

Myths, Folk Tales, Fables, and Fairy Tales



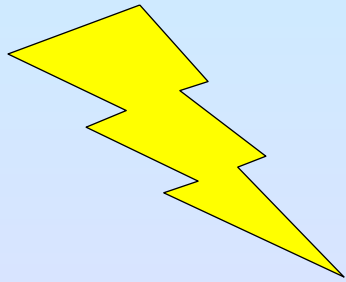
A
PowerPoint
Presentation

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What is a myth?



A myth is a story passed down from generations trying to explain how our world works or how we should treat each other.

Some myths have gods or 'super-beings' that use powers to make events happen.

“Myth” comes from the Greek word “mythos” which means “word of mouth”.





Let me introduce some of the major gods and their roles in ancient Greek culture. It might help you understand some of the myths we will read.

ZEUS, THE GOD OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING



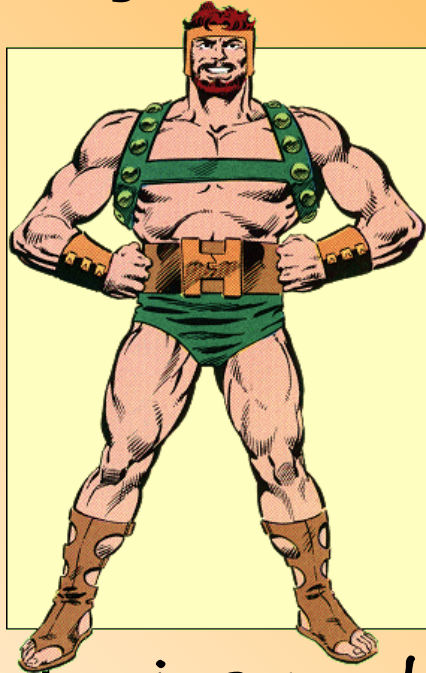
Zeus, the god of thunder and lightning, always figures predominately in the myths. He is the father of the lesser gods and rules all of them from atop Mount Olympus. He usually has the last say on punishment of both gods and humans, and is quick to dispatch a lightning bolt to destroy those who cheat, lie or treat others with disrespect.

Hera, the goddess of marriage and childbirth

Hera, the goddess of marriage and childbirth, is the wife of Zeus and Queen of the Gods. Often portrayed as jealous and vengeful, she is definitely not one to be crossed. She created the Medusa and was the reason Hercules had to perform the 12 labors.



Hercules (a mythical hero)



Hercules is a mythical hero. He is the son of Zeus, who survives 12 very hard tasks (labors) to redeem himself to the gods.

Athena, goddess of wisdom & weaving



Athena is the goddess of wisdom and weaving. She carries a metal breastplate with the image of the gorgon Medusa upon it. She is the daughter of Zeus, and the myth states she burst from his head fully formed and clothed in armor.

Poseidon, ruler of the water



Poseidon is also a brother to Zeus, and in mythology the three brothers divided creation, each taking control of a piece of it. Zeus ruled the land and the air, Hades ruled the underworld and Poseidon ruled all water, including rivers and ponds, though he is frequently portrayed simply as the god of the sea.

Eros, god of love

Eros is the god of love. In many of his stories, he was responsible for causing people to fall in love. Eros is known as Cupid today, but there are some differences between our version of Cupid and the ancient God. Both have wings and use arrows to pierce the hearts of lovers, but our modern Cupid is portrayed as an infant, while the Greek's Eros was an attractive young man.



Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty

Aphrodite is the goddess of love and beauty. Her myth tells how she was born from the foam of the sea and floated to shore on a scallop shell. She was immensely beautiful.

