

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION BOOKS

## ABOUT THE BOOK

In *The Son of Neptune*, Percy, Hazel, and Frank met in Camp Jupiter, the Roman equivalent of Camp Half-Blood, and traveled to the land beyond the gods to complete a dangerous quest. The third book in the Heroes of Olympus series will unite them with Jason, Piper, and Leo. But they number only six—who will complete the Prophecy of Seven?

The Greek and Roman demigods will have to cooperate in order to defeat the giants released by the Earth Mother, Gaea. Then they will have to sail together to the ancient land to find the Doors of Death. What exactly are the Doors of Death? Much of the prophesy remains a mystery. . . .



# CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

## READING, WRITING, AND RESEARCHING

### PRE-READING ACTIVITY

As a pre-reading activity, have students complete an anticipation guide structured in the following manner:

BEFORE READING	AFTER READING	STATEMENTS
		Friends should always take your side even if they don't agree with your choices.
		Being prideful is always a negative thing.
		Children should value opportunities to work and learn from each other.
		Feeling guilt or remorse for one's actions can be life changing.

Instruct students to complete the guide by placing a “+” sign in the box next to the statements with which they agree and a “o” next to those with which they disagree. They must commit to agreement or disagreement—there are no conditional responses. Students should be assured that there are no correct or incorrect positions.





## WRITING AND RESEARCH

The following questions may be posed throughout the novel study as reflective writing prompts, or alternatively, they can be used to 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 chose 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 to the gods so 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 be 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 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?

- 9 In *The Son of Neptune*, through Reyna's leadership, Camp Jupiter rallies to support Percy and defeat the giant. Predict what role Reyna will in *The Mark of Athena*.
- 10 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?
- 11 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 seem him in the same light? Why or why not?
- 12 Consider the title of the third installment in *The Heroes of Olympus* series; predict what the significance is of the Mark of Athena and what role Annabeth and her mother will play in the story.
- 13 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?
- 14 Throughout the 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 godly parent has changed throughout the course of the stories. In what ways is this realization similar or different to what kids learn about their own parents?



## EXTENDED WRITING AND RESEARCH PROMPTS

**Classical Vocabulary** if vocabulary lessons coincide with your reading of *The Mark of Athena*, consider this alternative. 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. Greek and Latin alphabet lists are provided at the end of this guide.
- Have student pairs or trios investigate the etymology of an assigned term—that is, the evolution of the meaning of their 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 translated into Greek or Latin. Encourage them to investigate books or sites of famous quotes, lines from literature or poetry, and the like.

**Great Greek and Roman Girls** Women usually weren't afforded the same respect as their male counterparts in the Greco-Roman world, but they certainly contributed heavily to its greatness! As this story focuses on perhaps the greatest of the female deities of Olympus, take the opportunity to put students to researching 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 encourage students to find their own comparable topic). Have students present their topics to the class. Parameters for research might include the following:
  - Provide a brief bio of the topic, but encourage emphasis on some of the lesser-known attributes.
  - Assess the “defining elements” of the topic—how do these figures help to define women in the Greco-Roman World? How did that world help to define what made them significant? How do they help us to define their era?
  - Make a “today’s version” argument—who best embodies the strengths, weaknesses, and significance of the subject in today’s world?

### Suggested subjects

- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| • Athena    | • Hypatia     |
| • Penelope  | • The Amazons |
| • Ariadne   | • The Pythia  |
| • Hortensia | • Fortuna     |
| • Cleopatra | • Dido        |



**Beast of a Mythology** The great beasts of Greco-Roman mythology helped the people of the Classical Mediterranean to 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:

- Provide the origin story and characteristics of the creature. Compel students to emphasize the “why”—the characteristics of these beasts is closely related to their origins, their creators, and some problem or tension (usually human) at the time. They should also address why the creature manifested in the form that it did (how might its setting or purpose have dictated 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 be misunderstood as a particular beast? In the case of creatures that don’t significantly differ from natural parallels, how was it made to be more fearsome? What was the basis for the fear it struck in people (e.g., consider that dragons might have been considered lucky in ancient East Asia, but serpentine creatures were loathsome in the ancient Mediterranean)?




### Possible subjects

- Python
- Charybdis
- Nemean lion
- Cerberus
- Cacus
- Arachne
- Pegasus
- Faun
- Artemis's boar
- Hydra
- Harpies
- Athena's owl
- Minotaur
- Cyclopes
- Jason's ram
- Centaur
- Cretan bull

***Zhto H Ellada! Or Viva Roma!*** Do your students fancy themselves loyal sons or daughters of Attica, or of the Apennines? Loyalty to home and the state was one of many common features of both Classical Mediterranean societies, but there were many ways in which they differed greatly from each other. For this activity, have students investigate some of the more intricate features of daily life, society, and culture in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, and present them to the class. To add an element of intrigue, pair students (one “Greek” and one “Roman”) who present clues about their society in a cryptic fashion to see if the class can guess who represents each society.

