

# How are Greek Gods and Goddesses Viewed in Today's Popular Culture?

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## Academic Setting

I am a teacher at Cleveland Middle School, a public middle school in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Our school demographics range from lower fixed income to middle and upper middle-incomes. Student population is categorized into the following:

fifty-five percent Anglo, thirty-eight percent Hispanic, five percent Native American, and two percent African American. 250 are special education students. There are approximately 900 students enrolled at Cleveland. Also, thirty-five percent of our students receive free or reduced breakfast and lunch.

Our school is a **Coalition School**, for which Ted Sizer and Deborah Meier put together Ten Essential Principles that all teachers and students focus on throughout the school year.

The Ten Principles are:

**Focus-** Schools help all students to use their minds well.

**Simple Goals-** Less is more. Schools must have in-depth study.

**Universal Goals-** School practice should be tailor-made to meet the needs of every group or class of adolescents.

**Personalization-** Smaller class size allows teachers to know students.

**Student-as-Worker-** Student is engaged in his/her learning; no "sage-on-sage."

**Demonstration of Mastery-** Students exhibit their mastery and understanding of subject matter.

**Tone-** Tone of a school should be safe child-centered.

**Teacher-as-Generalist-** Teacher acts as facilitator or counselor.

**Budget-** Budget is the concern of the administration.

**Cultural Diversity-** Students and staff recognize and

respect diversity.

Our school also shares the vision of subdividing the core subjects into blocks of

teaching. There are two-teacher "families" wherein one teacher teaches a math and science block and the other teaches a social studies and language arts block. The "family" concept is very important to our school as a whole. It gives the teachers the opportunity to teach sixty students instead of 150 students. We get to know more about the student this way. However, special education students don't feel as if they belong to a family, since they are with the same core teacher all day. Therefore, each special education teacher is grouped with a regular education "family." We incorporate the same lesson plans into our teaching styles, but at various levels. It promotes increased self-awareness in setting personal standards, positive risk-taking, and social acceptance. The special education students don't feel like the "odd-man-out" anymore. In order for this "family" concept to work, we are given forty-five minutes a day to collaborate and to design learning activities that provide appropriate challenges for all types of learners. Also, this allows us to deal with any problems that may arise throughout the day. All in all, this unit will not only affect the students in my classroom, but the students that are in my "family" as well.

The students that are in my classroom are sixth grade special education students in a self-contained classroom, where all core subject areas are integrated during the day. The class ranges throughout the year from a 12:1 PTR (pupil teacher ratio) to a 15:1 PTR. Each student has a specific learning disability or a behavioral disorder. The abilities in my students range from a second grade level to a ninth grade level in reading and reading comprehension. Their confidence and self-esteem are very poor. They are easily distracted, and it is very difficult for them to retain material that is taught to them on a daily basis. Their family backgrounds are as diverse as their learning disabilities.

Rationale

*Essential Question: "How is Greek Mythology related to today's popular culture?"*

By reading *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*, the students will be introduced to the creation myth, Zeus and his family, and the minor gods, which will include all the mortal descendants of Zeus. Students will not only read the myths, but will be able to interpret the myths in their own words. Also, they will compare themes to things they see on television or relate them to experiences in their own lives. They will

choose specific myths and act them out. Then they will discuss how they are relevant in today's society. Finally, students will be asked to produce a short comparative writing on Greek gods and today's celebrity archetypes.

### Objectives

- Students will compare similarities and differences between myth, saga, legend and folktale.
- Students will identify cause and effect relationships.
- Students will describe how the people of the world are connected over time, showing similarities and differences based upon social studies knowledge of why those similarities or differences exist.
- Students will evaluate ways regional, ethnic and national cultures influence individuals' daily lives.
- Students will recognize underlying messages in order to identify recurring themes.
- Students will examine connections between a variety of cultures, both world wide and within American society, as depicted through a variety of literature and media.

### New Mexico State and Albuquerque Public Schools Standards and Benchmarks

Social Studies 5-8 (SS)- The students will:

1c – describe how the peoples of the world are connected over time, showing similarities and differences

3a – use social studies vocabulary and concepts

3b – interpret and report social studies information from diverse sources

6a – describe personal changes and connections to social, cultural and historical contexts within community, the nation, and the world

6b – evaluate ways regional, ethnic and national cultures influence individuals' daily lives

6c – analyze how perceptions, attitudes, values and beliefs affect the development of personal identity

11a – analyze ways groups, societies and cultures meet human needs

11c – analyze complex societal patterns for preserving and transmitting culture while adapting to environmental or social change

These content standards were taken from: <http://sde.state.nm.us>

## Language Arts 6<sup>th</sup> (LA)

Strand I: Reading Process (1-6) The student employs appropriate reading strategies to read and interpret increasingly complex texts for a variety of purposes.