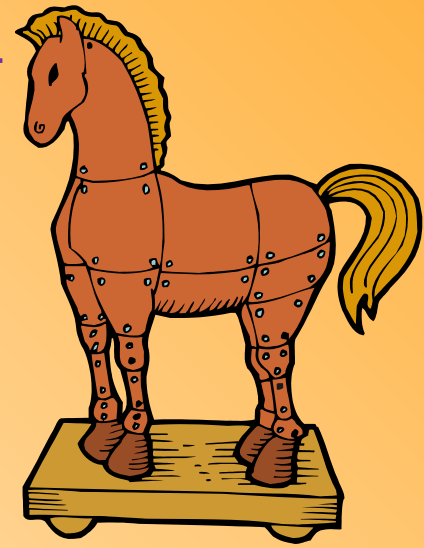


Follow these links to read some myths from diverse cultures



[Visit Starfall to view several myths](#)

- [Oban's Myths from Diverse Cultures](#)
- [EBN Myths & Create Your Own](#)



Teacher Page: Introducing Myths to Kids

Greek Myths in Everyday Life

The ancient Greeks believed that their gods directly affected every aspect of daily life. The Greeks worshipped the gods in temples and made offerings to them to seek good fortune. When good things happened, they attributed it to the gods. If they had good crops that year, it meant the gods were pleased with them. If they had bad crops or a flood, they attributed that to the gods being displeased with them.

Greek Myths for Kids

Some of the simpler stories make a great introduction to Greek mythology for kids. Among the most fascinating are myths the Greeks used to explain the origin of the universe. The creation of the universe includes many of the great stories and heroes we still know today, like Hercules, Athena, Poseidon and Zeus.

Prominent Greek Gods

Before you begin reading Greek myths with your child, take some time to introduce the major gods and their roles. Many of the myths introduce the gods only by name. During the time of the Greeks, each of these gods was understood independent of the written stories. Today, all we have is the written myths, and it can be confusing for kids to know who's who.

- Zeus, the god of thunder and lightning, always figures predominately in the myths. He is the father of the lesser gods and rules all of them from atop Mount Olympus. He usually has the last say on punishment of both gods and humans, and is quick to dispatch a lightning bolt to destroy those who cheat, lie or treat others with disrespect.
- Hera, the goddess of marriage and childbirth, is the wife of Zeus and Queen of the Gods. Often portrayed as jealous and vengeful, she is definitely not one to be crossed. She created the Medusa and was the reason Hercules had to perform the 12 labors.
- Hercules is a mythical hero. He is the son of Zeus, who survives 12 very hard tasks (labors) to redeem himself to the gods.
- Aphrodite is the goddess of love and beauty. Her myth tells how she was born from the foam of the sea and floated to shore on a scallop shell. She was immensely beautiful.
- Athena is the goddess of wisdom and weaving. She carries a metal breastplate with the image of the gorgon Medusa upon it. She is the daughter of Zeus, and the myth states she burst from his head fully formed and clothed in armor.
- Eros is the god of love. In many of his stories, he was responsible for causing people to fall in love. Eros is known as Cupid today, but there are some differences between our version of Cupid and the ancient God. Both have wings and use arrows to pierce the hearts of lovers, but our modern Cupid is portrayed as an infant, while the Greek's Eros was an attractive young man.
- Hades is the god of the underworld brother to Zeus. In his myth, he stole Persephone from her family and took her to the underworld. This myth was a way to explain the changing of the seasons.
- Poseidon is also a brother to Zeus, and in mythology the three brothers divided creation, each taking control of a piece of it. Zeus ruled the land and the air, Hades ruled the underworld and Poseidon ruled all water, including rivers and ponds, though he is frequently portrayed simply as the god of the sea.

Myth Graphic Organizer

Title of the Myth: _____

What Natural Phenomenon your myth is explaining (example: how the constellation Pegasus got in the sky)	Non-human characters and their descriptions	Human characters & their descriptions	Setting (a world long, long, ago, but similar)	The creative way the myth explained the natural phenomenon (example: Pegasus got in the sky b/c the bee stung him & he flew up into the sky)

What is a fable?

- A fable is a very brief story in prose or in verse that teaches a moral or a practical lesson about how to succeed in life.



Examples of Fables

The Hare and the Tortoise Fable

The Hare was once boasting of his speed before the other animals. "I have never yet been beaten," said he, "when I put forth my full speed. I challenge any one here to race with me."

