

GREEK HEROES

Imitation in Writing Series
Book 4

Matt Whitling

Logos School Materials
Moscow, Idaho

Imitation In Writing

This **GREEK HEROES** text is the fourth book in a growing series of Imitation in Writing materials designed to teach aspiring writers the art and discipline of crafting delightful prose and poetry.

Aesop's Fables
Fairy Tales
Greek Myths
Greek Heroes
Medieval Legends
The Grammar of Poetry

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Greek Heroes
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Moscow, Idaho

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Imitation In Writing

GREEK HEROES

Background:

We are commanded in Scripture to imitate the Lord Jesus Christ. We are also commanded to imitate those brothers and sisters who, through faith and patience, have inherited the promises. To imitate something or someone means:

- To do or try to do after the manner of; to follow the example of; to copy in action.
- To make or produce a copy or representation of; to copy, reproduce.
- To be, become, or make oneself like; to assume the aspect or semblance of; to simulate.

This God-sanctioned method of learning is an essential tool for educating young people. For example, how is it that we teach a child to perform simple physical skills such as throwing and catching? “Hold your hands **like this**. Step forward as you throw **like this**.” Imitation. How is it that we teach a child how to form his letters correctly? “Hold your pencil **like this**. Look at **this ‘a’**. Trace **this letter**. Now, you try to make an ‘a’ **like this one**.” Imitation. How is it that we teach art? At Logos School students learn how to paint by imitating master painters of the past. “**This** is a good painting. Let’s see if you can **reproduce it**.” Imitation. How is it that music is taught, or reading, or math? Very often the best instruction in any of these areas necessarily includes imitation. Why, when it comes to teaching young people writing, do we educators regularly neglect this effective tool?

Educators in seventeenth century England knew the value of imitation as a tool through which they could teach style, particularly in the area of writing. The primary method of imitation in these English grammar schools was called **Double Translation**. In a double translation the teacher would translate a Latin work into English. The student was to copy this English translation over, paying close attention to every word and its significance. Then the student was to write down the English and Latin together, one above the other, making each language answer to the other. Afterwards the student translated the original Latin to English on his own. This was the first part of the translation. The second part took place ten days afterward when the student was given his final English translation and required to turn it back into good Latin.

Benjamin Franklin wrote of a similar exercise that he employed to educate himself a century later. When he was a young man, he came across a particular piece of writing that he delighted in, *The Spectator*. *The Spectator* is a series of 555 popular essays published in 1711 and 1712. These essays were intended to improve manners and morals, raise the cultural level of the middle-class reader, and popularize serious ideas in science and philosophy. They were written well, the style was excellent, and Franklin wanted to imitate it. Here is Franklin’s method of “double translation” regarding *The Spectator*:

With that view (imitating this great work) I took some of the papers, and

making short hints of the sentiments in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should occur to me. Then I compared my Spectator with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them.

But he realized that he needed a greater stock of words in order to add variety and clarity of thought to his writing.

Therefore I took some of the tales in the Spectator, and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collection of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the sentences and complete the subject. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work with the original, I discovered many faults and corrected them; but I sometimes had the pleasure to fancy that, in particulars of small consequence, I had been fortunate enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think that I might in time become to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious.

Now the question is; “How can we employ a similar methodology?”

Imitation In Writing

GREEK HEROES

Instructions:

1. **READ SILENTLY:** Have the students read the myth quietly to themselves, paying close attention to the story line. When they are done, they should underline the vocabulary words and describe the characters. Discuss, by means of questioning, who the characters are in the myth and what took place.
2. **STUDENT READS MYTH:** Choose a student to come to the front of the class and read the entire myth while the class follows along. (*Variation: To develop listening and note taking skills try reading the myth to your students without giving them a copy of it.*)
3. **ORAL RETELLING:** The teacher calls on individual students to retell the myth in their own words. These oral summaries should be short and to the point.
4. **VOCABULARY:** Call on one student for each of the vocabulary words. That student will read the sentence in which the word is found, providing context, and then define the word for the class. Occasionally the student definition will need to be modified by the teacher so that it is an exact match with the vocabulary word in the myth. One word definitions work well. The idea here is to provide the students with a synonym for each vocabulary word which could be substituted into the sentence without distorting the meaning. Have the students write the definition of each word on the blank provided.
5. **OUTLINE THE PLOT:** Initially this activity should be guided by the teacher and completed as a class. Providing every other simple sentence or phrase for each scene is helpful for younger students. There is some room for variation in the exact wording of the sentence or phrase. The rules are that each sentence or phrase must be three to four words long and represent a significant chronological event in that scene. From time to time the students will come up with a better sentence or phrase than the one provided in the *Suggested Plot Summaries* at the back of this book. Use it, by all means.
6. **CHARACTERS:** At this point the students will list the main characters in the story and write a few descriptive words about each.
7. **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:** Discuss any additional requirements and have the students write them on the blanks provided at the bottom of each worksheet. For examples of additional requirements see *EXCELLENCE IN WRITING @ 800-856-5815* (stylistic techniques, dress-ups, sentence openers, etc...) or teach your students figures of speech and require that they use them in their own writing (metaphor, simile, synecdoche, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, rhetorical question, personification, pun, oxymoron, alliteration).

