



March 12-14, 1998

## CLIMBING TO THE TOP OF MOUNT OLYMPUS

**Grade Level:** Sixth Grade

**Presented by:** Melanie Karp and Michelle Ventura, Vineyard Elementary School,  
Templeton CA

**Length of Unit:** Nine Lessons

### I. ABSTRACT

This unit has been designed to enhance students' awareness of Western culture in relationship to its parent Greek culture. Greek mythology contains the seeds of basic questions that Western civilization has been posing for more than 2500 years. The lessons provide an opportunity for students to examine the origins of some of these ideas and to investigate the challenges that emerge from the myths. This unit can be adapted to the needs of all students. The fantasy element allows a flexible approach to learning. Through a variety of multidisciplinary activities, students' imaginations will be engaged in age old questions still relevant today.

### II. OVERVIEW

A. The sixth grade Core Knowledge Sequence includes an introduction to classical mythology. In connection with their study of lasting ideas from ancient Greece and Rome history, the students will be able to identify with several gods and goddesses and their origins.

B. The students will be able to identify Greek influence on modern society.

1. Students will be able to locate Greece and Rome on a world map.
2. Students will be able to match mythical characters to what they represent.
3. Students will be able to define "myth."
4. Students will be able to find evidence that Greek mythology has influenced modern society.
5. Students will be able to explain how the Greek gods were named.
6. Students will create their own lyrical poem.
7. Students will create commercials to show how companies use Narcissism to sell their products.
8. Students will create a newspaper based on their favorite myth and write an advertisement to encourage others to read it.
9. Students will create a mythical figure from sculpting clay.
10. Students will participate in a mock Olympics.

### III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

A. Hirsch, E.D., What Your Sixth Grader Needs to Know. ISBN 0-385-41120-0. New York, N.Y., Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. 1993

B. Nash, Gary and Christopher Salter, A Message of Ancient Days, ISBN 0-395-54027-5. Boston, MA, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991

## **IV. RESOURCES**

### **A. Books**

1. D'Aulaire, Edgar and Ingri, D'Aulaire's Book of Greek Myths. ISBN: 0-385-01583-6, Doubleday and Company, Inc. 1962
2. Evans, Cheryl and Anne Millard, Greek Myths and Legends. ISBN: 0860209466, Usborne Publishing Ltd., 1985
3. Evslin, Evslin and Hoopes, The Greek Gods. ISBN: 0-590-43351-2, Scholastic Inc., 1966
4. Hadley, Eric and Tessa, Legends of the Sun and Moon. ISBN: 0-521-379121, Cambridge University Press, 1989.
5. Harrison, James C., Hooked on Fitness! ISBN: 0-13-065616-X, Parker Publishing Company, West Nyack, N.Y., 1993
6. King, David c., Cultures. ISBN: 0-278-40228-3. American Book Company, Copyright 1979 by Litton Educational Company.
7. Lipson, Greta and Sidney Bolsky, Mighty Myth. ISBN: 0-86653-064-9, Good Apple, Inc. 1982
8. McLean, Mollie and Anne Wiseman, Adventures of the Greek Heroes. ISBN: 0-395-13714-4. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1989
9. McLeish, Kenneth, The Seven Wonders of the World. ISBN: 0-521-379-113, Cambridge University Press, 1989.
10. Osborne, Mary Pope, Favorite Greek Myths. ISBN: 0-590-41339-2, Scholastic Inc., 1989.
11. Richardson, I. M. Odysseus and the Cyclops. ISBN: 0-8167-0008-7, Troll Associates, 1984.

## **V. LESSONS**

### **A. Lesson One: Where in the World Are Greece and Rome?**

#### **1. Objective/Goal:**

- a. Students will be able to locate Greece and Rome on a world map.
- b. Students will be able to locate specific places using longitude and latitude.
- c. Students will gain an understanding of how these ancient places relate to the modern world through the introduction to myths and legends.

#### **2. Materials**

- a. Overhead projector
- b. Overhead transparencies
- c. Overhead pens
- d. Individual maps for students
- e. World map
- f. Pencils for each student
- g. Map of Ancient Greece

#### **3. Prior Knowledge for Students**

- a. General knowledge of how to look at a map
- b. Continents of the world
- c. Oceans of the world

#### **4. Key Vocabulary**

- a. continent
- b. longitude
- c. latitude
- d. city-state
- e. Odysseus
- f. peninsula
- g. democracy