Of course, more commonly known elements—forms of government, religious identities, etc.—are eligible for this activity, but consider challenging students to delve into topics that won't be as readily known or easily deduced, such as:

- Outdoor leisure activities of common people
- Common musical instruments or themes
- Perceptions of outsiders (or in their own terms, “barbarians”)
- Games and sports
- Preferred cuisines and local vs. imported foods
- Methods and attitudes about worship (not what they believe in, but how they supplicate)

- 
- Perceptions of virtue and honor
  - Military service, armaments, and tactics
  - Gender norms and child-rearing practices
  - Attitudes about the individual, the family, and the community
  - Slavery

*Note that many of these things varied across Greece from one city-state to the next, so it may be helpful to limit students to one of them.*

- As a summative assessment, assign students to write a “Which Would You Rather. . .” essay in which they make an argument for their preference for either Classical Greece or Classical Rome. Require them to use what they learned from the presentations, and to acknowledge or account for aspects in which their preference may manifest a weakness.

**Reviewing Greco-Roman Mythology and Lore** How well do your students know the myths, stories, and history of the Greco-Roman world? As a review activity, lead your classes through the following questions to assess their expertise. Develop questions that focus on identifying features of deities, demigods, literary characters, etc., that have both Greek and Roman iterations. Students must then identify each character in the proper iteration. Challenge students by emphasizing some of the less common lore from those mythologies (e.g., students may readily associate Mercury with winged feet or a winged helmet, but do they know he is also symbolized by the Caduceus—the symbol that today we associate with physicians?). Set this up as a game in a format such as *Jeopardy!* or *\$25,000 Pyramid*, or as a modified game of *Risk* with Greek and Roman teams expanding to try to conquer the world with each correct answer. Wikipedia pages are generally reliable as resources to develop questions for this activity, but *Encyclopedia Mythica* also provides reliable overviews of Greco-Roman mythology in a “Roman vs. Greek” comparative format ([http://www.pantheon.org/miscellaneous/roman\\_vs\\_greek.html](http://www.pantheon.org/miscellaneous/roman_vs_greek.html)).

# GREEK AND ROMAN ALPHABETS

LATIN ALPHABET WITH ENGLISH MATCH	
A	ah (a)
B	be (b)
C	ce (c)
D	de (d)
E	eh (e)
F	ef (f)
G	ge (g)
H	he (h)
I	ih (i)
K	ka (k)
L	el (l)
M	em (m)
N	en (n)
O	o (o)
P	pe (p)
Q	qu (q)
R	er (r)
S	es (s)
T	te (t)
V	u (oo)
X	ex (x)
Y	i Graeca (hy, yi, ye, ya)
Z	zeta (z)



## GREEK ALPHABET WITH ENGLISH MATCH

A, α	Alpha (a)
B, β	Beta (b)
Γ, γ	Gamma (g)
Δ, δ	Delta (d)
E, ε	Epsilon (e)
Z, ζ	Zeta (z)
H, η	Eta (“hey”)
Θ, θ	Theta (th)
I, ι	Iota (i)
K, κ	Kappa (k)
Λ, λ	Lamda (l)
M, μ	Mu (m)
N, ν	Nu (n)
Ξ, ξ	Xi (x)
O, ο	Omicron (short o)
Π, π	Pi (p)
P, ρ	Rho (r)
Σ, σ, ς	Sigma (s)
T, τ	Tau (t)
Y, υ	Upsilon (u)
Φ, φ	Phi (ph)
X, χ	Chi (ch)
Ψ, ψ	Psi (ps)
Ω, ω	Omega (long o)



Marty Umans

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**RICK RIORDAN** spent fifteen years as a classroom teacher in public and private schools in California and Texas. In 1997, he began publishing mystery novels for adults. His popular *Tres Navarre* series won the top three national awards in the mystery genre—the Edgar, the Anthony, and the Shamus. His best-selling series, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, started as a bedtime story for his son. Rick Riordan now writes full-time. He lives in San Antonio with his wife and two sons.

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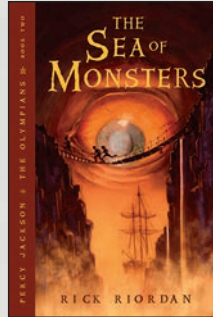
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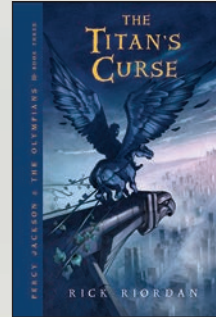
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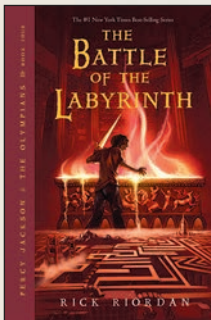
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This guide was created by Rose Brock, a school librarian and doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University specializing in children's and young adult literature.

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