage cooperative learning, group process, problem-solving, competition, and the use of the Internet as these activities are completed. Serve as facilitator and guide throughout the activities.

Other related activities:

- Write a poem about mythology.
- Keep a mythology notebook listing and defining vocabulary words associated with mythology.
- Select a mythical character and write a biography of that character.
- Write a journal entry describing a day in the life of a mythical character or god.
- Compare heroes of myths with real life, modern-day heroes.
- Create your own mythical God and surround him/her with a story that explains his/her existence, his/her powers and other special qualities.
- Teacher: Host a mythology party in your class. Each person should dress and act as a mythical character.
- Teacher: Place the name of a familiar mythical character on a card pinned to each student's back. The students have to discover who they are by asking their classmates questions.
- Teacher: Host a modern myth contest within your school. Ask students to write myths explaining natural phenomena of the world. Publish the myths.

Materials needed by teacher:

- Two-pocket folders
- World map
- Drawing materials such as colored pencils, markers, etc.
- Poster paper
- Paint program or graphic software (optional)

Teacher notes:

This is Part II of a two-part series of lessons relating to mythology. Part II provides an introduction to non-Greek mythology, the gods, creatures, myths, history and cultural information which make up mythology in many cultures of the world. Part I covers activities which focus solely on Greek mythology. It is recommended that students complete both sets of activities to gain a full understanding of the significance of myths, both past and present.

Part II begins by taking a look at a variety of cultures around the world and their myths and folklore. By examining the myths and folklore of a culture, students gain an insight into its beliefs, attitudes and life styles. Additionally, students will have an opportunity to see how these ancient myths still play a role today. The activities are designed to be interactive and explorative in nature. If time allows, consider adjusting the activities to allow students to further explore areas of interest relating to the world of mythology.

Greek Mythology - Part II

Student Activities

Activity #1: A daily dose of mythology

Many of the myths of the past still hold interest and intrigue. The mystery of our world is sometimes still explained by these ancient myths. Some of today's conventions to which we have become accustomed were born out of the myths of the past. Discover how something as simple as the names of the days of the week were influenced by mythology by visiting the Web site "The Origins of the Days of the Week" at <http://www.eliki.com/ancient/myth/daily/>.

- What culture can we credit the adoption of the seven days of the week?
- Why was the number seven adopted?
- Where did the names of the week originate?
- Create a table or matrix which outlines facts about each day of the week.
- Bonus activity: Could you have done a better job naming the days of the week? Using the Greek Olympian gods you previously studied, rename the days of the week. Provide an explanation as to why you selected each name. Create a calendar for the month that displays your newly named week.

Activity #2: A shamrock a day...

Every culture cultivates its own myths associated with its history and beliefs. Ireland is no exception. Snakes and shamrocks are closely associated with Irish mythology. See if you can explain the association by exploring the Web site "The Island - St. Patrick - Three Myths" at <http://www.paddynet.com/digitalisland/mythology/index.html>.

- How does the snake fit into Irish mythology?
- Do snakes really live in Ireland? Why do you think all of these myths came to be?
- Without referring to a mythical explanation, present a factual reason for the lack of snakes living in Ireland.
- What about the shamrock? How does it fit into Irish mythology?

Activity #3: Korean kinship

- Myths and folk tales can serve as a window into a culture's beliefs and attitudes. Experience the beliefs and attitudes of the Korean culture through their stories by exploring the Web site "Home Page of Korean Folktales" at <http://www.csun.edu/~hcedu004/>.
- From the list provided, select one folk tale to explore in detail. You can select from any folk tale listed between "The Teacher's Secret" and "The Substitute Son-in-law." Which story did you select?
- Create an outline with the headings beliefs, attitudes and conduct, which are important in the Korean culture. Describe how these are addressed in the selected story. You may have to look beyond the words to determine underlining attitudes within the story.
- Compare what you discovered with your own cultural beliefs and attitudes. How do the two cultures compare? Are you surprised by anything you discovered?
- Bonus activity: Go to the section "Outline of Korean Culture for Teachers." Explore the beliefs, moral codes and bonds outlined here regarding the Korean culture. Using this information, go back and re-evaluate your assessment of the folk tale. How did you do in your assessment? Were you accurate or off-base in your findings?

