

Greek Mythology and the Forms of Energy

developed by

Donna Quillen
Prospect Elementary School
Monroe, NC

Background:

Greek Mythology is a wonderful literary vehicle with which to integrate forms of energy. The ancient Greeks did not have the scientific tools we have today to study the natural phenomena affecting them, so they used myths to try to make sense of their world.

Objective:

To integrate literature and science and capture student interest by reading mythological explanations for phenomena we recognize as forms of energy.

Materials:

NEED EnergyWorks Kit (or Teacher and Student Guides with selected classroom materials to demonstrate the forms of energy)

Greek mythology materials from the NEED website and the library

Lessons:

Lesson 1: Meet the Gods & Introduction to the Forms of Energy

Lesson 2: Sound – Echo

Lesson 3: Light – Narcissus (reflection)

Lesson 4: Heat – Prometheus (fire)

Lesson 5: Growth – Demeter and Persephone

Lesson 6: Electricity – Zeus

Lesson 7: Motion – Hermes

Lesson 8: Review

Reinforcement Activities: Nine Kinds of Smart

Lesson 1: Meet the Gods

- KWL What do you know about Greek mythology?
- KWL What do you want to know about Greek mythology?
- KWL What do you know about the forms of energy?
- KWL What do you want to know about the forms of energy?

Introduction:

Introduce students to the Greek gods using the family tree on the website that displays the origin of the Olympian Gods and their antecedents, the Titans. Discuss family trees and how the family tree of Greek gods differs from the family trees of people today. Discuss why the Greeks might have used the concept of a family hierarchy with their gods.

Explain how the Greeks and other ancient cultures used myths to explain natural phenomena that they observed and could not explain with reason. What caused electrical storms, eclipses, meteors, floods, droughts, earthquakes, tidal waves, plagues of insects and disease?

Read the myth about Poseidon on the website to the students and discuss the natural phenomena that it attempts to explain.

Introduce the forms of energy using the Forms of Energy explanation on the website. Discuss how the ancient Greeks might have explained the forms of energy in myth.

Have the students create a picture of a present day god or goddess and write a one-paragraph myth explaining one of the forms of energy they will be studying.

- KWL What have you learned about Greek mythology?
- KWL What have you learned about the forms of energy?

Lesson 2: Sound - Echo

- KWL What do you know about sound?
- KWL What do you want to know about sound?

Have the students read the background information on sound in the EnergyWorks Student Guide.

Have the students conduct the experiments you have chosen for sound.

Have the students read the myth of Echo and write a paragraph about how the myth tries to explain a natural phenomena pertaining to sound.

Have the students design a musical instrument that produces sound and explain how it works.

- KWL What have you learned about sound?

Lesson 3: Light - Narcissus (reflection)

- KWL What do you know about light?
- KWL What do you want to know about light?

Have the students read the background information on light in the EnergyWorks Student Guide.

Have the students conduct the experiments you have chosen for light.

Have the students read the myth of Narcissus and write a paragraph about how the myth tries to explain a natural phenomena pertaining to light.

Have the students make a time line of the ways people have used and produced light over the years.

KWL What have you learned about light?

Lesson 4: Heat - Prometheus (giver of fire)

KWL What do you know about heat?

KWL What do you want to know about heat?

Have the students read the background information on heat in the EnergyWorks Student Guide.

Have the students conduct the experiments you have chosen for heat.

Have the students read the myth of Prometheus and write a paragraph about how the myth tries to explain a natural phenomena pertaining to heat.

Have the students write a paragraph about what life would be like without heat and describe ways they produce heat in their homes.

KWL What have you learned about heat?

Lesson 5: Growth - Demeter and Persephone

KWL What do you know about growth?

KWL What do you want to know about growth?

Have the students read the background information on growth in the EnergyWorks Student Guide.

Have the students conduct the experiments you have chosen for growth.

Have the students read the myth of Demeter and Persephone and write a paragraph about how the myth tries to explain a natural phenomena pertaining to growth.

Discuss the four seasons and how they affect the growth of plants and animals.

KWL What have you learned about growth?

Lesson 6: Motion - Hermes

KWL What do you know about motion?

KWL What do you want to know about motion?

Have the students read the background information on motion in the EnergyWorks Student Guide.

Have the students conduct the experiments you have chosen for motion.

Have the students read the myth of Hermes and write a paragraph about how the myth tries to explain a natural phenomena pertaining to motion.

Have the students use the laws of motion to explain the energy transfers in a game of their choice.

KWL What have you learned about motion?

Lesson 7: Electricity - Zeus (lightning bolt)

KWL What do you know about electricity?

KWL What do you want to know about electricity?

Have the students read the background information on electricity/technology in the EnergyWorks Student Guide. You can use the ElectroWorks unit for a more extensive exploration of electricity.

Have the students conduct the experiments you have chosen for electricity.

Have the students read the myth of Zeus and write a paragraph about how the myth tries to explain a natural phenomena pertaining to electrical energy.

Have the students write a paragraph about how ancient people might have explained static electricity.

KWL – What have you learned about electricity?

Lesson 8: Review

KWL What have you learned about Greek mythology?

KWL What have you learned about the forms of energy?

Introduce the Greek alphabet and discuss the letters and words that we use today.

Have the students read the creation myth and compare and contrast with other creation myths, with the theory of evolution, and with the Biblical explanation of creation.

Have the students begin a research project on one of the Greek gods or goddesses.

Reinforcement Activities: Nine Kinds of Smart

Verbal Smart:

Choose a god or goddess and write a bio-poem, acrostic, or other form of poem to describe the powers and personality of the character of your choice.

Look through the newspaper, find a natural disaster, and write a myth story using the appropriate gods or goddesses to explain the natural phenomena.

Choose a myth and create a play with a script and scenery to perform the myth on stage.

Nature Smart:

Write a myth explaining the seasons.

Collect seeds, leaves, and other natural specimens and create a collage for the god or goddess of your choice.

Music Smart:

Write lyrics about a Greek myth or character. Choose a popular song or rap and put your words to the melody and rhythm.

Listen to several classical music pieces and assign a particular composer or performer to any given Greek god/goddess or character. Be prepared to present your Greek Music Pop Festival to the class. Give logical explanations for your choices of music and character.

Assign musical instruments to the god/goddess that they best represent.

Math Smart:

Create a secret number code for the Greek alphabet. Make words or messages for your classmates to unscramble.

Find formulas that ancient mathematicians created. Use the formulas to solve a problem. Research the discoverer and share with the class. Pythagoras is one example.

Geometry is a great study of Greek genius. Research the history of this math concept.

Body Smart:

Create and perform a dance that shows one of the energy forms.

With your body, create the Greek alphabet. You may need a partner.

Dress like a Greek god/goddess and behave like that character might act in our day.

Art Smart:

Design and paint a mural depicting a scene from one of the myths.

Create a poster describing a form of energy.

Sculpt a clay statue of a Greek god/goddess or character.

Create several art centers or stations for students to depict one of the myths, or energy forms. Each piece of art should refer to a particular myth or form of energy.

Interpersonal Smart:

Write interview questions and pretend you interviewing one of the Greek gods or goddesses. Respond in a way that the character would probably react.

Choose two of the warring characters and write a plan that will bring peace to the diabolical duo.

Intrapersonal Smart:

Imagine you are one of the Greek gods or goddesses or one of the characters from a Greek myth. Create a diary and write entries that you would enter as one of these powerful figures.

As one of the Greek gods or goddesses, write an explanation of how you could use your powers to make the world a better place.

Spiritual Smart:

Write 10 Commandments that Zeus might think good rules to live by.

Explain how the Greeks helped humans to become better beings. Did they think of human-kind as spirit beings?

Compare the energy forms to spiritual characteristics and create a chart that displays the comparisons.

Write an essay about how the Greek gods and goddesses served mankind and prepare a speech from the essay to share with your class.

