Text-Dependent Questions for “The Gift of Fire”

From Usborne’s Greek Myths for Young Children

1. Why were the other gods afraid of Zeus?

* The other gods were afraid of Zeus because when he was angry, Zeus “…fired thunderbolts from his fingers…”

1. What was the earth like at first?

* The text says that at first the earth had only animals living on it. There were no people living in the world.

1. In the second paragraph, why does the author begin with the phrase, “At first,”? How does that phrase help the reader predict that things are about to change?

* When an author uses the phrase, “at first,” they typically have something that is going to come second, third, etc. Because we know that first means #1, we can infer that there will be something coming to be #2.

1. How did Prometheus change the world? Why did he do this?

* Prometheus changed the world by creating people.
* Zeus asked Prometheus to make human beings to live in the world.

1. Why did Zeus keep fire from the people? Use details from the text to support your response.

* The author does not tell us why Zeus did not want the people to have fire.
* Because we know that fire can be dangerous, we can infer that Zeus did not want the people to get hurt. This could be supported by the first paragraph when it says that Zeus was “…wise and very powerful.”
* We could also infer that Zeus kept fire away from the people because he was being mean. The first paragraph says that Zeus “…could sometimes be spiteful and do foolish things.” To be spiteful is to knowingly do things that could hurt someone.
* The 5th paragraph says that Prometheus “…loved the people and felt sorry that they had to shiver with cold through the dark nights, and eat raw food.” This leads the reader to infer that Zeus did not care for the people as much as Prometheus cared for them.

1. What character traits describe Prometheus? Use details from the text to support your response.

* Considerate, helpful-Prometheus gives fire to the people because he knows they are cold and are forced to eat raw food.
* Brave-Prometheus steals coal from Zeus even though he knows he could be punished.
* Foolish-Prometheus steals coal from Zeus; he knows that Zeus throws thunderbolts when he gets angry. Zeus will be angry when he knows that the coal was stolen.
* Disobedient-he does what Zeus has already told him not to do.

1. Why was Prometheus chained to a mountain?

* Zeus chained Prometheus to a mountain because Prometheus gave fire to the people even though Zeus did not want the people to have fire.

1. According to the myth, why did Prometheus’ liver grow back each night?

* As part of his punishment for disobeying Zeus, an eagle tore out Prometheus’ liver every night. People cannot live without their liver, but Prometheus’ was a god; he could not die. His liver grew back each night so that his body would not die.

1. What lesson can the reader learn from reading “The Gift of Fire”? Explain your answer using details from the text.

* The lesson from this myth is that you must follow instructions from whoever is in charge. Zeus was the ruler of the gods; he was the boss. Prometheus was told NOT to give fire to the people, but he gave it to them anyway. Because he disobeyed Zeus’ instructions, Prometheus had to face the consequences.

Note: Students could have other lessons that are learned from this myth. Just make sure they defend and support their answer with evidence from the text.