8. PASS IN ORIGINAL MYTH: Before the students begin rewriting the myth they must pass the original one in. Some students will want to read through the myth one more time to better understand what the whole thing is all about.

9. WRITE FIRST DRAFT: The students are now ready to rewrite the myth using their outlines to guide them. I allow my students to change the characters and some of the incidentals of the story in their rewrites as long as the plot is identifiable. The exceptionally good writers in the class will thrive off of this opportunity to be innovative. The students who are less comfortable with writing will tend to stick to the same characters and incidentals, which is fine. All of the vocabulary words must be used correctly and underlined in the rewrite. The students should skip lines on the first draft to allow room for editing.

10. PARENTS EDIT: Students take their rewrites home to complete the first draft and then they have their parents edit it. This is most profitable when the parents sit down with the student and edit the myth together. Guidelines for editing can be sent home at the beginning of the year or communicated at “Back to School Night” so that parents know what is expected.

11. FINAL DRAFT: Time in class can be provided for the students to work on the final draft. The students should not skip lines. I allow the students to draw an illuminated letter at the beginning of their story if they like.

12. GRADING: There is a grading sheet included which can be duplicated, cut out, completed, and stapled to each student’s rewrite. This will help the teacher to focus on the essential aspects of the composition as he is grading it and will provide specific feedback to the student and parents regarding which areas will need more attention in the future. If you have a different policy for grading writing assignments then simply disregard the grading sheet.

GREEK HEROES

1 st Draft / Worksheet	10	_____
Handwriting	10	_____
Vocab. Usage	20	_____
Content (style, structure...)	30	_____
Mechanics (spell, punct...)	30	_____
<hr/>		
Total	100	_____

GREEK HEROES

1 st Draft / Worksheet	10	_____
Handwriting	10	_____
Vocab. Usage	20	_____
Content (style, structure...)	30	_____
Mechanics (spell, punct...)	30	_____
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<hr/>		
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Handwriting	10	_____
Vocab. Usage	20	_____
Content (style, structure...)	30	_____
Mechanics (spell, punct...)	30	_____
<hr/>		
Total	100	_____

PERSEUS AND MEDUSA

I. Vocabulary: Underline the following words in the myth and define them below.

- renown: fame
- hasty: quickly
- groped: felt around
- brazen: shining, brass
- tresses: hair

II. Plot: Write a simple sentence or phrase to describe the main actions that take place in each scene.

Perseus Sets Out	The Journey	Foul as Swine
1. Perseus is challenged. 2. He receives gifts. 3. He departs rapidly.	1. Perseus meets sisters. 2. Perseus meets Atlas. 3. Perseus receives hat.	1. Medusa gets killed. 2. Atlas is stone. 3. Perseus escapes.

III. Characters: List and briefly describe the main characters in this myth.

Medusa: once beautiful, now evil, vipers in hair, sister of Gorgons

Perseus: Jupiter's son, sent to kill Medusa, kills Medusa, turns Atlas to stone

IV. Rewrite this myth. Be sure to:

- Include and underline all of the vocabulary words in your rewrite.
 - Write at least three separate paragraphs, one for each scene.
 - Include the following additional requirements:
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Student Example

PERSEUS AND MEDUSA (Rewritten by Laurel Ruth McGarry - 6th Grade)

Once a boy, by the name of Perseus, was born to Jupiter and Danae. His grandfather heard an oracle which greatly alarmed him. It reported that his daughter's child would one day kill him. Cruelly, he set mother and babe afloat in a sealed chest. A local fisherman found them and delivered them to Polydectes, the king of that region. They were treated well, but then Polydectes erred. He wished to marry Perseus' beautiful mother. Perseus refused to allow Polydectes to wed Danae. Wrathfully, Polydectes sent Perseus on a hopeless mission. He must go to the vast, barren wasteland of the Unshapen Lands to the hideous Gorgons to kill Medusa, the once lovely maiden of earth. Alas, Medusa now was a beautiful terror, sister to the Gorgons, her golden tresses writhing as the vipers mixed with them, her eyes lovely but treacherous as Scylla and Charybdis. Not too hastily, Perseus set out. A light fleecy cloud drew near bearing Minerva and Mercury. Minerva's words fell on him like honey, "Heed my words, son of earth. You must go to the Three Gray Sisters who sit on the edge of the Unshapen Lands. Go then to the Nymphs, and they will tell you the way to the Gorgons. Once there, you must not look into her eyes. Take then this shield, mirror her face in it and strike her with this sword. Take also my blessing." "Fly then, son of earth, with these winged sandals. Fly! Fly!" cried Mercury. Perseus walked upon the air and it bore him up. Faintly Mercury's words echoed in his ears, "Flyyyyyyy!"

