

SHORT ANSWER STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS **ANSWER KEY** *Mythology*

Part One *The Gods, the Creation, and the Earliest Heroes*

Chapter 1 *The Gods* Chapter 2 *The Two Great Gods of Earth*

1. What did the Greeks believe about the origins of the gods and the universe?
The Greeks believed that the universe created the gods.
2. Who were the first parents, and who were their children and grandchildren?
Heaven and Earth were the first parents. The Titans (Cronus-Saturn, Ocean, Tethys, Hyperion, Mnemosyne, Themis, and Iapetus) were their children, the gods were their grandchildren.
3. How did Homer describe Olympus?
Homer described Olympus as a mysterious region far above the mountains, but it was not heaven.
4. Give the Roman names for the following gods and goddesses: Zeus, Hades, Artemis, Hermes, Hestia.
Zeus = Jupiter; Hades = Pluto; Artemis = Diana; Hermes = Mercury; Hestia = Vesta
5. Give the Greek names for these gods and goddesses: Juno, Neptune, Minerva, Venus, Mars, Vulcan.
Juno = Hera; Neptune = Poseidon; Minerva = Pallas Athena; Venus = Aphrodite; Mars = Ares; Vulcan = Hephaestus.
6. How was the will of Zeus revealed at the oracle at Dodona?
The priests at the oracle interpreted the rustling of the oak leaves.
7. Describe the breastplate, bird, and tree that symbolized Zeus.
The breastplate was the aegis, his bird was the eagle, and the oak was his tree.
8. What was the dual relationship between Zeus and Hera?
Hera was both the wife and sister of Zeus.
9. Describe Hera's personality.
She was the protector of marriage. She was usually portrayed as angry and vindictive, mostly toward the many human females with whom Zeus fell in love.
10. Who were Zeus' two brothers and where did they rule?
Poseidon (Neptune) ruled the sea, and Hades (Pluto) ruled the underworld and the dead.
11. Briefly describe the characteristics and functions of any two of the following gods and goddesses: Athena, Phoebus Apollo, Artemis, or Aphrodite.

Athena sprang full grown from the head of Zeus. She was the protector of civilized life. She invented the bridle, and was the first to tame horses for men's use. She was known as the Maiden, or Parthenos, and her temple was the Parthenon. Athena symbolized wisdom, reason, and purity.

Phoebus Apollo played the golden lyre, and was also the Archer and Healer. His oracle at Delphi was a direct link between gods and men.

Artemis (Diana) was the Huntsman.

Aphrodite (Venus) was the Goddess of Love and Beauty.

12. Briefly describe the characteristics and functions of any two of the following gods and goddesses: Hephaestus, Hestia, Cupid, Ares, or The Muses and Graces.

Hephaestus (Vulcan) was the God of Fire. He made the armor and furniture for the gods. He was also the patron of handicrafts and the protector of smiths.

Hestia (Vesta) was Zeus' sister and the Goddess of the Hearth. She does not play an important part in the myths, although offerings were made to her in all homes.

Cupid (Eros) was the God of Love. The later poets said he was Aphrodite's son.

Ares (Mars) was the God of War.

There were nine Muses, the daughters of Zeus and Memory. They were known for their singing, and each also had a special field. There were three Graces: Splendor, Mirth, and Good Cheer. They were always together.

13. What did Hermes have on his feet, hat, and wand, and why?

Hermes (Mercury) was the messenger of the gods. He had winged sandals on his feet, wings on his hat and magic wand.

14. Name the Gods of the Waters.

Poseidon (Neptune) was the ruler of the waters. Ocean, a Titan, was Lord of the River Ocean. Nereus was the Old Man of the Sea. Triton used a shell as a trumpet. Proteus could change his shape at will. The Naiads were water nymphs.

15. Who were the main gods of the Underworld?

Hades (Pluto) ruled the Underworld. His Queen was Persephone. Charon ferried the souls of the dead across the water, where the three-headed, dragon-tailed dog, Cerberus, guarded the gate. The Furies punished evildoers. Sleep, Death, and Dreams also lived in the underworld.

16. What were the Elysian Fields?

They were a place of blessedness in the underworld where those who were good in life went.

17. Briefly retell the story of Demeter (Ceres).

Demeter was the Goddess of the Corn. Her daughter, Persephone, was carried off to the underworld by Hades. Demeter was greatly upset, and no crops grew on the earth. Zeus then ruled that Persephone would spend four months of every year in the underworld, and the rest of the time on the earth with her mother. The crops grew and flowers bloomed while Persephone was on the earth, but all died when she went to the underworld.

18. What were the two central ideas in the worship of Dionysus?

Dionysus was the God of the Vine. He could give either joy or savage brutality, because wine could be both bad and good.

19. Why did Dionysus become the center of the belief in immortality?

He was the symbol of the vine, which is pruned every year, and then grows back in the spring. His followers believed that his death and resurrection indicate the eternal life of the soul.

20. How were Demeter and Dionysus different from the other gods and goddesses?

They were the only ones who knew suffering, as the mortals did.

