

Summer Reading Study Guide for *Mythology* by Edith Hamilton
Mrs. Griffin English I Pre-AP

Name: _____ **Teacher :Mrs. Griffin**

Many times, the words “folk tale,” “fairy tale,” “legend,” and “myth” are used interchangeably. Folk tales or fairy tales are usually purely imaginative, fictional stories intended to amuse, entertain, or teach. Legends are usually true stories of events in history but exaggerated for dramatic or humorous effect. Myths are imaginative stories resulting from man's attempt to understand the phenomena of nature or to explain cultural customs and rituals. Mythology is a way to explain things in the world that had no explanation before.

Much of the literature you will read in school will contain allusions to Greek, Roman, or Norse mythology. For example, a character in a novel may be described as narcissistic, as an Adonis, or as undertaking Herculean tasks. All of these are references to Greek myths. Recognizing the myth leads to greater understanding of the character, which is being developed in the book. In addition, Western culture traces its political, philosophical, and social roots back to Greek culture. Mythological stories serve as the subject for works of art, commercial advertisement, comic books, and science fiction, among other things. A student who has some familiarity with Mythology is intellectually and academically ahead of a student who has no knowledge of mythology. The book is long, but it is not difficult reading. The subject matter itself provides reading that can be interesting and informative. It has been established as a popular classic, a valuable tool, and a necessary reference work that is essential for any well-read student.

Your task this summer is to read through Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* (chapters: 1- 10 and 22-23 only), complete the corresponding study guide questions, and write a well-written literary analysis essay in response to one of the essay questions. You may hand write on the study guide or type your responses. All your work is due on the first day of class.

Directions: Choose one of the following literary analysis essay topics and type a five-paragraph essay, which follows MLA formatting rules.

1. State what the myths of Hyacinth, Narcissus, Adonis, and Clytie have in common and support your generalization by referring to essential elements in the myths.
2. Consider the myths of Icarus, Arachne, Phaeton, and Niobe. State the theme that the four myths have in common and support your generalization by citing essential elements in each.
3. Monsters frequently play important parts in these myths. Find three myths in which monsters have prominent roles and explain how the heroes of each myth defeat the creatures, what power the monsters have, and what rewards the heroes receive after conquering the mythical demons.
4. Choose three heroes of Greek mythology. Discuss the qualities each of these heroes has and how these qualities are shown through the hero's actions.
5. Look at the myths of Hyacinth, Narcissus, Adonis, and Clytie. Discuss how these flower myths follow the death/resurrection idea.
6. Discuss how the stories of Demeter and Dionysus follow the cycle of birth, growth, reproduction, and death.
7. Choose three myths dealing with love and discuss how these myths illustrate three ideas about love: the essential element of trust; the acceptance of pain or suffering on behalf of love; valuing a person for him/herself and not for external appearances.
8. Several Greek and Norse gods share similar traits and responsibilities. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast the gods. Explain what you think these similarities highlight about human nature.

Part One: The Gods, The Creation, and the Earliest Heroes

Chapter 1: The Gods

Vocabulary

abhorred – hated
aegis – majestic breastplate
ascended – rose to
august – majestic
beguiled – enchanted
beneficent – kind and generous
chaste – pure
diffused – scattered
epithet – characterizing word used in place of a name
firmament – sky; heavens
implacable – merciless
incarnate – made real; given physical substance
inexorable – inflexible
infidelity – unfaithfulness
malicious – spiteful
omniscient – all-knowing
oracle – shrine or person through which a deity is supposed to speak and advise
pinnacle – peak
pre-eminently – first and foremost
raiment – clothing
redoubtable – famed; dreaded
retaliation – revenge
rustic – rural
tranquil – calm
unerring – faultless
venerated – honored
wiles – charms