It was not long before Perseus came upon the Three Gray Sisters. These hideous beings passed one eye and one tooth around. They were proud and scornful and rude. Perseus said, "With age comes wisdom, venerable ones. Which is the way to the Gorgons?" "You tease us with age, mortal. From us no advice will you receive," rasped one. "Give me that eye!" croaked another. As the eye was passed, Perseus put his hand in between theirs and they put their eye in his hands. He sprang back and laughed, "Ha! you fools! Tell me the way or I shall crush this eye!" "Go to the Nymphs, along that path. Now go away, for we don't remember anymore," they sobbed. Perseus tossed them the eye and left on the faint trail. Three days later, Perseus saw the Nymphs dancing. They called him to go with them. Perseus merely said, "Tell me the way to the Gorgons." The fair Nymphs replied in girlish voices, "We don't know, but we'll ask Atlas." While Perseus waited, he thought about the renown this would win him. Soon he was summoned to Atlas' presence. The great booming voice echoed around him, "You must find the cloak of darkness before you can dare to approach the Gorgons." "Where sh- shall I find-d this . . . this cloak?" stammered Perseus. "Ha!" the great laughter boomed, "No mortal can, for it lies in the depths of Hades. But my nieces are immortal, they will fetch it for you." Suddenly serious, the oldest Nymph slipped through a mountain crack. While waiting for her to come back, Atlas made Perseus promise to bring back the Gorgon's head and turn him into stone. Perseus agreed. Then the Nymph sprung up, pale but triumphant. She delivered the cloak to Perseus, who, with a parting thanks, sped away in the direction pointed.

The Gorgon's mountain approached quickly. Perseus threw the cloak over his shoulders and was immediately invisible. He advanced. In the shield he reflected Medusa's image. She tossed and turned, but Perseus was unmoved. He crept forward, silent as a mouse, eyeing her brazen claws. She awoke. Trusting in the Goddess's words, he struck, and Medusa lay decapitated. Hurriedly, he thrust the head into his goatskin sack and flew away on his winged sandals. His troubles were not over. The Gorgons had awoken. They smelled the blood and followed it. They could not see, but their needle-like fingers groped out farther and farther as they flew. Panting, they followed. He could feel their icy breath on his neck. But as he flew, they fell back. Soon they were specks on the horizon. Perseus made the journey back to Atlas' valley with ease. When he got there, he unwrapped the head and showed it to Atlas. Suddenly, he was stone. There was no mid-point. One moment he was alive and the next he was stone. One of the Nymphs began to cry. Perseus' heart was touched, and he took her for his wife. She became mortal then, but she didn't care. The two of them sped away to Polydectes. Then, one day, a little boy was born . . .

Finis

PERSEUS AND MEDUSA

I

Perseus was the son of Jupiter and Danae. His grandfather Acrisius, alarmed by an oracle which had told him that his daughter's child would be the instrument of his death, caused the mother and child to be shut up in a chest and set adrift on the sea. The chest floated till it was found by a fisherman who conveyed the mother and infant to Polydectes, the king of the country, by whom they were treated fairly. When Perseus was grown up, Polydectes wanted to marry Danae. He knew Perseus would never approve so he cruelly sent him to attempt a challenge which almost surely meant death—the conquest of Medusa, a terrible monster who had laid waste the country.

Before Perseus left, Minerva and Mercury came to him in a cloud. Minerva smiled at him and said, "Listen to me, for if you forget my words, you will indeed die. You must go northward till you find the three Gray Sisters. You must ask them the way to the Nymphs. The Nymphs will tell you the way to the Gorgon, that you may slay her. Once she was a maiden as beautiful as morn, till in her pride she sinned a sin at which the sun hid his face. From that day her hair was turned to vipers and her hands to eagle's claws, and her eyes became so terrible that whosoever looks on them is turned to stone. So she became the sister of the Gorgons.

Perseus replied, "but how am I to escape her eyes? Will she not freeze me into stone?"

"You shall take this polished shield," said Minerva, "and when you come near her look not at her herself, but at her image in the brass; so you may strike her safely. And when you have struck off her head, wrap it, with your face turned away, in the folds of the goat-skin on which the shield hangs. So you will win to yourself renown."

Then Perseus said, "I will go, though I die in going. But how shall I cross the seas without a ship? When I find her, how shall I slay her, if her scales be iron and brass?"

Then Mercury spoke, "Take these sandals of mine. They will bear you across the seas and over hill and dale like a bird. This sword itself will kill her for it is divine and needs no second stroke. Arise and gird them on and go forth."

So Perseus arose and girded on the sandals and the sword.

And Minerva cried, "Now leap from the cliff and be gone."

Then Perseus looked down the cliff and shuddered; but he was ashamed to show his dread. Then he thought of Medusa and the renown before him, and he leaped into the empty air. And behold, instead of falling he floated and stood and ran along the sky. He looked back, but Minerva and Mercury had vanished, and the sandals led him on northward ever.