#### **5. Procedures/Activities**

- a. Provide a bag of realia (articles from the Greek/Roman culture). Pull out each item and discuss its relevance to ancient history.
- b. Discuss with the class the growth of the Greek city-states and the development of democracy.
- c. Briefly describe the early masterpiece of Greek literature, the Odyssey. (According to the tale, Odysseus wandered for ten years among the islands and coastal regions of what is now Greece.)
- d. Have students name the three seas that touch Greece (Aegean, Ionian, Mediterranean) Tell students that according to the Odyssey, Odysseus wandered throughout the region known as the Aegean Sea.
- e. Have students use the information they've gained from the map to infer the importance of the sea to the ancient people of Greece.
- f. At the time when Greece was home to powerful city-states, Rome was just a village of straw-roofed huts. Rome was strongly influenced by Greek culture. Within 600 years, Rome had conquered Greece and much of the rest of the Mediterranean world.
- g. Read the legend of Romulus and Remus. Even though legends are not historically accurate, Roman legends tell us qualities people admired and the values they wished to pass on to future generations.
- h. Discuss the effect of the geography had on the birth of Rome (access to the Mediterranean, protected location).
- I. Have students locate Greece and Rome on a map.
- j. Using lines of longitude and latitude, students will locate continents, oceans, Greece and Rome.
- k. Play "Battleship" giving degrees of longitude and latitude and cardinal directions to locate certain places.

#### **6. Evaluation/Assessment**

- a. Students will be able to locate Greece and Rome on a world map.
- b. Students will be able to use lines of longitude and latitude to locate specific places on a map.
- c. Students will discover the importance of geography to the rise of a nation.

### **B. Lesson Two: Greek Mythology's Influence on the World's Culture**

#### **1. Objective/Goal:**

- a. Students will understand why myths were created.
- b. Students will be able to define "myth."

#### **2. Materials**

- a. Soundtrack from "Hercules"
- b. Chart paper with mythical characters and what they represent
- c. Markers
- d. Journal for each child (See Appendix A for cover idea)
- e. Pencil for each child
- f. Sponge or nerf ball

#### **3. Prior Knowledge for Students**

Students should have had some knowledge of tall tales, fairytales, legends, myths, etc.

#### **4. Key Vocabulary**

myth

#### **5. Procedures/Activities**

- a. Play music from "Hercules" soundtrack as students enter the room.
- b. The teacher will ask a probing question about the creation of the earth, such as "How did the stars get into the sky?" or "Why are some places on earth dry and frozen parts while others are green and warm?"
- c. Students will discuss their thoughts in answer to the probing questions.
- d. Teacher will lead discussion detailing the following ideas: Over 2000 years ago people did not always understand the wonders of nature. They reasoned that

superhuman powers that must be responsible and to describe the creation of natural phenomenon. And they intertwined these myths with moral values.

e. Students will match mythical characters to what they represent on the class chart.

f. Students will choose a name good or goddess name for themselves and a particular thing in nature that they represent and create a nametag.

g. Form a circle and throw a nerf ball from one side of the circle to the other calling out the student's mythical names. The ball will circulate until all student's names have been called.

h. Ask students, "How has Greek mythology influenced modern society?"

#### **6. Evaluation/Assessment**

a. Students will match mythical characters to what they represent.

b. Journal writing to describe "What is a myth?"

c. Students will find evidence of the Greek's influence in advertisements and commercials.

### **C. Lesson Three: Nature's Wonders**

#### **1. Objective/Goal:**

a. Students will be able to relate a Greek God to an explanation of a natural event/phenomenon.

#### **2. Materials**

a. Precut cards of different color and shape with four basic elements written on them.

(See Appendix B.)

b. Notecards with natural phenomenon written on them.

#### **3. Prior Knowledge for Students**

a. Students will be able to define a myth.

b. Students should have an understanding of how Greek gods were named.

#### **4. Key Vocabulary**

a. Ovid

b. metamorphosis

c. Mount Olympus

#### **5. Procedures/Activities**

a. Read short excerpt from Favorite Greek Myths about why the ancient Greeks invented stories to help explain nature and to free them from fears of the unknown.

b. Pass out precut shapes have them form groups by color/shape.

c. Teachers will give each group a notecard with natural phenomenon written on it.

d. Groups will be instructed to show how this phenomenon came to be. For example: skit, song, dance, etc.

e. Groups will present their interpretations to the class.

f. After sharing, explain to the students that most of the myths we will investigate come to us from ancient Greece by way of Rome, in particular the Latin poet Ovid.

g. Ovid is known for his retellings in a book called, Metamorphoses. As the title of his book indicates, the gods or mortals in his stories undergo dramatic changes into different shapes and forms.

#### **6. Evaluation/Assessment**

a. By teacher observation

b. Reflective journals

### **D. Lesson Four: "Apollo and Daphne"**

#### **1. Objective/Goal**

a. Students will be able to define a story plot.

b. Students will plot the events from the myth "Apollo and Daphne."