FORMS OF ENERGY

All forms of energy fall under two categories

POTENTIAL

Potential energy is stored energy and the energy of position (gravitational)



CHEMICAL ENERGY

Chemical energy is the energy stored in the bonds of atoms and molecules. Biomass, petroleum, natural gas, propane and coal are examples of stored chemical energy.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Nuclear energy is the energy stored in the nucleus of an atom - the energy that holds the nucleus together. The nucleus of a uranium atom is an example of nuclear energy.

STORED MECHANICAL ENERGY

Stored mechanical energy is energy stored in objects by the application of a force. Compressed springs and stretched rubber bands are examples of stored mechanical energy.

GRAVITATIONAL ENERGY

Gravitational energy is the energy of place or position. Water in a reservoir behind a hydropower dam is an example of gravitational potential energy. When the water is released to spin the turbines, it becomes motion energy.

KINETIC

Kinetic energy is motion - the motion of waves, electrons, atoms, molecules and substances



RADIANT ENERGY

Radiant energy is electromagnetic energy that travels in transverse waves. Radiant energy includes visible light, x-rays, gamma rays and radio waves. Solar energy is an example of radiant energy.

THERMAL ENERGY

Thermal energy (or heat) is the internal energy in substances - the vibration and movement of atoms and molecules within substances. Geothermal energy is an example of thermal energy.

MOTION

The movement of objects or substances from one place to another is motion. Wind and hydropower are examples of motion.

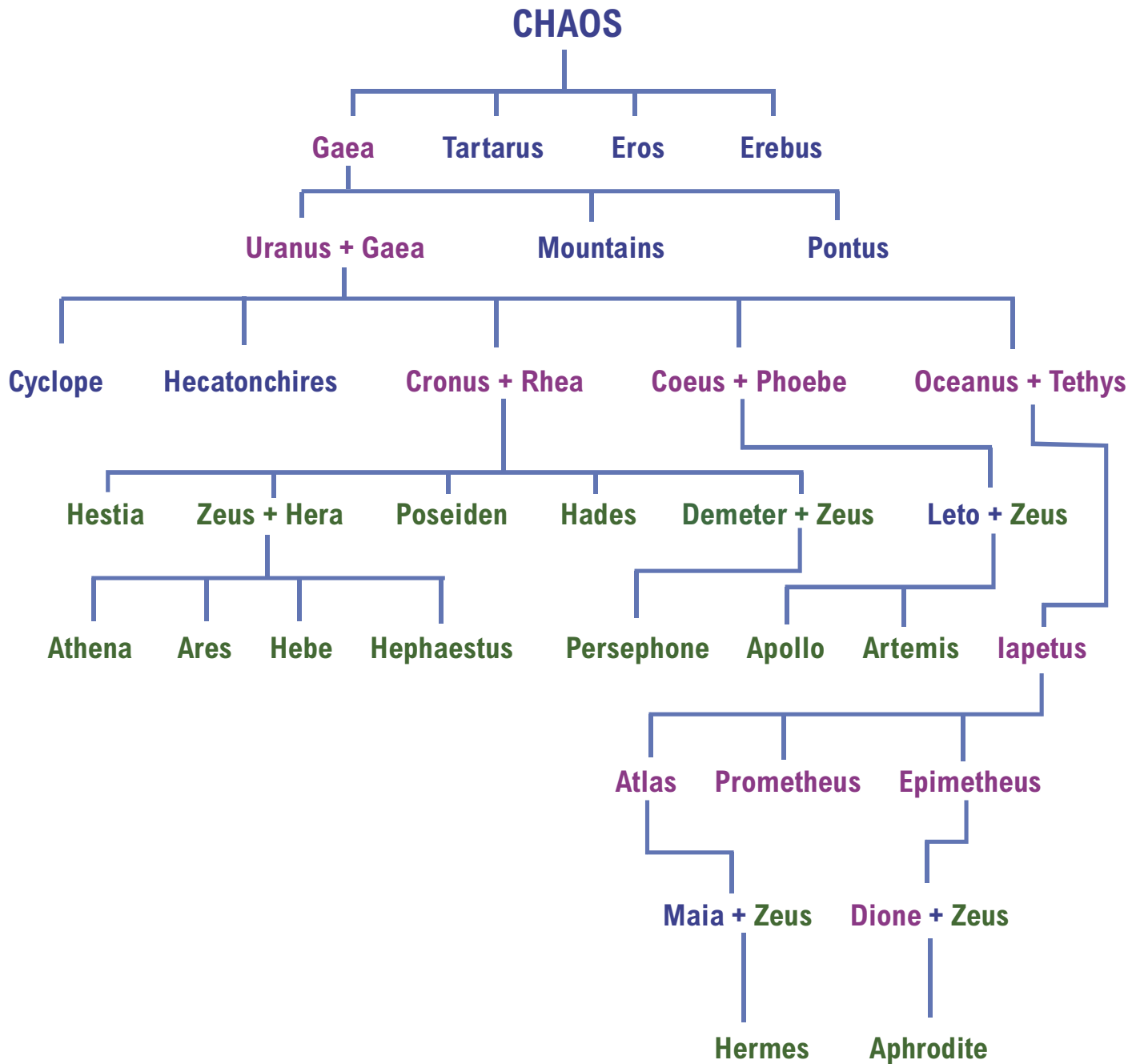
SOUND

Sound is the movement of energy through substances in longitudinal (compression/rarefaction) waves.

ELECTRICAL ENERGY

Electrical energy is the movement of electrons. Lightning and electricity are examples of electrical energy.

GREEK GODS



Titans

Olympians

Other Gods

Achelous

A river god who competed with Heracles for the love of Deianira, and lost. In the competition, Achelous changed into a raging river and tried to drown Heracles, changed into a giant serpent and tried to strangle Heracles, and then into a monstrous bull and tried to gore Heracles, but all to no avail as Heracles surmounted each challenge.

Achilles

The son of the mortal King Peleus and Thetis, a sea nymph. At birth, his mother supposedly dipped Achilles in the River Styx, which made him invulnerable except for the part of the heel by which she held him. His most famous adventure is told in the Iliad, which is about the Trojan War.

Adamanthea

The nymph who nursed Zeus when Rhea gave Cronos a stone to swallow instead of the newborn Zeus. Cronos was supposed to be able to see everything that occurred in the realms over which he had dominion (the earth, heavens, and the sea), but Adamanthea deceived him by hanging the baby Zeus in his cradle from a tree, so that suspended between earth, sea, and sky, he was invisible to his father.

Adonis

The goddess Aphrodite saw Adonis at his birth and was so taken by his beauty that she hid him away in a coffer. She told this to Persephone, who opened up the coffer. When she beheld Adonis, she was also struck by his beauty. She kidnapped him and refused to give him up. Aphrodite appealed to the god Zeus, who decreed that Adonis must spend a third of the year with Aphrodite, a third with Persephone, and the other third on his own. On his own, he usually spent the time boar hunting. Aphrodite tried vainly to dissuade Adonis from hunting this dangerous game. One day he was killed by a wild boar, after which Aphrodite begged for his life with Zeus. This time Zeus decreed that Adonis should spend half the year with Persephone and the other half with Aphrodite.

Aeacus

King of Aegina. He was the son of the nymph Aegina and the god Zeus. Hera, angry with Zeus for his love of Aegina, sent a plague that destroyed most of his people. Aeacus prayed to his father to change a group of industrious ants into human beings to people his deserted city. Zeus granted his wish, creating a race called the Myrmidons. Aeacus ruled over his people with such justice that after his death he became one of the three judges of the underworld. He was the father of Peleus and the grandfather of Achilles.

Aegeus

Father of Theseus, whom he sent to Crete to free his kingdom of having to pay a yearly tribute of seven youths and seven maidens. If Theseus was successful he was to return with white sails instead of the usual black on his ship. Theseus was successful but forgot to change the sails. When Aegeus saw the black sails on the approaching ship he threw himself into the sea from the Acropolis.