II

So Perseus started on his journey and his heart was high and joyful, for the winged sandals bore him each day, a seven days' journey. And he went on till he came to the Unshapen Land.

And seven days he walked through it till he came to the edge of the everlasting night. There at last he found the three Gray Sisters by the shore of the freezing sea.

There was no living thing around them, not a fly, not a moss upon the rocks. They passed one eye from one to the other, but for all that they could not see; and they passed one tooth from one to the other, but for all that they could not eat. And Perseus pitied the three Gray Sisters; but they did not pity themselves.

So he said, "Oh, venerable mothers, wisdom is the daughter of old age. You therefore should know many things. Tell me, if you can, the path to the Gorgon."

Then one cried, "Who is this who reproaches us with old age?"

And another, "This is the voice of one of the children of men."

And he, "I do not reproach, but honor your old age, and I am one of the sons of men. The rulers of Olympus have sent me to you to ask the way to the Gorgon."

Then one cried, "Give me the eye, that I may see him;" and another, "Give me the tooth, that I may bite him." But Perseus, when he saw that they were foolish and proud, left off pitying them, and said to himself, "Hungry men must needs be hasty; if I stay making many words here, I shall be starved." Then he stepped close to them and watched till they passed the eye from hand to hand. And as they groped about between themselves, he held out his own hand gently, till one of them put the eye into it, fancying that it was the hand of her sister. Then he sprang back and laughed and cried, "Cruel and proud old women, I have your eye; and I will throw it into the sea unless you tell me the path to the Gorgon and swear to me that you tell me right."

Then they wept and chattered and scolded, but in vain. They were forced to tell the truth, though, when they told it, Perseus could hardly make out the road.

"You must go," they said, "to the southward, till you come to Atlas the Giant, who holds the heaven and the earth apart. You must ask his daughters, the Hesperides. Now give us back our eye, for we have forgotten all the rest."

So Perseus gave them back their eye and leaped away to the southward, leaving the snow and the ice behind, till he saw far away a mighty mountain. Its feet were wrapped in forests, and its head in wreaths of cloud; and Perseus knew that it was Atlas, who holds the heavens and the earth apart.

At last he heard sweet voices singing, and he guessed that he was come to the garden of the Nymphs. When they saw him the nymphs begged him, "Come dance with us around the tree in the garden which knows no winter. Come, come, come!"

"I cannot dance with you, fair maidens; for I must do the errand of the Immortals. So tell me the way to the Gorgon, lest I wander and perish in the waves."

Then they sighed and wept and answered, "The Gorgon! she will freeze you into stone."

"It is better to die like a hero than to live like an ox in a stall. The Immortals have lent me weapons, and they will give me wit to use them."

Then they sighed again and answered, "We know not the way to the Gorgon; but we will ask the giant Atlas. He sits aloft and sees across the ocean and far away into the Unshapen Land."

So they went up the mountain to Atlas their uncle, and Perseus went up with them. They asked him, and he answered mildly, pointing to the sea with his mighty hand, "I can see the Gorgons lying on an island far away, but this youth can never come near them, unless he has the hat of darkness which whosoever wears cannot be seen."

Then cried Perseus, "Where is that hat, that I may find it?"

But the giant smiled. "No living mortal can find that hat, for it lies in the depths of Hades. But my nieces are immortal, and they shall fetch it for you, if you will promise me one thing and keep your faith."

Then Perseus promised; and the giant said, "When you come back with the head of Medusa, you shall show me the beautiful horror, that I may lose my feeling and become a stone forever; for it is weary labor for me to hold the heavens and the earth apart."

Then Perseus promised, and the eldest of the Nymphs went down and into a dark cavern among the cliffs which was one of the mouths of Hades. And Perseus and the Nymphs waited trembling till the Nymph came up again; and her face was pale, for she had been long in the dreary darkness; but in her hand was the magic hat.

Then all the Nymphs wept over Perseus a long while; but he was only impatient to be gone. And at last they put the hat upon his head, and he vanished out of their sight.

III

Then Perseus went on boldly, far away into the heart of the Unshapen Land, till he heard the rustle of the Gorgons' wings and saw the glitter of their brazen talons. Then he knew that it was time to halt, lest Medusa should freeze him into stone.

He thought awhile with himself and remembered Minerva's words. He rose aloft into the air and held the mirror of the shield above his head and looked up into it that he might see all that was below him.

And he saw the three Gorgons sleeping as huge as elephants. He knew that they could not see him because the hat of darkness hid him, and yet he trembled as he sank down near them, so terrible were those brazen claws.

Two of the Gorgons were foul as swine and lay sleeping heavily, but Medusa tossed to and fro restlessly, and as she tossed Perseus pitied her. She looked so fair and sad. Perseus had not the heart to strike and said, "Ah, that it had been either of her sisters!"

But as he looked, from among her tresses, the vipers' heads awoke and showed their fangs and hissed; and Medusa, as she tossed, threw back her wings and showed her brazen claws; and Perseus saw that, for all her beauty, she was as foul and venomous as the rest.

