



Introduction to Greek Mythology

The stories of the Greek myths are all that remain of an ancient religion. The gods and goddesses of stories represent the metaphors that the ancient Greeks used to make sense of the world around them and of life in general.

Those metaphors provided inspiration for a wealth of literature. Since the ancient Greeks began telling these stories in a pre-literate era (before they had writing), at first the stories were passed down from generation to generation in an oral tradition. The story of the Odyssey, for example, is supposed to have been composed by a blind poet named Homer. Today scholars suspect there was more than one “Homer” who helped shape the final epic, as different storytellers added or subtracted details or episodes. Once poets and dramatists began writing the stories down, they preserved them for future generations. What they preserved, though, is the story as they told it. So we must look at the stories as both religion and literature at the same time. We must treat them with respect.

You will understand the great Greek epic poem The Odyssey much better if you have a working knowledge of the gods and goddesses. We will spend this week researching and presenting what we have learned. At the end of the week, we will have a Greek (pitch-in) feast!

Your Task: Research, write, and present a speech about a Greek god or goddess. You will be assigned a character for your speech. Your speech must include the following details:

- Your Greek name
- Your powers/responsibilities
- Your family relationships
- Your symbol(s) – this could be several items, including tools, animals, and/or cities.

You must wear a garment similar to what the Greek gods and goddesses wore (a sheet will do). You must bring in at least one of your symbols (a picture will do).

Assessment: I will use a rubric to evaluate your presentation.

Due Date: _____

Resources: Our library has some good books you can use, including *Mythology* by Edith Hamilton. You can look in encyclopedias, and you might try some of the following Web sites:

- The Ancient Gods: <http://www.hol.gr/greece/ancgods.htm>
- Big Myth: <http://bigmyth.org>
- Bullfinch's Mythology: <http://www.bulfinch.org>
- Classical Mythology Online: <http://www.oup-usa.org/sc/0195143388/>
- Greek and Roman Experience:
<http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/southeast/pprojects/>
- Greek Mythology: <http://www.mythweb.com>
- Greek Mythology Today: <http://www.greekmyth.com>
- Hercules the Hero: Understanding the Myth:
<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1998/2/98.02.06.x.html>
- It Came From Greek Mythology:
http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=234
- The Odyssey, a ThinkQuest project:
<http://library.thinkquest.org/19300/data/odyssey.htm>
- Picture Index: Mythological Characters:
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/6946/images/mythological.html>

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