1. Identify the best-known writers of Greek and Roman mythology (Found in the Intro) .

A. Ovid

B. Homer

C. Hesiod

D. Pindar

E. Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides

F. Aristophanes

G. Plato

H. Virgil

2. What is the best guide to Greek mythology?

3. Briefly identify the twelve gods of Olympus by both Greek and Roman names.

A. Zeus (Jupiter)

B. Hera (Juno)

C. Poseidon (Neptune)

D. Hades (Pluto)

E. Athena (Minerva)

F. Phoebus Apollo (Apollo)

G. Artemis (Diana)

H. Aphrodite (Venus)

I. Hermes (Mercury)

J. Ares (Mars)

K. Hephaestus (Vulcan)

L. Hestia (Vesta)

4. Identify some of the lesser Gods of Olympus.

A. Eros

B. Hebe

C. Iris

D. The Graces

E. The Muses

5. Identify some of the Gods of the Waters.

A. Poseidon (Neptune)

B. Ocean

C. Triton

D. Proteus

E. Naiads

6. Identify some of the Gods of the Underworld.

A. Charon

B. Cerberus

C. Acheron, Cocytus, Styx

D. The Furies

E. Sleep and Death

7. Identify some of the lesser Gods of the Earth.

A. Demeter (Ceres)

B. Dionysus (Bacchus)

C. Pan (Faunus)

D. Castor and Pollux

E. The Satyrs

F. Nymphs

G. Boreas, Notus, Eurus, Zephyr

H. The Centaurs

I. The Gorgons

J. The Sirens

K. Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos

8. Who are two well-known lesser Roman gods?

A. Saturn

B. Janus

Chapter 2: The Two Great Gods of Earth: Demeter (Ceres) / Dionysus, also called Bacchus

Vocabulary

assent – agreement
atrocious – awful
blithe – cheerful
capricious – inconstant
chasm – gap
ensnare – trap
fetter – shackle
hallowed – blessed
incorruptible – indestructible
manifest – straightforward
multitudinous – numerous
refuge – protection
strove – challenged; tried
timbrel – small drum or tambourine

1. What do Greeks believe are the two basic gifts that Earth gives to man?

2. How are Dionysus and Demeter different from the Twelve Gods of mythology?

3. How does the myth of Demeter explain the seasons of spring and winter?

4. According to myth, how is Dionysus born? How is this related to Dionysus' association with grapes and wine?

5. What is he known as, and what does he teach humans?

6. What are the two contrasting ideas associated with the worship of Dionysus?

7. Why is Dionysus considered so important to Greeks?

8. How does Dionysus become a symbol of resurrection?

9. What is the connection between Dionysus and the Greek theater?

Chapter 3: How the World and Mankind Were Created

Vocabulary

abyss – hell; nothing less
adamantine – unbendable
aspect – appearance
boon – friend; assistant
confound – puzzle
delegated – assigned
deluge – flood
disgorge – cough up
innumerable – countless
melancholy – sad
precursors – ancestors
undisputed – unchallenged
unfathomable – immeasurable; inconceivable

1. What is Hesiod’s version of the creation of man?

2. Who are Prometheus and Epimetheus?

3. What gifts does Epimetheus give to animals? What does Prometheus give to mankind to make us superior to animals?

4. What is the second version of creation, the five stages of man?

5. What does Prometheus do that angers Zeus?

6. How is Prometheus tortured?

7. Why is Pandora created?

8. Why does Zeus send a flood to earth?

9. Who are the only two survivors?

10. Who are the Stone People?

Chapter 4: The Earliest Heroes

Vocabulary

affectation – pose
austere – simple; severe
credulous – unsuspecting
diverted – drawn away
fast – secure
heifer – cow
laggard – dawdler
minx – flirt
monotonously – boringly
plenteously – plentifully
pliant – supple
ponderous – heavy
prow – front end of a ship
prudent – sensible
succored – helped; lifted
uncouth – bizarre

1. Summarize the story of each of these heroes:

A. Prometheus and Io

B. Europa

C. The Cyclops Polyphemus

D. The Flower Myths, Narcissus, Hyacinth, Adonis

Part Two: Stories of Love and Adventure

Chapter 5: Cupid and Psyche

Vocabulary

consorting – “hanging out”

diligent – persistent

faltering – hesitating

homage – honor

inexplicable – unexplainable

junction – critical point

lamentable – distressing

languor – stupor

solitary – alone

1. How does Psyche compare in beauty with her sisters?

2. What plan does Venus have for Psyche?

3. What happens when Cupid meets Psyche?

4. How does “the mildest of winds” help Psyche?

5. When and why does Cupid appear to Psyche?

6. How do her sisters create doubts about Psyche’s future husband?

7. How does this myth end?

Chapter 6: Eight Brief Tales of Lovers

Vocabulary

animate/inanimate – alive/not alive
coiffure – hairdo
deficiencies – defects
diluted – made less strong
endure – bear
entice – seduce
insolently – arrogantly
passive – inactive
quavering – shaking
singular – exceptional; unusual
slake – quench
tarry – work; struggle
tryst – secret meeting
zeal – enthusiasm

1. How does the myth of Pyramus and Thisbe explain the deep red color of the mulberry bush?

2. How does the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice explain the sweetness of the nightingale's song?

3. How does the myth of Ceyx and Alcyone explain the idea of Halcyon days?

4. How does the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea illustrate the power of love?

A. Why does Pygmalion decide to remain a bachelor?

B. Under what circumstances does he fall in love?

C. How does Pygmalion act after this?

D. Who helps Pygmalion in his desire to have the woman he loves?

E. How does this story end?

5. How does the myth of Baucis and Philemon illustrate nature as a symbol of eternal love?

6. Explain the myth of Endymion.

7. How is the myth of Daphne related to the laurel leaf as a symbol of victory?

8. A myth says that Greek flowers emerge from the bottom of a well in Ortygia. If a wooden cup is thrown into the Alpheus in Greece, it will reappear in the Arethusa in Italy. How does the myth of Alpheus and Arethusa explain these beliefs?

