PRENTICE HALL
LITERATURE
STUDY GUIDE

MYTHS AND LEGENDS FROM ANCIENT GREECE AND AROUND THE WORLD

PRENTICE HALL
Upper Saddle River, New Jersey
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Using Anthologies in Your Literature Program

Each anthology in this series provides students with the opportunity to apply the literature skills, reading strategies, and critical thinking skills developed in their textbooks to selections from one particular genre. The selections in each anthology may also be used to reinforce the student edition themes. Each selection extends one or more themes, which are identified in the summary section of each selection. In addition to focusing on myths and legends, this multicultural anthology invites readers to draw comparisons and contrasts among the traditions of many nationalities and cultures, and so, through literature, to expand their sense of unity as well as diversity in the world.

Here are a few ways you can use Myths and Legends From Ancient Greece and Around the World to enrich your literature program:

- Assign a group of selections from different cultures, but with a shared theme, as a reading project to several small groups in your class. For example, "The Golden Fleece" (ancient Greece), "Head Over Heart" (African trickster tale), and "Krishna and the Serpent" (India) explore the theme of What Matters.
- Discuss related groups of selections with the whole class. The following selections focus on the theme of Resolving Conflicts: "The Trojan War" (ancient Greece), "Brunhild" (Norse), and "Coyote and the Blackbirds" (Native American).
- As students read, suggest they connect myths and legends from different cultures by common threads; for example, creation myths, trickster tales, bringers of fire, explanations of natural phenomena.
- Have students compare and contrast how people of different cultures have perceived the relationship between human beings and deities. Are gods and goddesses seen as perfect or imperfect? Familiar or unapproachable? All-powerful or vulnerable?

Teaching Myths and Legends From Ancient Greece and Around the World

Before reading the selections in this anthology, students might be interested in learning the definitions of the terms myth and legend and understanding the difference between the two genres. You might explain that stories treating natural forces or phenomena, such as the creation of the world or the progression of the seasons, are considered myths. For example, the ancient Greeks explained the phenomenon of fire with the story of Prometheus. A Bantu myth attributes the gift of fire to Bumba, the first ancestor, and an Aboriginal Australian myth attributes this gift to Joongabilbil, the chicken hawk. Stories that focus on the feats of heroes, often combining historical fact with imaginative material, are considered legends. The legend of Hiawatha, for instance, recounts Hiawatha's great deeds and is based on the life of a sixteenth-century Mohawk chief of that name.

The myths and legends in this anthology originated in diverse parts of the world—Asia, Africa, South America, North America, Europe, and Australia. You may want to share with students the following information about various cultures represented in the selections in Myths and Legends From Ancient Greece and Around the World, pointing out countries of origin on a map or globe. (The countries and cultures here are listed in alphabetical order.)

- **Africa (Bantu):** The first Bantu-speaking people came from present-day Cameroon and migrated across Africa 1,000 years ago. Bantu refers to some 300 different groups of Africans, including the Zulu, the Kikuyu, and the Swahili. Each Bantu culture has its own traditions and mythology, drawn from an oral tradition that goes back many centuries. Bantu creation myths often feature an all-powerful god-figure who creates the world and hands its management to minor gods. Bantu myths share the character of the trickster, usually an animal character who outwits others.

- **The Amazon:** The Indians of Amazonia originated in Asia, migrating to the Americas over the Bering Strait between Siberia and Alaska during the Ice Age. Tribes such as the Yanomami, Bororo, and Tucano still inhabit the Brazilian rain forest and follow the ways of their early ancestors, farming small areas of land and practicing their tribal customs. An important figure in their society is the shaman, who is both a priest and a healer.

- **Australia:** The word aboriginal refers to the original inhabitants of a country. The
Aboriginal people of Australia came to that continent from Southeast Asia perhaps 50,000 years ago. They were hunters and gatherers, nomads who lived in tribes and had distinctive customs, rituals, and arts and crafts. Although they were once numerous, today Aborigines make up only one percent of Australia's population. Their myths go back to a time before Europeans decimated their numbers through warfare and the spread of disease.

- **China**: Chinese literature can be traced as far back as 1400 B.C. The important early works of this huge, varied country include the Five Classics of Confucianism, the Book of Changes (or I Ching), The Book of Songs, and The Way and Its Power, a study of the philosophy known as Taoism. The story cycles narrated by professional storytellers contain myths and legends that passed from an oral to a written tradition, later taking the form of dramas.

- **Great Britain**: The Arthurian legends date back to the early medieval period of British history, around the sixth century. It was a time when the Roman empire was collapsing, and Germanic peoples, the Jutes and the Anglo-Saxons, warred with each other and established their own small kingdoms. The real Arthur was most likely a chieftain (king) of one of those realms. He was a warrior king, like the other rulers of his time, but he caught the imagination of poets, who have been celebrating his deeds for almost 1,000 years.

- **Greece**: Many of the traditions we follow today began in ancient Greece almost 4,000 years ago. Our own style of government and some aspects of our legal system, such as trial by jury, were founded on the democracy of the early Greeks. The first Olympic Games were held in Greece. Greek literature is an especially rich field; we still read the epic poetry of Homer, the tragedy and comedy plays of Sophocles and Aristophanes, and, of course, the Greek myths, some of which appear in this anthology.

- **Japan**: Japanese history can be traced back to at least 400 B.C. The Japanese are descended primarily from North Asian and Mongoloid peoples. Heavily influenced by outside cultures, especially that of China, the Japanese borrowed in the areas of language and philosophy. Japanese lyric poetry developed in the eighth century, but the haiku, the most familiar and distinctive form of Japanese verse, did not evolve until the seventh century. Fairy tales and poem-tales date to the early tenth century.

- **India**: Indian history dates back to the early Indus Valley civilization (2500–1500 B.C.). Invaded by the Aryans of central Asia, who developed Hinduism, and later raided by the Muslims, India absorbed several different important cultures and beliefs, as well as sixteen languages. The oldest literature of India, the Rigveda, contains stories and hymns about the great gods of Hindu mythology—Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; and Shiva, the destroyer. Together, these gods rule the universe. Vishnu plays a special role in the balance of good and evil in the world, appearing on earth in a variety of forms to see that good prevails.

- **Mesopotamia**: Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, was an ancient Middle Eastern civilization in the part of the world that is now Iraq. It is often called “the cradle of civilization.” Mesopotamians farmed a land irrigated by canals and established a unique culture with a distinctive art and mythology. The best-known myths of this culture focus on Gilgamesh, a warrior-hero who is part human and part god.

- **Mexico**: The Aztec Indians of central Mexico began as a poor nomadic tribe, but created a powerful empire in the fifteenth century under Montezuma I and II. Before that Aztec empire was destroyed in 1521 by the Spanish, under the Conquistador Hernán Cortés, both trade and agriculture had thrived. The Aztecs developed arts such as weaving, sculpture, music, and picture writing. They were also advanced architects, engineers, astronomers, and metalworkers. Religion was extremely important to the Aztecs, whose most important god was Quetzalcoatl, the “Plumed Serpent.” Quetzalcoatl was believed to be a creator, as well as the god of wind, water, and fertility.

- **North America (Hopi)**: The Hopi, a Pueblo tribe of Arizona, are farmers and craftspeople. Hopi myths tell of the Kachinas, gods who embody the spirits of ancestors and living things. Hopi mythology reflects the values of Hopi society, including harmony with nature. Their gods of creation, Taíowa, Sotuknang, and Koyanwuti (spider woman) had to make and destroy three worlds before achieving perfection and order of the fourth, which is the world of the Hopi.

