

Year 6 Summer Task



MYTHS AND LEGENDS

A letter of introduction



Dear Year 6,

Here at the St Clement's High School English Department, we are beyond excited to welcome you. We understand that due to the current climate, it may feel that you have been unfairly treated. As a year group, you have missed out on numerous opportunities in your last year at primary, including the chance to have a transition day at your new secondary school. However, we would like to assure you that we will do our utmost best to make you feel as welcome as possible.

We have many exciting opportunities planned for your first year at high school. In the past we have organised activities such as: celebrating World Book Day; inviting authors to come and speak to our students; a Trust Spelling Bee competition as well as trips to places such as Harry Potter World and theatre performances. You will also be registered for a reading programme called Accelerated Reader which we organise many competitions for and celebrate our progress with rewards throughout the year. We are eager to plan many more opportunities for you.

During your time at St Clement's High School, we hope that our curriculum will expose you to a wide range of texts which will sometimes explore deep and complex issues. Through this exploration, we will encourage you to form your own opinions and judgements to help you become young adults. But most of all, we hope that by the end of your high school journey, you will have become empathetic, understanding and compassionate human beings.

We look forward to meeting you in September.

Yours faithfully,

The English Department

What is a myth?

- When you first start in September, you will first learn in your English lessons about myths and legends from different historical periods and cultures.
- For your summer task, we would like you to have an introduction to this topic by looking at a Greek myth.
- Read the speech bubbles with information about Greek Myths.

Long ago, in Ancient Greece, gods and goddesses, heroes and heroines lived together with fearful monsters and every kind of fabulous beast that ever flew, or walked or swam. But little by little, as people began to build more villages, the gods and monsters disappeared into the secret places of the world and the heavens, so that they could have some peace. And although there were still heroes and heroines around (and always will be), they were less famous and less strong with every century that passed. But...

...before they disappeared, the gods and goddesses gave the gift of storytelling to men and women, so that nobody would ever forget that long ago, in Ancient Greece, gods and goddess, heroes and heroines lived together with fearful monsters and fabulous beasts. These stories were often gruesome and taught the Greeks about the way of the world including its darkness and cruelty.

Examples of Greek Myths

One day, Zeus distributed gifts to all the gods, but he didn't care much for humans. The Titan Prometheus, however, because he loved and felt sorry for humans, climbed up on Olympus and stole the fire from Hephaestus' workshop, put it in a hollow reed and gifted it to the humans. This way, humans could create fire, warm up and make tools. Zeus became very angry when he heard about this. He took Prometheus to a high mountain and chained him on a rock with thick. Every day, Zeus would send an eagle that ate Prometheus' liver. For thirty years Prometheus remained bound in the Caucasus, until the great hero Hercules, Zeus' demigod son, released him finally from his torment.



After Prometheus gave the fire to humans, Zeus decided to take vengeance. He ordered Hephaestus to create the first human woman out of soil and water. The name of the woman was Pandora (meaning "all gifts" in Greek). Zeus gave Pandora a jar, warning her not to open it under any circumstances and sent her to Prometheus' brother, Epimetheus. Prometheus had warned his brother not to accept any gifts from Zeus. However, Epimetheus accepted Pandora who, although tried hard to resist the temptation, opened the jar and released all evils upon the world. Hatred, war, death, hunger, sickness and all the disasters were immediately released.



Another famous tale from Greek Mythology is the killing of the terrifying Gorgon Medusa from the great hero Perseus. Perseus was a demigod, son of the Olympian god Zeus and the mortal woman Danae. Perseus sought to kill Medusa, the only mortal of the three monstrous sisters. Instead of hair, Medusa had living venomous snakes on her head and anyone that would look at her eyes would immediately turn into stone. With the help and the wisdom of goddess Athena, Perseus approached the monster by looking through the reflection of a shield and cut off her head.



Pretty gruesome aren't they? Read the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice called the 'The Sweetest Music' and complete the tasks.

