



# THE HEROES OF OLYMPUS

## SERIES GUIDE



This guide is aligned with the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards (CCR) for Reading in the areas of Literature, Writing, and Language. The broad CCR standards are the foundation for the grade level–specific Common Core State Standards. Each question and activity in this guide includes a reference for a specific grade–level strand, domain, and standard.

# THE LOST HERO

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions may be utilized throughout the series study as reflective writing prompts. Alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.

- 1 As the novel opens, Riordan tells us that Jason “woke in the backseat of a school bus, not sure where he was, holding hands with a girl he didn’t know.” Predict what role Jason’s lack of understanding about who he is will play in the novel.
- 2 Piper strives to make herself blend in, though Jason describes her as a “seriously pretty.” What are some of the reasons she prefers to remain unnoticed? What do these answers tell us about her personality?
- 3 The author uses some unusual first lines to introduce the chapters. Which one is your favorite? For what reason?
- 4 Explain the significance of being “claimed” for demigods. What is it about this tradition that provides campers at Camp Half-Blood a sense of belonging?
- 5 Leo harbors a great deal of guilt about the death of his mother. Is he justified in doing so? Have you ever felt a responsibility for events that were beyond your control? How did you work past feeling you were to blame?
- 6 Describe Jason, Piper, and Leo. What are three things that you find most (or least) appealing about each character?
- 7 Throughout the course of the novel, Jason learns that the world as he knows it may never be the same. In what ways will it be better or worse? Have you had an experience that reshaped your life? In what ways have you changed because of this incident?
- 8 Predict what influence the Roman gods will have on the decisions made by Jason, Piper, and Leo.

*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 6.2.; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 6.1., 6.2., 6.3. Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.2.; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1., 7.2., 7.3.*



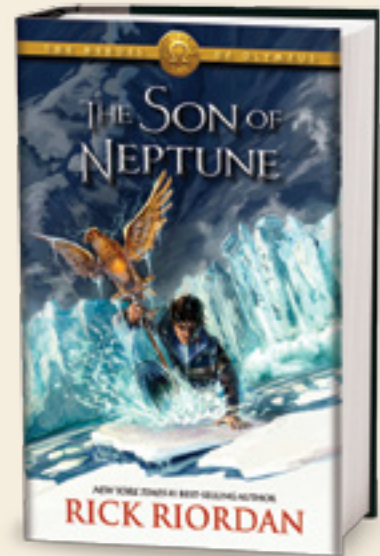


# THE SON OF NEPTUNE

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions may be utilized throughout the series study as reflective writing prompts. Alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.

- 1 As *The Lost Hero* closes, Jason tells Annabeth, “Percy Jackson is at the other camp, and he probably doesn’t remember who he is.” Predict what role Percy’s lack of understanding about who he is will play in *The Son of Neptune*.
- 2 Explain the significance of being “claimed” for demigods. What is it about this tradition that provides half-bloods a sense of belonging? How do those who remain unclaimed deal with this condition?
- 3 Hera’s role is an important one in *The Lost Hero*; predict what part she will play in *The Son of Neptune*.
- 4 At the end of *The Lost Hero*, campers at Camp Half-Blood learn that there is a Roman camp in California that functions similarly to theirs. Why is this important? In what ways does their past rocky relationship with the Roman camp complicate the current issues at hand? What do they need to do to overcome it?
- 5 For demigods, knowing the identity of your godly parent is a critical part of building a strong sense of self. In your opinion, why is this so important? What does a god’s choice to claim his offspring signify?
- 6 Describe Percy, Hazel, and Frank. What are three things that you find most (or least) appealing about each of them?
- 7 Compare Camp Half-Blood to Camp Jupiter. In what ways are these two camps similar? How are they different? What lessons can these camps glean from each other? Why might the gods have chosen to give Percy and Jason the opportunity to switch camps?
- 8 Have you had an experience that reshaped your life? In what ways have you changed due to this incident?