Strand II: Reading Analysis (1,2,3,5,6,14,16,19) The student responds to, examines, and critiques historically and culturally significant issues and events portrayed in literature that both illustrate and affect people, society, and individuals.

Strand III: Expressive Language: Writing (1,3,5,6) The student writes effectively for different audiences and purposes.

Strand V: Receptive Language: Listening and Viewing (1,2,4,5,6,7) The students demonstrate, analyze, evaluate, and reflect upon the skills and processes used to communicate by listening to and viewing a variety of auditory and visual works.

Strand VI: Research (1,2,3,6) The student conducts and compiles research data, synthesizes findings, and develops an original conclusion to increase personal and community depth of knowledge.

Standards were taken from:

<http://www.aps.edu/aps/standards/index.html>

## **Context and Background**

Myth, saga, legend, and folk tale are very similar, yet different in unique ways. The students are usually confused and frustrated when they are asked to differentiate between vocabulary words that are closely related. They will learn how to separate myth, saga, legend, and folk tale and understand how they are relevant to their own lives.

Myth comes from the Greek word "mythos," and is usually a story that involves gods and/or heroes whose adventures represent significant aspects of human experience. A myth is a traditional, typically ancient story dealing with supernatural beings. Myths were usually transmitted by word of mouth for several generations before they were ever written down. In watching the animated video of *Hercules* students will get a better understanding of a hero myth as Hercules is seen performing his labors to become immortal.

A saga is a story or a series of traditional tales about a person, place, or event. It could also be a narrative or legend of heroic exploits, as in *Jason and the Argonauts*. Jason undergoes several heroic episodes in

his journey to get the Golden Fleece.

A legend is a story transmitted from the distant past, especially one based at least in part on some historical event. This could be a famous event as in the cycle of legends related to the Trojan War.

A folk tale has an anonymous origin, but has traditional customs, tales, and beliefs. They give expression to deep universal emotions such as joy, grief, fear, jealousy, wonder, and triumph. These emotions are seen in the tale of La Llorona, from Mexico.

### In Olden Times

In the beginning of time there was only Chaos, meaning emptiness. From Chaos emerged the first three immortal beings: Gaea, Mother Earth; Tartarus, the pit of the underworld; and Eros, the god of love.

The explanation of the beginning of the universes is represented in the creation myth. Gaea, the mother of the earth was lonesome, so she created Uranus the sky and the first ruler. By herself she also created the mountains and Pontus, the sea. Gaea then married her creation Uranus, and together they had many offspring. The first of the many children were three sons, the Hundred-handed giants, which were incredibly large, strong, and frightening. Uranus was terrified of their strength so he confined them to Tartarus. The next of the children were the three Cyclopes. Their uniqueness was that each Cyclops had only one huge wheel-shaped eye set in the middle of his forehead. They were the first immortal craftsmen, because of their skillfulness. Uranus was jealous of them so he bound them with strong chains and sent them hurling deep within their mother, Gaea (Mother Earth), to Tartarus, where their brothers were being kept. Gaea then bore Uranus the twelve Titans.

The twelve Titans consisted of six male glorious gods and six sisters, the Titanesses, whom they married. They were as follows: **Oceanus**, who became the god of the Oceanus river, which encircled the Earth. He married his sister **Tethys** and they both became the parents of all the river gods and sea goddesses and the thousands and thousands ocean nymphs; **Coeus**, the Titan of intelligence and father of Leto, married his sister **Phoebe**, Titan of the moon and mother of Leto. **Hyperion**, became the god of the sun who then married his sister **Theia**, who together bore Eos (the dawn), Helios (the sun), and Selene (the moon). **Iapetus** married a sea goddess and is the father of Epimetheus, Menoetius, and Atlas by Clymene. **Themis**, the Titan of justice and order and the mother of the Fates and the Seasons. **Mnemosyne**, the Titan Goddess of memory and the mother of the Muses. **Crius** was also one of the Titanesses, but not much was

written about her. **Cronus** is the youngest of all the children. He and his wife was **Rhea**, his sister, they produce Zeus and his older siblings, the future Olympians.