Albion

A sea god, probably the kindest of Poseidon's offspring. He stumbled upon a mist-shrouded island whose inhabitants painted themselves blue. They saw immediately that he was a god and honored him with reverence. He stayed on the island, in appreciation, and taught the people the arts of boat building and navigation. They became among the world's best sailors, and named their island Albion in his honor. Today we call that island England.

Alectryon

Ares' one time friend. When Ares was dallying with Aphrodite, he asked Alectryon to stand guard and wake him before sunrise so no one would know of his tryst. Alectryon fell asleep, and Helios (the sun) saw the two together, so they were no longer a secret. Ares, in his anger, turned his friend into a rooster, who must awaken before all others and proclaim the sunrise.

Antaeus

He was a giant, the son of the sea god Poseidon and Gaea, the Earth goddess. He forced all who traveled through his country to wrestle him. Since every time he touched the Earth, his mother, he grew in strength, he was never defeated. Heracles, while wrestling him, discovered this and, holding him above ground, crushed him to death.

Apollo

Apollo was one of the most important Olympian gods, the son of Zeus and Leto and twin brother of Artemis. He was a master archer and a fleet-footed athlete, credited with having been the first victor in the Olympic games.

Arachne

Arachne was a weaver of such skill that she foolishly challenged Athena to a contest. Athena was enraged by Arachne's tapestry and tore it to shreds. In shame, Arachne hanged herself. The goddess took pity and loosened the rope, which turned into a cobweb, while Arachne changed into a spider. (Spiders are classified today as Arachnida.)

Ares

Ares was the bullying god of war

Argos

Master shipbuilder responsible for the designing and building of the Argo, fastest and most maneuverable of any ship in existence at the time. He is credited with the invention of the sail that could be tilted to catch prevailing winds, and of the rudder.

Artemis

Twin sister to Apollo, she was goddess of chastity, virginity, the hunt, the moon, and the natural environment. She was chief hunter to the gods and goddess of hunting and of wild animals, especially bears.

Asclepius

Legendary physician and god of medicine. Because he committed the unpardonable sin of raising a man from the dead, the god Zeus killed him with a thunderbolt.

Astraea

During the Golden Age, this goddess lived on earth and blessed mortals. After the age ended, she was placed in the heavens as the constellation Virgo.

Athena

Athena was the virgin goddess of reason in war and peace, intelligent activity, arts and literature. She sprang full-grown from Zeus' head. She was Zeus' favorite and was allowed to use his weapons including his thunderbolt. The goddess was usually shown wearing a helmet and carrying a spear and shield. Like her father, she also wore the magic aegis, a goatskin breastplate fringed with snakes that produced thunderbolts when shaken. She invented the bridle, the trumpet, the flute, the rake, the plow, the yoke, and (in some myths) the chariot.

Atlas

Atlas was one of the Titans that warred against Zeus, and lost. As punishment, Zeus condemned him to hold aloft the heavens forever. He is often pictured holding the earth on his shoulders.

Aura

Goddess of the morning wind.

Auxesia

Goddess of growth.

Bellerophon

He was the hero who, with the help of Athena, tamed Pegasus, the winged horse. Bellerophon angered Proetus, who sent him to the king of Lycia with a sealed message requesting the bearer be slain. The king who entertained, and became friendly with, Bellerophon before reading the message, could not do it. Instead he sent Bellerophon on a mission he thought would be suicidal, to kill the fire-breathing monster Chimera. This was done, and the king was so impressed he gave his daughter in marriage to the hero. Later, Bellerophon defied the gods and tried to fly Pegasus up to Olympus, but, thrown to the earth by his horse, he wandered in misery until he died.

Bendis

Goddess of the moon.

Biblys

Biblys fell in love with her brother and when he refused her love, she turned into a constantly flowing fountain.

Boötes

Inventor of the plough. At his death he, his plough, and the two oxen yoked to it, were taken into the heavens as the constellation, Boötes.

Boreas

God of the North wind.

Cadmus

Cadmus and his companions found a sacred grove guarded by a dragon. After the beast killed his companions, Cadmus slew the dragon and, on the advice of the goddess Athena, planted its teeth in the ground. Armed men sprang from the teeth and fought each other until all but five were killed. Cadmus enlisted the help of the victors in founding the new city of Thebes.

Calliope

Chief of the nine Muses.

Callisto

She was a friend of the famous huntress Artemis and took a vow to remain single. She was turned into a bear and was then killed in a hunt by her best friend Artemis. Zeus changed Callisto into a constellation, Ursa Major (Great Bear). Her son, Arcas, was changed into the constellation Ursa Minor (Little Bear).

Cassiopeia

When Cassiopeia boasted that she was more beautiful than the Nereids, the water nymphs complained to Poseidon, who sent a sea monster to ravage the land. Poseidon demanded that Cassiopeia's daughter, Andromeda, be sacrificed to the monster, but the girl was rescued by Perseus. At her death, Cassiopeia was changed into a constellation, the stars of which form the outline of a woman sitting in a chair and holding up both arms in supplication to the gods.

Chaos

The vacant, unfathomable space from which everything arose.

Charon

He was the foul-tempered boatman who ferried the spirits of the dead over the rivers Styx and Acheron to Elysium (the underworld).

Chiron

He was a wise physician and prophet whose pupils included Hercules, Achilles, Jason, and Asclepius. After receiving an incurable wound, he gave his immortality to Prometheus and died. Zeus turned him into the constellation Sagittarius.

Cronus

Cronus was the youngest Titan, who gained his power by castrating his father Uranus. By his sister Rhea, he fathered the Olympians: Zeus, Poseidon, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Hestia. Zeus later led the Olympian gods in defeating him.

Cyclope (plural Cyclopes)

The three immense one-eyed beings who made the lightning bolts Zeus used to slay his enemies.

Cygnus

Son of Poseidon, Cygnus was made invulnerable to spears and swords by his father and became a Trojan warrior. Achilles could not overcome him, until he threw Cygnus to the ground and buried him beneath a pile of rocks. Poseidon saved him by changing him into a swan. Since then all swans bear his name.

Daedalus

Daedalus was a craftsman and inventor who invented the sail, the compass, the potter's wheel, and the axe. Daedalus constructed wax and feather wings for himself and his son Icarus. They flew away, but when Icarus came too close to the sun, his wings melted and he fell to his death. Daedalus escaped.

Damocles

According to legend, Damocles commented to Dionysius on the happiness of rulers. At a banquet, Damocles enjoyed the delights of the table until his attention was directed upward and he saw a sharp sword hanging above him by a single horsehair. By this device, Dionysius made Damocles realize that insecurity can threaten those who appear to be the most fortunate. (Sword of Damocles: symbolic of potential disaster.)

Damon and Pythias

Two young men whose loyalty to each other symbolized true friendship. When Pythias, condemned to death by Dionysius, was released to arrange his affairs, Damon stayed on as hostage, pledging to die in place of Pythias if he did not return. On Pythias' return, Dionysius freed them both.

Deimos

The god of terror and panic.

Demeter

One of her children was Persephone, who was carried off by Hades. In her grief, Demeter let the earth grow barren (winter) and only when Persephone was returned to her, six months of the year, did she let the earth become fruitful again (summer). Demeter is the goddess of the earth, of agriculture, and of fertility in general.

Dendritus

Goddess of the tree.

Deucalion

A son of Prometheus who, with his wife, built an ark and floated in it to survive the deluge sent by Zeus in anger at humankind's irreverence. The couple became the ancestors of the renewed human race when an oracle told them to cast behind them the stones of the earth. These stones became human and repopulated the world.

Dionysus

Dionysus was one of the most important Greek gods. He was good and gentle to those who honored him, but he brought madness and destruction upon those who did not. According to tradition, Dionysus died each winter and was reborn in the spring. To his followers, this cyclical revival, accompanied by the seasonal renewal of the fruits of the earth, embodied the promise of the resurrection of the dead.