- **Polynesia**: The Polynesian people have been called the “Vikings of the Pacific.” Polynesia, which means “many islands,” is an area in
the South Pacific ranging over 5,000 miles. The most densely populated of the islands are Hawaii, Fiji, New Guinea, and New Zealand. Other islands may have only a few hundred inhabitants. Naturally, there are many races, cultures, and traditions among the Polynesians. Some of the better-known Polynesian myths come to us from the Maori of New Zealand and from Hawaii.

- **Rome**: Under the great emperors, or caesars, the Romans excelled at the practical arts and sciences. Famous contributions of the Romans include their network of roads, impressive architecture, and efficient aqueducts for obtaining fresh water. Above all, the Romans were empire builders, conquering peoples throughout the world and bringing new nations into the empire. The Romans learned from those they conquered and absorbed their cultures, just as they absorbed the Greek religion and simply "Romanized" the Greek gods, substituting their own names, as in Juno for Hera, Venus for Aphrodite, Jupiter for Zeus, Minerva for Athena, and Mercury for Hermes.

- **Russia**: The original state of Russia is believed to have been founded by Rurik, a Scandinavian chieftain who led the Varangians to Novgorod in 862. In 978, Prince Vladimir took the throne and introduced Christianity and Byzantine culture to his people. Early Russia was invaded by the Mongols, or Tartars, who built an empire that was overthrown in the fifteenth century by the Grand Duke Ivan III. His successor, Ivan IV, became Russia's first czar, establishing the political system that remained in effect until the Russian Revolution of 1917. Russia had a feudal system, in which landowners commanded labor and loyalty from those in the poorer classes. The Russian peasants endured political changes, harsh rule, and economic hardships for many centuries. Out of their experiences came many colorful and wise stories that showed the practical wisdom of the people.

- **Scandinavia**: From the harsh climate of Scandinavia come the Norse myths. These tales feature gods who fight and feast, maidens who decide which warriors will die on the battlefield, and adventures that lead up to Ragnarok, the final battle of the world in which the forces of good and evil battle each other. This battle is the main theme of many Norse stories. Odin, the greatest of the gods, can usually be found in Valhalla, the banquet hall of the immortals, feasting with the souls of men killed in combat.

### Suggested Scope-and Sequence Chart

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Literature Skills Lessons and Critical Thinking Questions

Classical Myths

Mother Earth and Her Children
by Alice Low

Summary and Themes
Mother Earth and Father Heaven, both born out of Chaos, have monstrous sons called Cyclopes and giant sons and daughters called Titans. Cronus, one of the Titans, wounds Father Heaven and releases his brothers from beneath the earth, only to imprison them again. When Cronus swallows his newborn children, knowing one will destroy him, Rhea hides Zeus and thus spares him. Zeus grows up to rescue his brothers and sisters and defeat Cronus and the Titans, establishing himself, his brothers, and sisters as the first Greek gods on Mount Olympus. This myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and Resolving Conflicts.

Literary Focus
Many myths feature gods and heroes in the resolution of a conflict; that is, they solve a problem or achieve victory in a struggle. This myth shows how the Greek gods struggled with the earlier Titans and gained power of the heavens, the earth, and the underworld.

1. What is the cause of the conflict? Between what two groups does the conflict take place? Cronus swallows his children in an effort to prevent them from destroying him. Zeus rescues his brothers and sisters, and they urge him to lead them in a battle against Cronus and the Titans for power over the universe.

2. How is the conflict resolved? The conflict is won by the gods, who punish all the Titans except for Prometheus and Epimetheus, brothers who helped the gods in the war against the Titans.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How do Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades decide who should be ruler of the universe, and what does this show about them? They both want to carry out Zeus' plan, but Prometheus is thoughtful and responsible while Epimetheus is quick-witted and hasty.

2. How would you compare and contrast their actions after the gifts have been given to the animals? Epimetheus regrets his actions and cannot solve the problem; Prometheus decides to find a superior gift to help humans survive.

Zeus and the Creation of Mankind
by Alice Low

Summary and Themes
Prometheus and Epimetheus create human and animal beings and equip them both with gifts to help them survive. Reckless Epimetheus gives all the valuable gifts, such as wings, claws, swiftness, and strength, to the animals. Prometheus, however, steals fire from the sun god's chariot to give to humans, creating man. This myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself, Common Threads, and What Matters.

Reading Strategy
Compare and Contrast Characters
Comparing and contrasting characters increases understanding of their personalities and actions by analyzing their similarities and differences. In this selection, the two brothers Prometheus and Epimetheus are both Titans and both are given the task of endowing the first creatures on earth with gifts. Their personalities, however, are very different. Prometheus ("Forethought") is a wise and thoughtful planner, while Epimetheus ("Afterthought") is rash and spontaneous.

1. How are Prometheus and Epimetheus similar and different? They both want to carry out Zeus' plan, but Prometheus is thoughtful and responsible while Epimetheus is quick-witted and hasty.

2. How would you compare and contrast their actions after the gifts have been given to the animals? Epimetheus regrets his actions and cannot solve the problem; Prometheus decides to find a superior gift to help humans survive.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Do you agree that fire would be the best gift for human beings? Why or why not? Students may agree that fire is the basis for the ways in which humans control their environment. Others may think that gifts such as supreme intelligence or physical prowess might be better. Students should give logical reasons for their answers.

2. Why does Prometheus still feel good about his actions? Although his body is bound, his mind and spirit are free, and he knows he has given people the power to control their environment.
Persephone by Ann Pilling

Summary and Themes
When Hades, King of the Underworld, lures Persephone to his realm, her mother, Demeter, prevents the crops from flourishing until Zeus himself intervenes. Persephone is restored to her mother, except for three months a year, which she must spend in the underworld. This myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and What Matters.

Literary Focus
In this myth, we discover how the ancient Greeks explained the changing of the seasons. In order to explain their conflict with nature, the Greeks imagined that the harshness of winter resulted from strife between the gods. The myth ends with a resolution of the conflict and an affirmation of the earth’s bounty.

1. How does the myth suggest that humans are in conflict with nature?
   *In the myth, winter is associated with death, and as is seen as an enemy—it is cold, dark, and a time of no harvest.*

2. How is this conflict resolved?
   *It is resolved by a compromise in which winter will last only three months a year. No matter how difficult winter seems, humans know that spring will always follow winter.*

Critical Thinking Questions
1. In the myth, why is Demeter called the most powerful of the gods and goddesses? *Without Demeter, nothing would grow; therefore, all life on earth depends on her.*

2. Why is the ending of this story a happy one?
   *Spring will always return after winter, bringing new promise and fruitfulness to the earth.*

The Golden Fleece
Retold by Anne Terry White

Summary and Themes
When Jason returns from exile to claim his rightful position as king, his deceitful uncle Pelias sends him on a near-impossible quest: to bring back the Golden Fleece. With the magical aid of Medea, Jason wins the fleece in a heroic battle and returns to Greece with his men and Medea to win back his throne. This myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and Resolving Conflicts.

Reading Strategy
Use Context to Unlock Meaning
Using context clues—the surrounding words, phrases, and sentences—can help readers determine the meaning of unfamiliar words, or phrases, and sayings from another time period. There are many types of context clues, including description, example, restatement, and comparison and contrast. Using context clues, students unlock the meanings of unfamiliar words and phrases.