Uranus was not terrified of his twelve Titan children, so he left them alone. Gaea was enraged with her husband and how he had left his other children in Tartarus. She created flint and with the flint she fashioned a sickle. She then confronted her Titan children and asked for their help to free their brothers from the Underworld. Hence, Uranus' ruling ended when Cronus, who was encouraged by Gaea, castrated his father.

Cronus then became the ruling Titan of Olympus with his wife/sister Rhea. Cronus was given the title "Father Time," and with his sickle he would harvest the grains of time. Words like chronology and chronicle are said to be derived for the name Cronus. Gaea, Cronus' mother, told him that his son, too, would overthrow him. Therefore, when Rhea gave birth to their first child, Hestia, Cronus swallowed her whole. Within the next three years Rhea had three more children, two daughters (Demeter and Hera) and one son (Hades). When Rhea would present her husband with newborn children he would do as he had done with the first and swallow them. The same thing happened to her fifth child, Poseidon. Rhea was very upset with this, so she went to her mother, Gaea, who was still upset with Cronus. For not having freed his brothers from Tartarus. Gaea devised a plan with Rhea that her next born (Zeus) would be raised on the island Crete by nymphs. To fool Cronus, he would be given a rock wrapped in a blanket. Cronus was given the rock, and he did like he had done in the past and swallowed what he thought was his child. He became ill from swallowing the rock. He vomited the rock first and then his five children in the order that he had ingested them. They were still alive because they were divine.

Zeus then came back to Olympus, and with the help of his brothers and sisters he fought against his father, Cronus, and other immortal Titans for control over the universe. The battle lasted ten years, until Gaea helped Zeus by telling him to go to Tartarus and set her sons free. In return, the Hundred-handed giants and the Cyclopes would fight on Zeus' side and they would defeat Cronus. In the end, that is exactly what happened.

### The Rule of Zeus

Zeus was now the leader of the Olympian gods, so out of Chaos had come a universe that was complete. Next came the council of the twelve major Olympian gods would reign in Mt.Olympus:

## *Zeus*

Zeus is god of the sky, weather and especially rain. His weapon is a thunderbolt, which he hurls at those who displease him. He is married to Hera, but is famous for his many affairs. He protects political and social institutions including state, family, hospitality and oaths. He is associated with the thunderbolt, the staff (scepter), scales, the aegis, the eagle, the lion, a garland of wild olive or oak leaves, Nike (victory), and the throne. His Roman name is Jupiter, or Jove.

## *Hera*

Hera is Zeus' wife and sister, also one of the highest ranking females. She is the protector of marriage and takes special care of married women, especially women in childbirth. Most stories concerning Hera have to do with her jealous revenge for Zeus's infidelities. Her sacred animals are the cow and the peacock. Her favorite city is Argos. She is associated with the crown, polos (high headdress), scepter, wedding veil, peacock, and cuckoo. Her Roman name is Juno.

## *Poseidon*

Poseidon is the brother of Zeus. He became god of the sea. He was widely worshiped by sailors. He married Amphitrite, a granddaughter of the Titan Oceanus. He desired Demeter, and she asked him to make the most beautiful animal the world had ever seen. To impress her, Poseidon created the first horse. His weapon is the trident, which can shake the earth, and shatter any object. He has a quarrelsome personality and is greedy. He had a series of disputes with other gods when he tried to take over their cities. He is associated with the trident, dolphin, horse, bull, Triton (merman), and a ship's beak. His Roman name is Neptune.

## *Demeter*

Demeter is the second daughter of Cronus and Rhea. She is the goddess of corn, grain, and the harvest. It is Demeter who makes the crops grow each year. The first loaf of bread from the harvest is sacrificed in her honor. Also, she is intimately associated with the seasons. Her daughter Persephone was abducted by Hades to be his wife in the underworld. In her anger at her daughter's abduction, Demeter laid a curse on the world that caused plants to wither and die. Zeus became alarmed and assisted in Persephone's return. That is how the seasons come to be; Persephone returns four months out of the year, which is spring and when she returns to the underworld, Demeter withdraws her gifts and creates winter. Demeter is also associated with fertility. She is associated with sheaves of grain, the

polos (high headdress), scepter, torch, and the sacrificial bowl. Her Roman name is Ceres.

