

Greek Mythology

D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths

Teacher Guide



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Famous Men of Rome
Teacher & Student Guides
by Cheryl Lowe & Leigh Lowe

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By Cheryl Lowe & Leigh Lowe

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Why Study Greek Mythology?

Next to the Bible, Greek myths are the most important set of stories in our history. Greek myths are universal stories that describe human character types and the human situation in a wonderfully imaginative and entertaining way. They are everywhere in English literature and in our culture, from the names of cars and shoes to the names of constellations and planets.

Except for the Hebrews all ancient cultures possessed a mythology. The Greeks developed the most extensive, imaginative, and literary mythology in the Western world. Many ancient mythologies had dark and evil gods like the Baal religion in the Old Testament, the religion that Phoenicia and Carthage had spread throughout the Mediterranean world.

The Greeks had the good sense to create their gods in the image of man and give them the better, if sometimes comical, attributes of the human race. The Greek gods, being quite human themselves, detested human sacrifice. As a literary creation, Greek mythology provides us with symbols and metaphors for human types, attributes, and ideals. Greek mythology is universal in our culture, because like Latin and Greek, artists, writers, musicians, and scientists have mined it extensively for two millennia.

Greek myths and other ancient myths and legends often have similarities to Bible stories. These parallels provide good opportunities for distinguishing between the Bible and other ancient writings. The fashion today is to lump Scripture with all other ancient writings as unreliable myth and legend.

For instance, the human race seems to have a collective memory of a universal flood and a "Garden of Eden" since almost all ancient mythologies have these two stories. This can be taken as nearly conclusive evidence for the opposite conclusions that (1) these two "myths," in fact, refer to things that are really true or (2) the universality of these stories shows that they are merely myths.

One way to approach this with your students is to ask them what they would think if these stories were found only in Scripture and nowhere else. The skeptic could then say that their uniqueness is conclusive evidence for their unreliability since if they were actually true, other cultures would have also had myths about such universal events. So "evidence" can be used to support whatever position one wants to believe. Students who have gone through these thought processes will be prepared for the mythologizing of the Bible that will confront them later in life.

A mythology is a culture's attempt to supply answers to the mysteries of human life. Man uses his imagination to penetrate beyond what his senses and reason can tell him. The Greeks in both their mythology and philosophy represent man's best efforts to penetrate to the divine. The Greeks show the limitations of the unaided human mind and by doing so witness to the divine origin of Scripture. The Greeks who created gods in the image of man, prepared the way for the God who created man in his own image.

How to Use This Guide

This guide was written to enhance the study of Greek Mythology through the D'Aulaires Book of Greek Myths text. We have been developing this guide for several years at the Highlands Latin School and we refined it for your use. With this guide, your students should have all the tools to learn (and remember) the information foundational to the study of Greek mythology and ancient history. After going through this text your students should easily recognize the abundant mythological references in the modern world. This guide has served our community well and we hope you find it equally helpful.

Ora et Labora,

Cheryl Lowe and Leigh Lowe

1. Facts to Know. This section highlights the most important information in the D'Aulaires textbook. It is laid out in an easy to read format with clear and concise definitions for each noteworthy fact. This section should be the foundation of memory work and should be drilled throughout the year. Ideally, a student who has received this material should be able to recite all of the information in each of the Facts to Know sections by the end of the year. Use the bold faced words as prompts and require students to recite definitions. Say, for example: "Zeus." Students should reply from memory, "youngest child of Cronus, king of the gods." If you are interested in copybook work, this is the best section to have students neatly rewrite in a separate notebook. An asterisk (*) marks locations that can be found on the map of Greece in the Appendix.

2. Vocabulary. We have noticed that students often skim over difficult vocabulary in subjects other than spelling, writing, English, or grammar. The *D'Aulaires'* text is rich with interesting and advanced vocabulary. We have identified the words that might be new or challenging to students so they can be defined or discussed either before reading or as the words come up in the stories. We have found that learning new vocabulary words in context (with the other words in the sentence) helps make the word more memorable and easier to understand. Try to locate the words in the text. Discuss the meaning and spelling of these words. Think of other places the challenging words have appeared, i.e., as a Latin derivative or in a piece of literature. It is generally better for students to learn new vocabulary from a teacher rather than by simply copying from a dictionary if that is possible. Use the words in this section for spelling and vocabulary tests. Students may also rewrite the words in the section as a copybook exercise. Vocabulary words are given in context. Definitions refer to the singular form of nouns and the infinitive form of verbs.

