

Topic A: Myths & Stories

Introductory lesson – The Greek & Roman Gods

Slide 1

This is the introductory lesson for the Myths & Stories topic. It covers the main deities to feature in Greek and Roman culture and forms an important base knowledge for any reading of ancient myth or stories as the gods have a habit of cropping up time and time again!

Slide 2

The main difference between modern Western religions and that of the Greeks and Romans is that the ancient societies were polytheistic. On mouse-click, you can show the students an etymological breakdown of this ambitious piece of vocabulary. The slide also shows some of the sources of our knowledge about ancient gods and goddesses. The temple shown is the Parthenon in Athens, which was the temple of Athena ('parthenos' in Ancient Greek means 'maiden'). The second picture shows a Greek red-figure 'krater' (wine mixing bowl) and the statues depict the Roman god Janus (with a face looking forward and a face looking back, he gives his name to the month of January) and Minerva (the Roman name for Athena). One of the best sources of information about the gods is ancient literature, which the students will be able to research in more detail in the Research Packs that accompany this Topic.

Slide 3

The Romans' gods were mostly inherited from Ancient Greece as the societal and cultural ties between the two peoples were very strong. Italy was initially settled by Greek migrants, and then later Greece itself became part of the Roman Empire. However, the Romans did give different names to nearly all of these deities and were also in the habit of adopting new gods for a variety of reasons. Indeed, some illustrious humans such as [mouse-click] the emperor Augustus were made into gods (deified) after their death.

In this lesson, though, we're going to get to grips with the most important gods and goddesses, known as the Olympians.

Slide 4



The students are then prompted to use their blank notes sheet (gods notes template.pdf) to record the information as it appears in the slide deck. These notes will then be used to complete the first part of the trading card task.

Slides 5–16

Each of these contains a fact-file about a god or goddess, with facts revealed on mouse-click. You may also want to prompt your students to see if they know anything else about the deity being displayed. The gods (Greek name first) are:

- Zeus/Jupiter – king of the gods
- Hera/Juno – queen of the gods, married to Zeus
- Poseidon/Neptune – ruler of the seas, Zeus' brother
- Hades/Pluto – ruler of the underworld, also Zeus' brother

- Athena/Minerva – Zeus’ daughter and patron goddess of Athens (which is named after her)
- Apollo – the only one with the same name in both cultures
- Artemis/Diana – twin sister of Apollo
- Aphrodite/Venus – she is sometimes symbolised by a mirror shaped like this ♀ which gives rise to the modern symbol for female
- Ares/Mars – god of war, whose spear and shield symbol (♂) gives rise to the modern symbol for male
- Hermes/Mercury – the messenger god, hence the modern delivery company calling itself Hermes
- Demeter/Ceres – gives her name to ‘cereal’
- Hephaistus/Vulcan – the lame smith god from whose name the word ‘volcano’ comes

Slide 17



The students can now set about making their trading cards using the template gods trading cards.pdf. Twelve of the gods featured are ones on which the students have just taken notes.



However there are three gods as yet uncovered so students can research these in their pairs/groups.



For those students keen for an extra challenge, they can make a card for an ancient god or goddess of their choice.

Some good starting places for this additional research are:

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/history/greece/greek-gods/>

<https://www.dkfindout.com/uk/history/ancient-greece/ancient-greek-gods-and-goddesses/>

http://www.ancientgreece.co.uk/gods/explore/exp_set.html

<https://greekmythcomix.com/comic/the-olympic-gods-family-tree/>