Greek Mythology - Part I

Internet Lesson Plan
Grade level:  9-12

Teacher Activities

Goal:
To utilize Internet resources to learn about Greek mythology - its myths, gods, history and origin.

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

- Describe the history of Greek mythology.
- Create a timeline outlining the history of Greek mythology.
- Define who the Titans and Olympians were.
- Create an Olympian family tree outlining the gods' relationships to one another.
- Select and research one Olympian god in detail.
- Design a new icon for one of the Olympian gods.
- Research three creatures from Greek mythology.
- Create a new mythological creature.
- Substitute and change a myth to incorporate his/her newly created creature.
- Compare the meanings of Greek words to words found in the English language.
- Maintain a daily journal to record and define Greek terms.
- Create a Greek word game, puzzle or crossword.
- Outline, compare and contrast the characteristics of two mythological heroes.

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, Greek mythology, heroes and legends.

Prerequisites:

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 they 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:

- Utilize the Web page "Fun Fact Quiz 2.0" at http://messagenet.com/myths/funfact2/index.html as a pre-test and a post-test to the unit on mythology. Make sure to keep track of your scores to see how much you learned.
- If the mythological Greek gods could endorse products like sports stars do today, what products would they endorse? Select a god/goddess and a popular modern product. Create an advertising campaign.
- Become a roving reporter and prepare to interview a mythological character. Where would you conduct the interview? What questions would you ask? Anticipate the answers he/she would give and build additional lines of questioning.
- What makes a hero/heroine? Discuss the traits that make up a hero. Then compare the Greek mythological heroes of the past with a modern hero like Martin Luther King. How has society’s definition of a hero changed? How is it the same?
- Write your own myth that explains a natural phenomenon.
• Using mythical characters studied in this unit, create a comic strip that uses humor to depict some of the characters, challenges and problems faced in the myths.

Materials needed by teachers:

• Two-pocket folders
• World map
• Notebook paper or journals
• Drawing materials such as colored pencils, markers and so on
• Poster paper
• Paint program or graphic software (optional)
• Presentation software such as Linkway Live!, SuperLink, HyperStudio and/or Powerpoint (optional)

Teacher notes:

This is the first part of a two-part series of lessons relating to mythology. Part I provides an introduction to Greek mythology - its gods, creatures, myths, history and cultural background. Part II covers activities beyond Greek mythology, focusing on the myths of many cultures. It is recommended that students complete both sets of activities to gain a full understanding of the significance of myths, both past and present.

This lesson begins by taking a historical look at the origins of Greek mythology and continues by introducing its characters and creatures. Additionally, students 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 other areas of Greek mythology.

In Activity #3: Meet the gods, you may want to refer students to either "The Principal Gods Family Tree" at http://www.desy.de/gna/interpedia/greek_myth/godsFT.html or "Encyclopedia Mythica: Genealogy Tables" at http://www.pantheon.org/mythica/miscellanea/genealogy/ to help them create or validate their family trees.

In Activity #6: Creatures of the myths, you may want to create a "Mythological Creature" bulletin board to share works of art.
In Activity #7: Myth magic, compile the Greek word puzzles into a book and prepare a copy for each student. Have students complete the activities in the Greek puzzle book. See if anyone created a stumper!
Greek Mythology - Part I

Student Activities

Activity #1: The birth of myths

What are myths? How did they begin? Myths sometimes straddle the line between folklore, religion, fiction and science. Specifically focus on Greek mythology and see what you can find about its origin and history. Use the following Web sites for your research:


Then answer these questions:

- Where did Greek myths originate?
- How far back can the oldest myths be traced?
- Create a timeline that marks significant events in the history of Greek mythology.
- What role did religion play in Greek mythology?
- In your own words, describe why the Ancient Greek society found solace in its myths.

Activity #2: A day in the life

As you delve into the world of Greek mythology, the myths and gods that make up these stories give you a glimpse into the society and culture that created them. Experience the Greek world of the past by exploring the Web site "The Ancient Greek World" at http://www.museum.upenn.edu/Greek_World/Index.html.

- Print the image of the Land of Ancient Greece.
- Using your world map, compare the image to modern Greece. How do they compare? Are there any visible changes to the landscape of Greece? If so, outline them.
• Explore and describe the daily life of both men and women in Ancient Greece. How did their roles differ? Compare and contrast their roles with the modern roles of men and women found in your culture. How would you fit into this ancient world?
• Explore and describe the trade and manufacturing that occurred in Ancient Greece.
• Using all the information you’ve learned, pretend you are a member of this ancient society. Write a journal entry that outlines and describes a normal day. Use your imagination as you step back in time!