3. Comprehension Questions. The comprehension questions in this book have been thoughtfully prepared to glean the most valuable information from the stories and direct students to identify the virtues and follies of the heroes. It is best for students to write answers as complete sentences and practice proper punctuation and capitalization. If your student has large handwriting, use a separate notebook for comprehension questions (and be sure to keep it all year).

4. Activities. This section capitalizes on the gem of the *D'Aulaires'* book, the gorgeous and detailed pictures. We have learned through teaching with this book that these pictures provide a valuable memory aid and serve as a fantastic launching pad for engaging discussions. The prompts direct students to identify the specific details that bring the stories alive. Students may label the items in pencil in the book or identify orally. Also included are enrichment activities that help a student see the context of the stories in the book with timelines, family trees, maps, discussion questions, drill questions, drawing, research, and writing prompts. The guide integrates lessons from Bible stories, *Famous Men of Rome*, and the modern world. The guide offers everything that is needed for this section in the back of the book, starting on page 94. Answers are also provided for the difficult or objective discussion questions. Drawing Pages are provided at the end of each Review Lesson. Activities marked with an asterisk (*) may be given as composition exercises.

Facts to Know



Gaea	<i>Mother Earth, mother of all living things</i>
Uranus	<i>Father Sky</i>
Titans & Titanesses	<i>first Children of Earth and Uranus; giants</i>
Cyclopes	<i>one-eyed children of Earth and Uranus</i>
Tartarus	<i>the deepest, darkest pit of the earth</i>
Cronus	<i>youngest Titan; overcame Uranus</i>
Rhea	<i>wife and sister of Cronus; a Titaness</i>
Zeus	<i>youngest child of Cronus; King of gods</i>
Crete*	<i>island where Zeus was raised</i>

* Asterisk indicates map locations.

Vocabulary

1. **magnificent** to behold superb, wonderful
2. warm and **bountiful** mother plentiful, abundant
3. lord of the **universe** milky way galaxy, the world
4. **tremendously** strong smiths extremely, immensely
5. looked at them with **disgust** repugnance
6. of hardest **flint** a hard stone
7. she fashioned a **sickle** curved metal blade with a short handle
8. out of her **crevices** narrow opening, crack
9. his **monstrous** brothers gigantic, unnatural
10. But Rhea **mourned** [mourn] to express sorrow or grief



Olden Times, Gaea, The Titans, Cronus

Comprehension Questions

1. How were the Greek gods similar to mortals in olden times? How were they different?
The Greek gods looked and acted like people, but were taller, more handsome, and could do no wrong.
2. What did Uranus do to upset Mother Earth?
Uranus seized his children and threw them into Tartarus.
3. Who became first Lord of the Universe and how did he acquire this position?
Cronus became the Lord of the Universe by daring to obey his mother and taking a sickle to his father, Uranus.
4. What did Cronus do to all of his children? Why?
Cronus swallowed the newborns in fear that they would one day overthrow him.
5. How did Rhea and Mother Earth fool Cronus?
When Rhea's sixth child was born, Rhea wrapped a rock in baby clothes and tricked Cronus into swallowing the rock instead of the newborn. Rhea then hid the baby in a secret cave on the Island of Crete.
6. Who was the sixth child of Rhea, hidden in youth? Zeus

Activities

- Identify:** (p. 11) Mother Earth and Father Sky. Why are there stars in their eyes?
(p. 13) Mother Earth, Uranus, Cyclopes, Titans, Titanesses, Cronus, 100-eyed children.
What is Cronus doing? What is Uranus doing?
(p. 14) Cronus. What is he doing? What is in his stomach? Where is his sickle?
(p. 15) Rhea, Zeus. Why is she running away?
(map) Crete
1. When was the Greek Golden Age? the Biblical Golden Age? What are the characteristics of a golden age?
The Greek Golden Age was during the reign of Cronus. The Biblical Golden Age was at the time of Adam and Eve, before the fall. A golden age is associated with harmony among men, nature, and God.
 2. Genesis 1:27 says, "God created man in his own image." In consideration of this statement, how did the Greeks perceive their gods?
The Greeks perceived their gods to be in the image of men, and conversely, men in the image of their gods. Because of this, they were prepared for the idea of man presented in the Gospel. They also recognized that there was something greater than and beyond the self.
 3. Think of some modern things that have the name Titan. Why is that name used?
Persons or groups use the name "Titan" to project an image of great power and size. An example is the Tennessee Titans football team. Powerful men such as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie are metaphorically called "titans."