Chapter 7: The Quest of the Golden Fleece

Vocabulary

abashed – embarrassed
brazen – bold; shameless
defiled – made foul
implored – pleaded
libation – sacred offering
parched – dried
peerless – without equal
proWess – heroism
shod – shoed
sovereign – royal
usurper – thief; displacer

1. What is the Golden Fleece?

2. Who is Pelias? Why is he worried about a “one-sандаled” stranger?

3. Why does Jason seek the Golden Fleece? Who helps him in his quest?

4. What are three adventures he has along the way?

5. How does the King of Colchis treat Jason when he arrives? What tests does he put Jason through?

6. How does Medea figure in these events?

7. What happens to Pelias after Jason returns with the Golden Fleece?
What does Jason do to Medea at the end?

Chapter 8: Four Great Adventures

Vocabulary

covet – desire
dissuade – persuade away from
hind – deer
pedestrian – dull
precipitous – hurried
supernal – heavenly

1. How does the myth of Phaëthon explain the poplar trees that grow along the bank of the river Eridanus?

2. Pegasus and Bellerophon

A. Why does Bellerophon believe that he can be equal to the gods?

B. What does Bellerophon forget?

C. What Greek beliefs does this story of Bellerophon illustrate?

3. How does the myth of Otus and Ephialtes also show the foolishness of trying to rise above the gods?

4. How does the myth of Daedalus explain the expression “flying too close to the sun”?

Part Three: The Great Heroes Before the Trojan War

Chapter 9: Perseus

Vocabulary

reconciled – restored to harmony
scudding – rushing
servile – submissive
verbose – wordy

1. How is Perseus’ birth magical?

2. Compare events in Perseus’ life to the following elements of a “Cinderella” story:

A. Cinderella’s fairy godmother gives her a ball gown and a coach.

B. Cinderella has certain rules to follow, such as leaving the ball by midnight

C. Cinderella is rescued from a miserable life by her fairy godmother.

D. Cinderella gets the prince in the end.

Chapter 10: Theseus

Vocabulary

banes – curses; troubles
beseeking – begging
novel – original
ominous – fateful
precipice – cliff
raze – burn
sanctuary – safe place

1. Before Theseus can go to Athens and claim King Aegeus as his father, what great test of strength is he required to perform?

2. Why is Theseus loved by the Greeks before he ever meets his father?

3. What two things does Theseus do to help the Athenians in their conflict with Minos?

4. What kind of ruler is Theseus when he becomes King of Athens?

5. How does the story of Hippolytus, Theseus' son, and Phaedra, his wife, bring about the end of Theseus?

Chapter 11: Hercules

Vocabulary

appeased – calmed
atoning – making amends for
conspicuously – noticeably
disarming – insincere; obviously trying to gain favor
exonerate – acquit
expiating – making up for
ludicrous – ridiculous
penitence – remorse
pestilence – plague
pyre – heap of wood on which a body is burned
respite – delay
reticence – restraint
undaunted – courageously resolved

1. What are four examples of Hercules great strength?

2. How could you interpret the following quote: “Intelligence did not figure largely in anything he did and was often conspicuously absent”?

3. What happens to Hercules when Hera sends madness to possess him?

4. Is he considered guilty of his crimes?

5. How does Hercules become involved in battling Death?

6. What happens after Hercules completes the twelve labors?

7. How does he die and why is he allowed onto Mount Olympus?

Part Seven: The Mythology of the Norsemen

Introduction

Vocabulary

unsullied – untainted

1. How is fate in Norse mythology different from fate in Greek and Roman mythology?

2. Why is courage so important in Norse mythology?

3. How do the following relate to Norse myths?

A. Elder Edda

B. Asgard

C. Valhalla

D. Beowulf

E. Younger Edda

Chapter 22: The Stories of Signy and Sigurd

1. How does the story of Signy show her qualities of great patience and determination?

2. How does the story of Sigurd illustrate the Norse mythology of fate?

Chapter 23: The Norse Gods

Vocabulary

festal – festive

sustenance – something that gives support, strength, or endurance

1. How does Norse mythology explain the Creation?

2. How are Norse gods responsible for the names of several of our days of the week?

3. How do Norse gods compare to Greek gods in mythology?

4. What is the function of the gods of Asgard?