#### **2. Materials:**

a. One sheet for each student of Appendix C and D.

b. Pencil for each student

c. Crayons, markers, or colored pencils for each student

### **3. Prior Knowledge for Students:**

a. Students should have examined parts of various stories to define the introduction, conflict, climax, and resolution.

### **4. Key Vocabulary:**

a. Apollo

b. Daphne

c. plot

### **5. Procedures/Activities**

a. Teacher will begin by asking the students probing questions such as, "Have you ever bragged about something to show off to your friends?" "What was the result?" or "Did you ever wish for something and then when you got it, it wasn't what you thought it would be?"

b. After a discussion the teacher will read or tell the story of Apollo and Daphne.

c. Students will have a discussion of the events that led up to Apollo's desire for Daphne. How could this outcome have been avoided?

d. Teacher will write the events of the story on the board as students discuss.

e. Students will then begin to examine the story plot of this myth.

f. Each student will be given a copy of Appendix C labeled: Introduction, Conflict, Climax, Resolution.

g. Students will fill in the boxes with facts and illustrations from the myth. They should include as many details as they can.

h. As students finish, they can use Appendix D to design a T-shirt that has symbols representing the characters from the myth.

### **6. Evaluation/Assessment**

a. Students will design the story plot from Apollo and Daphne.

b. Teacher will score the students story plots on a rubric scale.

## **E. Lesson Five: "Orpheus and Eurydice"**

### **1. Objective/Goal:**

a. Students will create a new ending to the myth.

b. Students will write a lyrical poem about nature and their emotions

### **2. Materials**

a. Writing journals

b. Pencils for each student

c. Paper for each student

d. Pictures of scenery and nature

### **3. Prior Knowledge for Students**

a. Exposure to various forms of poetry writing

b. Students will build from lessons 1-4.

### **4. Key Vocabulary**

a. Orpheus

b. Apollo

c. Eurydice

d. King Hades

e. lyre

f. Zeus

g. lyric

### **5. Procedures/Activities**

a. The teacher will ask a probing question for the class to discuss: "Have you ever wished you could undo something you had done?" "Would you do it differently if you had the opportunity to do it again?"

b. After a class discussion, tell the students that the mythical figure they will learn about today made such a mistake. His name was Orpheus and he was the most talented poet

of all. He wrote music to accompany his poems and often sang while playing his lyre. Orpheus' story, however, has a sad twist.

c. The teacher will then share the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.

d. After the story have the students pretend to give Orpheus a second chance by changing the outcome of his trip through Tartarus. The new endings should be written using the "first person" point of view, as if Orpheus himself were telling the details of his journey. Stories will be written in students' writing journals.

e. Allow students to share journals.

f. The students will then create original poems about something in nature to show emotion.

g. Illustrate poems in pastels.

#### **6. Evaluation/Assessment**

a. Teacher observation

b. Students will create a new ending to the story of Orpheus.

c. Students will compose a poem and share it with the class.

### **F. Lesson Six: Narcissus and Echo: "Why Can't You Love Me?"**

#### **1. Objective/Goal:**

a. Students will examine how self love effects others.

b. Students will demonstrate how advertisements today use Narcissism to sell products.

#### **2. Materials**

a. Writing journal

b. Pencils

c. Magazine pictures

d. Reader's theater of Narcissus and Echo

#### **3. Prior Knowledge for Students**

Students will build from lessons 1-5

#### **4. Key Vocabulary**

a. Hera

b. Echo

c. Narcissus

d. Artemis

#### **5. Procedures/Activities**

a. Have students write a response on one of the following topics in their journals:

Beauty is only skin deep.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

You can't judge a book by its cover.

b. Discuss students' responses

c. Tell students that today's lesson will describe how a person's character is not always how that person appears to be on the outside.

d. Have a group of four to five students perform a readers' theater about Narcissus and Echo.

e. Discuss how this myth describes the origin of the beautiful narcissus flower and the phenomenon of an echo. Note that it also tells the destructive effects of too much self-love and how it effects on the welfare of others.

f. Have the students work in small groups to create commercials that use Narcissism to sell products.

g. Students will act out commercials for the class.

#### **6. Evaluation/Assessment**

Teacher will observe commercials to check for understanding and to ensure that all instructions were followed.

### **G. Lesson Seven: The Daily Olympian**

#### **1. Objective/Goal:**

a. Students will use their literary skills to create a mythology newspaper based on a favorite myth.

b. Students will create an advertisement to influence others to read it.

## **2. Materials**

a. Classroom encyclopedia set

b. Variety of books on Greek mythology

c. Paper for each student

d. Pencil for each student

e. Crayons, markers, colored pencils for each student or group of students.

