

GODS OF THUNDER: Myths and Mythical Characters

Grade Level: Third Grade

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Length of Unit: Ten lessons over 12 days (40 minutes each)

I. ABSTRACT

In this literature unit, students will explore myths and legends from Ancient Greece and Rome, and from Norse Mythology. There are many similarities between the two, and students will compare, contrast and evaluate these myths and the cultures that created them. Teaching strategies include class discussion, journal entries, graphic organizers, worksheets, and creative writing. Students will produce a Portfolio of Mythology as the Culminating Activity. This unit can be split into two sections to correspond with history units on Ancient Rome and the Vikings (six days – Greek and Roman myths, six days – Norse myths).

II. OVERVIEW

- A. Concept Objective(s) (taken from the *Colorado State Standards for Reading and Writing*, Standard 6, Third Grade)
 - 1. Students will read, respond to, and discuss a variety of literature.
 - 2. Students will understand the elements of fiction in mythology, including character, plot and setting.
 - 3. Students will understand that tales from different cultures reflect the values of those cultures.
- B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*
 - 1. More Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome (page 68)
 - a. Jason and the Golden Fleece
 - b. Perseus and Medusa
 - c. Cupid and Psyche
 - d. The Sword of Damocles
 - e. Damon and Pyhias
 - f. Androcles and the Lion
 - g. Horatius at the Bridge
 - 2. Norse Mythology (page 67)
 - a. Asgard (home of the gods)
 - b. Valhalla
 - c. Hel (underworld)
 - d. Odin
 - e. Thor
 - f. Trolls
 - g. Loki
 - h. Norse gods and English names for days of the week
 - 3. Literary Terms
 - a. Fiction (page 68)
 - b. Character
 - c. Plot
 - d. Setting
- C. Skill Objective(s)
 - 1. Students will orally summarize main points from fiction. (*Core Knowledge Sequence*, page 65)
 - 2. Students will use literary terminology, such as character, plot and setting. (*Colorado State Standards for Reading and Writing*, Standard 6, Third Grade)

3. Students will ask and pose plausible answers to how, why and what-if questions in interpreting text. (*Core Knowledge Sequence*, page 65)
4. Students will compare, contrast, and evaluate text, developing the ability to enjoy literature and to articulate why they enjoy it. (*Colorado State Standards for Reading and Writing*, Standard 6, Third Grade)
5. Students will recognize the character traits displayed in myths, such as honesty, perseverance, and courage, and how they reflect the values of the culture. (*Colorado State Standards for Reading and Writing*, Standard 6, Third Grade)
6. Students will produce a written work with a beginning, middle and end. (*Core Knowledge Sequence*, page 65)

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
 1. Appendix A (Background Information)
 2. Read the introductions to the books listed below in RESOURCES.
- B. For Students
 1. Students should be familiar with the term “myth” from 2nd grade.
 2. Students should be familiar with the major gods, goddesses and mythological place names of Ancient Greece (E.D. Hirsch, Jr. *What Your 2nd Grader Needs to Know*).
 3. Students should be familiar with the climates and major geographical features of the Mediterranean Region and Scandinavia (E.D. Hirsch, Jr. *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*).

IV. RESOURCES

- A. *D’Aulaire’s Book of Greek Myths*, by I. and E.J. D’Aulaire (Lessons One and Two)
- B. *D’Aulaire’s Norse Gods and Giants*, by I. and E.J. D’Aulaire (Lessons Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, and Ten)
- C. *Favorite Greek Myths*, by M. Osborne (Lesson Three)
- D. *Roman Myths and Legends*, by A. Masters (Lesson Four)
- E. *Androcles and the Lion*, by Dennis Nolan (Lesson Five)
- F. *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. (Lessons Six and Ten)
- G. *Stolen Thunder: A Norse Myth*, by S. Climo (Lesson Ten)

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: Jason and the Golden Fleece (Greek & Roman Mythology) – this lesson will take two days

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will read, respond to, and discuss a variety of literature.
 - b. Students will understand the elements of fiction in mythology, including character, plot and setting.
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Jason and the Golden Fleece
 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will orally summarize main points from fiction.
 - b. Students will ask and pose plausible answers to how, why and what-if questions in interpreting text.
 - c. Students will use literary terminology, such as character, plot and setting.
- B. *Materials*
 1. Appendix A (Background Information)

2. Appendix B (Student Journal), one for each student
 3. Appendix C (Classroom Graphic Organizer), prepared on flip chart or tag board to display
 4. Appendix D (Student Graphic Organizer), one for each student
 5. *D'Aulaire's Book of Greek Myths*, by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire, "The Golden Fleece," pages 162 – 175
 6. A baby's lambskin blanket to show as a "golden fleece," if available
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Hera (Juno) – Queen of the gods
 2. Argo – the magic ship built for Jason
 3. Argonauts – the adventurous men who sailed with Jason
 4. Fleece – the wool obtained from a sheep when it is sheared

D. *Procedures/Activities*

DAY 1

1. Introduce the vocabulary words. Write the words on the board and ask for volunteers who might be able to define these words. Write down any acceptable responses. Use the definitions above to refine or clarify their responses.
2. Read the story, "The Golden Fleece," straight through.
3. Distribute the student journal pages. Have the students write down three details they remember from the myth, and at least one "how, why or what-if" question. Tell the students they will be creating a Portfolio of Mythology at the end of this unit, which will include these journal pages and other activities.
4. Tell the students you will be discussing the myth and their questions in the next lesson.