### *Apollo or Apollon*

Apollo is the son of Zeus and Leto. He has a twin sister, Artemis. He is the god of music and plays a golden lyre. He is also known for prophecy, medicine, poetry and dance, archery, youth and manly beauty. One of Apollo's daily tasks is to harness his chariot with four horses and drive the sun across the sky. He is associated with the tripod, omphalos, lyre, bow or quiver of arrows (golden arrows), laurel crown, peplos (robe), hawk, raven or crow, and the fawn. His Roman name is Phoibos or Phoebus.

### *Artemis*

Artemis is the daughter of Zeus and Leto, and she has a twin brother, Apollo. She is the lady of wild things. She is the huntsman of the gods, and she hunts with silver arrows. She became associated with the moon. She is a virgin goddess and the goddess of chastity. She presides over childbirth, which may seem odd for a virgin, but this association goes back to causing Leto no pain when she was born. The cypress is her tree. She is the protector of the young. She is associated with the bow and quiver, a short sleeveless hunting dress, buskins (high boots), a narrow ribbon in hair, deer, the wild goat, boar, bear, quail, and the torch. Her Roman name is Diana.

### *Athena*

Athena is the daughter of Zeus. She sprang fully-grown, in armor, from Zeus' forehead, and thus has no mother. She is fierce and brave in battle, but only fights to protect the state and home from outside enemies. She is the goddess of the city, handicrafts, and agriculture. She invented the bridle (which permitted man to tame horses) the trumpet, the flute, the pot, the rake, the plow, the yoke, the ship, and the chariot. She is the embodiment of wisdom, reason, and purity. Her favorite city is Athens. Her tree is the olive. The owl is her bird. She is a virgin goddess. She is associated with the helmet, shield, spear, aegis, Nike, lamp, distaff, owl, and snake. Her Roman name is Minerva.

### *Hermes*

Hermes is the son of Zeus and Maia (a Titan daughter). He is the messenger for Zeus. He is the fastest of the gods. He wears winged sandals, a winged hat, and carries a magic wand. He is the god of thieves and of commerce. He is the guide for the dead to go to the underworld. He invented the lyre, the pipes, the musical scale,

astronomy, weights and measures, boxing, gymnastics, and the care of olive trees. Hermes is known as the patron, the traveler, and the "lucky find." He is associated with a hat, kerykeion (or caduceus: herald's staff), winged sandals, a short cloak, tortoise-shell lyre, ram, and the shepherd's staff. His Roman name is Mercury.

### *Aphrodite*

Aphrodite is the goddess of love, desire, beauty and fertility. In addition to her natural gifts she has a magical girdle (known as a bikini belt) which compels anyone she wishes to desire her. There are two accounts of her birth. One says that she is the daughter of Zeus and Dione. The other goes back to when Cronus castrated Uranus and tossed his severed genitals into the sea. Aphrodite then arose from the sea foam on a giant scallop and walked to shore in Cyprus. She is the wife of Hephaestus. The myrtle is her tree. The dove, swan and sparrow are her birds. She is associated with the mirror, apple, beautiful clothes, and cosmetics. Her Roman name is Venus.

### *Ares*

Ares is the son of Zeus and Hera, but both parents disliked him. He is the god of war. He is considered murderous and bloodstained. He was caught in the act of adultery with Aphrodite, which caused public ridicule for Hephaestus. His bird is the vulture. His animal is the dog. He is associated with armor and weapons. His Roman name is Mars.

### *Hephaestus*

Hephaestus is the son of Zeus and Hera, although sometimes it is said that Hera alone produced him and that he has no father. He is the only god said to be physically ugly and lame. It is also said that he became lame when Hera saw that she had an ugly child, and she flung him from Mt. Olympus into the sea. Another story says that when Zeus and Hera were having a disagreement, Hephaestus took Hera's side in the argument and Zeus flung him off Mt. Olympus. He is the god of fire and the forge. He is the smith who armored the gods. He uses a volcano as his forge. He is the patron god of both smiths and weavers. He is kind and peace loving. His wife is Aphrodite. He is associated with smith's dress, hammer, anvil, bellows, forge and fire. Roman name Vulcan or Mulciber.