Then he came down and looked steadfastly on his mirror and struck with the sword stoutly once; and he did not need to strike again. Then he wrapped the head in the goat-skin, turning away his eyes, and sprang into the air aloft, faster than he ever sprang before. For Medusa's wings and talons rattled as she sank dead upon the rocks, and her two foul sisters woke and saw her lying dead.

Into the air they sprang yelling and looked for him who had done the deed. Thrice they swung round and round like hawks who beat for a partridge, and thrice they snuffed round and round like hounds who draw upon a deer. At last they struck upon the scent of the blood, and they checked for a moment to make sure; and then on they rushed with a fearful howl, while the wind rattled hoarse in their wings.

On they rushed, sweeping and flapping, like eagles after a hare; and Perseus' blood ran cold, for all his courage, as he saw them come howling on his track; and he cried, "Bear me well now, brave sandals, for the hounds of Death are at my heels!"

And well the brave sandals bore him, through cloud and sunshine, across the shoreless sea. Fast followed the hounds of Death, as the roar of their wings came down the wind. But the roar came down fainter and fainter, and the howl of their voices died away; for the sandals were too swift, even for Gorgons. By nightfall they were far behind, two black specks in the southern sky.

And as Perseus flew the blood dripped from Medusa's head and fell into the ocean far below. Neptune, who had once been in love with Medusa when she was a beautiful maiden, was deeply moved. Remembering how she had once been, he mixed the drops of her blood with the white foam of the sea and created the winged horse Pegasus.

Then Perseus came again to Atlas, and when the giant heard him coming he groaned and said, "Fulfil thy promise to me." Then Perseus held up to him the Gorgon's head, and Atlas, with all his bulk, was changed into stone. His beard and hair became forests, his arms and shoulders cliffs, his head a summit, and his bones rocks. Each part increased in bulk till he became a mountain and heaven with all its stars rests upon his shoulders.

Then Perseus thanked the Nymphs and asked them, "By what road shall I go homeward again, for I wandered far round in coming hither?"

Then they told him the way and he leapt down the mountain and went on, lessening and lessening like a sea-gull, away and out to sea.

Name: _____

Date: _____

PERSEUS AND MEDUSA

I. Vocabulary: Underline the following words in the myth and define them below.

renown: _____

hasty: _____

groped: _____

brazen: _____

tresses: _____

II. Plot: Write a simple sentence or phrase to describe the main actions that take place in each scene.

Perseus Sets Out
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The Journey
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

<u>Foul</u> as Swine
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

III. Characters: List and briefly describe the main characters in this myth.

IV. Rewrite this myth. Be sure to:

Include and underline all of the vocabulary words in your rewrite.

Write at least three separate paragraphs, one for each scene.

Include the following additional requirements:

Suggested Plot Summaries:

PERSEUS AND MEDUSA

1. Acrisius “avoids” prophecy.
2. Polydectes sends Perseus.
3. Minerva, Mercury help out.

1. Perseus visits sisters.
2. Perseus visits Atlas.
3. Nymphs get hat.

1. Perseus spies Gorgons.
2. Perseus decapitates Medusa.
3. Perseus “aids” Atlas.

PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA

1. Perseus meets Andromeda.
2. Andromeda explains situation.
3. Perseus laughs.

1. “Hide your eyes.”
2. Andromeda smiles at promise.
3. Perseus transforms monster.

1. Perseus meets Cepheus Cassiopoeia
2. Uncle challenges marriage.
3. Gifts are returned.

HOW PERSEUS CAME HOME AGAIN

1. Perseus returns home.
2. Polydectes scoffs.
3. Wicked turned to stone.

1. Perseus seeks grandfather.
2. Perseus wins competitions.
3. Perseus yearns after kin.

1. Wind carries quoit.
2. Prophecy is fulfilled.
3. Constellations sine and feast.

THE TRAINING OF JASON

1. Aeson is driven out.
2. Jason raised by centaur.
3. Jason desires inheritance.

1. Jason remembers promise.
2. Jason carries “dame” across.
3. Juno promises help.

1. Jason arrives w/o sandal.
2. Jason is tricked.
3. Jason seeks help.

HOW THEY BUILT THE SHIP “ARGO”

1. Gallant heros gather.
2. Jason consults Oak.
3. Oak recommends Argus.

1. A great ship built.
2. *Argo* is its name.
3. “Cut me off!”

1. Ship is too heavy.
2. Beak-head speaks.
3. Orpheus stirs ship.

ROMAN / GREEK NAME CHART

Below is a chart that shows which Greek gods the Romans associated with their own gods. Because the Roman names are more common in our language we use the Roman names in this book.