1. What is the meaning of the italicized word in the following passage:
   *(Chiron) “had educated many heroes in his cave. Under his care Jason learned all that befits a * stalwart man to know.”

   *Heroes are strong and brave; therefore, stalwart means strong, brave, and sturdy.*

2. What is the meaning of the italicized word?
   *“His bright, unslorn locks hung down his neck.”

   *Jason’s hair hung down his neck; therefore, it was long, or “uncut.”

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Because the golden fleece is such a valued prize, Jason doesn’t stop to question his uncle’s motives in sending him to bring back the fleece. What does this reveal about Jason’s character?
   *Jason is ambitious, brave, and overconfident.*

2. "Sowing dragon’s teeth" has become a saying. If someone says, "Be careful, you’re sowing dragon’s teeth," what does the person mean?
   *When Jason sows dragon’s teeth in the field of Ares, a crop of warriors springs up to fight against him. Therefore, “sowing dragon’s teeth” has come to mean doing something that causes a person trouble later on.*

Chariot of the Sun God: The Story of Phaeton and Helios
Retold by Mary Pope Osborne

Summary and Themes
To prove to Phaeton that he is his father, Helios, the sun god, promises Phaeton that he will grant any wish. Phaeton foolishly asks to drive the chariot of the sun for one day, but Helios cannot go back on his promise. Phaeton’s wild ride upsets the constellations and scorches the earth until Jupiter kills Phaeton with a thunderbolt. This myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and What Matters.

Literary Focus
Characters’ motives are reasons for their actions, thoughts, and feelings. Analyzing the characters’ motives through their thoughts and actions will help students understand this myth.

1. Why does Phaeton beg his father to let him drive the chariot of the sun god?
   *Phaeton wants to drive the chariot, like his father does, to turn night into day. If he can drive the chariot, it will prove to himself and to others that he is Helios’ son.*

2. Why does Helios agree to this request against his better judgment?
   *He has already promised to grant any request...*
made by Phaeton. He cannot go back on his promise even though he knows that the trip is too dangerous for his son.

3. Why does Jupiter destroy Phaeton?
   Jupiter must destroy Phaeton in order to save the earth.

Critical Thinking
1. Many myths explain a natural event or phenomenon. What natural event or events might this myth have explained to the ancient Greeks?
   This myth may have explained an unusually hot and dry spell of weather when the sun seemed to scorch the earth, or explained a violent storm as if Jupiter were hurling thunderbolts.

2. What is the moral, or lesson, of this myth?
   Acting with a strong will and disregarding caution as Phaeton does can be dangerous and destructive.

Daedalus
Retold by Anne Terry White

Summary and Themes
Famed architect and sculptor Daedalus kills his talented nephew Talus out of jealousy. He flees Athens for Crete, where King Minos has him design a labyrinth for the monstrous Minotaur and keeps Daedalus a prisoner on the island. Later, Daedalus sculptures wings for himself and his son, and they nearly escape, but young Icarus flies too near to the sun. His wings melt and he plunges to his death. This myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself, What Matters, and Common Threads.

Reading Strategy
Rereading Text
Rereading passages of the text often helps readers answer questions, clears up areas of confusion, and reflects on key points.

1. Why does Daedalus rush to save Talus' life, when he, himself, pushed Talus to his death?
   Daedalus kills Talus on impulse because he is envious and then immediately regrets his action. Horrified, he attempts to save Talus.

2. What are Daedalus' thoughts after his own son dies?
   He believes Icarus' death is his punishment from the gods for causing Talus' death.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. How do Icarus' actions show him to be brave and adventurous?
   He wants to fly, he is not afraid, and he enjoys the experience.

2. What do the actions of father and son tell us about ambition?
   Ambition and daring can be dangerous and destructive, if not tempered by common sense.

Orpheus and Eurydice
by Michael Gibson

Summary and Themes
When the dryad (tree and wood nymph) Eurydice, wife of the inspired musician and poet Orpheus, is stung by a serpent and dies, Orpheus ventures down to Hades, the underworld, to reclaim his wife from the land of the dead. But he accidentally breaks his promise not to look back at Eurydice on the way out of Hades, and loses her again. This myth extends the themes Finding Yourself and What Matters.

Literary Focus
Sensory language is language that appeals to the five senses. It can bring descriptive writing to life by evoking sounds, sights, tastes, smells, and textures of a setting or experience. This myth uses vivid sensory language that appeals mainly to the reader's senses of sound and sight, but also to the sense of touch.

1. Which words in the myth appeal to the senses of sight, sound, and touch?
   Possible answers: sight: "... dappled light which came down through the leaves ..."; sound: "Her voice echoed through the woods ... "; "... crashing through thickets like a wounded boar"; touch: "... the rough bark of her beloved trees."

2. Which examples of sensory language establish a contrast between the world of the living and the world of the dead?
   Possible answers: world of the living: "... pink and mauve cyclamen , ... butterflies dancing over the water ... "; world of the dead: "... out of the sunlight into the gloom," "... water dripped from the dank ceiling and rats scuttled away into the dark corners."

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Why do you think Orpheus turns to see Eurydice even though he knows he might lose her?
   He can't wait to see her; his happiness in getting her back overcomes his fear of losing her forever.

2. What does this myth show about the power of music, as exemplified by Orpheus' playing the lyre and singing?
   It shows that music can be a powerful force, moving even beasts and the hardest of human hearts.

Echo and Narcissus
by E. F. Buckley

Summary and Themes
The merry nymph Echo is punished by the goddess Hera so that she can repeat only the last words that are said to her. Echo is unable to declare
her love for the handsome youth Narcissus, who, meanwhile, falls in love with his own reflection in a pool and drowns. This myth extends the themes Finding Yourself and What Matters.

**Literary Focus**

A symbol is something that stands for something other than itself, or beyond itself. In literature, characters, objects, or places can be symbols for ideas or values. In this myth, Narcissus and Echo are both symbols.

1. What does Narcissus symbolize?
   - Narcissus is beguiled by his own beauty and can love no one but himself. He symbolizes vanity. (The word narcissistic, in fact, means “self-centered,” or “overly self-involved.”)

2. What might Echo symbolize?
   - Echo uses her skill at storytelling to deceive Hera, who trusts her. She might symbolize deceit. (An echo is, in fact, a sound that deceives the listener.)

**Critical Thinking Questions**

1. Why do you think Hera chose to deprive Echo of original speech as her punishment?
   - Echo has always been an entertainer, and Hera knows that this punishment will prevent her from amusing people by expressing her wit.

2. What is the meaning of the blind prophet’s words?
   - A person who is not obsessed with himself lives a happy life.

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**Perseus**

*by Alice Low*

**Summary and Themes**

When Perseus is an infant, his grandfather has him and his mother imprisoned in a wooden chest and thrown into the sea. They survive, and Perseus’ mother is taken by the evil king. Perseus accepts the king’s challenge to bring back the head of the horrible Gorgon, Medusa. He succeeds and returns to rescue his mother. Afterward, Perseus accidentally fulfills a prophecy and kills his grandfather. This myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and Resolving Conflicts.

**Reading Strategy**

**Author’s Purpose**

The author’s purpose for most myths is to teach a lesson, offer an explanation of a natural phenomenon, or entertain audiences. Identifying the lesson, explanation, or examples of entertainment in the myth of Perseus will help students understand the author’s purpose.