Echo

Hera deprived Echo of the power of speech except for the ability to repeat the last words of another. Echo fell in love with Narcissus, who was pining away staring at his reflection. Echo, in despair, faded away until only her voice remained.

Eleos

The goddess of mercy.

Eos

Eos was the goddess of dawn, the mother of the evening star Eosphorus (Hesperus), other stars, and the winds Boreas, Zephyrus and Notus. She most often appears winged or in a chariot drawn by four horses, one of them being Pegasus.

Epimetheus

He was considered the dumbest of the Titans. His name means "afterthought". He was responsible for Pandora (the first woman) and the releasing of all evils upon mankind.

Erato

The Muse of lyric poetry and mime, usually depicted holding a lyre.

Eris

Eris is the goddess of discord and the daughter of Zeus and Hera. She is obsessed with bloodshed, havoc, and suffering. She calls forth war and her brother Ares carries out the action.

Eros

God of love. In most myths, he was represented as a winged youth armed with bow and arrows with which he shot darts of desire into the hearts of gods and men.

Eurus

The East wind.

Euterpe

The Muse of lyric poetry and music.

Eutychia

Goddess of happiness.

Fates (The Moirae)

The three powerful goddesses who determined the lives of men. Clotho wove the thread of life, Lachesis measured it out, and Atropos cut it off with her scissors of death.

Gaea

Gaea is the earth goddess. Her name is the first syllable of words like geography, geometry, geology, etc. She was the mother of Cronus, by Uranus, her son. Gaea was also the mother of the Titans, the Gigantes, and the Cyclopes.

Ganymeda

The goddess cupbearer to the gods who served ambrosia and nectar at Olympian feasts.

Geras

Goddess of old age.

Glaucus

A fisherman who discovered an herb that could heal wounded fish. Poseidon heard about him, brought him to his domain, and when Glaucus' ministrations increased the flocks of fish, made him immortal.

Gyges

The shepherd who found a magic ring that made him invisible when he wore it. He immediately recognized its value and set off for the royal palace. When there he put the ring on his finger, became invisible, and was able to pass all the guards and enter the throne room. He killed the king, proclaimed himself king, and married the queen.

Hades

He was one of the Olympian gods in charge of the underworld.

Halia

Personification of the saltiness of the sea.

Hebe

She was the daughter of Zeus and Hera, and the goddess of youth. She was the wife of Heracles after he became a god.

Hecate

Hecate was the goddess of sorcery and witchcraft and was especially worshiped by magicians and witches, who sacrificed black lambs and black dogs to her.

Hegemone

Goddess of plants; responsible for their fruition.

Helios

He was the sun god. Each morning he left a palace in the east and crossed the sky in a golden chariot, then returned along the river Oceanus, which girded the earth.

Hephaestus

God of fire and metalwork. Shortly after his birth, he was cast out of heaven by Hera, who was repelled by his deformity. As the artisan among the gods, Hephaestus made their armor, weapons, and jewelry. His workshop was believed to lie under Mount Etna, a volcano in Sicily.

Hera

She was sister and wife of Zeus. Hera is the supreme goddess of the Greeks and goddess of marriage and childbirth. She was extremely jealous of other women to whom Zeus was attracted.

Heracles

The most popular Greek hero, he was famous for strength and courage. At his death he rose to Olympus, where he married Hebe.

Hermaphroditus

This was a creature that was partly male and partly female.

Hermes

He was the cleverest of the Olympian gods, and messenger to all the other gods. He ruled over wealth, good fortune, commerce, fertility, and thievery. He brought the souls of the dead to the underworld, and was honored as the god of sleep.

Herse

Goddess of the dew.

Hesperos

The goddess of evening and wife of Atlas.

Hestia

The virgin goddess of the hearth, family, and peace. Of all the Olympians, she is the mildest, most upright and most charitable.

Hilaeira

Goddess of brightness.

Himalia

Goddess invoked to bless the harvest.

Horae

The Horae are the goddesses of the seasons and the orderly procession of things in general.

Hosia

Goddess of holy rituals.

Hubris

God personifying lack of restraint.

Hyacinthus

One day, as Apollo was teaching the Spartan Hyacinthus to throw the discus, the god accidentally killed Hyacinthus. From the blood of the youth, Apollo caused a flower to grow.

Hydra

A many-headed water serpent. When one of its heads was cut off, two new ones appeared.

Hygieia

Goddess of health.

Hyperion

The Titan god of light, he was the father of the sun, the moon, and the dawn.

Hypnos

Also known as Somnus, Hypnos was the god of rest and/or sleep, and a twin brother of Thanatos, the god of death. He was the father of Morpheus, the god of dreams. He had many other sons, among who were Icelus, who brought dreams of animals and Phantasus, who brought dreams of things. From his names we get the words hypnotize and somnambulism.

Icarus

The son of Daedalus. He and his father fastened wings to their bodies and flew over the sea. When Icarus flew higher, the sun melted the wax fastenings and he fell to his death in the waters below.

Ilithyia

Goddess of childbirth.

Iris

Iris was the personification of the rainbow.

Jason

The husband of Medea and leader of the Argonauts who went in quest of the Golden Fleece.

Kakia

Goddess of vice.

Ker

Goddess of violent death. She is pictured as a black bird hovering over a corpse.

Klotes

Goddess of spinning.

Komodia

Goddess of happiness and amusement.

Koros

Goddess of extravagant joy.

Lethe

She is the goddess of oblivion.

Leto

Leto is the mother of Apollo and Artemis and is mostly worshipped in conjunction with her children. She was a Titaness and considered the goddess of fruitfulness.

Lina

Goddess of weaving, especially of flax.

Melissa

A nurse of the infant Zeus when he was being hidden from Cronus; she fed him honey and he developed such a liking for honey that, when he ruled Olympus, he decreed that honey should be fermented to make nectar, which became the drink of the gods. Cronus, before his ouster, became aware of her nursemaid duties to Zeus, and changed her into an earthworm. Zeus, in turn, changed the worm into a queen bee. Melissa means honey, in Greek.

Melobosis

Goddess of beneficence.

Minos

A king of Crete, the son of Zeus and Europa, who was made one of the three judges in the underworld after his death.

Mnemosyne

She was the Titan goddess of memory.

Moros

Moros was the god of doom.

Morpheus

The god of dreams.

The Muses

Nine Titan mountain goddesses: Clio (history), Calliope (epic poetry), Erato (love poetry), Euterpe (lyric poetry), Melpomene (tragedy), Polyhymnia (song, rhetoric, and geometry), Thalia (comedy), Terpsichore (dancing), and Urania (astronomy and astrology).

Narcissus

An exceptionally handsome youth, his mother was told he would live a long life if he did not look upon his own features. He chanced to see his reflection in a pool of water, fell in love with that reflection and pined away.

Nemesis

Nemesis is the personification of divine vengeance.

Nike

The winged goddess of victory.

Notus

God of the South Wind.

Nyx

She was the goddess of night. She was the daughter of Chaos and the mother of Death and Sleep. She was one of the most feared of the gods.

Odysseus

King of Ithaca and husband of Penelope.

Orion

A mighty hunter, Orion fell in love with Merope and attacked her. Her father blinded him as punishment. He regained his sight by going east and letting the rays of the rising sun fall on his eyes. His sight restored, he lived on Crete as the huntsman of the goddess Artemis. After Orion's death, Artemis placed him in the heavens as a constellation.

Orpheus

A legendary poet and musician, he was given the lyre by Apollo and became such an excellent musician that he had no rival among mortals. He married the lovely nymph Eurydice. Soon after the wedding the bride was stung by a viper and died. Orpheus determined to go to the underworld and try to bring her back, something no mortal had ever done. Hades, the ruler of the underworld, was so moved by his playing that he gave Eurydice back to Orpheus on the one condition that he not look back until they reached the upper world, but Orpheus could not control his eagerness and as he gained the light of day he looked back a moment too soon, and Eurydice vanished.