Activity #4: Journey to Japan

Discover more about the culture and heritage of the people of Japan by exploring their myths. As you explore the myths, you will gain an insight into the lives of the ancient people of this culture. Visit the Web site "Japanese Myth" at <http://www.st.rim.or.jp/~cycle/myrefE.HTML>.

- Read each of the Japanese myths.
- Create a table which outlines the gods of Japan. (This will not be an all-inclusive list, but it will be a start.)
- Report on insights you gained about the ancient people of Japan as you read through each myth. What was important to these people? How did they live? What were their beliefs?
- Compare the Japanese myths you just read to Greek mythology. How are they similar/different?
- Can you explain how one culture's myths can be similar to another's? What's your explanation?

Activity #5: Native wonders of the world

One culture strongly associated with myths is that of the Native American tribes. Many of their myths and folklore explain the natural wonders of the world and are grounded in caring for and living in harmony with nature. One Web site which provides a brief glimpse into the world and culture of Native Americans is "Encyclopedia Mythica: Native American Mythology" at

http://www.pantheon.org/mythica/areas/native_american/native_american.html.

- Select one myth to explore in detail. Which one did you select?
- With which tribe is this myth associated?
- Where did/does this tribe reside? Locate their home on the map. (You may have to do further research to learn more about the tribe.)
- What cultural characteristics can you glean from this myth? Describe the values, attitudes and beliefs you gathered about this tribe from the myth.
- How do the values, attitudes and beliefs you discovered about this tribe compare with your own?
- How does nature fit into the myth you explored?
- Bonus activity: Conduct additional research and write a report on the Native tribe from which the myth originated. Using Internet search engines such as "Yahoo" at <http://www.yahoo.com/>, "Excite" at <http://www.excite.com/> or another one of your choice, learn as much as you can about this tribe.

Activity #6: All about animals

For the indigenous people of the world, myths, legends and stories were an important part of their life. They were used to instruct, entertain and explain events. Typically it was the elders who told and retold the stories to the young people of the tribes in an attempt to pass down traditional values and traits of the culture. Although nature is the cornerstone of many indigenous cultures, animals also play a significant role. These native cultures often have a unique relationship with the animals in their environment. Learn more about myths involving animals by visiting the "Stories/Fables/Legends" Web site at <http://www.indians.org/welker/stories.htm>.

Select an animal category to explore and then a myth, fable or legend about the animal to read. (If a printer is available, you may find it helpful to print the story and read it off-line.)

- What is the story you selected?
- What animal is the main character in the story?
- Outline the events of the story including main characters, events, plot and conclusion.
- What was the moral presented through this story?
- How does this story reflect the life of the tribe's people?
- Compare the culture of the people who "own" this story with your own culture. How are they similar or different?
- Be creative and write your own myth involving an animal. Start by selecting the animal who will star in the story. Then determine a moral, lesson or explanation that will be told through the story. Write and/or illustrate your story. Be prepared to present your story to the class.

Activity #7: Rome through Roman mythology

Roman mythology is closely related and associated with Greek mythology. Many of the famous Roman myths were copied or borrowed from the Greeks but they reflect a slight change. Many of the gods' names were changed to protect the innocent! As time passed, more myths from other cultures began to find their way into Roman mythology as well. Take a close look at some of the mythological characters of the Roman culture by visiting the Web site "Roman Gods, Goddesses and Heroes" at <http://www.cybercomm.net/~grandpa/rommytha.html>.

As you explore the list of Roman and Greek characters, create your own list and include the names of characters which have been used during modern times. Describe how the god's name has been used and in what context according to the meaning behind the name. For example, Poseidon - Greek god whose name means Lord of the Sea and part of the title of a '70s adventure movie about a cruise ship that sinks, killing most of the passengers.

Once you have completed your list, examine how advertisers have borrowed from these ancient myths to generate sales and brand recognition for their products.

Pretend you are employed by a top-ten advertising firm and your job is to name a new product using one of these ancient mythological characters. You are to create an advertising campaign to match. Be creative. You may use computer software (if available), posters, sketches and so on to get your ideas across to the client. Be prepared to make a presentation to the class on your final product.