DAY 2

1. Discuss the students' notes and questions from the previous session.
2. Introduce the following literary terms:
 - a. Fiction – a story that did not really happen
 - b. Characters – the people in a story; you can learn about a character from story clues that tell you:
 - i. what the character says,
 - ii. what the character does,
 - iii. what other characters say about the character,
 - iv. what the author says about the character.
 - c. Plot – the important events that happen in a story; a story has a beginning, middle, and end:
 - i. beginning: you find out what problem the characters have
 - ii. middle: you find out what the characters do to solve their problem
 - iii. end: you find out how the characters solve their problem, their solution
3. Review the myth with the class. Ask for students to identify the main character of the story. Ask for volunteers to summarize the story, including the beginning, middle and end.
 - a. *Main Character: Jason*
 - b. *Plot: In the beginning, Jason tries to reclaim his throne from his uncle (problem: his uncle doesn't want to give him the throne). His uncle says he must complete a task before he can have the throne: he has to bring back the Golden Fleece. In the middle, he has many adventures and he meets a beautiful young witch named Medea who helps him (what the character does to solve his problem). Then, he brings the Golden Fleece*

home to his uncle. Finally, Jason is King for a while, but he doesn't keep his promise to Medea and he loses his kingdom (solution).

4. Display the classroom graphic organizer and distribute copies of the student graphic organizer.
 5. Complete the organizer with the students, having them fill in the blanks on their copies. Use the following discussion questions or your own:
 - a. Who are the good people in this story? Who are the bad people? Why?
 - b. What task does the hero need to complete?
 - c. What magic appears in the story?
 - d. What is the reward or punishment? Who gets it? Why?
 6. Have the students answer the following questions on the student journal pages:
 - a. How did Jason find the Golden Fleece?
 - b. Why did Hera help Jason?
 - c. What if Hera had not helped Jason?
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Collect and review the students' notes.

Lesson Two: Perseus and Medusa (Greek & Roman Mythology)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will read, respond to, and discuss a variety of literature.
 - b. Students will understand the elements of fiction in mythology, including character, plot and setting.
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Perseus and Medusa
 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will use literary terminology, such as plot and character.
 - b. Students will compare, contrast, and evaluate text, developing the ability to enjoy literature and to articulate why they enjoy it.
- B. *Materials*
1. Appendix B (Student Journal) - additional copies as needed
 2. Appendix C (Classroom Graphic Organizer) continued from Lesson One
 3. Appendix D (Student Graphic Organizers) continued from Lesson One
 4. *D'Aulaire's Book of Greek Myths*, by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire, "Danaus, Perseus, and the Gorgon," pages 114 – 122 (or any other version of this myth)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Gorgon - the Gorgons were terrifying, dragon-like creatures, covered with golden scales and they had snakes for hair; they had huge wings and round, ugly faces; their tongues were always hanging out, and they had large, tusk-like teeth; they lived on the farthest side of the western ocean, shunned because their glance turned people to stone
 2. Zeus (Jupiter) – ruler of the gods
 3. Poseidon (Neptune) – God of the Sea
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Review selected student journals with the class as you remind them of the last story. Return all journals to students to keep for their portfolios.
 2. Introduce vocabulary words as in Lesson One.
 3. Read the story, "Danaus, Perseus, and the Gorgon," straight through.
 4. Review the Graphic Organizer from Lesson One and tell students you will be continuing this chart with today's story.

5. Have the students work in pairs or small groups to complete the Graphic Organizer. Have the groups share their answers and compare results, filling in the Classroom Graphic Organizer. Leave on display and continue filling in as you discuss additional myths.
 6. Using the Graphic Organizer, compare both myths. Use the following discussion questions or your own:
 - a. Which “good person” (Jason or Perseus) is stronger? Smarter? Braver?
 - b. Which “bad person” (Jason’s uncle or the gorgon) is meaner? Trickier?
 - c. Which magic did you like better? Whose magic was stronger?
 - d. Compare the tasks the hero must complete. Who had the hardest tasks? The most tasks? The scariest tasks?
 - e. Who got the best reward? Was it what he expected? Did it turn out to be worth the effort?
 7. Have students write in their journals to complete the following phrase (working in groups or individually).
 “_____” (*Jason and the Golden Fleece* or *Perseus and Medusa*) was my favorite Greek and Roman myth because...
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Collect and review the graphic organizers and student journal pages.

Lesson Three: Cupid and Psyche (Greek & Roman Mythology)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will read, respond to, and discuss a variety of literature.
 - b. Students will understand the elements of fiction in mythology, including character, plot and setting.
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Cupid and Psyche
 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will use literary terminology, such as plot and character.
 - b. Students will ask and pose plausible answers to how, why and what-if questions in interpreting text.
- B. *Materials*
1. Appendix C (Classroom Graphic Organizer) continued
 2. Appendix D (Student Graphic Organizers) continued
 3. Appendix E (Character Map), one for each student
 4. *Favorite Greek Myths*, by Mary Pope Osborne, “The Four Tasks: The Story of Cupid and Psyche,” pages 57-65
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Cupid (Eros) – God of Love
 2. Venus (Aphrodite) – Goddess of beauty
 3. Goblet – a drinking cup
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Review selected student journals with the class as you remind them of the last story. Return all journals to students to keep for their portfolios.
 2. Introduce vocabulary words.
 3. Read the story, “The Four Tasks: The Story of Cupid and Psyche,” straight through.
 4. Have the students work in pairs or small groups to continue filling in the Graphic Organizer. Have the groups share their answers and compare results, filling in

the Classroom Graphic Organizer. Leave on display and continue filling in as you discuss additional myths.

5. Discuss the character of Psyche. Use the following discussion questions or your own:
 - a. What does Psyche look like?
 - b. How does she feel about Cupid?
 - c. How does she feel about her sisters?
 - d. What does she do when she sees Cupid?
 - e. Why does Venus give her four tasks to complete?
 - f. How is she helped to complete her tasks?
 - g. What does Psyche do near the end that gets her in trouble again?
 - h. What happens to Psyche at the end of the story?
6. Distribute copies of the character map for each student. Working in pairs or small groups, have the students complete the Character Map for Psyche. Possible character descriptions include (but are not limited to):
 - a. *She looks like...*she is beautiful, sweet and gentle
 - b. *She acts like...*she is brave and loyal, but curious; she is brave because she finishes all her tasks, but she is curious because she looks at Cupid and she opens the box when she is not supposed to
 - c. *She feels like...*she loves Cupid; she is lonely; she is desperate and afraid when she has to do the 4 tasks; she is happy at the end when she marries Cupid and has a baby
 - d. *She sounds like...*she is polite and thoughtful, but not very strong

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Collect and review the graphic organizers and character maps.