### *Dionysus or Bakchos/Bacchus*

He is the god of vegetable life, especially the grapevine and ivy, wine and winemaking and all liquids, fertility, poetry, song, and drama. He has a dual nature: on the one hand bringing joy and divine ecstasy and on the other brutal, unthinking, rage. This reflects both sides of wine's

nature. Dionysus can drive a man mad. No normal fetters can hold him or his followers. Dionysus is the son of Zeus and Semele. He is the only god to have a mortal parent, Semele, who was burnt to a crisp when Zeus revealed himself to her. Zeus however rescued Dionysus and stitched him into his thigh to hold him until he was ready to be born and to protect him from Hera. His birth from Zeus alone conferred immortality. This did not stop Hera, who was still jealous. She arranged for the Titans to kill him, and they ripped his body into pieces. However, Rhea brought him back to life. Zeus then arranged for his protection and turned him over to the mountain nymphs to be raised. Dionysus is accompanied by the Maenads - wild women, flushed with wine, shoulders draped with fawn skin, carrying rods tipped with pinecones. His worshipers would worship him in the woods, where they would go into mad states and rip apart and eat raw any animal they came upon. Dionysus is also one of the few who was able to bring a dead person out of the underworld. He even overthrew Thanatos and brought back his mother, Semele, from the underworld. Unlike the other gods Dionysus was not only outside his believers, but also within them. At these times a man might be greater than himself and do work he otherwise could not. He is associated with the grapevine, ivy vine, crown of ivy, cluster of grapes, thyrsos (vine-wrapped staff), kantharos (drinking cup), clothing of fawn or leopard skin, leopard-drawn chariot, leopard, deer, Satyrs, Pan, Bacchantes, Phallus. Roman name Liber.

The following were important Gods, but were not on the council of the twelve major gods who ruled on Mt. Olympus. However, they do play important roles in Greek mythology.

### *Hades or Pluton*

He is the fourth child of Cronus and Rhea and the brother of Zeus. Hades is the god of the underworld, including Tartarus, ruling over the dead. He is a greedy god who is greatly concerned with increasing his number of subjects. Good wealth is a positive attribute due to the precious metals mined from the earth. He has a helmet that makes him invisible. Hades abducted Persephone as his wife. Hades is king of the dead, but death is the god Thanatos. He is associated with the cap of darkness, scepter, throne, chariot and horses and the cornucopia (horn of plenty). Roman name Dis.

### *Persephone or Kore*

She is the daughter of Zeus and Demeter. After her abduction by Hades she became his wife and queen of the underworld. She has the same attributes as her mother Demeter, which are agriculture and fertility. Roman name Proserpina.

### *Hestia*

She is the first child of Cronus and Rhea (last to come out of his mouth), and sister of Zeus. She gave up her seat in Mt. Olympus for Dionysus. She shows up very little in myths. Hestia is known as the virgin goddess of the hearth, which is the symbol of the house. She taught mortals how to build houses and then safeguarded them. Each city contains a public hearth, which is sacred to Hestia, and the fire is not allowed to go out. Roman name Vesta.

### *Eros*

He is the son of Aphrodite. He is the god of love (in particular erotic, romantic love), carnal desire, and fertility. He is often represented blind folded, because love is often blind. His "weapons" are darts and arrows. The tips are known to have magic to produce uncontrollable love or insurmountable disinterest in the first person seen by Eros's victims after wounding. In Hesiod's creation myth, Eros is one of the first four principals, but in the later myths he is always known as Aphrodite's boy. He is associated with the bow, quiver of arrows and wings. Roman name Cupid or Amor.

The following are other important deities, which will be important to the students as they are trying to get into character for their play presentations. They will need to know who these gods/goddesses are and some attributes about them.

### *Herakles*

His name means "Glory of Hera." He is known as the strongest man on earth. He is also one of the most popular Greek hero archetypes. His mother was a mortal, Princess Alcmena, and his father was Zeus. Hera hates Herakles from birth and tries to destroy him on several occasions. She makes him go mad and he kills his children thinking they are wild beasts. He goes to the oracle in Delphi, so that he can learn what he must do to pay for his crime. He must serve King Eurystheus for ten years, where he will be told to perform his Twelve Labors: 1) killing the Nemean Lion, 2) killing the Hydra of Lerna, 3) capturing the Cerynitian hind, 4) capturing the Erymanthian boar, 5) cleaning the Augean stables, 6) removing the Stymphalian birds, 7) capturing the Cretan bull, 8) capturing the Thracian horses (mares of Diomedes), 9) bringing back the girdle (belt) of Hippolyte, 10) bringing back the cattle of Geryon, 11) bringing back the Golden Apples of the Hesperides, 12) capturing Cerberus. In the end he is rewarded with immortality on Mt. Olympus and marries Hebe. Roman name Hercules.

