

3rd Grade, Unit 6: Fantastic Adventures with Dragons, Gods, and Giants

Introduction to Mythology

This lesson is intended to offer students an opportunity to gain an understanding of mythology through Text Dependent Questions from a complex text. Following the Text Dependent Questions, teachers will find to opportunities to engage students in deeper exploration of specific vocabulary terms.

The text is the introduction to *Favorite Greek Myths* retold by Mary Pope Osborne. Teachers are encouraged to allow the students to read the passage a couple of times **independently** before engaging in the text dependent questions. Allow students to discuss their thoughts and any confusing vocabulary before beginning the full-class discussion.

This lesson offers the opportunity to score to the following standards:

* RI.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers
* RI.3.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area
* L.3.4a. Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
* L.3.6 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., After dinner that night we went looking for them).

-Renee Simpson

JM Literacy Facilitator

Introduction from *Favorite Greek Myths*

Retold by Mary Pope Osborne

Welcome to a strange and beautiful world where human forms turn into seagulls, lions, bears, and stars. Welcome to a world where the impossible seems common; where the moon, the sun, and the wind are all gods. Welcome to the world of Greek mythology.

 Imagine yourself living on an ***ancient*** Greek island, before the days of airplanes, cars, and television-when civilization was very young, and people lived very close to nature. How would you have explained such mysteries of the ear as weather changes, or where rainbows come from, or why spiders spin webs?

2

 The ancient Greeks invented stories to help explain nature and to free them from their fears of the unknown. When the sun ***rose*** in the sky, it meant the sun god was driving his golden chariot through the heavens. When winter turned to spring, it meant a young goddess had just returned to earth to live with her mother. When lightning flashed, it meant the god of the skies was hurling his thunderbolts in anger.

 The stories the ancient Greeks created about their gods and goddesses are called myths. Not only did the myths help explain the mysteries of nature, but they also provided wonderful entertainment on cold winter nights. As the myths were passed from generation to generation, different Greek and Roman poets retold them.

 Nearly all of the myths in this collection are derived from the work of the Roman poet Ovid, who lived 2,000 years ago. Ovid’s book, ***Metamorphoses***, tells about the mortals of earth and gods and goddesses who lived on Mount Olympus, a mysterious mountaintop above Greece. In nearly all of Ovid’s stories, the gods or mortals change into different shapes and forms.

5

 Though today we may have more modern ideas about life than the ancient Greeks or Romans did, our feelings are still much the same as theirs. As we read about their gods, goddesses, and mortals romping through woods and over mountains and seas, we understand their sorrows, joys, and angers. Welcome to their world-one that is as lively and passionate today as it was long ago.

What are myths? Why were they written?

* stories the ancient Greeks created about their gods and goddesses
* to help explain nature and to free them from their fears of the unknown
* to provide wonderful entertainment on cold winter nights
1. Where did the myths come from?
* Ancient Greeks and Romans (Greece and Rome, Italy)

*Note to Teachers: Consider pointing out these locations on a map or globe to give students a reference of where these places are in relation to their own homes.*

1. What does ***ancient*** mean as it is used in paragraph 2? What clues from the text help you to determine the meaning of the word?
* Ancient means a long time ago
* “before the days of airplanes, cars, and television”
1. In paragraph 5, why is *Metamorphoses* written in italics? How do you know? How else could this have been noted in the text?
* *Metamorphoses* is written in italics because it is the name of a book.
* The text says “Ovid’s book” just before the word. This lets the reader know that *Metamorphoses* is the name of the book he wrote.
* Book titles can also be underlined.
1. According to the text, how did the myths survive from ancient times until now?
* The text says that the myths were passed from generation to generation. They were retold by Greek and Roman poets.
1. Are the myths in this text the exact same myths that were told in ancient Greece and Rome? What might have caused them to change? Use evidence from the text to support your inference.
* The stories have probably changed as they have been passed down. The text says that different poets have told the stories throughout the generations. This leads the reader to think that they may have changed a little has they have been told throughout the years.
1. As a formative assessment for this lesson, consider having students demonstrate their understanding by writing to tell about the roll myths played for ancient Greeks. How were myths used by the ancients? How are myths used today? Remind students to use details from the passage to support their response.

Vocabulary Discussions

1. Without drawing their attention to the text, ask students what comes to mind when they hear the word “rose.” Students will likely say that they think of a flower, a red rose. Then, draw students attention to the word *rose* as it is used in paragraph 3. Have students write a quick definition of *rose* as it is used in this context. Ask students about the tense of this verb. What is the present tense form for *rose*?

If students are having trouble (especially ELL students), have students focus on **what** rose in the sky. Once they are able to note that *the sun* is what rose, have students Think-Pair-Share about where the sun sits early in the morning vs. where the sun sits at lunch time.

Have students discus other objects and whether or not they rise (rose) into the sky. Does the moon rise? The stars? A rainbow? Can a balloon rise? What other words or phrases mean the same as, “the sun rose”?

1. Remind students of the definition for ancient from question 3. Ask students to think of synonyms for ancient.
* Ancient means very old, from a long time ago.
* Synonyms may include old, very old, antique, outdated, etc.

What word from the text is an antonym for *ancient*? If students are struggling to locate the antonym, focus their attention towards the last paragraph where it talks about the ideas of today.

* The text uses the word modern several times. Modern is an antonym for ancient.

Have students work with a partner or individually to complete the following analogies:

* Cave is to ancient home as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is to modern home.
* Dinosaur is to ancient as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is to modern.
* Stones and shells are to ancient money as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is to modern money.

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