Lesson Four: Legends: The Sword of Damocles & Horatius at the Bridge (Greek & Roman Mythology)

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will read, respond to, and discuss a variety of literature.
 - b. Students will understand that tales from different cultures reflect the values of those cultures.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. The Sword of Damocles
 - b. Horatius at the Bridge
3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Compare, contrast, and evaluate text, developing the ability to enjoy literature and to articulate why they enjoy it.
 - b. Recognize the character traits displayed in myths from different cultures, such as honesty, perseverance, and courage.

B. *Materials*

1. Appendix F (Character Guessing Game), one copy for each student
2. Appendix G (Greek and Roman Legends), copy for the teacher
3. *Roman Myths and Legends*, by A. Masters, "Horatius at the Bridge"
4. Markers or crayons
5. Scissors

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Character Traits – the human qualities that a society values, such as honesty, courage or patience

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Review the classroom graphic organizer with the class as you remind them of the last story. Return all character maps to students to keep for their portfolios.
2. Introduce vocabulary word.
3. Read the legend of *The Sword of Damocles* (from Appendix G).
4. Discuss the story with the students. Use the following discussion questions or your own:
 - a. What do we know about Damocles from this story? (*He is not very brave; he may be greedy and jealous.*)
 - b. What do we know about Dionysius? (*He is cruel; he is powerful and rich.*)
 - c. How would the story be different if Damocles had run away from the table when he saw the sword? (*It would just show how cruel Dionysius was, but it wouldn't really mean as much.*)
 - d. What if the thread had broken? How would the legend be different? (*It would be a tragedy about how Damocles dies, not a lesson about the perils of leadership.*)
5. Discuss the character traits that Damocles displays.
 - a. What do they tell us about the culture that this myth came from?
 - b. What do you think this culture values most?
6. Tell the students that this legend is the origin of our phrase “hanging by a thread.” Take questions or comments on this information.
7. Read the legend of *Horatius at the Bridge* (from the book, *Roman Myths and Legends*, or from Appendix G.)
8. Discuss the character traits of Horatius and compare him to Damocles.
 - a. What do we know about Horatius? (*He was brave, strong, and a good soldier.*)
 - b. Why was it important for Horatius to block the bridge? What would have happened if he had failed? (*The enemy was invading Rome. The bridge was the only way for them to cross the river. If he had failed, the enemy was going to attack Rome and make their king the ruler.*)
 - c. How do you think Horatius was feeling as he stood alone on the bridge, after he sent his companions to safety? (*Scared but courageous; willing to give his life if needed; maybe thinking of a way to cross the river once the bridge was destroyed.*)
9. Discuss the character traits that Horatius displays.
 - a. What do they tell us about the culture that this myth came from?
 - b. What do you think this culture values most?
10. Remind the students of the myths you have studied so far: *Jason and the Golden Fleece*, *Perseus and Medusa*, *Cupid and Psyche*, *the Sword of Damocles*, and *Horatius at the Bridge*. Tell the students they will be creating game cards for the characters in these myths.
11. Distribute Appendix F (Character Guessing Game) to students. Have them work in pairs or small groups to create the cards, following the instructions on the sheet. Allow time to play the game if possible, or save for next time.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. As the students are creating their cards, walk around to each group or pair and discuss their work. Make sure students are describing the characters in clear and accurate details from the story, and that each student completes all six cards. You may wish to allow the students to keep the cards to play with during choice time.

**Lesson Five: Legends: Damon and Pythias & Androcles and the Lion
(Greek & Roman Mythology)**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will read, respond to, and discuss a variety of literature.
 - b. Students will understand that tales from different cultures reflect the values of those cultures.
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Damon and Pythias (or Phintias)
 - b. Androcles and the Lion
 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will recognize the character traits displayed in myths, such as honesty, perseverance, and courage, and how they reflect the values of the culture.
 - b. Students will compare, contrast, and evaluate text, developing the ability to enjoy literature and to articulate why they enjoy it.
- B. *Materials*
1. Appendix G (Greek and Roman Legends), copy for the teacher
 2. *Androcles and the Lion*, by Dennis Nolan
 3. Appendix H (Retelling a Myth), one copy for each student
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- None
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Allow time for students to play the character guessing game from last time if possible. If not possible, briefly review the stories.
 2. Read the legend of *Damon and Pythias* (from Appendix G).
 3. Discuss the story with the students. Use the following discussion questions or your own:
 - a. What do we know about Damon from this story? (*He is trusting and loyal.*)
 - b. What do we know about Pythias (or Phintias)? (*He is honest and trustworthy.*)
 - c. How would the story be different if Phintias had not returned? (*It would be a tragedy.*)
 - d. How do you think Damon felt while he was waiting for his friend to return? (*He may have been scared, but there is no reason to think he was angry or worried.*)
 4. Discuss the character traits that Damocles displays.
 - a. What do they tell us about the culture that this myth came from?
 - b. What do you think this culture values most?
 5. Read the legend of *Androcles and the Lion* (from the book, *Androcles and the Lion*, or from Appendix G).
 6. Discuss the story with the students. Use the following discussion questions or your own:
 - a. What do we know about Androcles from this story? (*He is helpful and he values freedom.*)
 - b. How would the story be different if Androcles had been killed in the arena? (*There would not be much of a story. Androcles would be dead and no one would know about the lion.*)

- c. Do you think the lion was released also? Why or why not? (*The legend does not say that the lion was set free, so probably it wasn't.*)
 - 7. Discuss the character traits that Androcles displays.
 - a. What do they tell us about the culture that this myth came from?
 - b. What do you think this culture values most?
 - 8. Distribute Appendix H (Retelling a Myth). Following the instructions on the sheet, have the students retell the myth on the lines provided (and on the back if needed).
 - 9. Have selected students share their worksheets with the class.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
 - 1. Collect and review the retelling a myth worksheet.