Roman / Latin Name	Greek Name	Description
Jupiter, Jove	Zeus	King of Gods and Men
Neptune	Poseidon	God of the Sea
Pluto	Pluto or Hades	God of the Underworld
Juno	Hera	Goddess of Marriage
Apollo	Phoebus Apollo	God of Sun, Music and Poetry
Minerva	Pallas Athena	Goddess of Wisdom, Crafts and War
Diana	Artemis	Goddess of the Hunt and Childbirth
Venus	Aphrodite	Goddess of Love and Beauty
Mercury	Hermes	God of Commerce and Science, Jupiter's Messenger
Mars	Ares	God of War
Vulcan	Hephaestus	God of the Forge and Fire, Smith to the Gods
Cupid	Eros	God of Love
Proserpine	Persephone	Goddess of the Underworld
Ceres	Demeter	Goddess of the Harvest and Growing Things
Bacchus	Dionysus	God of the Vine, Wine and Merriment
Aurora	Eos	Goddess of the Dawn
Somnus	Hypnus	God of Sleep
Hercules	Heracles	Son of Jupiter and Alcmena

A GLOSSARY OF MYTHOLOGICAL TERMS AND GODS

GREEK HEROES

Aegeus (EE-joose) – Aegeus was the father of Theseus. The part of the Mediterranean Sea which is located between Greece and Turkey is called the “Aegean Sea” to commemorate the place where Aegeus died in despair after seeing the unchanged black sails of Theseus’ ship.

Amazon – The Amazons were a band of warrior women who supposedly lived in Asia Minor. The word *amazon* comes from the Greek; *a* - without + *mazos* - breast. It is said that the Amazons were in the habit of burning off their left breast to facilitate the drawing of the bow. Many of the heroes fought against the Amazons. In some legends Theseus captured the queen of the Amazons named Hippolyta and married her. (This is the setting for Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*.) Hercules also dealt with the Amazons in one of his labors. Even today a strong, muscular woman can be called an “Amazon.”

In 1541 the explorer Francisco de Orellana traveled up a large river in South America. He entered into a battle with a native tribe in which the women of the tribe fought along with the men. The river he was traveling had been discovered forty years earlier but had been called many different names. He named the river the “Amazon River” after the women warriors and that name has stuck till this day.

Andromeda (an DRAHM uh duh) – Andromeda was rescued by Perseus and became his wife. She was placed in the sky and is best seen from September to January.

Argo – Argo was the name of the ship which carried Jason and the heroes on their adventure. The *Argo* was named after Argus who designed the *Argo*. The word *argos* means swift, so this was an appropriate name. The *Argo* was placed among the constellations in the Southern Hemisphere. It would be the largest of the constellations except that it has been broken up into the smaller constellations *Vela* which means “sail” in Latin, *Carina* which means “keel,” *Puppis* which means “stern,” and *Pyxis* which means “compass.” It is interesting to note that the paper nautilus shell has the scientific name “*Argonauta argo*.”

Ariadne (air ee AD nee) – Ariadne was the bride to be of Theseus. Some say that Theseus received a message in a dream telling him to leave Ariadne because she had been promised to be the wife of a god. Theseus left her on the island of Naxos where she met the god Bacchus, who tried to convince her that he was a god. She did not believe him so he produced a beautiful gold crown to convince her. She did marry Bacchus and they lived happily together. When she died he placed the crown in the sky as the constellation *Corona Borealis* or “the Northern Crown.” *Corona Borealis* is best seen from April to August.

Atlas – Atlas was a Titan who was condemned to hold up the heaven as punishment for his participation in war with the gods. The word *Atlas* comes from a Greek word meaning to support. The Greeks thought of Atlas as standing in the west near the Straits of Gibraltar. Today, the range of mountains near is named the Atlas Mountains. Once the Greeks had learned more they realized that it didn’t make sense for Atlas to hold up the heaven so they decided he must be supporting the earth. When geographers of old made books of maps they used to put a picture of Atlas holding up the earth on the cover. A geographer named Gerhardus Mercator made the first book of modern maps in the 1500’s and called his book an atlas after the picture of the cover. Atlas also leaves his mark in human anatomy. Atlas is pictured holding up the earth which rests on his spine near his head. The topmost of the bones of the spine is called the atlas.

Atlas was the father of the Atlantides, a group of young goddesses, otherwise known as the Hesperides. *Hesperides* is from a Greek word meaning west which is where Atlas and the Hesperides were supposed to dwell. The Atlantides were nymphs associated with the sea. Since they were located in the west, the ocean to the west of Greece is called the Atlantic Ocean. Plato made up a story of a land he called Atlantis which sank after an earthquake. Atlas has come to be associated with tremendous size. The

supposed largest dinosaur of all time has been named *Atlantosaurus*, the Atlas beetle is a large beetle, and the Atlas moth is a very large moth.

Caduceus – The caduceus is a rod or pole around which are entwined two snakes. Sometimes caduceus have wings near the tip. The caduceus was the badge of Mercury the messenger of Jupiter. Before modern medicine, doctors treated an infection of parasitic worms by using a stick and a knife. The doctor would cut a slit in the patient’s skin just in front of the moving worm and as the worm would crawl out the cut, it was wound around the stick until the entire worm was removed from the patient. Because of this practice, doctors would promote their services by means of a sign on which was painted a stick with worms entwined around it. This caduceus symbolizes medicine today and is the insignia of the U.S. Army Medical Corps.