### *Hebe*

She is the daughter of Hera and Zeus. Her main function is to service the gods and is the cupbearer. She is known for eternal youth. She married the immortal Herakles. Her associations are a cup or a bowl.

### *The Graces*

They are three goddesses personifying beauty and charm and they inspire artistic creation. They are the daughters of Zeus and Eurynome. Aglaia, which is "splendor," Euphrosyne is "mirth," and Thalia is "good cheer."

### *The Muses*

The nine are daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, and they are the patrons of literature and the fine arts. They are known for their music, which brings joy to all that hear it. Each muse has her own specialty: Clio is "History", Urania is "Astronomy", Melpomene is "Tragedy", Thalia is "Comedy", Terpsichore is "Dance", Calliope is "Epic Poetry", Erato is "Love Poetry", Polyhymnia is "Sacred Songs/Hymns", and Euterpe is "Lyric Poetry."

### *The Erinyes (Furies)*

They were born from Uranus' blood when he was castrated. They are the goddesses of blood vengeance. They pursue wrong-doers relentlessly, until death, often driving them to suicide. They are particularly concerned with matricide.

### *The Fates (Moirae)*

They were pictured as ancient women who spun, wove, and cut off the individual threads signifying human lives. They had the power of deciding a person's destiny. Clotho, she is the spinner, spins the thread of life. Lachesis, she is the measurer, chooses how long one will live. Atropos, is the sign of death and cuts the thread of life.

### *Nemesis*

Her name means righteous anger, due enactment, or divine vengeance. This goddess helped avenge those who were wronged.

### *Ate*

A minor goddesses who personifies moral blindness.

Once the myths are learned and the students get an understanding of Greek mythology, they will be able to recognize how it is relevant in

their own lives. They will be able to connect the gods to celebrities who are well known in the twenty-first century. Students want to know why we are studying particular activities and they want it to mean something to them. They will see that even today we still tie god like figures to almost everything that happens in our day-to-day lives. You hear names of the gods in the hip-hop music that the students listen to. Hermes, who is the messenger for Zeus and is the fastest of the gods and who wears winged shoes, is associated with FTD, the florist (they will deliver flowers the fastest and they even have the same symbol of the wing printed on their trucks and in their commercial advertisements).

Once the gods/goddesses have been introduced the students will then be asked to list their attributes, which together will outline an archetype. Once these characteristics and even actions are listed, the students can then compare the lists with celebrities they know. The list of attributes will suggest modern parallels.

### **Implementation/Lesson Plans**

The following lessons will be covered in six to seven weeks, depending on how well the students grasp the concepts and master the desired outcomes. All of the lessons will fulfill New Mexico State content standards in social studies and Albuquerque Public Schools content standards in language arts. The lessons will be taught in a ninety-minute block.

\*Students will be expected to take notes daily.

#### Week One: Learning the Terms

Purpose: To teach students the basic meanings of myth, saga, legend, and folk tale and have them compare and contrast the four key concepts with each other. Students will have to be reminded how these terms are intertwined with one another. Content Standard-Strand II.

Materials Needed: VCR, Videos of *Hercules & Jason and the Argonauts*, white paper, overhead projector

Day (1): Watch the video *Hercules*, describe the sequence of events. After the video explain the term "myth" to the students and relate the word to ideas in their own lives. Why is Hercules considered to be a myth? What makes a hero and why? What special attributes does a hero need to have?

Days (2 and 3): Watch the video *Jason and the Argonauts*, list the different events that take place in the video. Once the video is completed (will take a day in a half) introduce the term "saga" and

how this term relate to any stories that they may know from the modern day. Why was Jason's and the Argonauts' story considered a saga? What unique attributes were given to Jason to help him along the way? What is the difference between myth and saga?

Day (4): Introduce the last two terms: legend and folk tale. Will read picture books to distinguish the differences (legend – the Loch Ness Monster, and folk tale – *Beauty and the Beast*). Have students brainstorm with what they think the terms mean. How are they different?

Day (5): Have the students take a piece of white paper and have them fold it once (long ways) and then once more. The paper should have four sections. On the top of each section they will label Myth, Saga, Legend, and Folk Tale. Under each heading they will be given textbook meanings of each. As a class we will also give examples of each. On the back of the paper they will label the top like the other side and then write their own definition of the terms. If they are having a difficult time with this assignment they can write short examples of each or draw a picture of their idea.

Week Two and Three: Read the text *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*

Purpose: Using literature, students will understand Greek mythology and learn about the Olympian Gods. Content Standard-Strand I.