Lesson Six: Asgard and Odin (Norse Mythology)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 - 1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will read, respond to, and discuss a variety of literature.
 - b. Students will understand the elements of fiction in mythology, including character, plot and setting.
 - 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Asgard
 - b. Odin
 - 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will orally summarize main points from fiction.
 - b. Students will ask and pose plausible answers to how, why and what-if questions in interpreting text.
- B. *Materials*
 - 1. Appendix A (Background Information)
 - 2. Appendix B (Student Journal), one copy for each student
 - 3. Appendix C (Classroom Graphic Organizer) continued, to display
 - 4. Appendix D (Student Graphic Organizer) continued
 - 5. *D'Aulaire's Norse Gods and Giants*, by I. and E.P. D'Aulaire, "Asgard and the Aesir Gods," pages 36-37 and "Odin, the All-Father," pages 38-39
 - 6. *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 - 1. Asgard: the abode of the gods; access to Asgard was possible only by crossing the bridge Bifrost (the rainbow); Asgard was divided into 12 or more realms in which each principal god had his own luxurious mansion of gold or silver; the most important palace was Valhalla, the home of Odin, the chief of the gods
 - 2. Aesir – the Norse name for the gods and goddesses
 - 3. Odin – father and ruler of the Norse gods, always wore his golden helmet and carried his magic sword; his two ravens, Huginn ("Thought") and Muninn ("Memory"), bring him news from all over, and his two wolves, Geri ("Greedy") and Freki ("Gobbler") wait at his feet
 - 4. Frigg – Odin's wife
 - 5. Mimir – a wise and ancient giant
 - 6. Jotun – the Norse name for the giants
 - 7. Jotunheim – land of the giants
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
 - 1. Discuss the students' notes and questions from the previous session.
 - 2. Review the terms:
 - a. Fiction – a story that did not really happen

- b. Character – the people in a story. You can learn about a character from story clues that tell you
 - c. Plot – the important events that happen in a story. A story has a beginning, middle, and end, with a problem and a solution.
- 3. Introduce vocabulary words.
- 4. Read and discuss *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*, “How the Norse Gods Lived,” page 44.
- 5. Read *D’Aulaire’s Norse Gods and Giants*, “Asgard and the Aesir Gods,” pages 36-37 and “Odin, the All-Father,” pages 38-39 straight through.
- 6. Distribute the student journal pages, and have the students write down three details they remember from the myth, and at least one “how, why or what-if” question.
- 7. Ask for volunteers to summarize the story, including the beginning, middle and end. Ask for students to identify the main characters of the story.
 - a. *Main Character: Odin*
 - b. *Plot: The first story describes Asgard, the home of the gods. Asgard is found at the top of the rainbow bridge. Odin is the ruler of Asgard. The next story tells about Odin, and how he became very wise (problem: he wanted all the wisdom of the world). He had the power to see everything from his throne in Asgard. One day, he decided to become very wise, and he made a trade with Mimir, the wisest giant (what he does to solve his problem). He traded one eye for a drink at Mimir’s Well of Wisdom. That is how Odin lost one eye and became very wise (solution).*
- 8. Display the classroom graphic organizer, and distribute copies of the student graphic organizer.
- 9. Complete the organizer with the students, having them fill in the blanks on their copies. Use the following discussion questions or your own:
 - a. Who are the good people in this story? Who are the bad people? Why?
 - b. What task does the hero need to complete?
 - c. What magic appears in the story?
 - d. What is the reward or punishment? Who gets it? Why?
- 10. Have the students answer the following questions on their student journal pages:
 - a. How did Mimir use Odin’s eye?
 - b. Why did Odin want to become wise?
 - c. What if Mimir had tricked Odin?
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
 - 1. Collect and review the students’ notes.

Lesson Seven: Thor, the Thunder-god (Norse Mythology)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 - 1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will read, respond to, and discuss a variety of literature.
 - b. Students will understand the elements of fiction in mythology, including character, plot and setting.
 - 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Thor
 - b. Trolls
 - 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will use literary terminology, such as plot and character.

- b. Students will compare, contrast, and evaluate text, developing the ability to enjoy literature and to articulate why they enjoy it.
- B. *Materials*
 1. Appendix B (Student Journal) – additional copies as needed
 2. Appendix C (Classroom Graphic Organizer) continued
 3. Appendix D (Student Graphic Organizers) continued
 4. *D'Aulaire's Norse Gods and Giants*, by I. and E.P. D'Aulaire, "Thor, the Thunder-god," pages 40-41, and "Thor and the Jotun Rungnir," pages 117-119
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 1. Thor – Thor, god of thunder, who protected humans and the other gods from the giants and who was especially popular among the Scandinavian peasantry
 2. Troll – a powerful giant that was an enemy of humans; trolls lived in caves or in castles on hilltops, robbing and eating any travelers foolish enough to stray into their domain after dark; huge, hard-skinned, and virtually indestructible, they could only be vanquished by sunlight, which would either turn them to stone or make them explode
 3. Mjolnir – Thor's magic hammer
 4. Rungnir – a giant (or Jotun)
 5. Whetstone – a stone used for sharpening dull-edged tools
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
 1. Review selected student journals with the class as you remind them of the story. Return all journals to students to keep for their portfolios.
 2. Introduce vocabulary words.
 3. Read the stories, "Thor, the Thunder-god" and "Thor and the Jotun Rungnir," straight through.
 4. Have the students work in pairs or small groups to complete the graphic organizer. Have the groups share their answers and compare results, filling in the classroom graphic organizer. Leave on display and continue filling in as you discuss additional myths.
 5. Using the graphic organizer, compare both myths. Use the following discussion questions or your own:
 - a. Which "good person" (Odin or Thor) is stronger? Smarter? Braver?
 - b. Which "bad person" (Loki or Jotun Rungnir) is meaner? Trickier?
 - c. Which magic did you like better? Whose magic was stronger?
 - d. Compare the tasks the hero must complete. Who had the hardest tasks? The most tasks? The scariest tasks?
 - e. Who got the best reward? Was it what he expected? Did it turn out to be worth the effort?
 6. Compare these Norse myths with the Greek and Roman myths discussed earlier. Use the following discussion questions or your own:
 - a. Which myths are scarier? Why? Which gods or goddesses were stronger, more powerful? Which heroes were braver? Why?
 - b. Imagine the world these people lived in (*Norse – cold, snowy; Greek & Roman – warm, sunny; Both – lived near the ocean, traveled by ship*). How did the climate affect their myths? How was nature (ocean, mountains, seasons, animals) described in these myths?
 7. Have students write in their journals to complete the following phrase (working in groups or individually).
"_____” (*Asgard and Odin or Thor, the Thunder-god*) was my favorite Norse myth because...

- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Collect and review the graphic organizers and student journal pages.

Lesson Eight: Loki, the Trickster (Norse Mythology)

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will read, respond to, and discuss a variety of literature.
 - b. Students will understand the elements of fiction in mythology, including character, plot and setting.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Loki
3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will use literary terminology, such as plot and character.
 - b. Students will ask and pose plausible answers to how, why and what-if questions in interpreting text.

B. *Materials*

1. Appendix C (Classroom Graphic Organizer for Myths) continued
2. Appendix D (Student Graphic Organizers for Myths) continued
3. Appendix F (Character Guessing Game)
4. *D'Aulaire's Norse Gods and Giants*, by I. and E.P. D'Aulaire, "Loki, the God of the Jotun Race," pages 42-43 and "Sif's Golden Hair," pages 44-49

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Loki – trickster god, giant, blood-brother to Thor
2. Sif – Thor's wife

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Review selected student journals with the class as you remind them of the last story. Return all journals to students to keep for their portfolios.
2. Introduce or review vocabulary words.
3. Read the stories, "Loki, the God of the Jotun Race" and "Sif's Golden Hair" straight through.
4. Have the students work in pairs or small groups to continue filling in the graphic organizer. Have the groups share their answers and compare results, filling in the classroom graphic organizer. Leave on display and continue filling in as you discuss additional myths.
5. Discuss the character of Loki. Use the following discussion questions or your own:
 - a. What does Loki look like?
 - b. What is Loki best at doing?
 - c. What does Loki do to Sif and what happens next?
 - d. How does Loki make up for his terrible trick on Sif?
 - e. What happens to Loki at the end of the story?
6. Distribute copies of the character map for each student. Working in pairs or small groups, have the students complete the Character Map for Loki. Possible character descriptions include (but are not limited to):
 - a. *He looks like*...he is a giant, but graceful and handsome, not ugly like other giants
 - b. *He acts like*...he is a trickster, mean and clever; he plays tricks on everyone and then tricks or lies his way out of trouble
 - c. *He feels like*...he is proud to be Thor's blood brother; he thinks he is smarter than everyone else; he is afraid of Thor when Thor is angry

- d. *He sounds like...he is powerful and a smooth-talker; he can convince anyone to believe the craziest stories*
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
 - 1. Collect and review the graphic organizers and character maps.

Lesson Nine: The Valkyries and Valhalla (Norse Mythology)

A. *Daily Objectives*

- 1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will understand the elements of fiction in mythology, including character, plot and setting.
 - b. Students will understand that tales from different cultures reflect the values of those cultures.
- 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Valhalla
- 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Compare, contrast, and evaluate text, developing the ability to enjoy literature and to articulate why they enjoy it.
 - b. Students will use literary terminology, such as character, plot and setting.

B. *Materials*

- 1. Appendix B (Student Journal) - additional copies as needed
- 2. *D'Aulaire's Norse Gods and Giants*, by I. and E.P. D'Aulaire, "The Valkyries and Valhalla," pages 72-79

C. *Key Vocabulary*

- 1. Valhalla – the hall of slain heroes, ruled by the king of the gods, Odin, in the realm of the gods, Asgard; the hall had 540 doors, through each of which 800 heroes could walk abreast, and the roof was made of shields; the souls of heroic soldiers killed in battle were brought to Valhalla by warrior maidens called Valkyries; the heroes fought during the day, but their wounds healed before night, when they banqueted with Odin
- 2. Valkyries – warrior maidens who attended Odin, ruler of the gods; the Valkyries rode through the air in brilliant armor, directed battles, distributed death lots among the warriors, and conducted the souls of slain heroes to Valhalla, the great hall of Odin

D. *Procedures/Activities*

- 1. Review the classroom graphic organizer with the class as you remind them of the last story. Return all character maps to students to keep for their portfolios.
- 2. Introduce vocabulary words.
- 3. Read the story, "The Valkyries and Valhalla," straight through.
- 4. Discuss the story with the students. Use the following discussion questions or your own:
 - a. What do we know about the Valhalla from this story? (*It was a magical place with a goat that gives mead, a pig that is eaten every day and then comes back to life, and battles that are repeated every day. Warriors lose their heads, arms, or legs in battle, and then put them back on that night.*)
 - b. What do we know about the Valkyries? (*They have a very important job of bringing dead warriors to Valhalla. In Viking mythology, the best way to die was to be a brave soldier who is taken to Valhalla.*)
 - c. How would the story be different if it took place somewhere else? (*Valhalla is the Viking idea of heaven. It matches their warrior culture. Anyplace else just wouldn't be right.*)

5. Introduce the following literary term:
 - a. Setting: when and where a story takes place
 6. Allow the students to describe Valhalla. What details did they notice? Reread sections if necessary. Remind the students of Asgard. What is the setting in that story? How is Asgard described?
 7. Distribute the student journal pages. Have the students develop a Story Map for a myth they will write next time. Remind the students that most myths involve magic or magical beings. The story map should include:
 - a. Characters
 - b. Setting
 - c. Magic (person or thing)
 - d. Plot: beginning (problem), middle (what they do), end (solution)
 - e. Illustrations of main characters or important places
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Collect and review the story maps.