1. What is one lesson in the myth about Perseus?
   - The ancient Greeks believed in fate and that people cannot avoid their fate. The lesson in this myth is that the gods will punish evil people and reward those who are courageous and virtuous.

2. What passages in the myth show that one of the author’s purposes is to entertain?
   - Possible answers: “Suddenly a shower of gold rained down into her house, and that shower changed into Zeus, who declared his love for her.” “Perseus waited for the right moment. Then he darted out and snatched the eye.”

**Critical Thinking Questions**

1. Why does Acrisius believe he has outwitted the oracle who foretold his death by Perseus’ hand?
   - He believes he has sent Perseus and Danae to their deaths in the sea.

2. Compare and contrast Polydectes with Acrisius. How are their actions and their fates similar and different?
   - Both Polydectes and Acrisius commit the evil act of trying to cause the death of one or more innocent people. They both die in the end. Acrisius, however, acts to protect his own life, while Polydectes acts only out of selfishness. Acrisius dies because it is his fate, whereas Polydectes brings about his own death by his evil behavior.

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**Theseus and the Minotaur**

*Retold by Anne Terry White*

**Summary and Themes**

Young Theseus sets off for Athens to meet his father, King Aegeus, for the first time. Along the way he proves himself a hero through mighty exploits. From Athens, Theseus sails to Crete to battle King Minos’ monster, the Minotaur, who has been devouring Athenian youths. Helped by King Minos’ daughter Ariadne, Theseus slays the monster. This myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and Resolving Conflicts.

**Reading Strategy**

**Identify Cause and Effect**

Understanding cause and effect helps readers to recognize the relationship between events in a piece of literature. The cause is why something happens, and the effect is the result. Often, the results of a cause are, in turn, causes of future events.

1. What causes Ariadne to help Theseus?
   - Ariadne falls in love with Theseus.

2. Theseus’ victory over the Minotaur is the effect of the help Theseus receives from Ariadne. What events are the effects of Theseus’ victory?
   - Because Theseus is so elated, he forgets to change the sail and causes his father’s death.

**Critical Thinking Questions**

1. Why does Medea leave the king when Theseus reveals who he is?
   - She knows that since she has tried to poison Theseus, the king will never forgive or trust her again.
2. Why does Theseus choose to accompany the victims to Crete?
   He is too brave and good to let innocent people face the Minotaur without trying to save them.

The Judgment of Paris
by Max J. Herzberg

Summary and Themes
This Greek myth is retold using Roman names: Venus for Aphrodite, Juno for Hera, and Minerva for Athena. When Eris, goddess of discord, offers a golden apple inscribed “For the Fairest,” the goddesses Juno, Venus, and Minerva appeal to the young Trojan prince Paris to judge their beauty. Venus, whom Paris chooses, rewards him with the beautiful Helen, who is the wife of King Menelaus of Sparta. Venus helps Paris carry Helen away with him to Troy, but disaster lies ahead. This myth extends the student edition theme Resolving Conflicts.

Literary Focus
In this Greek myth, the writer uses foreshadowing, or clues for events yet to occur. Paris’ involvement in the contest foreshadows the Trojan War.
1. What is foreshadowed by the sentence “But one deity had not been invited to the celebrations—Eris, or Ate, the goddess of discord”?
   Because Eris is the goddess of discord, this foreshadows that she will cause trouble.
2. Eris is angry at being left out and vows revenge. What does the end of the story foreshadow?
The Trojans and the Greeks will fight a war over Helen.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Why does Eris bring an apple labeled “For the Fairest” to the marriage feast?
   She knows that a prize labeled “For the Fairest” will cause resentment and jealousy among those who compete for it. She wants revenge for not being invited.
2. What does the behavior of Minerva, Juno, and Venus reveal about the way the Greeks viewed their gods and goddesses?
The three goddesses behave like humans with human faults such as jealousy and vindictiveness. The myth reveals that the Greeks thought of their gods and goddesses as powerful, but imperfect, beings.

The Trojan War
by Ingri Mortenson d’Aulaire and Edgar Parin d’Aulaire

Summary and Themes
After Paris and Helen elope to Troy, King Menelaus calls upon the Greeks to help him win back his wife. The resulting Trojan War rages for ten years before the Greeks finally destroy Troy. This myth extends the student edition theme Resolving Conflicts.

Reading Strategy
Predict
When readers predict, they make a guess about the outcome of a story using details the author provides. Making and revising predictions is based on new information in the text. This myth leads readers to make a prediction and then revise it.
1. At which point in the story might you predict that the Trojans would win the war?
The Trojans cannot defeat the Greeks as long as Achilles fights for them. When Achilles is killed by Paris, it seems the Trojans will win the war.
2. Which fact in the story might lead you to revise that prediction and guess that the Greeks will win?
The Greeks leave behind the wooden horse filled with Greek soldiers, and the Trojans take the horse inside the city.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. How is the term “Achilles’ heel” explained by Achilles’ death?
   Achilles was mortally wounded by an arrow that pierced his heel. This was his only weak spot. The term refers to a vulnerable or weak spot in anyone.
2. What does Paris’ refusal to forget Aphrodite’s promise reveal about his character?
   It reveals that Paris is selfish and self-centered, caring more about his own pleasure and pride than about the fate of his people.

The Wanderings of Odysseus
by Michael Gibson

Summary and Themes
The Greek hero Odysseus survives the Trojan War, but then must overcome the Cyclopes, a dangerous enchantress, and a shipwreck. Back home, he finds more trouble as his wife is besieged by suitors who believe him dead. Helped by an old friend, his son Telemachus, and the goddess Athene, Odysseus reclaims his wife and home. This myth extends the student edition themes What Matters and Resolving Conflicts.

Literary Focus
In myths, as in other literary forms, the fates of characters are often determined, in part, by character traits, or personal qualities of the characters themselves. In this myth, Odysseus’ character traits are revealed by what he says and does.
1. What traits does Odysseus display when he devises a plan for listening to the singing of the Sirens?
   He displays inventiveness, curiosity, and determination.
2. What qualities does he display upon his return to Ithaca, his home?
   *He displays patience, wit, and courage.*

**Critical Thinking Questions**

1. Instead of sailing safely away, Odysseus angers Polyphemus by telling him, “Know that it was not the gods who took your sight, but mere weak men. . . .” What do his words reveal about his character?
   *In addition to being clever, Odysseus also acts foolishly out of pride and conceit.*

2. Odysseus does not allow his men to hear the Sirens’ song, but he, himself, insists on hearing it. What does this action reveal about his character?
   *Odysseus is self-confident and does not doubt his strengths.*

**The Wanderings of Aeneas**

*by Dr. William Montgomerie*

**Summary and Themes**

During the Trojan War, Aeneas sets off with his family to found a new Troy. After encountering many obstacles in the journey and venturing to the underworld to see his father, Anchises, Aeneas and his followers reach Italy, where they found the city of Lavinium, which eventually leads to the founding of Rome. This myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and Common Threads.

** Literary Focus**

The central idea of a literary work is the main idea—the single most important idea in the work. The central idea may be stated directly or suggested by the writer’s tone or use of details. In this story, the central idea—that fate cannot be avoided—is implied by the fact that all the Sybil’s prophecies come to pass.