Materials Needed: A textbook for each student: *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*

Students will read about the Olympian gods and what characteristics each of them exhibit.

Week Four and Five: Research and Presentation

Purpose: To give the students time to fully understand one particular god and their attributes. Content Standard-Strand III and VI.

Materials Needed: Various books on Greek mythology (school or public library) Computer (access to the internet)

Students will be given a particular god to research, where they will focus on writing three complete and detailed paragraphs about their god. Then the students will write one paragraph comparing their god with a celebrity and how they can be associated with one another. They will then present their findings to the class. \*(They will need to do the collage activity first.)

\*A day during the research the students will be asked to bring in various magazines to cut images out of. With the magazines the students will cut out pictures of celebrities and make a collage. They will be asked why is that particular person considered a celebrity? What attributes are they associated with? Then the students will be asked to connect the celebrities to a Greek god. For example,

Madonna could be connected with Aphrodite, because they both exhibit love, desire and sexuality.

### Week Six: Acting Out Plays

Purpose: The students will get an idea of how Greek myths were presented on stage in front of an audience. It will also introduce the students to the Greek dramatic genre. Content Standard-Strand IV.

Materials Needed: Dr. Albert Cullum's book on plays: *Greek and Roman Plays for the Intermediate Grades*

Students will be divided into groups of six to ten, and they will be allowed to pick a myth from the book that they would like to act out. They will pick a character and study their lines. A lot of work will be done with pronouncing/enunciating the vocabulary the correct way. Then they will practice how the stage will be set and where everyone will stand when they enter or exit. (If time allows the students can be creative and design their own costumes and masks to use while they are on stage.)

After they act out their plays the students will have to create their own myth. They will be asked to devise a myth that explains the existence of some modern item, as an etiological myth.

### **Essay Scoring Rubric**

#### Sentences

\_\_\_\_\_ **Points**

**3 points**—There are no run-ons, fragments, or comma splices. The sentences show variety. (Some are short, some are long, some are simple, some are compound or complex.) The sentences are arranged in logical order, and some transition words (exp. first, next, then, therefore) are used.

**2 points**—There are only a few run-ons or fragments. There are only a few sentences which are confusing or out of order.

**1 point**—There are many run-ons or fragments. Only short, simple sentences are used. Some sentences repeat the same ideas.

#### Spelling/Punctuation

\_\_\_\_\_ **Points**

**3 points**—All basic words are spelled correctly. Punctuation and capitalization are correct.

**2 points**—There are only a few errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

**1 point**—There are many errors in punctuation capitalization, and spelling.

## Word Choice

### Points

**3 points**—Vocabulary is at a high level, and the writer chooses specific nouns and verbs rather than general one (exp. he glared at the toddler, rather than he saw her). Subject and verb agree (exp. he says, they say). Verbs are used correctly (exp. he brought, not he brang).

**2 points**—Vocabulary is okay, but the writer uses more general words than specific ones. There are a few problems with subject/verb agreement or verb use.

**1 point**—Vocabulary is "babyish." There are many errors in subject/verb agreement and verb use.

## Organization

### Points

**3 points**—There is an introductory paragraph, which makes the writer's thoughts clear and captures the reader's attention. The paragraphs which follow all support the thoughts stated in the introduction. Each paragraph has a topic sentence and several additional sentences which support the topic sentence with repeating ideas. There is a concluding paragraph, which answers the question, "How is the celebrity related to your Greek god/goddess?"

**2 points**—There is an introduction (which is not very interesting) and a conclusion (which just repeats the introduction). There are some good details in between, but not enough, and some are out of order. Sometimes the same ideas are repeated in different words.

**1 point**—There is no clear introduction or conclusion. The writer's thought is never stated clearly. There are only a few details, and they are not very helpful in supporting the thoughts of the writer. Some details may be confusing.

## **Bibliography and Resources**

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces Second Edition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972.

Deals with mythology and psychoanalysis, includes bibliographical references and has an index.

Artman, John H. *Ancient Greece –Independent Learning Unit (Heroes, Gods and Men)*. Parsippany, NJ: Good Apple, Inc., 1991.

Reproducible for the entire class. Includes timelines, answer keys and basic introduction to Greek society that allows for further study on an independent level.

Cullum, Albert. Ph.D. *Greek and Roman Plays – For the Intermediate Grades*. Parsippany, NJ: Fearon Teacher Aids, 1993.