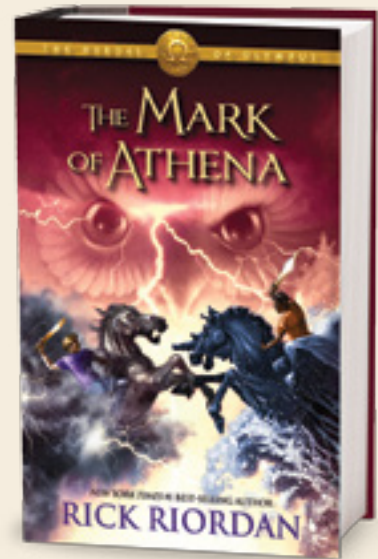


*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 6.2.; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 6.1., 6.2., 6.3. Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.2.; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1., 7.2., 7.3.*

# THE MARK OF ATHENA

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions may be utilized throughout the series study as reflective writing prompts. Alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.



- 1 In your opinion, what are the major similarities and differences between Camp Half-Blood and Camp Jupiter? If given a choice, which would you choose to attend? What is it about this particular camp that you feel suits you best?
- 2 In *The Mark of Athena*, much attention is given to the friction between the two camps. What might be the cause of their tumultuous history?
- 3 In what ways is Frank's lineage unique? How does he come to terms with who he is?
- 4 Why is it so important that Percy seek the assistance of a god to defeat Polybotes? Do you believe the outcome would have been different without this joint endeavor? Why or why not?
- 5 Why is the piece of firewood that Frank keeps with him known as the fire of life, and why is it so important to him?
- 6 Consider Hazel's past. In what ways is she different from the others? How do her past experiences shape her character?
- 7 While at Camp Jupiter, Percy is inspired by the lifestyle of others there. What does Percy ultimately hope the future holds for him and Annabeth?
- 8 In *The Son of Neptune*, through Reyna's leadership Camp Jupiter rallied to support Percy and defeat the giant. Predict what role Reyna will play in *The Mark of Athena*.
- 9 Percy and Jason are the respective leaders of their two camps. In what ways are these two young men similar? How are they different? What type of relationship do you predict the two of them will have?
- 10 Consider Leo's gifts; though he is greatly talented, he still feels isolated and alone. Why do you think he feels this way? Do others see him in the same light? Why or why not?
- 11 At Camp Half-Blood, Mr. D is regarded as a difficult and often cantankerous god, yet in Roman lore, Bacchus is revered and celebrated. Why might these two aspects of the god be so different?

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# THE HOUSE OF HADES

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions may be utilized throughout the series study as reflective writing prompts. Alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.



- 1 Throughout the Heroes of Olympus series, the heroes learn that while their parents are gods, they are far from perfect. Consider your favorite hero and consider how his or her knowledge of his or her godly parent has changed throughout the course of the novels. In what ways is this realization similar to or different from what all kids learn about their own parents?
- 2 Annabeth tells Percy, “You promised, Seaweed Brain. We would *not* get separated! Ever again!” Why does Annabeth fear separation so much? How are the pair stronger as a team than as individuals? Do you believe they bring out the best in each other? Why or why not?
- 3 In your opinion, what are the major similarities and differences between Camp Half-Blood and Camp Jupiter? If given a choice, which would you choose to attend? What is it about this particular camp that you feel suits you best?
- 4 Cupid laughs and states, “Oh, did you expect me to play fair? I am the god of love. I am never fair.” Considering what has transpired for the demigods, in what ways is Cupid’s statement true?
- 5 In the Heroes of Olympus series, much attention is given to the friction between the two camps. What might be the cause of their tumultuous history?
- 6 Jason tells Nico, “I’ve seen a lot of brave things. But what you just did? That was maybe the bravest.” Why do you think Jason feels that way? In what ways does Nico’s honesty about who he is prove how brave he is?
- 7 *The House of Hades* features a number of characters who exhibit a variety of strengths. Whose strength most impresses you? Explain your choice.
- 8 Mars tells his son Frank, “It’s natural to feel fear. All great warriors are afraid. Only the stupid and the delusional are not.” Why does Mars offer these wise words to Frank?

*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 6.2.; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 6.1., 6.2., 6.3. Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.2.; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1., 7.2., 7.3.*

# THE BLOOD OF OLYMPUS

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions may be utilized throughout the series study as reflective writing prompts. Alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.