Lesson Ten: Days of the Week & Writing Activity (Norse Mythology)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will understand that tales from different cultures reflect the values of those cultures.
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Hel (underworld)
 - b. Norse gods and English names for days of the week
 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will recognize the character traits displayed in myths, such as honesty, perseverance, and courage, and how they reflect the values of the culture.
 - b. Students will produce a written work with a beginning, middle and end.
- B. *Materials*
1. Appendix B (Student Journal) - additional copies as needed
 2. *D'Aulaire's Norse Gods and Giants*, by I. and E.P. D'Aulaire, "Loki's Monstrous Brood," pages 50-53 **OR** *Stolen Thunder: A Norse Myth*, by S. Climo
 3. *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*, E.D. Hirsch, Jr.
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- None
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Review selected story maps with the class as you remind them of the last story. Return all story maps to students to keep for their portfolios.
 2. Read the story, "Loki's Monstrous Brood" or "Stolen Thunder," straight through for the students to enjoy.
 3. Discuss the story with the students. Use the following discussion questions or your own:
 - a. Who are the main characters in this story?
 - b. What happened in the beginning of this story (what was the problem)?
 - c. What happened in the middle of this story (what did they do)?
 - d. What happened at the end of this story (what was the solution)?
 4. Tell the students that many of our names for the days of the week came from Norse Mythology. Write the following days on the board: Tuesday, Wednesday,

Thursday, and Friday. Ask for volunteers to guess where the names came from. Give clues as needed.

5. Read and discuss *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*, “How the Days of the Week Got Their Names,” pages 42 and 43.
6. Tell the students that they will be using what they have learned about myths and legends to write their own myths. Remind them of the key elements of a myth:
 - a. Character
 - b. Setting
 - c. Plot (beginning, middle, and end; problem and solution)
 - d. Magic
7. Brainstorm ideas for myths. Tell the students they may choose to start their myth like a favorite Greek and Roman myth or a Norse myth, or they may create one entirely from their imagination. They may take elements of the myths they’ve studied and combine them, or use their own ideas. For example, they might take a Greek god and put him in Asgard. Or they could take Loki and send him Olympus. They could have Psyche meet a Jotun, or send Damocles to a Viking king. Or, they could create their own hero or heroine and place the myth in their own imaginary world.
8. Using the story maps created last time, have the students write their own myths. The stories should include characters, setting, and plot, with an element of magic. Students should write their first drafts today.
9. Tell the students that next time they will be writing their final drafts and putting their portfolios together. Make sure all work is completed to date.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Collect and edit the first drafts.

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

A. *Materials*

1. Appendix I (Portfolio Grading Rubric)
2. Construction paper or other colored paper
3. Markers or crayons
4. Yarn or other binding material
5. Scissors
6. Hole punch

B. *Procedures*

1. Return the students’ first drafts for them to complete (with appropriate edits).
2. Have the students complete their final drafts, and then begin working on their portfolios.
3. Assembling the Portfolio of Myths:
 - a. The students will put their work from this unit into a final portfolio to be graded. See Appendix H (Portfolio Grading Rubric).
 - b. Portfolios should include:
 - i. cover sheet with name, title and appropriate illustrations
 - ii. graphic organizers
 - iii. journal pages
 - iv. character guessing game cards
 - v. character maps
 - vi. story maps
 - vii. retelling a myth worksheet
 - viii. student myth – final version

4. If possible, allow time for the students to share their portfolios in class.
5. Grade the student portfolios using Appendix I (Portfolio Grading Rubric).

VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Appendix A – Background Information
- B. Appendix B – Student Journal
- C. Appendix C – Classroom Graphic Organizer
- D. Appendix D – Student Graphic Organizer
- E. Appendix E – Character Map
- F. Appendix F – Character Guessing Game
- G. Appendix G – Greek and Roman Legends
- H. Appendix H – Retelling a Myth
- I. Appendix I – Portfolio Grading Rubric

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APPENDIX A: GODS OF THUNDER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Greek and Roman Mythology

GREEK NAME	ROMAN NAME	ROLE IN MYTHOLOGY
Aphrodite	Venus	Goddess of beauty
Apollo	Apollo	God of prophecy; God of the sun
Athena	Minerva	Goddess of arts and crafts, and war
Cronus	Saturn	God of the sky; Ruler of the Titans
Eros	Cupid	God of love
Hera	Juno	Goddess of marriage; Queen of the gods
Hermes	Mercury	Messenger of the gods, trickster
Poseidon	Neptune	God of the sea and earthquakes
Zeus	Jupiter	Ruler of the gods

Norse Mythology

NAME	ROLE IN MYTHOLOGY
Aesire (AY-seer)	Gods and Goddesses of Norse Mythology
Asgard (AZ-gard)	Home of the gods and goddesses, consisting of at least 12 kingdoms
Freya (FRAY-uh)	Goddess of fertility
Frigg (FRIG)	Goddess of the home; Odin's wife and the mother of Balder; she knew the future by kept what she knew to herself
Hel (HEL)	Ruler of the underworld, Loki's child
Loki (LOH-kee)	Actually a giant, but blood brother to Odin; he was trickster and mischief-maker
Mimir (MEE-meer)	Giant who possessed great wisdom
Odin (O-din)	Greatest of all the gods, god of war and death
Sif (SEEF)	Wife of Thor
Thor (THOR)	Son of Odin and husband of Sif; Strongest of all the gods; God of thunder
Tyr (TEER)	Son of Thor; God of war
Valhalla (Val-HALL-a)	Hall of slain heroes, a kingdom in Asgard

**APPENDIX C: GODS OF THUNDER
CLASSROOM GRAPHIC ORGANIZER**

Prepare a BLANK classroom size display on flip chart or tag board.

Fill in and keep on display as you compare myths.

