

Myths and Legends

- they speak to us of the human condition
- they are about us and our hopes, fears, joys and tragedies

Myth

- a traditional story that serves to explain the world view of a people
- passed down from generation to generation *by word of mouth*
- anonymous (author unknown)
- believed to be true by the culture that produced it
- about gods/goddesses, heroes/heroines, and other real and fantastical creatures
- real and unreal events are included

Legend

- a traditional story popularly regarded as true, but actually containing a mixture of fact and fiction
- passed down from generation to generation
- Historical characters are the main characters (ie King Arthur)
- includes some fantastic elements (dragons), take place in historical times
- differ from myths in that they contain an element of the truth

Urban Legend

- involves incidents of the recent past
- a story that appears mysteriously and spreads spontaneously in various forms and is usually false
- contains elements of humour or horror and is popularly believed to be true
- many times they happened to a "friend of a friend"

THE CREATION

The Ancient Greek religion tried to explain how the world began like this:

Mother Earth, Gaia, produced a son, Uranus, who was the sky. Then they had children. Rain fell from the sky onto the Earth, making plants grow; animals appeared from the rivers and ocean. Next, many strangely-shaped monsters and giants were born. Among these were three Cyclopes--each of whom had only one huge eye in the middle of his forehead. Uranus treated them cruelly and banished them to the Underworld. Later, some human-shaped giants, called Titans, were born; they later became the first gods and goddesses.

Mother Earth could not forgive her husband Uranus for his treatment of her first children and encouraged the Titans, lead by Cronos, to rebel against their father. He attacked and overpowered Uranus with a sickle and took power from him.

Three drops of Uranus' blood fell on the earth and formed the Furies (Erinyes). They had a dog's head and bat's wings and were the spirits of revenge and justice. They hounded murderers, especially those who killed a relative.

Another drop fell into the sea, creating foam from which was born the goddess Aphrodite.

Cronos married his sister and became King of the Titans. They had five children but Cronos had been warned that one of them would kill him; so, he swallowed each one as it was born. To save her sixth child, Rhea tricked Cronos into swallowing a stone wrapped in baby's clothing and hid the child among some lesser nature goddesses called nymphs who brought him up safely. This child was Zeus.

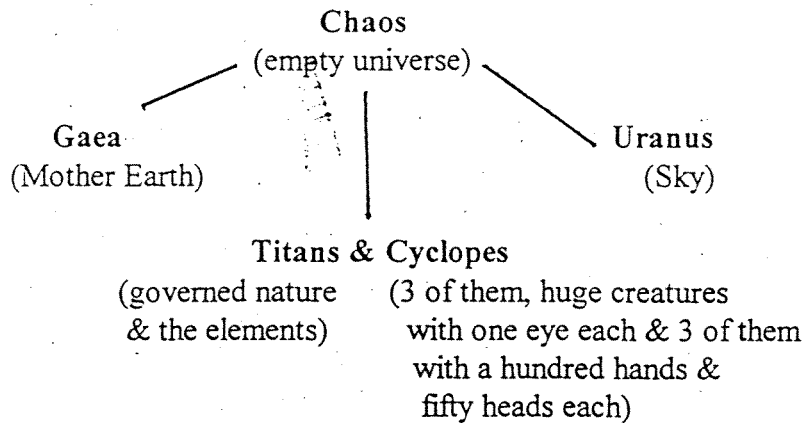
When he grew up, Zeus returned home in disguise and slipped a potion into Cronos' drink, making him choke. The children he had swallowed were coughed out, whole and safe. They were his daughters Hestia, Demeter, and Hera, and sons Pluto and Poseidon.

A fierce battle then took place. Zeus freed the Cyclopes who made thunderbolts for him to hurl. They also made a forked trident for Poseidon, and a helmet that made its wearer invisible for Pluto. But, most of the Titans and giants sided with Cronos.

After a terrible struggle the younger gods were victorious. The Titans were banished: one of them, Atlas, was made to hold up the heavens as punishment.

Zeus became ruler of the sky and king of all the gods. Poseidon was made king of the Ocean and Pluto of the Underworld.

The home of the gods was Mount Olympus. At first, because it was relatively inaccessible, it was thought to be the actual home of the gods; later it became an imaginary place high above the earth.



*** Uranus imprisons his 6 monstrous children under the earth and Gaea persuades Cronus, the smartest of her Titan children to attack his father with a sickle.

Cronus
(becomes ruler on Earth;
marries Rhea but swallows
his first 5 children because
he was afraid that one of
his children would unthroner him
the way he did his father; an
enraged Rhea gives birth to
her sixth child, Zeus, but sent
him to be raised by ash-nymphs
until he was old enough to overthrow
his father.)