1. How are the Sybil’s prophecies fulfilled?
   *Aeneas arrives safely in Latium; Hera causes a war by opening the gates of Janus; Aeneas fights the war over the princess Lavinia; he receives help from King Evander, a Greek.*

2. How is the main idea expressed in the story—directly or indirectly?
   *The main idea is suggested indirectly by the action of the story. No one states the idea, but it is implied by what happens.*

**Critical Thinking Questions**

1. Why does Hera want to cause trouble for Aeneas?
   *Hera still holds a grudge because Paris gave the “Apple of the Fairest” to Aphrodite, Aeneas’ mother.*

2. In what sense is Rome “a new Troy”?
   *Rome grows to be a rich and powerful city, as Troy was before it was destroyed by the Greeks.*

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**Norse Myths and Medieval Legends**

**The Death of Balder**

*Retold by Mary Pope Osborne*

**Summary and Themes**

Frigg, the mother of Balder, the most beautiful and beloved of the Norse gods, makes all of nature promise not to harm her son. When all appears safe, the trickster Loki manages to kill Balder and keep him in the land of the dead, signaling that the end of the world was near. This myth extends the student edition themes Common Threads and What Matters.

**Literary Focus**

The turning point in a literary work is the point in the action at which changes occur, leading up to the resolution of the plot, or the ending of the story. In Norse mythology, the gods eventually die, and their world is destroyed. Since this myth begins with the appearance that Balder will be safe, his death is a turning point, a time of significant change for the gods.

1. What is the turning point in this myth?
   *The turning point occurs when Frigg does not make the mistletoe promise not to harm Balder.*

2. How does the world change after Balder’s death?
   *The “dark of winter” triumphs over the “light of the world.”*

**Critical Thinking Questions**

1. What does this tale reveal about the way the believers in the Norse myths viewed life and fate?
   *The myth reveals that the believers in the Norse myths felt that fate should not be mocked, as the gods did when they played their games with Balder.*

2. Would you call the Norse world view optimistic or pessimistic, based on this myth?
   *The myth reflects a pessimistic world view because evil triumphs over good, rather than the other way around.*

**Twilight of the Gods**

*Retold by Mary Pope Osborne*

**Summary and Themes**

When Loki turns against the gods, all the forces of evil are unleashed against them. All perish in a terrible battle, and heaven and earth are destroyed, except for one man and woman. But the earth is renewed, and these survivors create a new race of people. This myth extends the student edition theme What Matters.

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*Myths and Legends From Ancient Greece and Around the World*
Reading Strategy
Summarize
When readers summarize, they consider all the information they have read and boil it down to the essential, or most important, points. Summarizing can help readers see the main points of this myth.

1. How would you summarize the interaction between Loki and the other gods?
   It is hostile and becomes violent as Loki calls up all the evil beings to fight on his side against the gods.

2. How would you summarize what the death of the gods meant to the Norse people?
   The death of the gods meant that a golden age of peace had passed and chaos would come to their land.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Does the story have a happy or an unhappy ending?
   The ending can be viewed in either way. It is unhappy for the world of the Norse gods, because it is the end of their world and because evil triumphs over good; but the ending is happy because it heralds creation of new life and a new world.

2. How did the believers of the Norse myths place themselves in time in relation to the battle between the gods and the forces of evil?
   They believed that the battle had taken place long ago, and that they were descended from Life and Eager for Life. They believed their gods no longer walked the earth, but were in heaven.

Brunhild
by James Baldwin

Summary and Themes
When the hero Siegfried discovers a sleeping land, he learns that its queen, the beautiful Brunhild, who was once one of Odin's handmaidens called the Valkyries, is under an enchantment that can be broken only by the bravest of heroes. Siegfried rides through flames on his horse Greyfell and awakens Brunhild and her sleeping kingdom from the spell. This myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and What Matters.

Literary Focus
"Brunhild" contains both major and minor characters. A major character plays a central role in moving along the action of a work of fiction, while a minor character may play a supporting, but not a central, role in the development of the plot. Both major and minor characters play roles in the story of Brunhild.

1. Identify one or more minor characters in the selection. Explain your answer.
   Bragi, the harper, is a minor character because, although he paves the way for Siegfried's actions by telling him the story of Brunhild, he himself plays no important part in what happens. Brunhild, herself, is a minor character, as well. Although her name is the title of the selection, she does nothing to move the action along.

2. Identify the major character in the selection. Explain your answer.
   Siegfried is the major character because his actions form the basis for the plot.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Why do Brunhild's actions make Odin angry with her?
   She sometimes interferes in battles, possibly changing the outcomes that Odin had intended.

2. What other folk tale or legend has a similar plot to that of "Brunhild"?
   Sleeping Beauty

The Sword in the Stone
Retold by Rosemary Sutcliff

Summary and Themes
All the knights of the realm attend a great tournament to see who can pull a magic sword from an anvil set in stone. Only Arthur can do it because, although he does not know it, he is the rightful heir to Britain's throne. This legend extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and What Matters.

Literary Focus
Traditionally, a heroic character in a myth or legend is one who combines the qualities of physical and spiritual strength, courage, and virtue, and performs great or nearly impossible deeds. King Arthur, celebrated in legend for more than 1,000 years, is considered a typical heroic character, as are many of his Knights of the Round Table. This tale introduces the young Arthur as he accomplishes his first heroic deed.

1. Which of Arthur's actions show that he is a hero?
   He is able to pull the sword from the stone, an act impossible for anyone else. In addition, he shows that he is virtuous when he gets the sword only for the good of his brother and not because of ambition for himself. His speech to the people in the church also demonstrates his virtue.

2. What shows that Kay is not heroic?
   He lies about where he got the sword; he cannot pull the sword from the stone.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Why does Ector not believe that Kay pulled the sword out of the stone?
   Ector is Kay's father and knows that Kay cannot be rightful heir to the throne of Britain.

2. Why do the knights insist at first that Arthur cannot be the true king?
   They are jealous and competitive, and they also do not think an unknown boy should be king.
Myths From Around the World

Apsu and Tiamat the Creators
Retold by Virginia Hamilton

Summary and Themes
Apsu the begetter and Tiamat the salt sea are the creators of life. From them come all the gods, including Lord Marduk, the mightiest god, who forms the earth and sky as well as the first people. This creation myth extends the student edition theme Common Threads.

Literary Focus
This Babylonian myth, from the verse narrative Enuma elish, belongs to the World-Parent myth type. Its theme, or underlying idea, is that all living things share a common ancestry and are therefore related to one another. It shares this theme with many other creation myths students have read or will be reading.

1. If all human beings come from one creator, as in this myth, what does that imply about all people on earth?
   It implies that all people are related and are, in some sense, brothers and sisters.

2. For what purpose does Marduk create human beings?
   He creates humans to be the servants of the gods, to free them from eternal labor.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Why do you suppose early people imagined the earth as a great mother?
   Like a mother, the earth gives life and nourishes all creatures.

2. When she is transformed into earth, why is the Hungry Goddess still always looking for food?
   The earth needs continual nourishment in the form of rain and animal and plant remains in order to be fertile.

The First People
Retold by Mercedes Dorson and Jeanne Wilmot

Summary and Themes
According to this Amazonian myth, two sorcerers, Aroteh and Tovapod, notice a beautiful woman stealing their harvest. They develop a plan to teach the people to sing and to create their own songs and languages. This myth extends the student edition themes Common Threads and What Matters.

Reading Strategy
Make Inferences
When readers make inferences, they draw conclusions based on information in the text, although the conclusions are not directly stated in the text. Making inferences about the characters, setting, and details of a myth often gives insight into the culture from which it originated.