Myth	Good People	Bad People	Magic	Tasks	Rewards & Punishments
Jason and the Golden Fleece	Jason	King Aeetes Medea King Pelias	The Argo could talk. Medea was a witch.	Bring back the Golden Fleece	Jason becomes King Jason loses his kingdom
Perseus and Medusa	Perseus Danaus	Medusa	Athena's shield, Hermes' sword; Winged sandals, invisible cap, and magic bag	Slay Medusa, the Gorgon	Marries Andromeda and becomes King of Argos
Cupid & Psyche	Psyche	Psyche's sisters	Cupid's arrow makes people fall in love	1. Store the grain 2. Gather the fleece 3. Fill the goblet 4. Visit the underworld	Psyche died because she opened the box from the underworld but Cupid rescued her and they were married
Asgard & Odin	Odin	Giants	Well of Wisdom	Odin trades his eye for Mimir's wisdom	Odin becomes All-Wise
Thor and the Trolls	Thor	Jotun Rungnir	The Clay Giant comes to life	Defeat the Clay Giant & face Jotun Rungnir's challenge	Thor gets a rock in his head and gets headaches Now he roars thunder and lightning when his head hurts
Loki, the Trickster	Thor Odin Sif	Loki The Giants	The Gnomes can make magic tools: the Hammer, the Spear, the Ship, etc.	Make up to Thor for cutting off Sif's hair Convince the Gnomes to make their best tools as gifts to the gods Keep the Gnome from chopping off his head	Loki's mouth is sewed up for a while The gods get their great gifts Sif gets beautiful golden (real gold) hair

**APPENDIX D: GODS OF THUNDER
STUDENT GRAPHIC ORGANIZER**

NAME: _____

Myth	Good People	Bad People	Magic	Tasks	Rewards & Punishments

APPENDIX E: GODS OF THUNDER CHARACTER MAP

Name _____

Directions: You can use a Character Map to describe what a character is like and how the character feels. Fill in the boxes for the main character in your myth. Draw a picture of the character in the middle.

What a Character!

The character looks like...

The character feels like...

The character acts like...

The character sounds like...

Extra Help! Here are some words to use when you describe a character's feelings and actions.

kind	proud	curious	interesting	brave
clever	quiet	powerful	adventurous	happy
stubborn	sad	helpful	silly	shy

adapted from *Scholastic Explains Reading Homework*, Scholastic Inc.

APPENDIX F: GODS OF THUNDER CHARACTER GUESSING GAME

Name: _____

Directions: Choose six myths. For each one, write descriptive words and phrases on a card below. Cut out the cards and write the characters' names on the backs. Show the descriptions to a partner. Ask your partner to guess who the character is, then turn over the card to see if he or she is right.

<p>Description:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Description:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Description:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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adapted from *Multicultural Fables and Fairy Tales*, Tara McCarthy

APPENDIX G: GODS OF THUNDER GREEK & ROMAN LEGENDS

retold by Peggy Downs

The Sword of Damocles*

Damocles served in the court of Dionysius the Elder, in the 3rd century B.C. Dionysius was the ruler of Sicily, a small but important island off the coast of Italy. He was a tyrant. He was bold and cruel. He had a great army at his command and had won many battles. He was rich. He often held luxurious banquets at his palace, offering fancy foods, sweet wine, music and dancers to entertain his guests.

Damocles watched with envy as his ruler enjoyed the luxuries of power. One day, Damocles told Dionysius how he felt. "Kings are the lucky ones," he said. "You must be very happy." Dionysius did not answer him. Instead, he sent Damocles an invitation to the next banquet.

Damocles was delighted! He began imagining the wonderful food he would eat, the delicious drinks, the music, the dancers...ahhh! How nice it would be!

When the time was right, Damocles put on his best clothes and went to the banquet. He was led to a table in the front of the hall, a place of honor where everyone could see him. Damocles was filled with pride. The table was spread with all the delights he had imagined. As the meal was served, Damocles began eating the delicious foods, enjoying every tasty mouthful. He nodded his appreciation to his sovereign and raised his glass of wine in salute. Dionysius returned the salute, but as he did he lifted his eyes to the ceiling above Damocles' head.

Puzzled, Damocles glanced at the ceiling above him, and froze. Above his head, hanging by a single horsehair, was a sharp sword, ready to drop at any moment.

Damocles knew that he was expected to remain in his seat and continue his meal. Suddenly, the food tasted like sawdust and the wine was sour.

Moral: Insecurity threatens even those who seem to be the most fortunate.

Horatius at the Bridge**

(See Masters, A., *Roman Myths and Legends* for a complete retelling of this story.)

Horatius was a Roman soldier. In the 6th century B.C., Rome was fighting with the Etruscans. The enemy was approaching the city. There was just one wooden bridge between them and victory. If the Etruscans won this battle, they would place their king on the Roman throne!

The River Tiber raced under the bridge. Horatius and two companions volunteered to cross the bridge and try to hold off the enemy. They were hopelessly outnumbered. On the other side of the bridge, Roman soldiers worked desperately to destroy the bridge and keep the enemy out of Rome. Would the Romans destroy the bridge in time? And then what? The river was swift and dangerous. How would Horatius and his friends find their way back to safety?

Finally, the bridge was about to be destroyed. Horatius sent his companions across the bridge to safety, while he continued to fight until the bridge collapsed. Hooray! The Romans cheered in victory! They had done it! Rome was safe again.

And Horatius? He bravely swam across the river and rejoined his troops. For his heroic service, he was awarded all the land he could plow around in one day.

Damon and Pythias*

Damon and Pythias were great friends. They lived in Sicily at the time of Dionysius the Younger (son of Dionysius the Elder). They were philosophers, and they were famous for their faithful friendship to each other.

Like his father before him, Dionysius was a tyrant and not at all popular. Pythias was caught trying to have Dionysius killed. He was condemned to death. He wanted to go home to take care of a few things before he died, so he asked Dionysius for permission. His friend, Damon, offered to stay

APPENDIX G, PAGE 2: GODS OF THUNDER GREEK & ROMAN LEGENDS

behind as hostage. Dionysius agreed, but if Pythias did not return by noon on the third day, Damon would be killed in his place.

Pythias traveled to his home and took care of his business. He said goodbye to his family and bravely set out for the palace again. On the way, he was delayed. The river was too wide and dangerous to cross. Bandits stopped him on the road and stole his last possessions. The roads were choked with mud and muck from recent rains. But he pressed on, determined not to fail his faithful friend.