## **3. Prior Knowledge for Students**

Students will build from lessons 1-6.

## **4. Key Vocabulary**

Names of gods and goddesses from lessons 1-6

## **5. Procedures/Activities**

a. The students will work independently or form small groups of 2 or 3.

b. The teacher will display an example of a newspaper headline called The Daily Olympian and explain to the students that they will be composing a newspaper based upon a favorite myth.

c. The students will write a headline about the myth and then create a report focusing on factual events which occurred.

d. In another column, the students will write an editorial giving their opinion of the myth. Explain to the students that they must include reasons that back up their opinion.

e. The students will then design an illustration of an important part in the myth and write a caption below it that explains the action occurring.

f. In the last column, have the students draw an advertisement that would influence others to read their myth.

## **6. Evaluation/Assessment**

a. The students will share their newspapers with the class and teacher will observe.

b. The teacher will grade the students on a point system to evaluate their literary skills.

# **H. Lesson Eight: Greek Art and Sculpture**

## **1. Objective/Goal**

a. Students will compare the architecture of ancient Greek buildings to architectural styles today that reflect Greek influence.

b. Students will look at sculptures of Greek athletes and create a sculpture of a mythical character of their own.

## **2. Materials**

a. Photographs of the Parthenon, Temple of Nike, the Pantheon, "The Discus Thrower," Zeus, the White House, Buckingham Palace or modern day buildings with Greek influence in design

b. Sculpting clay for each student

c. Kiln to fire clay pieces

d. Assorted colors of glazes

## **3. Prior Knowledge for students**

a. Students will build from lessons 1-7.

b. Students should have worked with modeling material in the past.

## **4. Key Vocabulary**

a. architecture

b. balance

c. columns

d. arch

## **5. Procedures/Activities**

a. Teacher will present the students with photographs of the Temple of Nike, The Parthenon, and the Pantheon.

- b. Teacher will lead the discussion to describe the architectural designs that were created by the ancient Greeks, such as the use of columns, arches and sense of balance.
- c. Teacher will then display pictures of modern day buildings and have the students look for comparisons to the ancient designs. Have students list other buildings that share common characteristics.
- d. Teacher will explain that not only did the Greeks influence us architecturally, but they were also wonderful painters and sculptors. They believed that art could be expressed in a variety of ways.
- e. Teacher will show the students photographs of "The Discus Thrower," and Zeus. Explain that the Greeks showed the human body in a way that is both beautiful and without flaws. Ask students to point out the qualities that make the statue look lifelike.
- f. Give each of the students sculpting clay. Tell them that they are going to create a sculpture of one of the mythical characters they have studied. Their model should represent the qualities that made that god or goddess unique.
- g. After the sculptures are complete allow the students time to share out their designs.

#### **6. Evaluation/Assessment**

- a. By teacher observation and class discussions.
- b. Students will create a sculpture of a mythical character.

### **VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY (optional)**

#### **A. Lesson Activity: Going for the Gold**

##### **1. Objective/Goal:**

- a. Students will be able to take the information they've acquired in previous lessons and compete in a mock "Olympic" event.
- b. Students will participate in a test of strength and endurance and/or test of the minds.
- c. Students will learn the history of the first Olympic games and how our present day Olympics are modeled after the ancient ones.

##### **2. Materials**

- a. Jeopardy Game questions and gameboard
- b. For outdoor events, students use large play area on playground
- c. "Chariots of Fire" music
- d. Medals for gold, silver, bronze awards
- e. Tape recorder
- f. Public-Address system
- g. Frisbee for distance throw
- h. Track for running races or open area
- i. Sand pit
- j. Cones to mark field
- k. Painted lines for individualized lanes.

##### **3. Prior Knowledge for Students**

Students will build from lessons 1-8

##### **4. Key Vocabulary**

- a. javelin
- b. discus
- c. chariot
- d. hurdle
- e. marathon

##### **5. Procedures/Activities**

- a. Read a literature book about the beginning of the Olympics
- b. Explain the rules for Jeopardy
- c. Explain the outdoor events and how points are earned
- d. Have the students choose three outdoor events to participate in
- e. After the mock Olympics, award medals to athletes accumulating the most points
- f. Hold closing ceremony

## **6. Evaluation/Assessment**

- a. Students will be able to answer Jeopardy Game questions with 90% accuracy.
- b. Students will participate in the mock Olympics enthusiastically.

## **VII. HANDOUTS/STUDENT WORKSHEETS**

- A. Appendix A: Journal cover
- B. Appendix B: Basic element cards
- C. Appendix C: Story plot exercise
- D. Appendix D: Design a T-shirt

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