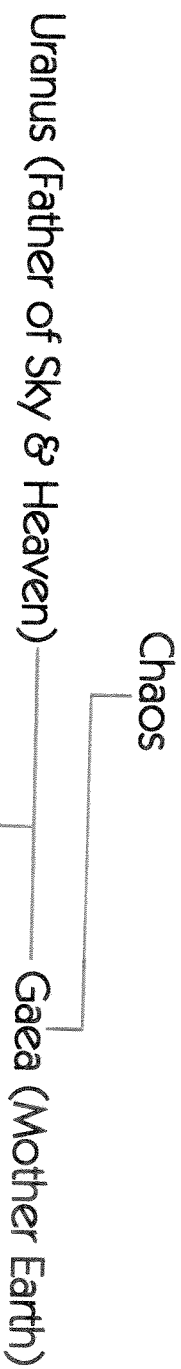
Zeus
(Zeus uses a medicine to make Cronus spew out
the 5 children he swallowed; they were now grown
and with Zeus became rulers of the world.
They lived on Mt. Olympus and divided the
Universe between themselves.)

Hades - lord of the underworld
Poseidon - god of the seas
Hera - became Zeus' wife & Queen
Hestia - goddess of homes & family life
Demeter - goddess of agriculture

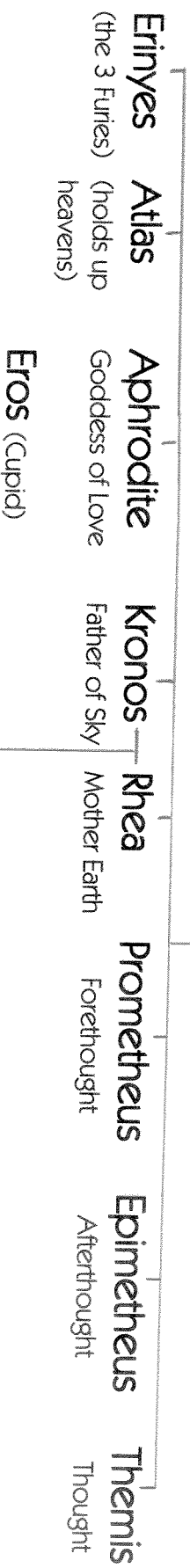
An Ancient Family Tree

THE GODS

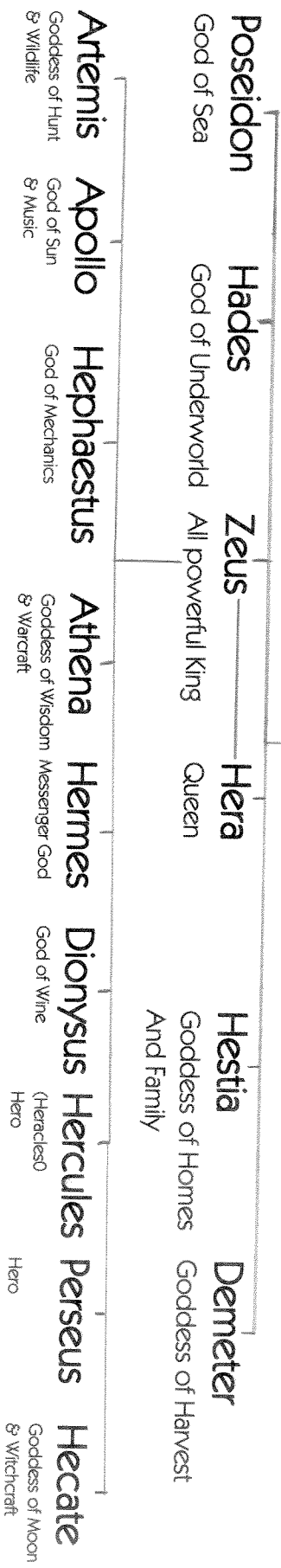
Oldest Generation



Next Generation- The Titans



New Generation -Olympians



The 12 Great Olympians

(+ One)

There are 12 gods and goddesses considered to be the "Great Olympians" who ruled from Mount Olympus. Under each name, list at least three points for each god and goddess. Include what they represent (god or goddess of what), their relationship to other gods or goddesses, and any other information relevant to their origin.