Facts to Know

Amaltheia	<i>fairy goat, horns flowed with ambrosia and nectar</i>
Aegis	<i>breastplate of Zeus</i>
Metis	<i>first wife of Zeus; goddess of prudence</i>
Prometheus, Epimetheus	<i>Titans who left to join Zeus in revolt</i>
lightning bolt	<i>Zeus' weapon; symbol of his power</i>
Atlas	<i>strongest Titan; carries the sky on his shoulders</i>
Typhon and Echidna	<i>monsters sent by Mother Earth to fight Zeus</i>
Mount Olympus*	<i>highest mountain in Greece; home of the gods</i>
Iris	<i>fleet-footed messenger of gods; traveled on a rainbow</i>
Hestia	<i>goddess of the hearth; daughter of Cronus</i>

Vocabulary

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. tended by gentle nymphs | <u>minor nature gods</u> |
| 2. an impenetrable breastplate | <u>cannot be penetrated, pierced</u> |
| 3. goddess of prudence | <u>caution, good sense</u> |
| 4. cunningly tricked him | <u>slyly</u> |
| 5. the herb would make him unconquerable | <u>unable to be conquered, defeated</u> |
| 6. frothing waves stood mountain high | <u>bubbling, foaming</u> |
| 7. venom dripped from his evil eyes | <u>poison secreted by some snakes, spiders</u> |
| 8. Echidna, his hideous mate | <u>horrible, ugly</u> |
| 9. She cowered [cower] in a cave | <u>to cringe, tremble in fear</u> |
| 10. a gown of iridescent drops | <u>glittering with rainbow colors</u> |



Zeus and his Family

Comprehension Questions

- 1. What good advice did Metis give Zeus regarding Cronus?**
Metis advised Zeus not to try to overthrow his child-devouring father by himself. Metis warned Zeus he must also have strong allies.
- 2. List the allies of Zeus and describe how Metis helped Zeus acquire them.**
Zeus' siblings, the other children of Cronus—Hades, Poseidon, Hestia, Demeter and Hera—all joined forces with Zeus after Metis had tricked Cronus into eating a magic herb that made him so sick that he vomited up five of his children.
- 3. Who were Prometheus and Epimetheus? Why did they join Zeus in the fight with the Titans?**
Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus left the Titans to join Zeus. Prometheus could look into the future and knew Zeus would win.
- 4. What were the weapons the Cyclopes made for Zeus and his brothers?**
The Cyclopes made a trident (a three-pronged spear) for Poseidon, a cap of invisibility for Hades, and lightning bolts for Zeus.
- 5. Describe the monsters, Typhon and Echidna.**
Typhon and Echidna were monsters so fearful that when the gods saw them they changed themselves into animals and fled in terror. Typhon had 100 heads that touched the stars. His eyes dripped venom and his mouth poured lava. Echidna was his hideous mate and bore horrid offspring that future gods would challenge.
- 6. Who built the palace for the gods? Describe it.**
The one-eyed Cyclopes built the palace. The palace was hidden in the clouds and was protected by the goddesses of the seasons. Light in the palace never failed. The Olympian gods and goddesses sat on twelve golden thrones and Hestia tended the sacred fire in the hall.

Activities

- Identify:** (p. 16) Almaltheia, Zeus, ambrosia, nectar, nymphs.
(p. 18) Echidna, Echidna offspring. Why did Zeus let Echidna live?
(p. 19) Zeus, Zeus's weapons.
(p. 20) Iris, Mt. Olympus, gate of clouds, goddesses of seasons.
(map) Mt. Olympus
- 1. Begin filling in the list (Appendix) of Greek heroes hidden in youth. Who would be added first?**
Zeus
 - 2. Can you think of other Biblical or Roman history examples?**
Moses, Romulus and Remus
 - 3. What is a modern atlas?**
An atlas is a bound book of maps, charts, or graphs of the earth and skies.
 - 4. Explain the expression, "A revolution eats its children." Discuss how it is illustrated in Greek mythology.**
Those who rebel against legitimate authority end up destroying their own children (as shown in pictures of Cronus). In other words, the sins of the fathers are visited on the children. Greek mythology offers the example through both Cronus, who overthrew Uranus, and Zeus who then overthrew Cronus.