

# Teaching Notes

## Favorite Greek Myths

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### Description

A handsome, distinctive volume of twelve ancient Greek stories made exciting and accessible for today's young readers.

### Fabulous Fun with Greek Myths

Take a class voyage into the world of Greek mythology's rich and powerful stories!

### Reading the Myths

Start your myth unit by gathering together a rich collection of mythology resources from the library and the Internet. Begin by reading aloud two or three myths such as 'Theseus and the Minotaur' and 'Pegasus and Bellerephon'. In both stories a hero must wage a battle against a powerful fantastic creature. Learn these first myths together as a class by reading and comparing several versions of the same story. Then ask students to work in pairs or small groups. Each pair or group may be assigned particular myths, or allowed to explore the available books and to choose the myths they would like to read. Encourage students to read two or three different versions of the same myths before completing an activity. Understanding the myths well will make their learning experience that much richer. As students continue reading myths, introduce a new activity every few days, and enjoy it together as a class.

### Myth-Fact Trading Cards

Making Greek myth trading cards is a great classroom activity, as students will have come to know the characters from their appearance in a number of myths. Ask students to create four card patterns for God, Goddess, Mortal, and Creature. On one side the student draws and labels a picture of a character, and on the other side they write down important facts about the character. Creating the trading cards helps to reinforce a number of language skills such as notetaking, outlining, finding the main idea, and checking for details. Share the cards by playing guessing games. Have students take turns reading the facts from their cards. How fast can the class guess who the character is?

### Legendary Words

The influence of Greek mythology is widespread in our language and culture. Help students to gain an understanding of this influence with a Scavenger Hunt. Give them a list of words and phrases that originated in mythology. Divide students into small groups, and challenge them to find the connection between the word and the originating myth. Here are some examples:

- Herculean
- the Midas touch
- Atlas
- panic
- Achilles heel
- volcano
- Titanic
- siren
- narcissistic
- hypnotic

## Modern Portraits of the Gods

These bright modern portraits are easy to do and produce impressive results. Begin by showing students the striking colours and bold lines in the art of Picasso, Chagall or Miro. Ask students to choose a mythological character they wish to portray, such as the Minotaur, the one-eyed Cyclops, or the frightening Medusa, and to draw a frontal portrait of its face in pencil. Next, ask students to erase one half of the face and to draw a profile view so that it appears to overlap the frontal view. Students then colour the frontal view one colour and the profile another, using pastels or wax crayons.

## Interviews

Interview the heroes and villains of the Greek myths! Start your own class Myth-world radio or TV talk show, and watch your students' dramatic skills soar. For this activity, some students are 'interviewers' while others are 'guests'. The interviewer prepares a list of questions he or she wishes to ask the guest. The guest studies the myth and tries to anticipate the questions he or she will be asked. Ask Zeus why he gets so angry, or Icarus why he flew too close to the Sun. Talk to your class about posing who, what, where, when, and why questions. This activity reinforces interviewing techniques as well as drama, reading for details, forming good questions, making inferences, and creativity. When students are ready to present their show, sit back and enjoy. The interviews are sure to be both entertaining and educational!

## The 'Real' Story

Rethinking a familiar myth from a different point of view is a great way to develop critical thinking, sequencing skills, and creativity. Students can rewrite myths from the perspective of the villain or a minor character. Perhaps the Minotaur could explain why he's 'really' in the labyrinth, or Hades could explain why he kidnapped Persephone. When students know the myth well, they are able to put a new twist on the events and do a great job!

## Comic-Book Adventures

Your class is sure to get excited about writing and illustrating comic-strip versions of their favourite myths. Creating comics gives students good practice at identifying important details and summarising. By studying the myth closely, they should be able to figure out what is essential to the plot and what can be left out. When the class is finished, publish their comic books in a series with matching covers, and keep them in your class library. Students will have a great time reading each other's comic book creations!

## Myth Starter List

- Pegasus and Bellerephon
- Odysseus and Polyphemus
- Theseus and the Minotaur
- Icarus and Daedalus
- King Midas
- The Twelve Labours of Heracles
- Jason and the Argonauts
- Demeter and Persephone