- 1 Consider the dedication in *The Blood of Olympus*: “To my wonderful readers. Sorry about that apology for that last cliffhanger. I’ll try to avoid cliffhangers in this book. Well, except for maybe a few small ones . . . because I love you guys.” What do you predict will happen in the last book in the series?
- 2 “Reyna had always thought of Jason Grace as the all-American boy. Thalia looked more like the girl who robbed all American-boys at knifepoint in an alley.” In what ways does Reyna’s impression of the Grace siblings ring true? What about their experiences has shaped them into the people they are?
- 3 The Heroes of Olympus series (and *The Blood of Olympus* in particular) features a number of characters who exhibit a variety of strengths. Whose strength most impresses you? Explain your choice.
- 4 Throughout the series, the demigods tell the story in alternating chapters. In what ways does hearing these diverse perspectives benefit the overall story?
- 5 Hylla states, “No one can hate you with more intensity than someone who used to love you.” Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?
- 6 The South Wind tells Jason, “You can’t choose your parentage. But you can choose your legacy.” Why is Jason’s legacy so important to the rest of the demigods? Do you agree with this idea?
- 7 In many ways, the Heroes of Olympus is a story about family. Explain the significance of family to each of the major characters. Did you find this to be consistent throughout Riordan’s epic series?
- 8 Consider the differences in how the Greek and Roman camps view the gods. Do you think one camp has a better approach than the other? Why or why not? In what ways does each camp ultimately recognize the value in working as a team with the other?

*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 6.2.; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 6.1., 6.2., 6.3. Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.2.; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1., 7.2., 7.3.*



# ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

## EXTENDED WRITING AND RESEARCH PROMPTS

- 1 In the Heroes of Olympus series, readers witness all of the campers mature and grow throughout the course of the novels. Based on their observations, ask students which character they believe demonstrates the greatest growth? Have students compose a short persuasive essay offering their position on this issue. While considering their selected character's experiences, they should use textual evidence to provide specific examples to support their case.

*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 6.2.; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 6.1., 6.2., 6.3. Key Ideas and Details; Standard Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 6.4 and Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 7.4.*

- 2 The mythical creatures that colored the mythology of Greece and Rome were fearsome and fascinating beasts, and many are part of the lore created in the Heroes of Olympus series. Using library and Internet resources, students should consider a specific creature and conduct research to share with peers. Examples include but are not limited to Cerberus, Pegasus, the Hydra, the Minotaur, the centaurs, Charybdis, and the Harpies.

*Correlates to Common Core Standard Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 6.4 and Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 7.4.*

- 3 In addition to a wide variety of inventions and global contributions, ancient Greeks and Romans excelled at applied mathematics. As a class, consider the Pythagorean theorem, Euclidean geometry, and other applications in engineering and physics. Using library and Internet resources, students should consider other ways that the ancient Greeks and Romans contributed to the discipline of mathematics. Have students select one of the following to research: Pythagoras, Euclid, Archimedes, or Hypatia of Alexandria. Next, ask them to consider the following: How did this individual contribute to our understanding of mathematics during this time period? How did these advances serve the Greek and Roman people, and in what ways have mathematical practices been influenced by these contributions? Have students prepare a report of their findings.

*Correlates to Common Core Standard Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 6.4 and Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 7.4.*



*Dionysus/Bacchus*

- 4 Part of the legacy of ancient Greece and Rome are the monuments these societies erected. In addition to the great monuments of Greece and Rome (the Parthenon, the Erechtheion, the Pantheon, and the Colosseum, for example), monuments that pay tribute to ancient Greece and Rome can be found throughout the world. Have students research a Greek or Roman monument or one inspired by the Greco-Roman styles referenced in the Heroes of Olympus series and consider the following:
- What was the purpose of that style and why did civilizations beyond the Greeks and Romans choose to use it?
  - When considering one of the genuine Greek and Roman artifacts throughout the world, why and how was the artifact placed in its current location?
  - What conservation efforts are being made to protect this artifact? Using Animoto or another digital movie maker, make a video of your research findings to share with the class.