1. From their reaction to the strange underground people, what inferences can you make about the sorcerers?
   They are kind, curious, and inventive.

2. What does the initial description of the sorcerers' lives tell about this culture's sense of contentment?
The description emphasizes an ample supply of food and the company the sorcerers had with each other, both of which are considered important.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. In what ways do the sorcerers serve as creators? They let the underground people into their own world and reshape them, then let them go forth to form the different tribes of the region.
2. Why do you suppose that they never find the beautiful woman?
   Possible answer: She is a goddess who helps the underground people; once above ground, they no longer need her.

From Bumba
by Maria Leach

Summary and Themes
In this Bantu creation myth, Bumba, the first ancestor, makes the sun and moon and a variety of creatures, including human beings, from the contents of his own stomach. His sons and the first creatures finish the process of creation. Finally, Bumba moves lightning, the troublemaker, into the sky, and teaches people how to make fire. This myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and Common Threads.

Reading Strategy
Interpret
Interpretation of a literary work is finding meaning deeper than what is directly stated in the work. Often, interpreting requires "reading between the lines," or making inferences based on what is directly stated. Looking for deeper meaning as they read will help students with their interpretation of this myth.
1. What does this imply about the relationships between humans, humans and animals, humans and nature?
   Because Bumba is the creator of all, humans are all related, not only to one another, but to all animals and nature as well.
2. What natural phenomenon does the story about the creation of the ants explain?
   It explains why ants tunnel underground. They are burying their creator.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. What adjectives would you use to characterize Bumba as a creator? Explain your choices.
   Words such as "kind," "generous," and "caring" characterize Bumba because he chased the dangerous lightning into the sky, taught people how to make fire, and told them that all the wonders he created belong to them.
2. What existed before Bumba vomited up the sun? How do you know?

How Grandmother Spider Named the Clans
Retold by Joseph Bruchac

Summary and Themes
After the creation of earth and its creatures, Grandmother Spider puts the new world into its proper order. She leads the people out of the underworld caves and separates them into clans, each led by a different animal. The Hopi still call their clans by these animal names. This myth extends the student edition theme Common Threads.

Reading Strategy
Author's Message
The author's message is an underlying lesson or idea the author of a literary work wants to get across. The message might be stated directly or implied. The message in this myth is implied. Looking for the lesson or implied message will help students understand the author's message.
1. Who established the clans that exist today and decided where each would live? What message might members of these clans find in this story?
   The clans and their locations were established by a deity; therefore, they must be for good purposes, and people should continue to live by them.
2. How would people who believe this myth react to one clan's making war on another?
   It would be considered wrong to invade another clan's territory, since each clan's location was established by a divine creator.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Why do you suppose the creator takes the form of a spider rather than another animal?
   The spider is a creator; it weaves its web and so can construct a world.
2. What does this story show about how the Hopi regard the animal kingdom?
   The Hopi have great respect for animals and see them as relatives.

The Broken Tusk
Retold by Uma Krishnaswami

Summary and Themes
The wise, gifted poet Vyasa has a wonderful tale to tell, but needs someone to write it down for him. He enlists the help of the elephant-headed god Ganesha. This tale, the Mahabharata, is one of the great Hindu epics still told in India today. It is an action-packed saga with an underlying moral message. This myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and Common Threads.
Reading Strategy

Ask Questions

One way to appreciate and understand a literary work is to ask questions, or wonder why the author made certain choices about character, plot, setting, or language. Asking questions will help students understand story elements.

1. Why might Vyasa feel that his story is so important that he wants to pass it on to future generations?
   Vyasa probably thinks that his story contains an important message for humankind.

2. Why is Ganesha's pen “worn with so much use” that it breaks?
   Ganesha is the “special friend” of writers; as with Vyasa, perhaps he often helps them by writing down their thoughts.

Critical Thinking

1. What does this story reveal about the relationship of humans to gods in the Hindu religion?
   Gods can appear before humans, help them, and take active parts in their lives.

2. While talking with Vyasa, Ganesha laughs, and the world laughs with him; when he frowns, blossoms close and skies turn dark. How does this reflect human relations to nature?
   Difficulties with nature may come from humans upsetting the gods.

The Bridge of Magpies

Told by Robert Ingpen and Barbara Hayes

Summary and Themes

When the princess of the Land of Stars leaves her loom to marry the prince of a nearby kingdom, the young couple displeases the king, who separates them. They grieve until the magpies form a bridge over which the prince can travel to meet his beloved on the seventh day of the seventh month each year. This Chinese myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself, Common Threads, and What Matters.

Literary Focus

The moral of a story is the lesson to be learned by readers of the story. The moral may be directly stated or, as in this myth, indirectly implied.

1. Why does the king punish the couple?
   After their marriage, they forget their duties and begin to live frivolously.

2. What are we meant to learn from their fate?
   People have to remember their responsibilities; it is dangerous to live just for pleasure.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does the king think the match between the young man and his daughter will work out?
   They are both hardworking and diligent.

2. Why did the marriage change the young people?
   They had both been used to working hard, and they got carried away with freedom and pleasure.

World Without Sun

Retold by Neil Philip

Summary and Themes

When the god Izanagi divides up the world among his three children, Susanowo is given the sea as his realm. This angers him, and he throws such a tantrum that his sister Amaterasu, goddess of Heaven, hides in a cave and must be tricked back out so that the world can have light and order again. This myth from Japan extends the student edition theme Resolving Conflicts.

Literary Focus

Humor in a literary work may be achieved with a situation that is incongruous, or unfitting the characters and the circumstances. While humor strikes us as funny and makes us smile or laugh, it can be used for serious purposes. In this myth, both order and disruption in the world are explained by humorous means.

1. What is humorous, or ridiculous, about Susanowo's behavior when he is given the rule of the oceans?
   He is a god, but he acts like a young child having a tantrum.

2. What ridiculous thing does he do that so scares Amaterasu?
   He drops a skinned pony through the roof of the hall where Amaterasu is weaving.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What human failing in Amaterasu allows her to be tricked?
   Vanity allows Amaterasu to be tricked; she comes out when she hears there is a goddess who shines even more brightly than she does.

2. What is ridiculous in the punishment given to Susanowo?
   Cutting his beard, fingernails, and toenails doesn't seem like much of a punishment.

Hiiaka

Retold by Robert D. San Souci

Summary and Themes

Hiiaka, sister of the fire goddess Pele, agrees to face terrible danger in order to rescue Pele's beloved Lohiau from evil spirits. Hiiaka and Lohiau love each other, but Hiiaka will not betray her sister. Jealous Pele kills Lohiau, but Hiiaka brings him back to life and the two eventually wed with Pele's consent. This Hawaiian myth extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and Common Threads.
Literary Focus

Internal Conflict

When characters face internal conflicts, the conflicts are inside their minds. The characters struggle to make a decision, take an action, or overcome a feeling. In this myth, a young woman must choose between loyalty and love.