Activity #3: Meet the gods

Although myths exist in almost every culture, the Ancient Greek myths are the most familiar to those in Western civilization. Greek mythology is filled with gods. The easiest way to begin exploring and understanding each of these characters is to begin looking at the Olympians and the Titans. The Olympian family lies at the heart of Greek mythology and offers a great starting point. Visit the Web sites below:

• "Greek Mythology" at http://www.vacation.net.gr/p/mithos.html

Then answer these questions:

• Who were the Titans? Where did they live?
• Who were the Olympians? Where did they reside? Locate and mark this site on a map.
• From the information presented, create a family tree which outlines the relationships of each god. Keep in mind this will not be a typical family tree, instead it is going to be more like a "tree of power" which outlines each god’s character. Use words or pictures on your tree.
• Explore other gods found in Greek mythology. Do any of them have a relationship with the Olympians? If yes, include them in your family tree.

Activity #4: Olympian gods on-line

Mythology broadly consists of traditional stories about gods, kings and heroes. Myths often provide lessons on moral code and explanations of the creation of the world and natural events.

These stories were typically passed on orally from generation to generation with each retelling becoming more embellished. Use the following Web sites to conduct your research:

• "The Encyclopedia Mythica" at http://www.pantheon.org/mythica/
Select one of the twelve Olympian gods: Aphrodite, Apollo, Ares, Artemis, Athena, Dionysus, Hades, Hephaestus, Hera, Hermes, Poseidon or Zeus.

- How was the Olympian created?
- Did he/she possess any special powers?
- Retell one myth associated with the Olympian. Make sure to include references to his/her special powers.
- Prepare a presentation on the Olympian and be ready to present it to the class. (The presentation may utilize handouts, posters or presentation software such as LinkWay, HyperStudio, SuperLink or Powerpoint).

**Activity #5: Iconography**

The use of "icons" is typically associated with computer technology and software. Icons are the pictures or graphics which are used to represent a certain task, activity, person or thing. For example, most software uses a picture or icon of a printer to represent the task of printing. The use of icons, or iconography, is not a modern practice. Even the gods associated with Greek mythology were depicted with icons. Use the Web site "Attributes in Iconography" at http://web.uvic.ca/grs/bowman/myth/info/attributes.html to learn more about the icon associated with the Olympian god you researched in Activity #4.

- Describe the icon for the Olympian if one is available.
- Knowing what you now know about the history and special powers of the Olympian, create a new icon to represent this god. Be creative and use your imagination. Use a paint program if available.

**Activity #6: Creatures of the myths**

Along with the gods that were created in the image of man, the ancient myths contain many creatures that add fear as well as fascination to the stories in which they are cast. Visit the Web page "The Book of Gods, Goddesses, Heroes and Other Characters of Mythology" at http://www.cybercomm.net/~grandpa/gdsindex.html and explore the section "Creature/Artifacts of Mythology."

- Select three creatures from Greek mythology to explore.
- List the three creatures you selected.
- To which myth(s) are they associated?
- What role do they play in the myth?
- Using the description provided, create a drawing of the creature.
- Now it's your turn to create a creature. Using your imagination, create a new mythological creature. Substitute this creature into a familiar Greek myth. Change the myth to reflect the new character - his/her personality, strengths and weaknesses.
Activity #7: Myth magic

Greek mythology has had far reaching affects in Western civilization. It largely contributed to the words, phrases and expressions in the language we use today. There are many words and phrases you probably use frequently without even knowing their origin. Take a closer look at some of these expressions that originated in Greek society by visiting the Web site "Mythology in Language" at http://members.xoom.com/grkmyth/grkterms.htm.

• Print the list of the words and phrases listed along with their meaning and origin.
• Compare the meanings provided with dictionary definitions.
• Begin keeping a journal. Track the number of times you come across each of these words or phrases during a week.
• Using the list from the Web site, create one of the following puzzles: word search, crossword or word association.

Activity #8: Heroic qualities

Now that you are familiar with the mythological characters found in Greek mythology, explore a few famous myths. As you examine these myths, pay close attention to the characteristics that make the heroes bigger than life. Go the Web site "MythWeb" at http://www.mythweb.com/ , then do the activities related to these heroes:

Hercules:

• Explain Hercules' relationship with his parents.
• Why was he assigned labors?
• What were they? Describe each mythological character he encountered.

Jason:

• How was Jason related to the gods?
• What challenges did Jason face?
• Describe or outline each challenge.

Comparison of Hercules to Jason:

• Did they possess similar heroic qualities?
• How do they differ?