*Correlates to Common Core Standard Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 6.4 and Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 7.4.*

## CLASSICAL VOCABULARY

If vocabulary lessons coincide with your reading of the Heroes of Olympus books, consider this extension. Develop the lesson into a study of Greek and Latin roots and have students learn both translations for their vocabulary terms (terms will, of course, need to have a Greek or Latin root, or both):

- Assign students to learn Greek and Latin terms both phonetically and in their respective alphabets. Use the opportunity to investigate or discuss transitions in alphabets from ancient Greek to modern English.
- Have student pairs or trios investigate the philology of an assigned term—that is, the evolution of the meaning of that term through history. Each group should present their findings for the rest of the class.
- To carry the extension further, assign students to learn phrases or clichés that employ either a vocabulary term of their choice or one you assign in Greek or Latin. These may be part of a Greek or Latin saying, or one that’s been translated into Greek or Latin. Encourage them to investigate books or sites that collect famous quotes, lines from literature or poetry, and the like.





## EXPLORING THROUGH EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

In the Heroes of Olympus series, the complexities of the Greek and Roman deities, their relationships, and the situations in which they find themselves provide students opportunity to dig deep into the Greek and Roman myths as they examine and answer one of the following prompts:

- Though the stories of the major players in the Heroes of Olympus were created in ancient Greece and ancient Rome, if these characters lived in our time, they would likely use the same social media that is popular in our world. Select a Greek god or goddess of your choice and create a faux Facebook page for that character, being sure to complete all the pertinent information, like education, relationships, groups to follow, pages to like, and two to three status updates.
- Throughout the course of the Heroes of Olympus series, readers are offered great insights about the Greek and Roman gods encountered by the demigods. Assume the role of one of the gods or goddesses and compose a diary entry detailing what you experienced and witnessed. To prepare, create an outline using the five Ws (who, what, when, where, and why). Remember to write in first person and give special attention to sensory imagery (what you saw, smelled, heard, etc.).
- Consider the gods and goddesses featured in the Heroes of Olympus. What characteristics do these deities have in common? In what ways are their personalities and the challenges they face similar to those of people today? Based on what you've learned, which of the gods or goddesses do you think you are most like? Create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting yourself with the Greek god or goddess of your choice.
- In small groups, have students select a favorite scene from a Heroes of Olympus book and create either a digitally or manually illustrated graphic novel for that scene. A digital comic strip creator ([makebeliefscomix.com](http://makebeliefscomix.com) or [infinitecomic.com](http://infinitecomic.com), for example, can help them create storyboards for their selected myth. Have students select original art, images, and graphics. Alternatively, students could assume the roles of two of the characters with each one's personality and voice and have them interact with one another by creating an extension of a scene from the myth. As part of the evaluation component, consider panel size and number of panels, transitions and layouts, artwork, writing, and lettering.
- Ask students to draft a short essay answering the question "Should mortals be allowed on Mount Olympus?" This notable topic was never settled in ancient Greece. It is up to your students to resolve the issue by developing a persuasive argumentative essay that inserts the role of "hero" into the discussion.

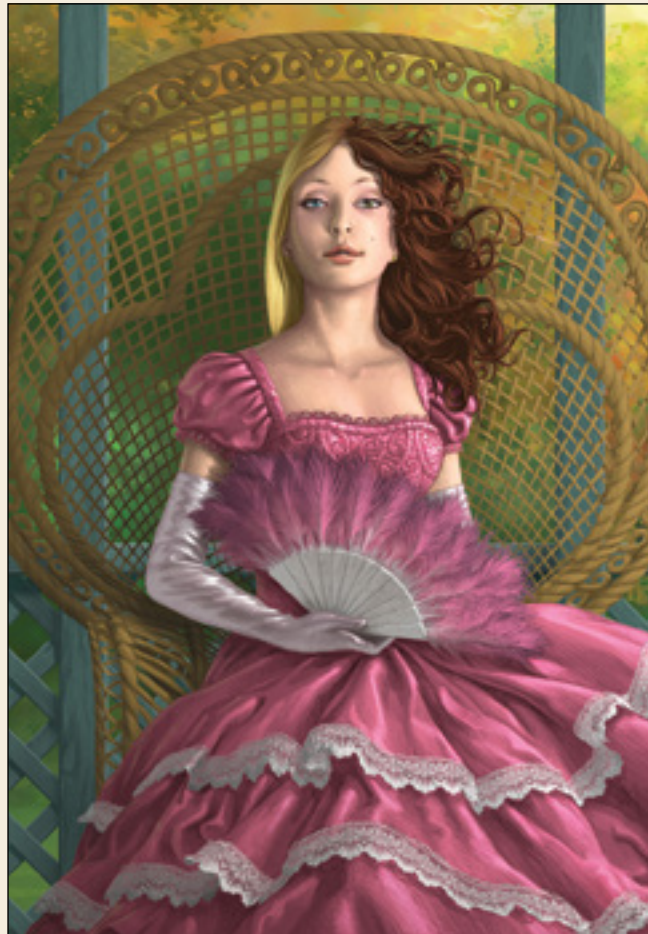
Have students select their favorite Greek or Roman god or goddess featured in the Heroes of Olympus series — or from additional studies on Greek and Roman mythology — and then choose one of these assignments for practice in letter writing (in both print format and e-mail):