A basic introduction to doing plays in the classroom. It gives an introduction as to what type of play it is and who the characters are, etc... Includes ideas for staging, costumes, and a vocabulary list to help students with terms before they perform the play.

\*D'Aulaire, Ingri and Edgar Parin. *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*. New York, NY: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1962.

A literary interpretation of Greek myths from the beginning of recorded time to the mortal descendants of Zeus and how the Muses fell silent.

Evelyn-White, Hugh. trans. Hesiod *Homeric Hymns Epic Cycle Homerica*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000.

An English translation of Greek literature. It contains early Greek epics and epic poetry.

\*Evslin, Bernard, Dorothy Evslin and Ned Hoopes. *Heroes and Monsters of Greek Myth*. New York, NY: Scholastic, 1967.

Contains readings on the demigods (Perseus, Daedalus, Theseus, Atlanta) and two fables (Midas and Pygmalion).

Hamilton, Edith. *Mythology- Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*. New York, NY: Mentor, 1969.

Contains several stories that deal with mythology. Would be very difficult for students with low reading abilities.

Harris, Stephen L. and Gloria Platzner. *Classical Mythology Images and Insights, Second Edition*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998.

An introduction to Greek myth which includes a vivid array of divinities, heroes, and heroines. The epic poems of Homer and Hesiod and the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Also, included are the Homeric Hymns and tragedies in full text.

\*Osborne, Mary Pope. *Favorite Greek Myths*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc., 1989.

Myths/stories: The Golden Touch, Ceyx and Alcyone, Minerva and Arachne, Apollo and Daphne, Echo and

Narcissus, Ceres and Proserpina, Callisto and Arcus, Phaethon and Helios. Some names are used in their Roman form.

\*Rosenberg, Donna. *World Mythology Second Edition – An Anthology of the Great Myths and Epics*. Lincolnwood, IL: NTC Publishing Group, 1996.

Presents the major myths from around the world. The myths are arranged geographically into seven major cultural groups. The myths depict human nature, with its needs and desires, hopes and fears.

\*Rosenberg, Donna and Sorelle Baker. *Mythology and You – Classical Mythology and Its Relevance to Today's World*. Lincolnwood, IL: NTC Publishing Group, 1994

An introduction to the myth, then the myth retold in a version which students of all ages and abilities can understand. Also, discussion questions are available that focus on important themes. Commentaries from human experience help to illustrate the relationship between mythology and contemporary life.

Rutland Gillison, Linda W. *Instructor's Manual and Test Bank to Accompany – Classical Mythology Images and Insights Third Edition*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2001.

Gives a quick overview of the main points in each chapter of *Classical Mythology*, and it also provides a bank of objective questions and essay questions.

Sutherland, Zena and Mary Hill Arbuthnot. *Children and Books*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1977.

An adult text which shows how to attract children to literature. Gives ideas and examples of how to integrate myths, fables, and epics from different cultures into studying literature that students can associate with.

\* *Denotes student reading list.*

## **Videos**

*Hercules*. Video. Prod. by Alice Dewey, John Musker and Ron Clements. Walt Disney.

An animated film that re-creates the myth of Hercules. He is taken from the Gods as a newborn. Later in life he

finds out his father is Zeus, god of the sky. It is an odyssey of fun, fantasy and adventure.

*Hercules*. Video. Prod. by Filmroos, Inc. A & E Network, 1995.

The film follows Hercules as he performs the twelve labors.

*Jason and the Argonauts*. Video. Prod. by Dyson Lovell. Hallmark Entertainment, 2000.

An epic saga of good and evil. Jason goes back to his kingdom, Ancient Greece, after twenty years to re-claim his throne. Before he goes back he wants to give his uncle the Golden Fleece. A stouthearted crew of sailors goes on a perilous voyage to capture the fleece and fulfill his destiny. This video is a mythic adventure and a classic love story.

*Life, Times and Wonders of: Athens and Ancient Greece*. Video. Prod. by Dyson Lovell. Questar Video, Inc.

A Questar Video presentation of Ancient Greece and the twenty-five of the most significant structures and monuments as they were originally built. Includes: the Acropolis, statue of Athena, the Parthenon, the Agora Theatre of Dionysus, the Temple of Zeus, Delphi's temple of Apollo where the oracle spoke, just to name a few.

*The Powerful Gods of Mount Olympus*. Video. Prod. by Greystone Communications, Inc. A & E Network, 1996.

Ancient mysteries- they investigate the power of the gods and examines their effects on an entire civilization.