The Tortoise said quietly, "I accept your challenge."

"That is a good joke," said the Hare; "I could dance round you all the way."

"Keep your boasting till you've beaten," answered the Tortoise. "Shall we race?"

So a course was fixed and a start was made. The Hare darted almost out of sight at once, but soon stopped and, to show his contempt for the Tortoise, lay down to have a nap. The Tortoise plodded on and plodded on, and when the Hare awoke from his nap, he saw the Tortoise just near the winning-post and could not run up in time to save the race.

Then said the Tortoise: *Slow and steady wins the race.*



More Examples:

- [Hare and Tortoise Fable video](#)
- [Starfall Chinese Fables](#)
- [Kid-Friendly Fables](#)
- [Oban's Fables](#)
- [Printable Short Aesop's Fables](#)
- [More Aesop's Fables](#)

The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf

A Shepherd Boy tended his master's sheep near a dark forest not far from the village. Soon he found life in the pasture very dull. All he could do to amuse himself was to talk to his dog or play on his shepherd's pipe.

One day as he sat watching the sheep and the quiet forest, and thinking what he would do should he see a wolf, he thought of a plan to amuse himself.

His master had told him to call for help should a wolf attack the flock, and the villagers would drive it away. So now, though he had not seen anything that even looked like a wolf, he ran toward the village shouting at the top of his voice, "Wolf! Wolf!"

As he expected, the villagers who heard the cry dropped their work and ran in great excitement to the pasture. But when they got there they found the boy doubled up with laughter at the trick he had played on them.

A few days later the Shepherd Boy again shouted, "Wolf! Wolf!" Again the villagers ran to help him, only to be laughed at again.

Then one evening as the sun was setting behind the forest and the shadows were creeping out over the pasture, a Wolf really did spring from the underbrush and fall upon the Sheep.

In terror the boy ran toward the village shouting "Wolf! Wolf!" But though the villagers heard the cry, they did not run to help him as they had before. "He cannot fool us again," they said. The wolf killed a great many of the boy's sheep and then slipped away into the forest. *Liars are not believed even when they speak the truth.*

What do you think the moral of this fable is?

Use the graphic organizer on the next slide to identify important information from the fable.



Fable Graphic Organizer

Title of the Fable: _____				
Non-human characters & descriptions	Human characters & descriptions	Problem to be solved	Solution	Moral of the Fable or Lesson the Main Character learned

What is a Folk Tale?

- A folk tale is a story with no known author. Folk tales are passed down from one generation to another by word of mouth.
- They teach lessons & teach you about the consequences of certain kinds of behaviors or attitudes.
- Sometimes they start with "Once upon a time or long, long time ago."
- They usually have a character that is evil that the hero must overcome.
- The characters often use trickery to defeat the evil character or complete the task.
- Many things occur in "threes" (3 main characters, 3 magic objects, 3 tasks to complete, etc.)



Examples of Folk Tales

- Starfall Folk Tales
- Why Little Hare Has Such a Short Tail (an African Folktale)
- The Little White Cat (an Irish Folk tale)
- PBS Kids Folk Tales



Folk Tale Graphic Organizer

Title of the Folk Tale: _____

Good Characters	Bad Characters	Problem to Solve	Use of Trickery	How Good Character Solves Problem	Happy Ending (Good Wins Over Bad)
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What is a fairy tale?

- A fairy tale is a type of imaginative writing that carries the reader into an invented world where the laws of nature, as we know them, do not operate.
- Usually starts with... "Once upon a time & ends with "They lived happily ever after".
- Good & evil characters
- Magic happens!
- Problem & Solution
- Things of ten happen in "threes" or "sevens"



Examples of Fairy Tales

- The Brother's Grimm audio Fairy Tales
- Jack & the Beanstalk (video)
- Snow White and the Seven Dwarves (video)



Photo from:

- The Three Little
<http://www.jlmatrix.co.uk/joanna/images/enchanted1.jpg>