Zeus

Hera

**Aphrodite
(Eros)**

Poseidon

Hades

Hestia

Hermes

Artemis

Apollo

**Athene
(Athena)**

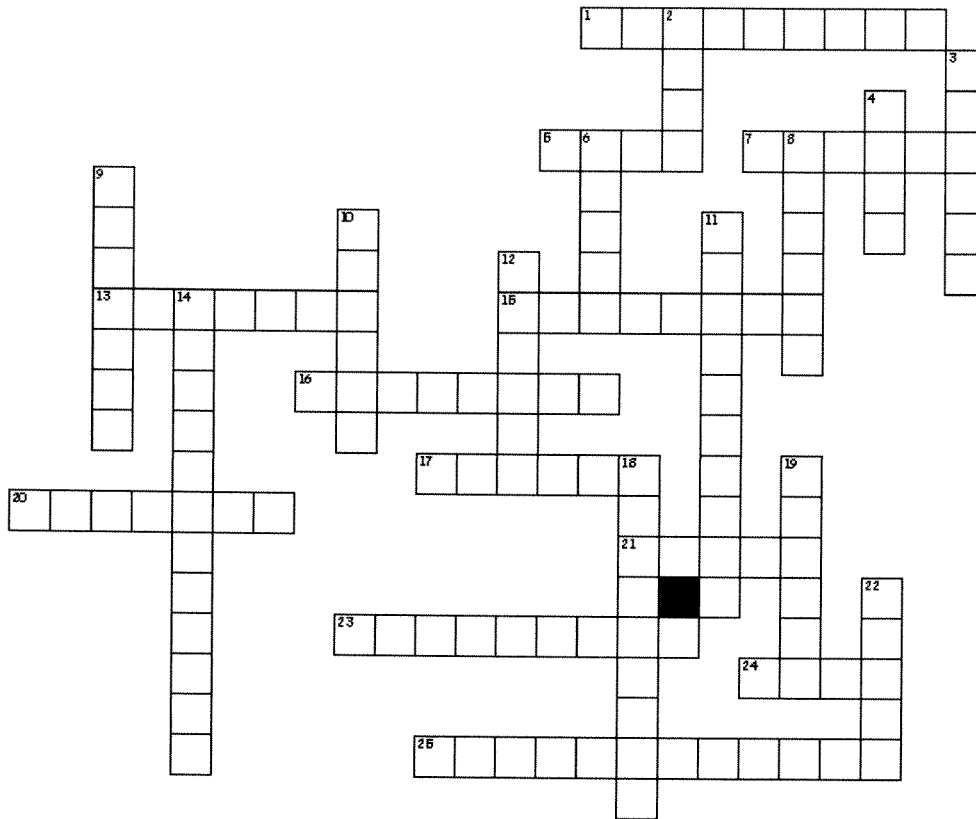
Hephaestus

Ares

Demeter
(not considered to
be one of the Great
Olympians)

FYI Gods and goddesses of lesser deities who still deserve honourable mention in the Olympian circle are: **Eris** (Goddess of strife), **Hebe** (Cup bearer of the gods), **Dionysus** (God of wine), **Ganymede** (personal cup bearer of Zeus), **the three Graces** (lovely daughters of Zeus who brought happiness everywhere), **the Nine Muses** (originally goddesses of song, they brought entertainment to the Olympians), **Nemesis** (Goddess of retribution), **Iris** (Rainbow goddess), **Pan** (Shepherd god).

The Creation Myth and Greek Gods



Across

1. Blood from Uranus fell into sea & made foam from which she was born
5. Sister and wife of Kronos, mother of Zeus
7. Goddess of Wisdom and Warcraft
13. Goddess of Harvest (Agriculture)
15. God of the Sea
16. A famous Greek Hero
17. Attacked his father, Uranus, with a sickle
20. Huge creature with one eye
21. Holds up the Heavens
23. Hades has a helmet that makes the wearer _____.
24. Mother Earth
25. Cyclops made these for Zeus to throw

Down

2. Queen of the Gods; Zeus' wife
3. Son and husband of Gaia, the sky
4. King of the gods
6. God of the Underworld
8. Human shaped giants; the first gods and goddesses.
9. Poseidon carries a forked _____.
10. Have dog's head and bat's wings; spirits of revenge & justice
11. Uranus banished the Cyclops to here
12. God of Sun and Music
14. Home of the Gods
18. Kronos did this to each of his children
19. Goddess of homes and family
22. Empty universe

WHO ARE THEY?

GREEK GODS AND GODDESSES-THE OLYMPIANS

	Roman Name
1. Zeus--Ruler of all gods and men	Jupiter or Jove
2. Hera--Wife of Zeus, Queen of the gods	Juno
3. Poseidon--God of the seas	Neptune
4. Hades--Ruler of the land of the dead	Pluto
5. Demeter--Goddess of grain, Earth and harvest	Ceres
6. Aphrodite--Goddess of love and beauty, wife of Hephaestus	Venus

THE NEXT GENERATION

7. Athena--Goddess of wisdom	Minerva
8. Apollo--God of the sun (light), reason, prophecy, music and archery	Apollo
9. Artemis--Goddess of the moon, archery, the hunt, twin sister of Apollo	Diana
10. Hephaestus--Lame god of fire and smiths	Vulcan
11. Ares--God of war	Mars
12. Hermes--Messenger of the gods; god of speed and commerce	Mercury
13. Dionysus--God of wine	Bacchus
14. Persephone--Goddess of Springtime, daughter of Demeter, wife of Hades and Queen of the underworld	Proserpine
15. Eros--God of love, son of Aphrodite	Cupid
16. Pan--God of shepherds and goatherds	Pan

In reading the Greek myths it helps to remember, throughout the perils and adventures, that the Titans and the gods were immortal. The demigods and heroes, like all other humans, were mortal.