Ophthalmitis

Patron goddess of eyesight.

Paen

The god of healing, even for the other gods.

Pan

He was the son of Hermes, and the god of flocks. He had the head and torso of a man, but the hindquarters and horns of a goat. He was a great musician with the pipes.

Panacea

Goddess of healing.

Pandora

Pandora had a jar containing every evil. When she could not control her curiosity and opened it, the evils escaped and flew over the earth. Only hope remained in the jar.

Penelope

Wife of Odysseus and a model of fidelity. Pursued by suitors during Odysseus' absence at the Trojan War, she agreed to marry after she finished weaving her father-in-law's shroud. Each night, for three years, she undid what she had woven during the day, but one of her maids discovered the secret and told the suitors. She finally promised to marry the man who could bend Odysseus' bow, but none could. Odysseus returned disguised as a beggar, bent the bow, and slew the suitors.

Penia

Goddess of poverty.

Penthus

God of grief.

Persephone

She was the goddess of springtime and, after her abduction by Hades, the queen of the underworld for six months of each year, during which time it was winter.

Perseus

Told by an oracle that Perseus would kill him, his grandfather set him and his mother Danaë afloat in a chest. They were rescued by King Polydectes, who fell in love with Danaë. Seeing Perseus as an obstacle, the king sent him to kill Medusa, who was so ugly, anyone who looked at her would turn to stone. He appealed to the gods and was given a mirrored shield by Athena and a pair of winged sandals by Hermes. Perseus flew using the sandals. When he found Medusa, he used the reflection in the shield to guide his sword so he could behead her as she slept. As she died, the white, winged horse Pegasus sprang from her neck.

Phantasos

Son of Somnus and god of dreams. In dreams he was able to turn himself into rock, water, tree, and all other natural objects.

Phobus

A son of Ares, he personified fear.

Phoebe

She was a Titan, the daughter of Uranus and Gaea, and the grandmother of Apollo and Artemis.

Phospherus

The god of the morning star.

Physis

A goddess of nature.

Plutus

The god of riches.

Poseidon

God of the sea, protector of all waters. Powerful, violent, and vengeful, he carried the trident, with which he caused earthquakes.

Prometheus

The wisest Titan, and the creator of mankind. Originally a good friend and ally to Zeus, he later fell from favor and was chained in the Caucasus Mountains, where an eagle fed upon his liver each day. He is known for stealing fire from Hephaestus and giving it to the human race.

Proteus

A son of Poseidon, his attendant and the keeper of his seals. Proteus knew all things past, present, and future but was able to change his shape at will to avoid prophesying.

Pudicitia

Goddess of modesty.

Pyrene

She gave birth to a snake, lost her mind when she saw what she had birthed and fled into the mountains where she was killed by wild animals. The mountains are named the Pyrenees today.

Rhea

She was a daughter of Uranus (Heaven) and Gaea (Earth). She married her brother, Cronus. A prophecy told Cronus that one of his children would overthrow him. To prevent that, Cronus swallowed his children as they were born. Those children were Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades and Poseidon. Rhea, finally, decided to fool Cronus and at the birth of her next child, Zeus, she presented Cronus with a large stone wrapped in blankets, which he promptly swallowed. As foretold, Zeus eventually overthrew Cronus, who was made to regurgitate the children he had swallowed.

Rumor

A feathered and swift-footed goddess-demon who delivers messages, not always truthfully.

Selene

The Greek goddess of the moon and daughter of Hyperion and Theia. Her twin brother is the sun god Helios and her sister is Eos (dawn). At night, she rose from the ocean and with her chariot, drawn by white horses (or oxen) she rode through the sky.

Senecta

Goddess of old age.

Sisyphus

Legend has it that when Death came to take him he turned the tables and captured Death whom he put in chains. No one died while Death was in chains and it stayed that way until Ares arrived and freed Death. In the meantime Sisyphus had his wife, Merope, promise to leave him unburied when he died, a practice clearly against the orders of the gods. When Death was released he claimed Sisyphus and brought him to the underworld where Sisyphus pointed out the fact that his body was unburied. The gods allowed him to return to life so that he could punish his wife. Once back home he lived to a ripe old age before he died for a second time. His punishment then was to roll a huge boulder up a hill to the top, but each time he neared the top the boulder would roll back down the hill, so his task is never-ending.

Smyrna

She became a myrrh tree at her death and from this tree Adonis was born.

Sophrosyne

Goddess of temperance and moderation.

Soteira

Goddess of safety.

Styx

The goddess of the River Styx who prevented the living from crossing into the realm of Hades without first undergoing death's torments.

Tantalus

He was sentenced to the underworld for a crime against the gods. He stole nectar and ambrosia from one of the feasts and gave them to men. His punishment in the underworld was to stand neck deep in swirling water with fruits hanging over his head. When he would attempt to eat the fruit, a wind would arise and blow them out of his reach. When he would attempt to drink, the water would swirl away from him. Tantalize is a word derived from this tale.

Techne

Goddess of art.

Thanatos

The Greek personification of death, twin brother of Sleep (Hypnos).

Theia

The wife of her brother Hyperion, Theia gave birth to Helios (sun), Eos (dawn), and Selene (moon). She is the goddess from whom light emanates and considered especially beautiful.

Themis

Themis is the goddess of the order of things established by law, custom and ethics.

Titans

They were children of Uranus and Gaea. Often called the Elder Gods, they were for many ages the supreme rulers of the universe and were of enormous size and incredibly strong. They were: Oceanus (river that flowed around the earth), Coeus, Crius, Hyperion (father of the sun, the moon, and the dawn), Iapetus (the father of Prometheus, who created mortals), and Cronus (the most important of the Titans and ruled the universe until he was dethroned by his son Zeus), Theia, Rhea, Themis, Mnemosyne, Phoebe, and Tethy. Of all the Titans, only Prometheus and Oceanus sided with Zeus against Cronus. As a result, they were honored and the others were bound in Tartarus.

Triton

Triton was the son of the sea god Poseidon and Amphitrite. He had the power to calm or agitate the waves by blowing on a twisted seashell.

Tyche

Goddess symbolizing fortune and prosperity.

Typhon

The youngest son of Tartarus of the underworld and Gaea. He was described as a grisly monster with a hundred dragon's heads. He was imprisoned under Mount Etna (a volcano) and thus was considered the personification of volcanic forces. Zeus killed him with a thunderbolt.

Zagreus

Zagreus was Zeus' favorite child and due to inherit all of Zeus' power. Hera was jealous and talked the Titans into killing Zagreus. The Titans tore the child apart and began eating the parts. Athena managed to save the boy's heart and brought it to Zeus, who swallowed it. Zeus then blew the Titans into dust with his thunderbolts. From this dust mankind arose.

Zelus

God of enthusiasm and zeal.

Zephyrus

God of the west wind.

Zeus

Zeus was the god of the sky and ruler of the Olympian gods. He was considered the father of the gods, and of mortals. He was the rain god, and the cloud gatherer, who wielded the terrible thunderbolt. His breastplate was the aegis, his bird the eagle, his tree the oak. Zeus was the youngest son of the Titans, Cronus and Rhea, and the brother of the Poseidon, Hades, Hestia, Demeter, and Hera.

According to one of the ancient myths of the birth of Zeus, Cronus, having heard the prophecy that he might be dethroned by one of his children, swallowed them as they were born. Upon the birth of Zeus, Rhea wrapped a stone in swaddling clothes for Cronus to swallow and concealed the infant god in Crete, where he was reared by nymphs. When Zeus grew to maturity, he forced Cronus to disgorge the other children, who were eager to take vengeance on their father. In the war that followed, the Titans fought on the side of Cronus, but Zeus and the other gods were successful, and the Titans were banished to Tartarus.