Finally, he returned to the city just as Damon was about to be killed. Dionysius was so impressed by this example of friendship and loyalty that he pardoned Pythias and released Damon. He asked to share their friendship.

Androcles and the Lion**

(See *Androcles and the Lion*, by Dennis Nolan for a complete retelling of this story.)

Androcles was a slave. He didn't like being a slave, but he served his master faithfully. One day, he saw his chance for freedom, and ran away from his master. He found his way into the wild countryside and hid in a cave.

The cave was dark and deep, but it was not empty. In the back of the cave was a wounded lion. As Androcles approached, he saw that the beast had a thorn in his paw. Bravely, Androcles came nearer, soothing the animal with soft words and gentle movements. Androcles swiftly removed the thorn from the lion's paw and backed away while the lion licked his wound.

A short while later, Androcles was captured and taken to prison. Escaped slaves were condemned to fight in the arena to entertain the crowds. Sometimes, they had to fight lions. When it was Androcles' turn, he entered the arena, knowing that his death was near. He saw the lions on the other side, restless and hungry. He waited, ready to die.

Suddenly, one lion separated from the group and trotted across the arena. Androcles held his ground. The lion paused before him, hesitating. Then, he turned around and faced the other lions. It was the lion from the cave! He was protecting Androcles. The other lions were confused. The crowd watched, silent at first. Then, they began to cheer. Never had they seen such a display of friendship between man and beast! The other lions growled, frustrated and angry. One or two tried to attack Androcles, but his protector fought them off. The crowd began to chant, "Live! Live! Live!" This meant that they wanted Androcles to be set free. He would not die today, thanks to his loyal friend.

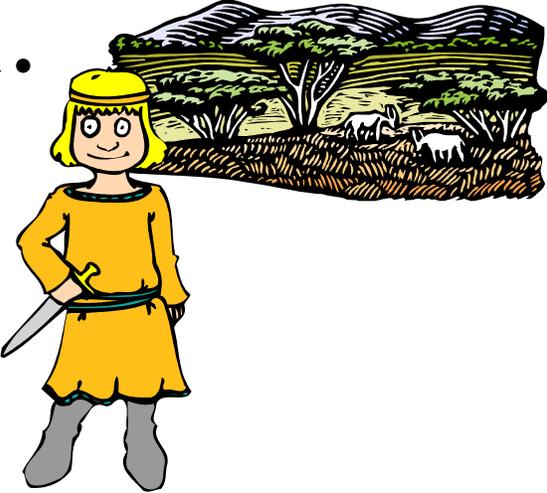
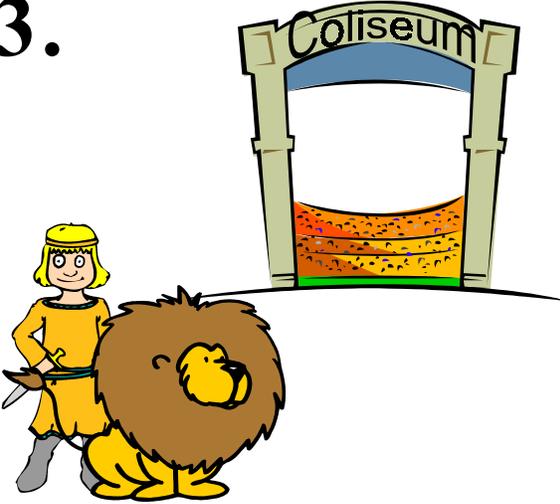
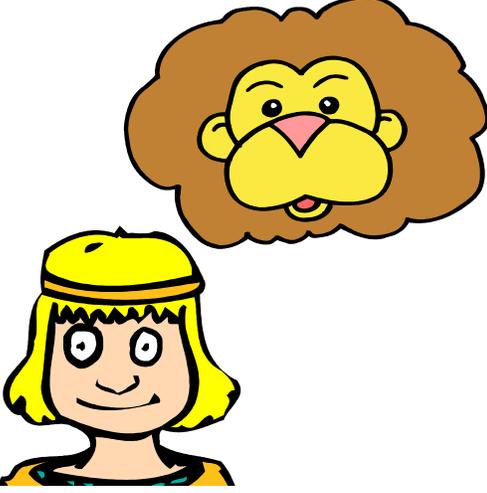
*adapted from *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 1999*, Microsoft Corporation

**adapted from *The Macmillan Encyclopedia of Myths and Legends*, Arthur Cotterell

APPENDIX H: RETELLING A MYTH

Name: _____

Directions: Using the story clues, rewrite the myth of “Androcles and the Lion” on the lines below.

<p>1.</p> 	<p>2.</p> 
<p>3.</p> 	<p>4.</p> 

**APPENDIX I: GODS OF THUNDER
PORTFOLIO GRADING RUBRIC**

Name _____

Directions: Choose the appropriate column for each row. Multiply the number for that column times (5). Repeat for each row, then add the total.

	NOVICE (1 pt.)	APPRENTICE (2 pts.)	DEVELOPING (3 pts.)	PROFICIENT (4 pts.)
Effort/task commitment _____ X 5 = _____ pts.	Resistant	Inadequate for task	Appropriate effort and time on task	Extensive effort; uses time well
Appearance of Portfolio _____ X 5 = _____ pts.	Inadequate; not neat	Needs more attention to detail	Attractive; neat	Eye catching; beyond expectations
Overall Creativity _____ X 5 = _____ pts.	Used others' ideas	Typical responses; little original thinking	Creative; added to more typical ideas	Unique ideas or response; fresh; imaginative
Writing: Elements of Myth _____ X 5 (character, plot) = _____ pts.	Needs more information	Needs to add depth or elaborate	Accurate; covers topic well	Precise; complex content
Writing: Mechanics _____ X 5 (grammar; punctuation, spelling, capitalization, paragraphing) = _____ pts.	Serious errors make it hard to understand	Frequent errors but readable; emerging skills	Few errors; appropriate for grade level	Skillful application of mechanics
Total Grade Points _____ / 100 Grade: _____	COMMENTS			

*adapted from Kingore, B., *Assessment: Time-Saving Procedures for Busy Teachers*