1. What is Hiiaka's internal conflict?
   *She is loyal to her sister Pele, but she loves Lohiau herself. She is afraid that if she does what her sister asks, her love for him will be revealed.*

2. How does she resolve her conflict?
   *She chooses loyalty to her sister over love for Lohiau. At the end of the story, however, she is rewarded with Lohiau's love.*

Critical Thinking Questions

1. *Why does Hiiaka not tell Lohiau that she loves him?*
   *She is being loyal to her sister Pele, who loves him too.*

2. *How would you contrast the personalities of the two sisters?*
   *Pele is hot-tempered, quick to judge, and self-seeking, while Hiiaka is calm and thinks of others.*

**Krishna and the Serpent**

Retold by John Bailey

Summary and Themes

Vishnu, lord and preserver of the universe, comes to earth as the child Krishna to overthrow evil. When the serpent Kaliya poisons the river, Krishna battles the snake and is almost destroyed by him. When Krishna's half-brother Rama reminds him that he is divine, he defeats Kaliya and banishes him to the ocean. This myth extends the student edition theme Resolving Conflicts.

Reading Strategy

Levels of Meaning

Often, a myth has more than one level of meaning. On the surface, the words mean just what they say. But on a deeper level, the writer wishes to convey a deeper meaning. On one level, "Krishna and the Serpent" is just an exciting story; on another, it expresses ideas about good and evil.

1. Give two levels of meaning for this sentence:
   *"The evil serpent-king Kaliya had entered the river, and his presence poisoned the water."*
   *A poisonous snake has made the water unfit for drinking; Evil has entered the village.*

2. Give two levels of meaning for this sentence:
   *"All his music, all his godlike skill, poured out in a dance of death on Kaliya's head."*
   *Krishna stamps on the snake's head; Good vanquishes Evil.*

Critical Thinking Questions

1. *Why would Krishna take the form of a child?*
   *He can more effectively surprise Evil when he is in the form of an innocent child.*

2. *Why does Kaliya nearly defeat Krishna?*
   *Evil is very strong, and Krishna tries to fight as a boy without using the power of a god.*

**Coyote and the Blackbirds**

Told by Nancy Van Laan

Summary and Themes

Mischievous blackbirds trick Coyote into a bag and pelt him with stones, telling him that it is hail he feels. In revenge, Coyote eats the blackbirds the next day. That is how war began on earth. This folk tale extends the student edition theme Resolving Conflicts.

Literary Focus

This Native American Tewa tale features Coyote, a well-known trickster figure. Since audiences are familiar with this character, storytellers strive to retell the tale in a manner as colorful and exciting as possible. The repetition and certain other devices show that the story comes from an oral tradition, meaning that it was told aloud for years before being written down.

1. *What is the purpose of the repeated animal sounds in the story?*
   *The story would be told orally to a group of listeners, and the repetition makes it more dramatic.*

2. *How would having heard other stories about Coyote, the trickster, affect the way you feel about him at the end?*
   *If the audience knows that Coyote has tricked others, they will not feel sorry that he gets tricked himself.*

**Head Over Heart**

Retold by Martin Bennett

Summary and Themes

In this African trickster tale, Shark would cruelly repay Monkey for mangoes by sacrificing him to the Shark leader. But Monkey, using his wits, tricks Shark and lives to taunt Shark with his own stupidity. This tale extends the student edition themes What Matters and Resolving Conflicts.
Literary Focus
Animal characters are often used in fables to illustrate human characteristics, particularly failings. Both Monkey and Shark are examples of animal characters in a fable.

1. What are Shark's human characteristics?
   He is tricky, cruel, and too selfish to repay Monkey for the many mangoes he has received from him.

2. What are Monkey's human characteristics?
   He is good-natured, lively, quick-witted, and learns from his mistakes.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Why do Monkey and Shark fall for each other's tricks?
   Each see things only from his own point of view and cannot imagine what the other is thinking or planning.

2. What lesson does this fable teach?
   It is best not to be too trusting.

The Deceitful Pelican
Told by Robert Ingpen and Barbara Hayes

In this Polynesian fable, the pelican tricks Ruan the fish, Ruan's wife, and his little ones by telling them their watery home will dry up. Of course, the pelican eats the fish, but the wily crab tricks and kills the pelican, releasing all the fish from his beak. This fable extends the student edition theme Resolving Conflicts.

Reading Strategy
Relate to Experience
When you relate a literary work to your own experience, you think back to an experience you have had that is in some way similar to the situation described in the work. Readers who have fallen for surprise endings of stories or jokes from friends can relate this story to their own experiences.

1. Why does Ruan believe the pelican?
   The pelican makes it seem as if he is just trying to help Ruan.

2. Why does it take Ruan so long to realize his error?
   He is too trusting and has not used good judgment.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Why might Ruan's old nurse, Nokomis, wish she had died in Minnehaha's place?
   She loves Hiawatha so much she wishes she could save him the sadness of losing his young wife.

2. What do Hiawatha's words and actions reveal about his character?
   He goes in search of food, even though he knows the hunt is hopeless; he is heroic, brave, and loving.

The Famine
by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Summary and Themes
In this excerpt from the epic poem The Song of Hiawatha, Minnehaha lies dying of fever and famine while Hiawatha vainly hunts for food to save his beloved wife. The poet Longfellow, not himself a Native American, wrote nostalgically of the tribal people. Although the character Hiawatha has the same name as a sixteenth-century Mohawk chief, the poem is a romance, rather than a realistic work. This poem extends the student edition theme What Matters. A clarification of the history of the poem comes from Joseph Bruchac, a Native American author. In his essay Restoring the Circle: Native American Literature as a Means of Preserving Cultural Traditions, he states "The famous poem Hiawatha by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow actually tells the story of Managozho, a trickster hero of the Chippewa people. The real Hiawatha was a political leader of the Iroquois people."

Literary Focus
A narrative poem is a poem that tells a story in verse. It has all the elements of a prose work of fiction: characters, setting, plot, and climax. This excerpt from Longfellow's narrative provides details about the characters Hiawatha, Minnehaha, and Hiawatha's old nurse, Nokomis. The sad event of Minnehaha's death marks a turning point in Hiawatha's life.

1. How is this narrative poem like a story?
   It tells of a series of events and contains characters, as does a story.

2. Why might this excerpt from the longer narrative mark a turning point in Hiawatha's life?
   Hiawatha and Minnehaha were once happy together, but sadness has entered Hiawatha's life. He now looks toward the end of his own life when he will join Minnehaha in death.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Why might Hiawatha's old nurse, Nokomis, wish she had died in Minnehaha's place?
   She loves Hiawatha so much she wishes she could save him the sadness of losing his young wife.

2. What do Hiawatha's words and actions reveal about his character?
   He goes in search of food, even though he knows the hunt is hopeless; he is heroic, brave, and loving.

The Creation of Night
Retold by Mercedes Dorson and Jeanne Wilmot

Summary and Themes
In the beginning there was no darkness, only endless day. Water Serpent's daughter asks her
father to bring night up from the bottom of the river where he lives. Only she, a powerful sorceress, can control the spirits of night, but her curious servants let them out to destroy the day. In the end, Water Serpent’s daughter divides the day from night so earth can enjoy both. This Amazonian tale extends the student edition themes What Matters and Resolving Conflicts.

Reading Strategy
Envision
When you envision, you use details in a literary work to create a mental picture that helps you to “see” a scene described in the work. Being able to envision a scene helps make the work come alive for the reader. This myth provides opportunities for students to envision several scenes.