Zeus henceforth ruled over the sky, and his brothers Poseidon and Hades were given power over the sea and the underworld, respectively. The earth was to be ruled in common by all three. He is represented as the god of justice and mercy, the protector of the weak, and the punisher of the wicked.

GREEK ALPHABET

GREEK LETTER		ENGLISH	ENGLISH SPELLING	PRONUNCIATION
capital	small			
Α	α	a	alpha	AL fah
Β	β	b	beta	BAY tah
Γ	γ	g	gamma	GAM mah
Δ	δ	d	delta	DEL tah
Ε	ε	e	epsilon	EP si lon
Ζ	ζ	z	zeta	ZAY tah
Η	η	e	eta	AY tah
Θ	θ	th	theta	THAY tah
Ι	ι	l	iota	eye OH tah
Κ	κ	k	kappa	COP pah
Λ	λ	l	lamba	LAM dah
Μ	μ	m	mu	MOO
Ν	ν	n	nu	NEW
Ξ	ξ	z	xi	ZIGH
Ο	ο	o	omicron	OH mee cron
Π	π	p	pi	PIE
Ρ	ρ	r	rho	ROW
Σ	σ	s	sigma	SIG mah
Τ	τ	t	tau	TAW
Υ	υ	u	upsilon	OOP si lon
Φ	φ	ph	phi	FIGH
Χ	χ	ch	chi	KIGH
Ψ	ψ	ps	psi	SIGH
Ω	ω	o	omega	oh MAY gah

ENGLISH WORDS FROM GREEK GODS

WORD	MEANING	FROM
atlas	a book of maps	Atlas, Titan who held the sky on his shoulders
cereal	wheat, oats, corn	Ceres, goddess of agriculture
cloth	fabric formed by weaving	Clotho, the Fate that spun the thread of life
chronology	list of events in time	Cronos, god of time
cornucopia	horn of plenty	Cornucopia
echo	repetition of a sound	Echo, who could only repeat other's words
fortune	chance happening or luck	Fortuna, goddess of luck
hypnosis	sleeplike state	Hypnos, god of sleep
jovial	good cheer	Jove – alternate name of Jupiter
junoesque	stately bearing	Juno – stately, majestic goddess
martial	relating to war	Mars, god of war
mercurial	quick and changeable	Mercury, messenger god
Midas touch	ability to make money	Midas
mnemonics	system to improve memory	Mnemosyne, goddess of memory
music	arrangement of sounds of harmony	the Muses
narcissism	excessive love of oneself	Narcissus
panic	sudden terror	Pan
plutocracy	government run by the wealthy	Pluto, god of wealth
psychology	science of mental behavior	Psyche
somnambulism	to act while asleep	Somnus, god of sleep
stentorian	extremely loud	Stentor, the herald
tantalize	keeping in sight but out of reach	Tantalus
terpsichorean	relating to dancing	Terpsichore
typhoon	tropical cyclone	Typhon
venerate	regard with reverence	Venus
vestal	chaste, pure	Vesta
volcano	opening in earth's crust that ejects lava	Vulcan
zephyr	gentle west wind	Zephyrus

Poseidon

Poseidon was the god of the sea, earthquakes and horses. Although he was officially one of the supreme gods of Mount Olympus, he spent most of his time in his watery domain.

Poseidon was brother to Zeus and Hades. These three gods divided creation between them. Zeus became ruler of the sky, Hades had dominion of the Underworld and Poseidon was given dominion over all water, both fresh and salt. In dividing creation, the Olympians agreed that the earth itself would be ruled jointly, with Zeus as king. This led to a number of disputes among the gods.

Poseidon vied with Athena to be patron deity of Athens. The god demonstrated his power and benevolence by striking the Acropolis with his three-pronged spear, which caused a spring of salt water to emerge.

Because Odysseus blinded the Cyclops Polyphemus, who was Poseidon's son, the god delayed the hero's homeward return from the Trojan War, and caused him to face enormous perils. ...the raft on which he set sail was destroyed by Poseidon, who lashed the sea into a storm with his trident. Odysseus barely escaped with his life and washed ashore days later, half-drowned.

Creation of Mankind

The Race of Gold

Zeus, the father of the gods, was also the father of human beings. He created a race of man that was mortal, kind, respectful, and that lived comfortably in freedom, safety, and peace. They lived long lives and died peacefully in their sleep. Zeus, though, had neglected giving them the ability to procreate, so that eventually they all passed away.

The Race of Silver

Zeus created a second race of mankind (without procreative abilities). This race was far less virtuous than the first and much more juvenile. They spent most of their time in the pursuit of childish pleasures. They never learned respect for each other, or for the gods. Zeus became angry with them, and changed the conditions on earth so that it was much harder to find food and shelter. When their attitudes remained unchanged, he brought their lives to an early end.

The Race of Bronze

Zeus then created a third race of mankind (without procreative abilities). These mortals were far inferior to even the Silver Race. They were endowed with brute strength and were cruel and war-loving people. They also eventually died off.

The Race of Heroes

Zeus now created a fourth race of mankind (still without procreative abilities). These beings were more noble and virtuous than the Silver or Bronze race, and those that did not die in the Trojan War, or other wars, were placed upon the islands of heroes at the ends of the earth, to be ruled over by Cronus whom Zeus freed for that purpose.

The Race of Iron

The fifth race created by Zeus is the one now inhabiting the earth. So far, this race shows the defects of all the races (except the Gold) that preceded it; this bodes ill for our continuing existence, as Zeus has shown he has little patience for this kind of behavior.

Prometheus

Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus, were spared imprisonment after the war between the Olympians and the Titans because they had stayed neutral. According to one legend, Prometheus shaped man out of mud, and Athena breathed life into the clay figure. Then Prometheus allowed Epimetheus to dispense various qualities to the animals and man.

Epimetheus began with the animals, to which he gave the best traits (swiftness, courage, cunning, stealth). He soon found he had nothing left to give man. Prometheus took over and, after long deliberation, gave man an upright posture like the gods. This enabled man to survive.

It was decided by the Olympians that man would sacrifice animals to the gods to show their respect. Zeus was to decide which parts of the animals would go to the gods and which parts would go to man. Prometheus made two piles of animal parts so Zeus could make his choice. The sneaky Prometheus made one pile of bones wrapped in the juicy fat of the animal and another pile of the edible meat, which he wrapped in the ugly hide of the animal. Naturally Zeus chose the fat-wrapped package, and was very angry when he saw that he had been fooled. In revenge he deprived man of fire.

Prometheus was not yet done. He ascended into heaven and lighted a torch at the sun; then returned to earth and gave the fire to man. This enraged Zeus. He ordered Hephaestus to create a mortal of stunning beauty, to whom Hermes gave a deceptive heart and a lying tongue. This was the first woman, Pandora. Prometheus had warned his brother not to accept gifts from Zeus, but Epimetheus could not resist this radiant creature and brought her to man. The gods had given Pandora a jar, which they forbade her to open. Being a woman, her curiosity doomed her. She opened the lid and a multitude of evils flew out and scattered over the world to afflict man. The only thing that remained in the jar was Hope, the thing that could keep man going.

For Prometheus, Zeus reserved a special punishment. He had Prometheus chained to a rock, and every day he sent an eagle to peck out the Titan's liver, which grew back again every night. This agony was to last for eternity, or until an immortal would sacrifice his life for Prometheus and a mortal would kill the eagle and unchain Prometheus. Eventually, after many ages, the centaur Chiron agreed to die for Prometheus, and Heracles (Hercules) killed the eagle and unbound Prometheus.

Orion

Orion was a son of Poseidon, and famous as a hunter. It was said he was so large that he could walk through the oceans with his head above water. He fell in love with Merope, but grew impatient at her father's conditions, and stole her. Her father blinded him as punishment.