- Your favorite mythological character has just retired, and Zeus/Jupiter, the father of the gods, is now accepting applications for a replacement. Write a letter of application and a brief resume or biographical sketch.
- As the best friend of a mythological character, write a letter offering support, encouragement, or guidance for a task or quest your friend hopes to accomplish. Be sure to research the differences between formal and informal letters or e-mails.

One of the hallmarks of Greek and Roman myths was how they were often used to explain natural phenomena. Challenge your students to create an original myth to explain some natural phenomenon or land formation—anything from the origin of hurricanes to how a mountain range was created. They should choose Greek or Roman gods and goddesses from the *Heroes of Olympus* books and use the following points to guide the creation of their myth:

- The story must involve at least two gods or goddesses, but is not limited to just these two.
- The original myth must explain a natural phenomenon or a geological feature (a sea, a polar ice cap, a mountain range, etc.).
- The story should include details about the Greek or Roman gods and goddesses you've discovered through reading the *Heroes of Olympus*. It should show your understanding of their powers, symbols, and personalities.

*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details C.C.S.S.E.L.A. Literacy. R. L. 4.1., 4.2.,4.3, R.L. 5.1.,5.2., 5.3. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. C.C.S.S.E.L.A. Literacy. R. L. 4.7.,4.9. R. L. 5.7.,5.9. R. L. 6.7.,6.9.*



*Aphrodite/Venus*

## UTILIZING THE HEROES OF OLYMPUS FOR LANGUAGE DISCOVERY

Greek and Roman mythology’s influence is evident in our daily language. It’s difficult to imagine reading or writing without drawing upon myth-oriented adjectives or idioms. As part of your everyday curriculum or as part of a separate word-study unit, ask students to research the histories of words and phrases that come from the Greek and Roman myths. For instance, ask them what it means to have an “Achilles’ heel.” To provide clarity, share the myth with them or allow them to research Achilles’s story on their own. Then ask them to speculate on the meaning of the following modern-day expressions and determine their Greek and Roman mythological connection:

- labyrinth
- atlas
- Herculean effort
- Midas touch
- panic
- tantalize
- titanic

Pair students up and challenge them to find as many Greek or Roman myth language connections as they can. To extend the activity, have them use the collected words in a myth of their creation.

## GREAT GREEK AND ROMAN GIRLS

Women usually weren’t afforded the same respect as their male counterparts in the Greco-Roman world, they certainly contributed heavily to its greatness! Since Rick Riordan writes about strong female characters, including Athena, perhaps the greatest of the female deities of Olympus, have students research some of the great female figures—mortal, immortal, and in between—of the classical Mediterranean world. Pair or group students and instruct them to investigate one of the subjects suggested below (or their own comparable choice). Then have them present their findings to the class. Parameters for research might include the following:

- Provide a brief bio of the subject, but emphasize some of the lesser-known attributes.
- Assess the “defining elements” of the subject—how did this figure help define women in the Greco-Roman World? How did that world help define what made your subject significant? How does she help us define their era now?
- Make a “today’s version” argument—who best embodies the strengths, weaknesses, and significance of your subject in today’s world?
- Suggested subjects:
  - Athena
  - Penelope
  - Ariadne
  - Hortensia
  - Cleopatra
  - Hypatia
  - the Amazons
  - the Pythia
  - Fortuna
  - Dido