The Sweetest Music

The youngest Muse, Calliope, had a son called Orpheus who played the sweetest music on earth. Wild beasts lay down and purred when they heard him play, and even the trees tore their roots out of the earth and followed after him when they heard his songs. Orpheus was in love with a girl called Eurydice, and on their wedding day his happy music made even the stars dance in the sky. But that night, as they were going home from the wedding party, Eurydice tripped and stepped on a poisonous snake which bit her in the heel. She fell down and died immediately, and Hermes whisked her spirit down to the Underworld.

Orpheus wept and wept so much that he almost lost his beautiful voice. He could not live without his Eurydice, so he decided to go down to Tartarus and get his bride back. Bravely he entered the dark entrance to Hades's kingdom, and as hope came back to him, he began to sing again.

The Underworld had never heard such music. The shimmering notes of the lyre sped downwards, and unlocked the barriers of death. Even the fierce three-headed dog Cerberus lay down and listened to Orpheus' song of love and loss.

Tartarus was still and silent. The souls of the dead no longer fluttered and whispered. Charon the old ferryman stilled his oars. Hades himself wept tears of pity as he heard Orpheus play.

"You may have your Eurydice back," he boomed. "But there is one condition. If you look back even once to see if she is following you up to earth, she will have to stay here forever. Only when you are both safely in the land of the living may you turn around." Orpheus agreed at once, and he and Eurydice swiftly set out for the earth above. The journey seemed to take a long time, and Orpheus was not at all sure that Eurydice was behind him. As he reached the light of day, he couldn't bear it a moment longer and he turned around. Eurydice had not quite reached the entrance. Orpheus shrieked with grief as Hermes dragged her down once again into the Underworld – this time forever. He ran weeping through the woods, playing a terrible sad lament, until he ran into a group of the man Maenads.

"Join our dance," they cried, but Orpheus was crying so much that he didn't hear them, and so they tore him apart in a rage, and flung him into the river. In after times it was said that his head and his lyre floated on, still singing and playing, until they landed on the island of Lesbos and were taken up to the heavens and honoured among the stars. The Muses gathered up his torn body and buried it in a grove, and there the nightingales still sing more sweetly than anywhere else in the world. After the funeral, Orpheus's soul raced down to Tartarus, where he joined his beloved Eurydice forever.

(Atticus the Storyteller's 100 Greek Myths; Lucy Coats and Anthony Lewis)

Comprehension reading task

1. What is the name of the girl Orpheus is in love with?
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2. Who is the God of the Underworld?
.....
3. What does Orpheus have to agree to do in order to get Eurydice back?
.....
.....
4. What technique has been used in the following quotation? What mood does it create? *'his happy music made even the stars dance in the sky'*
.....
.....
5. Is there a lesson to be learnt in this story (a moral)? Explain your answer.
.....
.....
.....



Writing task

Your task is to write a diary entry as Orpheus's story and his feelings along the way.

In your diary entry you should:

- ✓ *Demonstrate your knowledge of the story*
- ✓ *Use adventurous vocabulary*
- ✓ *Use descriptive techniques (E.g. similes, metaphors, personification etc.)*
- ✓ *Use paragraphs*
- ✓ *Use a range of sentence structures*
- ✓ *Use a range of punctuation.*

Use the guidance below to help plan your diary entry.

Organising your paragraphs:

Paragraph	My ideas – try to plan what events you're going to describe and your feelings
1) A brief summary of what happened.	
2) Describe your love for Eurydice and what happened to her. How did you feel?	
3) Your experience of going to the underworld and meeting Hades.	
4) How Orpheus now feels being back with his bride.	

Planning continued...

- Now try to plan for some interesting words and phrases to describe Orpheus' emotions.
- Try to come up with interesting adjectives, verbs and adverbs in the spider diagrams below.
- Challenge: use descriptive techniques such as similes, metaphors, personification etc.