Orion traveled east to the point where Helios (the sun) arose from the ocean. Dawn fell in love with Orion, whereupon Helios cured his sight. Orion decided to seek out Merope's father for revenge, but Artemis persuaded him to become her hunting companion instead.

Apollo, fearing for the safety of his sister Artemis, sent a giant scorpion to chase Orion. Unable to slay the scorpion, Orion set out across the water to escape it. Apollo convinced Artemis to shoot the bobbing object on the waves. Her arrow pierced Orion's head and killed him. In grief she placed him in the heavens as the constellation Orion. Apollo then placed the scorpion in the sky as a constellation, where it still chases Orion.

Tithonus

Eos (goddess of dawn) fell in love with the Trojan prince Tithonus, and asked Zeus to grant him immortality, but she forgot to ask for eternal youth along with the immortality, so Tithonus was fated to live forever, but continue to grow older and older. In time he withered into a parody of a man and his voice grew shrill. Eos shut this loathsome creature away in a closet, where it turned into a cricket or a grasshopper.

Midas and the Donkey' Ears

Midas, as judge of a musical contest between Pan and Apollo, unwisely chose Pan as the victor, so Apollo replaced Midas' ears with those of a donkey. Midas hid his ears under a cap, and only his barber knew of them, and he promised to tell no one. Burdened with this secret, the barber went down to the shore of a river, scooped out a hole and whispered, "Midas has donkey ears," into it. The next year, reeds grew in that spot and, as the wind rustled through them, the reeds repeated the secret to all who passed by.

Ariadne & Theseus: The Labyrinth

King Minos of Crete angered Poseidon, for he had promised to sacrifice to the Sea God his most beautiful bull, but when the time came he could not bring himself to do so. Queen Pasiphaê, his wife, had also neglected the Rites of Aphrodite, thereby incurring that goddess's wrath. Therefore Poseidon and Aphrodite caused Pasiphaê to fall in love with the bull. They mated and so was born the Minotaur. Minos, in shame, ordered that Daidalos build a labyrinth to house the Minotaur. The labyrinth was so designed that it was easy to go in, but difficult, if not impossible, to come out again.

At this time Crete was in conflict with Athens, and when the Athenians, struck by a terrible drought, asked advice from the oracle they were told they must appease Minos. Whereupon Minos demanded that every nine years, seven youths and seven maidens, chosen from the noblest of Athenian families, were to be sacrificed to the Minotaur. When Minos came for the sacrificial victims, Theseus was chosen to be among them. Theseus picked six valiant youths and seven brave maidens to go with him to try to slay the beast.

Ariadne was the daughter of Minos. When she beheld Theseus disembarking from the boat, she immediately fell in love with him. She consulted with Daidalos and he told her the only way to exit the labyrinth was by the exact same path by which one entered. She designed Ariadne's Thread – a string to mark the way by which Theseus could escape after the monster was killed. The Minotaur was slain and the Athenians were able to return from the labyrinth using the string.

The Athenians set sail to Athens with Ariadne. However, an ill wind blew the ship off course to the isle of Dia. There, Theseus and Ariadne were drugged and put to sleep. While they slept, Dionysos claimed Ariadne as his bride. When Theseus awoke, Athena told him that his destiny was in Athens, and that he must leave Ariadne behind. Theseus sadly boarded his ship and sailed for home. Theseus forgot that he had promised his father that if he killed the Minotaur, he would take down the black sail and put up a white one. When King Aigeus saw the black sail come over the horizon, he threw himself in grief from the Acropolis and drowned. Ariadne and Dionysos meanwhile ascended together into the heavens where her crown is still visible (the constellation Corona).

Glaucus

Anthêdôn was born to Minôs of Crete and his wife Pasiphaê. One day the child went into a cave that was used to store mead. He accidentally drowned in the liquor, but nobody knew what had happened to him. Minôs sent for the Curetes, who were known as great seers, and they told him that whoever could best describe Minôs' miraculous cow would be able to restore Anthêdôn alive to him. Poluidos won and was entrusted with finding Anthêdôn. He went to the cave, found the drowned boy and brought him to Minôs.

The grief-stricken Minôs was not satisfied because the boy was dead, so he ordered Poluidos shut up with the boy's body in a tomb until he brought Anthêdôn back to life. This was beyond Poluidos' power and he prayed to the Gods for help. After a while, as his eyes became accustomed to the dark, he saw a snake approaching the corpse. He killed the snake, because he feared it would nibble on the corpse.

Soon, a second snake came forth and discovered the body of the first. It went away and came back holding in its mouth a twig with three blue-green leaves. The snake laid this twig upon the first snake, which immediately came to life and left with its companion. Poluidos was astonished, but quickly took the serpent's twig and applied it to the boy. Like the snake, the boy immediately returned to life. Anthêdôn had a shiny blue-green scar over his heart where the twig had touched him, and so he was thereafter called Glaucus (Blue-Green).

Scylla

Glaukos ate a mysterious herb and became a sea creature with a thick green beard, bluish skin, and feet like the tail of a fish. Not long after Glaukos' transformation, Scylla, a beautiful Nêreid, came down to the seashore at night to bathe. There she disrobed and refreshed herself in a shallow pool.

In the moonlight she saw a beautiful boy floating with his chest and arms out of the water. She called to him. They talked for a time, but when he got close, she saw that his thick hair was green and that his skin was blue. When Scylla saw that he was half-fish, she jumped from the pool and ran to the top of a cliff. She donned her robe and ran away laughing and yelling about what a disgusting creature he was.

Glaukos was furious, but was still in love for her. He made his way to the hidden kingdom of Kirkê (Circe), sorceress and sister of Pasiphaê, his mother. He explained that he was filled with love for a nymph. He begged her to cast a spell that would turn Scylla's heart so that she would love him. Kirkê instead used her powers so that he felt the same love for her that she felt for him. Soon, however, Glaukos admitted to Kirkê that he would never stop loving Scylla.

Kirkê was furious and would have destroyed Glaukos, but she loved him too much. She turned her wrath toward Scylla. She gathered secret herbs and mixed them together while she sang a magic spell. She went to that pool where Scylla bathed and poured her magic potion into the water. When Scylla entered to the pool, she felt something churning in the water around her thighs. Then the water around her waist erupted with snarling dogs' heads. She jumped from the pool to escape them, but discovered to her horror that they were part of her. Her legs had become barking dogs.

Scylla went to hide in a cave by the shore, where she would lure sailors into her cave. When they came to her, her hungry dog-heads would eat them. Scylla stayed in this cave for many years, until she was mercifully turned to stone.

Daphne and Apollo

Apollo taunted Eros after having slain a dangerous serpent. Eros got revenge. He swiftly winged his way through the air to summit of Parnassus. From his quiver, he drew two arrows with very different properties. One kindled love; the other put love to flight. With the second arrow, the god pierced the nymph, Daphne, but Apollo he wounded with the other. Immediately Apollo fell in love, while Daphne rejected love, spending her time in the forest hunting wild beasts.

Many men wooed her, but she cared nothing for love. As soon as Apollo saw Daphne, he fell in love with her, and wanted to marry her. But Daphne ran off and did not stop to hear his words. Apollo sped after her, never giving up. Finally, Daphne's strength was spent, and she grew pale and weary with the effort of her flight.

Then she saw the waters of the Peneus: "Oh, father," she cried, "help me! If your rivers really have divine powers, work some transformation, and destroy my beauty so I will no longer be pursued!"

She was changed into a tree. Even as a tree, Apollo loved her. He placed his hand against the trunk, and felt her heart beating under the new bark. He kissed the wood but, even as a tree, she shrank from his kisses. Then Apollo said: "Since you will not be my bride, surely you will at least be my tree. My hair, my lyre, my quivers will always display the laurel."