## BEAST OF A MYTHOLOGY

The great beasts of Greco-Roman mythology helped the people of the classical Mediterranean explain the oddities and mysteries of the natural world—and also added plenty of suspense and excitement to the myths themselves! Assign student pairs or groups to investigate some of the beasts of Mediterranean mythology, the bullet points are for the students, while the instructions are for the teacher:

- Provide the origin story and characteristics of the creature. Emphasize the “why”—the characteristics of these beasts are closely related to their origins, their creators, and some problem or tension (usually human) at the time. Also address why the creature manifested in the form that it did. How might its setting or purpose have dictated its existence in its particular form rather than another?
- Explain how the belief in the existence of these creatures may have affected the behaviors or thoughts of Greeks and Romans of the ancient world.
- Provide a depiction of the creature, both in mythical and natural terms. In other words, are there natural phenomena that could have been misunderstood as a particular beast? In the case of creatures that don't significantly differ from natural parallels, how were they made to be more fearsome? What was the basis for the fear they struck in people? For instance, consider that dragons were considered lucky in ancient East Asia, but similar serpentine creatures were loathsome in the ancient Mediterranean.
- Possible subjects:
  - the Python
  - Cerberus
  - Pegasus
  - the Hydra
  - the Minotaur
  - centaurs
  - Charybdis
  - Cacus
  - fauns
  - the Harpies
  - the Cyclopes
  - the Cretan bull
  - Nemean lion
  - Arachne
  - Artemis's boar
  - Athena's owl
  - Jason's ram



*Arachne*

## THESE MYTHS ARE MIXED UP!

The following seven statements are taken from famous (and some not-so-famous) Greek and Roman myth, but each has three major errors in it. See how well your students know their myths—can they fix these mix-ups? (We gave you the right answers.)

- 1 Although Hermes persuaded Poseidon to release Aphrodite's daughter from the Underworld, young Persephone ate the seeds of the pomegranate, which caused her to be turned into a tree.

**ANSWER:** Although Hermes persuaded **Hades** to release **Demeter's** daughter from the Underworld, young Persephone ate the seeds of the pomegranate, **which caused her to spend a third of the year in the Underworld.**

- 2 As punishment for providing humans with fire, the god Hephaestus was banished by Zeus to the prison cave of Poseidon, where he was forced to battle Ceto.

**ANSWER:** As punishment for providing humans with fire, the **Titan Prometheus was bound** by Zeus to **a rock in the Caucasus**, where a **giant eagle ate his liver every day.**

- 3 Orion was laid to rest among the stars after being accidentally killed by his beloved Aphrodite, who was tricked by the jealous god of war, Ares.

**ANSWER:** Orion was laid to rest among the stars after being accidentally killed by his **admirer Artemis**, who was tricked by **her protective brother, Apollo.**

- 4 Juno was so jealous of the beauty of Psyche that she ordered Pluto to punish her, but Pluto kept her safely hidden until she looked upon his face and was pulled back into the Underworld.

**ANSWER:** **Venus** was so jealous of the beauty of Psyche that she ordered **Cupid** to punish her, but Cupid kept her safely hidden until she looked upon his face and **he disappeared in a puff of smoke.**

- 5 Daedalus tamed the flying stallion Pegasus to carry him and his son Oedipus from the tower of Minoan king Minos, but Oedipus was killed when he pushed Pegasus to fly too close to the constellation Scorpio.

**ANSWER:** Daedalus **crafted wings** to carry him and his son **Icarus** from the tower of King Minos, but **Icarus drowned when he flew too close to the sun and the wax holding the wings' feathers melted.**

- 6 King Midas's gift of the Golden Touch, granted by Apollo, was only taken away when the god told Midas to bathe in the River Styx and he was taken into the Underworld by Hades.

**ANSWER:** King Midas's gift of the Golden Touch, granted by the god **Bacchus**, was only taken away when the god told Midas to bathe in the **River Pactolus, whose sands were made golden.**

- 7 Romulus and Romanus, brothers and founders of Rome, burst from the skull of their father after he devoured them, fearing treachery. They fled to be raised by a bull.

