

The logo for Unicorn Online, featuring the words "UNICORN" and "ONLINE" stacked vertically in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is contained within a white outline of a speech bubble that points towards the top-left corner.

**UNICORN
ONLINE**

GREEK MYTHS UNPLUGGED

TEACHER RESOURCE PACK

FOR AGES 7-12



ABOUT THE UNICORN

WE CREATE INNOVATIVE PRODUCTIONS THAT ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO QUESTION AND EXPLORE THE WORLD.

WE CREATIVELY COLLABORATE WITH CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES.

WE MAKE OUR WORK AS AVAILABLE AS POSSIBLE.

WE ARE REDUCING OUR IMPACT ON THE PLANET.

WE BELIEVE IN EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION.

We offer innovative and thrilling theatre experiences for children aged up to 13, producing and presenting new shows alongside adaptations of classic texts. We are the largest children's theatre in the UK, welcoming 65,000 families and schools to our venue every year, and thousands more through our new Unicorn Online programme of free digital theatre experiences.

We offer subsidy to groups to enable them to attend where needed, and make our work with the values of curiosity, respect and courage, partnering with schools from our local boroughs and community groups from across London to ensure that young people have a voice in shaping our shows.

We believe that young people of all ages, perspectives and abilities have the right to experience exciting, entertaining and inspiring work - we want all children to experience our theatre and actively seek out children who wouldn't otherwise attend. We maintain a strong commitment to representing diversity in our audiences, as well as on our stages, and we prioritise accessibility and inclusion across our organisation.

UNICORN ENGAGEMENT

We work directly with our audiences as collaborators via school and community partnerships, guaranteeing the voices of children are represented on our stages and that we remain relevant and useful to those we serve. Through these partnerships we ensure that children have the opportunity to influence and shape our artistic programme by being involved in the creative development of plays with artists and facilitators. Alongside this we work with our partner schools and community groups to support delivery of drama activities beyond our partnership, with emphasis on the impact drama can have on children's educational, social and emotional development.

Our current partnership schools are in Southwark, Lambeth and Tower Hamlets. Our community partners are pan-London and linked by a shared wellbeing mission; these include Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH), Body & Soul Charity and Young Carers Hubs.

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WELCOME TO GREEK MYTHS UNPLUGGED

We're excited to present three of the most loved and enduring Greek myths for School Years 3 – 7. This series of three new short plays by some of the UK's most exciting writers have been creatively filmed and edited to bring theatre to life online for children. The films reinvent and reimagine the original myths enabling pupils to explore the resonances of Greek Myths to today's world anew.

This series of three filmed theatre pieces are designed to accompany KS2 topic work on Ancient Greece. They also meet KS2 curriculum criteria for 'Retelling myths' and 'gaining familiarity with stories from another culture', so can be used for wider classroom activities.

Your class will be invited to join the Chorus, for the retellings of these myths: led by Deanna Rodger, the Chorus of our films, pupils will work together to interrogate the meaning of these ancient myths and understand why they are still relevant in the modern western world.

The films are short and simple to fit into your timetable, with optional activities to suit your class. Contained within this pack is an outline for five sessions. These could be delivered over the course of a week, and can include an additional one hour drama session. You can adjust the sessions to suit your timetable, with each lasting between 20 – 50 minutes.

We recommend the full series of five sessions, but you can also choose to just watch the three Myths (Sessions 2, 3 and 4) and follow up with a group discussion (20 minutes) or add the suggested activity to extend the session.

NOTE – students don't need to be familiar with the myths before taking part. We have included summaries within each session plan which can be shared with the class. .

All of the films can be accessed here:



If you have any questions or would like to speak to the Engagement Team, please email engagement@unicorntheatre.com

SESSION 1

INTRODUCTION – WHAT IS A CHORUS?



RESOURCES:

1. Video: Greek Myths Unplugged – Prologue (2:10 minutes)



2. Choruses from popular music to play (see list below)



DURATION: Film & Activity (20 - 30 minutes)

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

History

- Study Ancient Greek life and achievements and their influence on the western world.
- Understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.

Learning Objective: To understand the role of the Greek chorus.

Key Vocabulary: myths, chorus

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the lesson, pupils will be able to:

- Define what a myth is and highlight key features.
- Identify and describe what a myth is.
- Discuss and explain the role of a chorus.



ACTIVITY:

Greek Myths and the Chorus (30 minutes)

Defining Greek Myths (10 minutes)

Throughout this week we are going to look at retellings of ancient Greek myths.

What do the class already know or remember about Greek Myths?