1. Which details helped you to envision a world without night?
   Sample Answers: no sunset; no starlight; no night beasts
2. Identify three details in the tale that an artist might use to make a painting of the land without night.
   Sample Answers: the perfume of orchids burned by the sunlight; men working and sweating under the hot sun; macaw feathers in the headdresses of the men are so bright they look flaming

Critical Thinking Questions
1. Why does the River Serpent’s daughter’s husband refuse to believe that Night exists?
   He doesn’t believe Night exists because he has no experience or concept of night.
2. What would be the worst part of a world without night?
   Sample Answers: People would find it difficult to sleep; no one would dream; there would never be cool air.

The Seven Simeons
Retold by James Riordan

Summary and Themes
In this Russian tale, seven identical brothers with the same name have seven different crafts. The youngest, a musician whose songs make people dance for joy, falls in love with the fair Tamara, the bride meant for the king. This tale extends the student edition themes Finding Yourself and What Matters.

Reading Strategy
Summarize
Summarizing the plot of a story is retelling the events in a concise way. A summary includes only the most important events and leaves out minor events that do not influence the development of the plot. In “The Seven Simeons,” students can decide which events to include and to exclude from a summary.

1. In a summary of “The Seven Simeons,” would you include the following detail: “Upon her head she wears a crescent moon and in her hair gleam lustral pearls”? Give reasons for your decision. This detail should not be included in a summary because it does not influence the development of the plot.

2. Would you include the specific crafts of all the brothers? Would you include the craft of the youngest brother?
   It is not important to the story to specify the older brothers’ crafts, but the youngest brother’s flute playing is essential to the plot.

Critical Thinking Questions
1. What do Tamara’s actions aboard the ship reveal about her character?
   In order to save the brothers’ lives, she agrees to marry the king although she does not want to do so. This shows she is kind and unselfish.
2. What point does this story make about the value of music and the arts?
   Art is just as important as other activities: the youngest Simeon’s music “warmed the people’s hearts and lightened their labour.”

Joongabilbil Brings Fire
Edited by Barbara Ker Wilson

Summary and Themes
In this Aboriginal tale from Australia, Joongabilbil, the Chicken Hawk, can make fire by flapping his wings, but none of the people have a way to make fire. Joongabilbil gives the people the gift of fire so that they can stay warm and cook their meat. This story extends the student edition themes Common Threads and What Matters.

Literary Focus
Character’s Motives
A character’s motives are the reasons for his or her actions. A character’s motives can tell the reader much about the character’s personality. In this myth, the main character’s motives are very clear, although not directly stated in the story.

1. Why does Joongabilbil give fire to the tribespeople?
   He feels sorry for them that they are cold and have to eat their food raw.
2. Why didn’t Joongabilbil give the tribespeople fire earlier?
   He didn’t know that they did not know how to make fire; otherwise, he would have given it to them.
3. What do Joongabilbil’s motives for giving fire to the people tell about his character?
   Joongabilbil is generous and kind.
Critical Thinking Questions
1. Why are so many myths concerned with mankind's need for fire?
   When people learned how to make and use fires, they had an essential tool for survival: cooking, keeping warm, and scaring away wild animals.

2. Why are magical or godlike figures thought to have given fire to human beings?
   Fire was held in such high regard that its presence must have seemed to be a divine gift bestowed by one with superhuman powers.

Teaching English Language Learners

English language learners will require special assistance to understand some of the themes and language in this anthology. You will probably need to model skills for them more frequently and to emphasize the use of context clues in reading in order to understand new words. A successful plan for English language learners will include the following components:

Theme Provide students with a central theme to help them organize their thinking about a specific selection. For example, Coming of Age is an important theme in a number of selections. Students might discuss their own coming-of-age experiences in order to relate more fully to their reading.

Key Concepts Select several key concepts to help students focus their attention on what they are reading. Character and plot are two key concepts that may help them organize their thinking.

New Vocabulary Help students identify the meanings of any unusual or difficult vocabulary words. Encourage them to keep a personal dictionary of these words.

Background In order to provide background for the selections, refer students to introductory information in this study guide about myths and legends. Use a classroom map to locate the countries and cultures represented in this anthology.

Guided Practice Students can begin reading and discussing the text in small groups. Adjust the lesson as you monitor their progress.

Follow-up Activities These can include independent activities that enable students to practice the skills they have been focusing on in the lesson. Select appropriate activities from those in Portfolio/Accessment Opportunities.

Assessment/Evaluation To assess students' comprehension of the information after completing each selection, use an activity that is not language dependent, such as creating a storyboard of an important scene or pantomiming a scene involving key characters.

Portfolio/Accessment Opportunities

Writing
1. Fable Have groups of students read and discuss fables from different countries. Encourage students to write original fables that end with morals.
2. Narrative Have students reread the following myths and write a paragraph in which they identify the main conflict in each: "Mother Earth and Her Children," "Perseus," and "Chariot of the Sun God: The Story of Phaeton and Helios." As a prewriting activity, encourage students to identify the main character's goals and discuss the obstacles in the character's path.
3. Play Script Have students work in pairs to write a script for a one-act play based on any selection they choose. Students' plays should extract the main points of the selection and focus on the central conflict presented. Students can then volunteer to perform in one another's plays.
4. Poetry Have students write a poem about the hero of one of their favorite myths or legends.

They may make their poems first- or third-person narratives. Have students share their poems in small groups.

Speaking and Listening
5. Storytelling Invite students to take on the role of storyteller. Remind them of important features of oral storytelling, such as repetition, imitation, and dialogue. They can make their narration more colorful through chanting, singing, or clapping some parts of the story. They can work in small groups, each student taking a turn at telling a favorite tale while others listen and provide feedback on the effectiveness of the presentation.
6. Pantomime Have students select a scene from "Chariot of the Sun God," "Echo and Narcissus," or "Theseus and the Minotaur" to pantomime by using gestures and facial expressions. Ask them to present their pantomimes in small groups. Other students in the group should identify the subject of the pantomime.
7. Making a Speech Encourage students to identify with a major character in "Daedalus," "Orpheus and Eurydice," or "The Judgment of Paris." They can write a speech explaining the reasons for their unusual actions. Ask them to present their speeches to the whole class and to invite discussion of their presentation when they have finished speaking.

Projects
8. Storyboard Have small groups of students create a storyboard illustrating a key idea from one of the following selections: "The Death of Balder," "The Sword in the Stone," or "Brünhild." Display the storyboards in class and discuss them.

9. Poster Have students create posters that convey how they imagine a memorable character or scene from "How Grandmother Spider Named the Clans," "The Bridge of Magpies," or "Krishna and the Serpent." They may exhibit their finished work in the classroom.

10. Interpretive Dance Have small groups of students collaborate to choreograph an interpretive dance based on "The Creation of Night," "The Seven Simeons," or "Joongabilbil Brings Fire." They can perform their dances for the entire class.

11. Comic Strip Have pairs of students work on a comic strip illustrating the action of "Head Over Heart," "The Deceitful Pelican," or "Coyote and the Blackbirds." Encourage them to convey the humor of these selections in their artwork.

Customizing for Performance Levels
Following are suggestions for matching the Portfolio/Assessment Opportunities with your students' performance levels:
Less Advanced: 8, 9, 11
Average: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
More Advanced: 4, 7, 10

Customizing for Learning Modalities
Following are suggestions for matching the Portfolio/Assessment Opportunities with your students' learning modalities:
Verbal/Linguistic: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7
Bodily/Kinesthetic: 3, 6, 10
Musical/Rhythmic: 5
Logical/Mathematical: 7
Visual/Spatial: 8, 9, 11
Interpersonal: 7
Intrapersonal: 1