**ANSWER:** Romulus and **Remus**, brothers and founders of Rome, **were condemned to die in the River Tiber by their great-uncle**, but were found and cared for by **a she-wolf.**

## MAP YOUR WAY THROUGH HISTORY!

Locate the following historically significant places on a map of the classical world, and match them to the event or significance of that location.

### GREEK WORLD

- Crete/Knossos (earliest Greek civilization, the labyrinth of King Minos)
- Mycenae (kingdom of Agamemnon, leader of the expedition to Troy)
- Troy (in Anatolia, location of the Trojan Wars in the *Iliad*)
- Athens and Sparta (most powerful city-states of the classical era)
- Delphi (site of the Temple of Phoebus Apollo, home of the Oracle)
- Mount Olympus (home of the gods)
- Olympia (site of the Temple of Zeus—one of the ancient wonders of the world—and home of the ancient Olympic Games)
- Marathon (site of the Athenian victory over the Persians, followed by the famed run of Phidippides to carry the news to Athens)
- Thermopylae (site of the stand of over three hundred Spartans against tens of thousands of Persian invaders)
- Alexandria (in Egypt; built by Alexander the Great, center of commerce and knowledge in the Mediterranean until the Roman conquest)





## ROMAN WORLD

- Rome (capital city of the Republic and the Empire until the fourth century AD)
- Etruria (modern Tuscany; kingdom of one of Rome's parent civilizations, the Etruscans)
- Sicily (center of the Mediterranean world, site of Greek colonization and spread of Greek culture to Italy)
- Carthage (in modern Tunisia; Rome's greatest rival)
- Ostia (port for the city of Rome—no longer exists, but was second only to Rome itself in its day)
- Cannae (site of Hannibal's victory over the Roman legions, though it ultimately cost him the war)
- Mount Vesuvius, Pompeii, and Herculaneum (resort cities on the Gulf of Naples, destroyed by volcanic eruption)
- Lugdunum and Lutetia (modern Lyon and Paris; key trade centers in Gaul)
- Londinium (modern London; northernmost city in the Roman Empire)
- Hadrian's wall (boundary between Roman Britannia and Scotland)
- Byzantium (ancient Greek city, became the site of the new eastern Roman capital of Constantinople in the fourth century AD)
- Ravenna (major trade center, became the center of the revival of Roman and Christian traditions after the Roman Empire's collapse)

## SOME GODS ARE UNDERDOGS!

Put students into mixed-ability pairs and have them research and develop a biographical presentation of a lesser-known deity from the Greco-Roman tradition. These may include deities that either are rather obscure or simply were not studied in class.

Possibilities might include:

- Nemesis
- Salacia
- Concordia
- Pan
- Fortuna
- Alecto
- Pax
- Hecate
- Juventas

*Nemesis*



## THE ULTIMATE MOTHER

Gaia has a pretty bad rep in the Heroes of Olympus series. Are these statements about the Earth Mother's place in Greco-Roman mythology **FACT** or **FICTION**?

- Gaia was born of sea foam and drops of blood from her father, Uranus.

**FICTION** (*This describes the birth of Aphrodite, the giants, and the nymphs. Gaia was born out of the primordial void the Greeks called Chaos.*)

- Our popular perception of a tolerant, generous, fragile “Mother Earth” is misleading: Gaia was portrayed as quite fickle and cruel in the Mediterranean world.

**FACT** (*In classical myth, Gaia was quite cruel—she was horrified at the appearance of her first children and banished them to the pre-Hadean abyss.*)

- *Gaia* to the Greeks and *Terra* to the Romans, both names for the deity have a different meaning from that of our English word *earth*.

**FICTION** (*Both the Greek root *ge* and the Latin *terra* translate as “land.”*)

- It was Gaia who convinced the Titan Cronos to eat Zeus and the rest of his children to prevent them from overthrowing him.

**FICTION** (*Gaia actually helped Zeus's mother, Rhea, trick Cronos into believing a stone wrapped in swaddling was Zeus, and he summarily swallowed it.*)

- In Roman mythology, the Earth goddess was also linked to the fertility goddess, Ceres.