Cassiopeia (kas ee uh PEE uh) – Cassiopeia was married to Cepheus and the queen of Ethiopia. It is said that she was placed in the sky by Neptune but the Sea Nymphs which she had insulted were indignant at this place of honor given her. Neptune appeased them by placing Cassiopeia in the sky so that she spends half of the night upside down, tied to her throne in a humbling position. The constellation *Cassiopeia* is best seen in November, and she is located north of *Perseus* and *Andromeda*.

Cancer – Cancer was the crab sent by Juno to torment Hercules as he battled the Lernean Hydra. Juno placed her pet in the sky after Hercules killed him. The constellation *Cancer* is the faintest of the Zodiac constellations and is located above and to the left of Hydra’s head. The best time to try to find *Cancer* is between January and May.

Cepheus – Cepheus was the king of Aethiopia or Ethiopia and was the father of Andromeda. He was placed in the sky as a constellation which is located north of Perseus and Andromeda and best seen from August through January. There is one star in *Cepheus*, which is named *Delta Cephei*, and it was the first pulsating star found. In honor of this star, pulsating stars are called “Cepheids.”

Cetus – Cetus was the sea monster which ravaged Ethiopia and was turned to stone by Perseus. The constellation *Cetus* is best seen in December and is located beneath *Pisces*. Scholars in the late Christian era saw Cetus as the whale that swallowed Jonah.

Chiron – Chiron was one of the centaurs. Unlike the others of his race, Chiron was wise and had an extensive knowledge of the healing arts. He had been the tutor of, among others, Asclepius, Theseus, and Achilles. Chiron was accidentally hit by a poisonous arrow shot by Hercules. The arrow had been dipped in the poison of the Lernean Hydra, and though Chiron was immortal the poison pained him to the point of madness. Chiron pleaded with Jupiter to take away his immortality and let him die as a mortal. Jupiter took pity on Chiron and let him die but placed him among the stars to honor him as *Sagittarius* or The Archer. The constellation *Sagittarius* is best seen during July and August and is poised to shoot an arrow at the scorpion *Scorpius*.

Circe (SUR see) – Circe was the daughter of Apollo. She was an enchantress especially remembered for turning Ulysses men into swine.

Golden Fleece – The brave ram that saved Phrixus and Helle and gave up its golden fleece was honored by the gods with a place in the sky. The constellation *Aries* represents the ram and is said to be faint because it was placed in the sky after the fleece was removed. *Aries* is best seen from October through February.

Hercules – Hercules is considered one of the heros of ancient Greece. He had to perform twelve labors for King Eurystheus and won fame by his heroic accomplishments. *Hercules* is a faint constellation which can be found to the right of *Lyra* with one foot resting on *Draco*. *Hercules* is best seen from May through October.

Lernean Hydra – Hercules killed the Lernean Hydra to accomplish his second labor. The hydra was placed in the sky after its death and is the longest constellation. *Hydra* is best seen from February through May.

Lyre – Mercury is said to have invented the lyre. He found, one day, a tortoise, of which he took the shell, made holes in the opposite edges of it, and drew cords of linen through them, and the instrument was complete. The cords were nine, in honor of the nine Muses. Mercury gave the lyre to Apollo and received from him in exchange the caduceus. Later Apollo gave the lyre to his son Orpheus. When Orpheus died Jupiter placed the lyre in the sky as the constellation *Lyra*. The constellation *Lyra* is located next to *Cygnus* and is best seen from May to November.

Medusa – Medusa was a gorgon who was killed by Perseus and given a place in the sky as the star *Agol*. *Agol* is the second brightest star in the *Perseus* constellation and is found beneath his right arm, close to his waist. The word *Agol* comes from the Arabic Ra's *al ghul* which means "head of the demon." This is where our word *ghoul* comes from.

Mercury – Mercury was the son of Jupiter and Maia. He presided over commerce, wrestling, and other gymnastic exercises, even over thieving and everything, in short, which required skill and dexterity. He is also thought of as presiding over chemistry and medicine. Today when chemists seal off a vessel to keep the contents from being exposed to the air, we call the vessel hermetically sealed (see Roman / Greek Name Chart for the connection). He was the messenger of Jupiter and wore a winged cap and winged shoes. He bore in his hand a rod entwined with two serpents, called the *caduceus* (see *caduceus*). The planet which moves the fastest is naturally named Mercury. It is interesting to note that the symbol for the planet Mercury is a *caduceus* with two wings on top and snakes twining the sides. Mercury is said to have invented the lyre (see Lyre, Muses). Mercury is the name of a metallic element which is also called quicksilver.