Aristaeus

Aristaeus was a keeper of bees, the son of Apollo and a water nymph Cyrene. When his bees all died from some unknown cause, he went for help to his mother. She told him that Proteus, the wise old god of the sea, could show him how to prevent another such disaster, but would do so only if forced. Aristaeus must seize him and chain him, a very difficult task, since Proteus had the power to change himself into many different forms. However, if his captor could hold him through all the changes, he would finally give in and answer what he was asked.

Aristaeus followed his mother's directions. He went to the favorite haunt of Proteus. There he seized Proteus and did not let him go, in spite of the terrible forms he assumed, until the god was discouraged and returned to his own shape. Then in answer to the question, he told Aristaeus to make a sacrifice to the gods and leave the carcasses of the animals in the place of sacrifice. Nine days later he must go back and examine the bodies. Again Aristaeus did as he was bid, and on the ninth day he found a marvel, a great swarm of bees in one of the carcasses. He never again was troubled by any blight or disease among them.

Theseus & Pityocampes

Theseus was walking in the woods when he ran into a huge brute of a man. He was called Pityocampes, which means “pine-bender”. He said to Theseus, “Just hold this for a moment like a good fellow, will you?”

“Certainly,” said Theseus. Theseus grasped the pine tree, let his mind go dark and all his strength flow downward, anchoring him to the earth like a rock. Pityocampes let go of the tree, expecting to see Theseus fly into the air.

Nothing happened. The giant could not believe his eyes. He leaned his head closer to see. Then Theseus let go. The tree snapped up, catching the giant under the chin, knocking him unconscious. Theseus bent the tree again and bound the giant’s wrists to it. He pulled down another tree and tied Pityocampes’ legs to that one, then let go of both pine trees. They sprang apart. Half of Pityocampes hung from one tree, half from the other. Theseus wiped the pine tar from his hands and continued on his way.

Hephaestus

No one celebrated the birth of Hephaestus. His mother, Hera, had awaited him with great eagerness, hoping for a child so beautiful, so gifted, that it would make Zeus forget all of his other children. But when the baby was born, she was appalled to see that he was shriveled and ugly, with a bleating wail. She did not wait for Zeus to see him, but snatched the infant up and hurled him off Olympus. For a night and a day he fell, and hit the ground at the edge of the sea with such force that both of legs were broken. He lay there on the beach crying piteously, wracked with pain, but unable to die because he was immortal.

Finally the tide came up. A huge wave curled him under its arm and carried him off to sea. He sank like a stone and was caught by Thetis, a naiad, who thought he was a tadpole. When Thetis saw it was a baby, she made a pet of him and kept him in her grotto. She was amazed at the way the crippled child worked shells and bright pebbles into jewelry.

One day she appeared at a great festival of the gods, wearing a necklace he had made. Hera noticed the ornament, praised it and asked her how she had come by it. Thetis told her of the strange twisted child whom someone had dropped into the ocean, and who lived now in her cave making wonderful jewels.

Hera divined that it was her own son and demanded him back. Hephaestus returned to Olympus. There Hera presented him with a broken mountain nearby, where he could set up forges and bellows. She gave him the brawny Cyclopes to be his helpers, and promised him Aphrodite as a bride if he would labor in the mountain and make her fine things.

Hephaestus agreed because he loved her and excused her cruelty to him. "I know that I am ugly, Mother," he said, "but the fates would have it so. And I will make you gems so beautiful for your tapering arms and white throat and black hair that you will forget my ugliness sometimes, and rejoice that you have taken me back from the sea."

He became the smith-god, the great artificer, and lord of mechanics. And the mountain always smoked and rumbled with his toil, and he has always been very ugly and very useful.

Echo

Echo was a cheerful and very talkative nymph. One day Hera came down to Earth to check on her unfaithful husband Zeus, when she ran into Echo. Echo chattered with Hera so long that Zeus was able to sneak away before Hera could catch him. Hera was furious when she found out and punished Echo. She took away Echo's ability to speak her own words, and decreed that she could only repeat the last words that others said. A little while later, Echo's eyes fell upon Narcissus, and she fell in love with him. But, Narcissus did not return her love and she faded away, until only her voice remained, repeating the words of others.

Narcissus

Narcissus was one of the most handsome youths in all of Greece during his time. He loved to go hunting, but also liked to be loved by maidens who acknowledged his beauty over theirs. Every nymph who saw him instantly fell in love with him. Eventually they came to hate him because he was so cold and cruel to them. He never returned their love because he was so in love with himself. The nymphs, including Echo, prayed to the Gods to punish Narcissus for how he treated them, and the Gods heard their entreaties. A spell was cast on the vain Narcissus.

The next day, Narcissus stopped by a pool of water to get a drink. When he leaned over the lake to look into the water, he saw the most beautiful person he had ever seen and fell hopelessly in love. He fell in love with his own reflection, but he did not know it. Every time he tried to touch or kiss his love, it always disappeared.

Narcissus refused to leave the pool, even though his parents tried to break him away. Finally, they asked the Gods to end his misery taking his life, and Apollo took pity on him. Narcissus slowly vanished, and in his place grew a Narcissus flower – a low, beautiful plant whose blossom hung from the stem to look into the lake.

Hermes

Hermes was the messenger god, the son of Zeus and Maia. He was considered the fastest god, the god of thieves and commerce. He enjoyed playing tricks and games. During the Trojan War, it was always Hermes who was sent to steal things that were otherwise unattainable.

Hermes was the god who most easily crossed the line between the living and the dead, because it was his job to guide the newly dead to Hades, the underworld.

Hermes is usually depicted as a young man with a wide-brimmed hat and winged sandals, carrying a staff crowned with two snakes. The winged sandals allowed him to fly and the staff assured safe passage during times of war.

He invented the lyre, the pipes, the musical scale, astronomy, weights and measures, boxing, and gymnastics.

Demeter & Persephone

Demeter was the Greek goddess of vegetation and fruitfulness, the daughter of Cronos and Rhea. She was especially associated with corn. Demeter possessed mysterious powers of growth and resurrection. Demeter means 'mother earth', the abundant soil as well as the resting place of the dead.

Demeter's myth is about her daughter Persephone. When Persephone was a young girl, Zeus promised his brother Hades that she would be his bride. Hades was impatient and rose from the underworld to steal the girl as she picked flowers in a field. In the underworld, Persephone refused to eat and pined away, while in the world of the living, her mother Demeter lost all interest in fertility, so that the plants and animals began dying.

Eventually Zeus had to intervene. Since Persephone had eaten something in the underworld, Hades did not have to give her up completely. Zeus ruled that she must spend half the year with Hades in the underworld and could spend the other half of the year with Demeter in the living world.

Zeus

Zeus was the god of the sky and ruler of the Olympian gods. He was considered the father of the gods, and of mortals. He was the rain god, and the cloud gatherer, who wielded the terrible thunderbolt. His breastplate was the aegis, his bird the eagle, his tree the oak. Zeus was the youngest son of the Titan gods, Cronus and Rhea, and the brother of the Poseidon, Hades, Hestia, Demeter, and Hera.

According to one of the ancient myths of the birth of Zeus, his father Cronus, having heard the prophecy that he might be dethroned by one of his children, swallowed them as they were born. Upon the birth of Zeus, his mother Rhea wrapped a stone in swaddling clothes for Cronus to swallow and concealed the infant god in Crete, where he was reared by nymphs. When Zeus grew to maturity, he forced Cronus to disgorge the other children, who were eager to take vengeance on their father. In the war that followed, the Titans fought on the side of Cronus, but Zeus and the other gods were successful, and the Titans were banished to Tartarus.

Zeus henceforth ruled over the sky, and his brothers Poseidon and Hades were given power over the sea and the underworld, respectively. The earth was to be ruled in common by all three. He is represented as the god of justice and mercy, the protector of the weak, and the punisher of the wicked. He used his weapon, the thunderbolt or lightning bolt, to punish those who defied him.