**FACT** (*The Romans celebrated both manifestations of the goddess in late January in celebrations for the protection of the seed and the sower.*)

- Greeks and Romans understood the offspring of the Earth Goddess very differently—they were natural entities for the Greeks, but more associated with human principles for the Romans.

**FACT** (*Among Gaia's offspring were Uranus, the sky; Pontus, the sea; and Ourea, the mountains. In contrast, Terra was mother to Fama: popular rumor, or “fame.”*)

- As the oldest goddess (and perhaps the most feared), Gaia was typically the patron of the largest temples in the Greco-Roman world.

**FICTION** (*Gaia was typically worshipped in the open countryside—though the Greeks also used caves—and rarely had any structures built in her honor.*)

## DID YOU KNOW . . . ?

- Gaia was the grandmother of Prometheus, who tricked Zeus in order to give man the gift of fire—in the ancient world, the symbol of learning and technology.
- Gaia’s “birth” from Chaos was understood by the Greeks as the receding of the void to reveal the earth. The Roman writer Ovid altered the concept of Chaos to be understood as an unformed primordial mass.
- Most all of Gaia’s many children were objects of awe and fear for believers of Greco-Roman mythology: from the monstrous giants and Cyclopes to the terrifying Titans.
- In artistic representations, Gaia was almost always portrayed as an attractive woman half-buried in the earth—a kind of reversal of the Egyptian sky goddess Nut from the Kane Chronicles.
- For both Greeks and Romans, an oath sworn on Gaia was considered one of the most binding, since there was no way to escape earth if it was violated. Even in ancient times, it wasn’t wise to swear on your mother!

## GRECO-ROMAN GOD FACE-OFF!

Consider these facts about deities worshipped in both Greek and Rome. Greeks and Romans sometimes understood these deities differently, so see if you can identify whether the description is a Greek representation or a Roman one:

- This god battled the horrific monster Typhon and pinned him under Mount Aetna—the cause for the volcano’s frequent and violent eruptions.  
**ANSWER:** *Zeus (Greek)*
- This deity’s association with agriculture and the cultivation of grapes could, in a way, be understood as passing the time.  
**ANSWER:** *Saturn (Roman)*
- This fertility deity was also understood to deliver oracles, and sometimes was called “one who wards off the wolf.”  
**ANSWER:** *Faunus (Roman)*
- Though not as rich in status as his trans-Mediterranean manifestation, he still got to date the most beautiful girl in the pantheon!  
**ANSWER:** *Ares (Greek)*
- Speed was of the essence for this patron of merchants and trade.  
**ANSWER:** *Mercury (Roman)*
- Though it seems out of place, this deity was believed to have created the horse. One of the early attempts yielded the zebra!  
**ANSWER:** *Poseidon (Greece)*
- On the other side of the Mediterranean, he (rather than Typhon) is the cause for Mount Aetna’s rumblings.  
**ANSWER:** *Vulcan (Roman)*
- Though both sides of the Mediterranean linked this deity to the peacock, only one made him/her the patron of the treasury.  
**ANSWER:** *Juno (Roman)*



This guide was created by Rose Brock, a school librarian and doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University specializing in children's and young adult literature.

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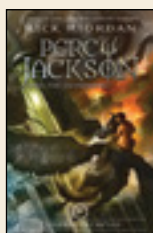
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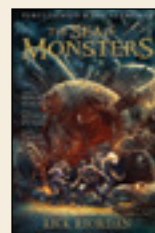
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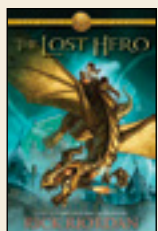


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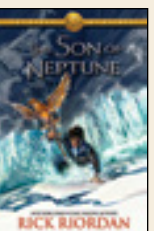


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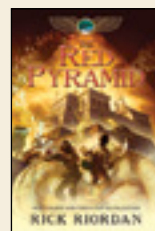
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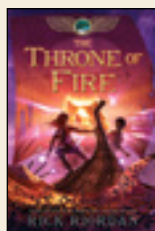
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