

# Greek Mythology and Literature

---





# Myths Explain the World

---

- Instead of science, the ancient Greeks used **mythology**—stories about gods or heroes—to try to explain how the world works.
- The Greeks believed that the gods caused natural events, from the rising of the moon to thunderstorms.
- Everything was attributed to the gods, from disasters to daily events.

Olympian Gods: This picture shows one god, Poseidon, riding a fish on the top of the water with a pitchfork in his hand. Dionysus is laying on the beach looking at a bunch of grapes. There are two women in the picture that have dark hair, Hestia and Demeter. One of them has her hair up and the other one has it down. Hephaestus is in the background hammering iron. He has a large, muscular arm. There are four women in the picture who are all wearing robes draped like dressed. Aphrodite is sitting in a chair

# Olympian Gods



# More about Myths

---

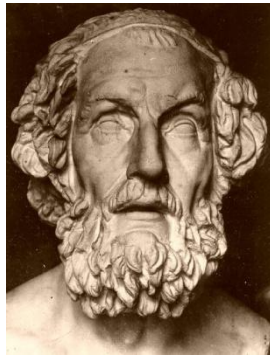
- Some myths told not of gods, but of heroes.
- Each city had its own hero, real or fictional, who would slay terrible monsters.
- The most famous Greek hero was Hercules.
- The Greeks loved to tell these stories.



# Ancient Greek Literature

---

- Because of their love of stories, Greek writers produced great works of literature and some of the world's most famous stories.
- Among the earliest and most influential are the epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, by the poet **Homer**.





# The Iliad and The Odyssey

---

- It is thought that Homer lived some time during the 800s-700s BC.
- Scholars are not sure if Homer actually existed, but the poems were central to Greek lore and education.
- The *Iliad* told the story of the Myceaneans' war with the Trojans.
- The *Odyssey* told of the Greek hero Odysseus' long journey home after the war.

## Other Forms of Literature

---

- Other forms of literature were also popular.
- Lyric poetry, recited by the poet while playing the lyre, was especially prized. The most famous lyric poet was a woman, **Sappho**.
- Fables, or short stories that offer the readers lessons on life, were also popular. The most famous fable writer was **Aesop**, who was said to live sometime before 400 BC. Aesop's fables are still commonly told today.





# Greek Literature Lives

---

- Greek literature, language, and art have had a great influence on modern culture.
- The English language is peppered with Greek expressions: a long journey, for example, is called an “odyssey” after Odysseus.
- Many places are named after Greek gods.
- Greek myths and stories have inspired painters, writers, and filmmakers for centuries.

# Demeter



- The Greeks believed that Demeter, the goddess of agriculture, caused the seasons.
- Hades, the god of the underworld, kidnapped Demeter's daughter. Demeter struck a bargain to get her daughter back for half of the year, during the spring and summer. In the winter, she missed her daughter, and because of her grief the plants did not grow.

# Chapter 9 Summary



The early Greeks developed trading cultures and independent city-states.



Athens had the world's first direct democracy.



The stories of Greek literature and mythology have influenced language and culture today.

Chapter Visual Summary: The first picture shows a boat at a dock. There are people unloading things off of the boat. The second picture shows a man standing on a stage in front of people with the city of Athens far in the background. The third and final picture is of a man sitting in a chair holding a lightning bolt. There is a bird sitting next to him and mountains in the background.