Minerva – The Romans identified their goddess Minerva with the Greek goddess Athena. *Minerva* comes from the Latin word *mens*, meaning mind. Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, was the daughter of Jupiter. She was said to have leaped forth from his brain, mature and in complete armor. Her favorite bird was the owl, and the plant sacred to her the olive. She presided over the useful and ornamental arts, both those of men - such as agriculture and navigation, and those of women - spinning, weaving, and needlework. She was also a warlike divinity, but it was defensive war only that she patronized.

Athens was her chosen seat, her own city, awarded to her as the prize of a contest with Neptune (Poseidon), who also aspired to it. The tale runs that in the reign of Cecrops, the first king of Athens, the two deities contended for the possession of the city. The gods decreed that it should be awarded to that one who produced the gift most useful to mortals. Neptune gave the horse; Minerva produced the olive. The gods gave judgment that the olive was the more useful of the two and awarded the city to the goddess; and it was named Athens after her, her name in Greek being Athena. In the ancient world, Athens was the most powerful and richest and civilized of all the cities of Greece. It is still the capital Greece today.

Another name used for Athena is Pallas. At one time, it is said that Athena killed a giant named Pallas and then adopted his name. Thus Athena is frequently referred to as Pallas Athena. References to Pallas Athena show up many places in our modern language. The second planetoid that was discovered (in 1802) was named Pallas. It is also the second largest of the known asteroids with a diameter of 304 miles. In 1803 a new element was discovered by an English chemist. He named it *palladium* after Pallas. *Palladium* is especially used in electrical contacts and in alloys. There are other tales that contain the word *palladium*. The ancient city of Troy had a statue of Athena called a *palladium*. Legend had it that the city of Troy would be safe as long as the statue was preserved in the city. The statue was eventually lost and the city of Troy fell. In the modern world a *palladium* has come to mean a safeguard. Our constitution can be considered a palladium of our freedoms. Athena was often referred to by the Greeks as Athena Parthenos (Athena the Virgin) because she never married. In 437 B.C. a temple to Athena was completed in Athens. The Greeks called it the Parthenon. Its remains can still be seen today as a reminder of the glories of ancient Greece. Because of all the words we use today that originated with Pallas Athena, this is one case where the

Greek name of the goddess is more commonly known today than the Roman.

Muses – The Muses were the daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne (Memory). The name Mnemosyne, which means *memory* in Greek, is represented today in our word *mnemonic*. They presided over song and prompted the memory. Poets considered the muses as the goddesses of poetic inspiration. Many times poets called on the Muses for inspiration. They were nine in number, to each of whom was assigned the precedence over some particular department of literature, art, or science. Calliope was the muse of epic poetry, Clio of history, Euterpe of lyric poetry, Melpomene of tragedy, Terpsichore of choral dance and song, Erato of love poetry, Polyhymnia of sacred poetry, Urania of astronomy, and Thalia of comedy. Our word *music* is related to the Muses and places which are dedicated to the learning of history of types are called museums. Three planetoids are named Melpomene, Calliope, and Thalia.

Nemean Lion (nih MEE uhn) – Hercules killed the Nemean Lion and thus accomplished his first labor. Juno, who disliked Hercules, placed the Nemean Lion in the sky as the constellation *Leo* to honor him. *Leo* can be found to the left of *Cancer* the crab and is best seen from February through June.

Neptune – Neptune was the god of the waters. The Romans identified their god of springs and rivers named Neptune with the Greek god Poseidon. When, in the 1800's scientists observed Uranus to discover its exact orbit they realized that there must be another planet beyond Uranus which was affecting its orbit. When they had calculated where such a planet must be, astronomers looked into the sky and there was Neptune. Neptune carried a trident which was given him by the Cyclopes. The two satellites of Neptune are named Triton and Nereid. Triton was Poseidon's son who was half man and half fish. After a storm it was his job to blow a horn made of a large shell to calm the sea. There is a type of large sea snail that is called Triton after the shell that he was supposed to have blown. Nereid refers to the fifty sea nymphs that accompanied Poseidon on his travels. Element number 93 of the periodic table is known as *neptunium* after Neptune.

Orpheus (OHR fee uhs) – Orpheus was the son of Apollo and the Muse Calliope (See Lyre).

Pegasus – Pegasus was a beautiful winged white horse formed by Neptune out of the drops of Medusa's blood and the foam of the sea. The constellation *Pegasus* is best seen from August through October.

Perseus – Perseus was married to Andromeda, and it is said that their first born son was named Peres and was the first of the Persians. In the sky, *Perseus* continues to diligently guard *Andromeda* while *Cetus* continues to chase her. The constellation *Perseus* can be seen best in December and is pictured holding the head of Medusa. During August a display of meteors often appears coming out of the sky where *Perseus* is located. These meteors are called the "Perseids."

Pluto or Hades – The god of the underworld is Pluto. The Romans had a god of the dead named Dis but in this instance the name that has stuck with us has been the Greek one - Pluto. In 1931 the ninth planet was discovered and named Pluto. It is the only planet named after a Greek god and not a Roman one. Element number 94 of the periodic table is known as *plutonium* after Pluto.