Definition examples:

- Myths are stories created by early civilisations to make sense of the world around them.
- Myths describe stories that take place in a timeless past and involve supernatural or fantastical characters such as deities, creatures and demigods.
- Throughout history, myths have been used to explain the unexplainable – they often have lessons which teach us about the world.

Tip: *Pupils who have not learnt about Greek Myths may find this challenging and may benefit from a quick overview of Greek Myths in a form of a short video [BBC BITESIZE: What is a Myth](#) (45 seconds)*



WATCH VIDEO

Ask the class to listen to what Deanna says about Greek Myths

Greek Myths Unplugged – The Prologue



Defining a Chorus (15 minutes)

Play a selection of choruses for children to hear and view on the board.*

Songs they might know with clear choruses:

- Can't Stop the Feeling – Justin Timberlake
- Everything I Wanted – Billie Eilish
- Three Little Birds – Bob Marley
- Count On Me – Bruno Mars

State you have played the chorus of each song. Display the word '**chorus**' on the board.

*This is optional, you could move on to the next question

What is a Chorus?

Allocate time for children to discuss in pairs and come up with

1. their definition of the word
2. why it is important

Definition examples:

- A chorus is a section of words in a song that gets repeated multiple times throughout an entire song, conveying the overall theme.
- The chorus helps us understand and adds to our **enjoyment** of the song.
- It is the most **memorable** part of the song.
- The chorus highlights the **main idea** of the song.
- A chorus hooks and engages with the listener's emotions.

SUPPORT: Keywords that are in bold can be displayed on the board to aid effective talk.

CHALLENGE: Ask if pupils have heard of the word chorus in the context of Greek Theatre. Are they able to draw similarities or differences between the two terms?

What is a Greek Chorus?

Pupils will find it helpful to watch this short video on [BBC BITESIZE: Ancient Greek Theatre](#) (2 minutes)

Ask children what a Greek Chorus is? They may discuss with a partner or as a whole group. What is similar to the choruses we spoke about in popular music?

Definition examples:

- The ancient Greeks were one of the first communities to invent a 'chorus' – in ancient Greece the Chorus were a group of people who performed onstage and commented on the action and ideas in the story, myth or play.
- The role of a chorus is to draw the audience into the story, and make the action onstage feel even more relevant to their own lives.
- The chorus speaks directly to the audience.

Unpause video (re-starting at 1m 27seconds) and watch to the end



CONTINUE VIDEO USING PREVIOUS LINK

SESSION 2

MIDAS – FILM AND GROUP POEM ACTIVITY



RESOURCES:

1. Video: Greek Myths Unplugged – Jessie and the Jellybeans



2. Optional – school camera for filming poem



DURATION: **Film and Discussion** (20 minutes). **Group Poem** (25 minutes)

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

English

- Increase familiarity with myths, legends and traditional stories.
- Check that the stories make sense to them, discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context.
- Draw inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence.
- Predict what might happen from details stated and implied.
- Extend confidence, enjoyment and mastery of language through public speaking & performance.
- Preparing poems and play scripts to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone, volume and action

Learning Objective: To interpret a myth for a performance.

Key Vocabulary: myth, moral

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the lesson, pupils will be able to:

- Understand the moral lesson of King Midas myth
- Demonstrate oracy and performance skills.
- Adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role.
- Improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences.
- Rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.



ACTIVITY:

Story recap, Film and Discussion (20 mins)

Briefly recap the story - do they know it?

- Midas was the king of Phrygia, known for his greed and foolishness.
- For his kind deeds, Midas was granted a wish by the god Dionysus. The king secretly desired that all he touched must turn to gold.
- He was extremely happy at the beginning, however, everything that he touched turning to gold included his daughter.
- When his food turned into gold, he almost starved to death. As a result, he realised the error he had made.



WATCH VIDEO

Greek Myths Unplugged – Jessie and the Jellybeans



Content advice: The story centers on the loss of a parent/guardian

Questions for the group

- Which parts of this retelling were the same as the original myth?
- Did it make you think about the moral of the story in a different way?
- What does “You can’t appreciate the good without the bad” mean?



ACTIVITY:

Group Performance Poetry (25 minutes)

5 minutes

Group Discussion:

What other things can the class think of that people say they wish for but might not mean?

Suggestions

- I wish I never had to go to bed.
- I wish breaktime would last forever.
- I wish I could watch as much TV as I wanted.

SUPPORT: *Ask the pupils to pick a statement and describe the circumstance in which this statement could be said.*

CHALLENGE: *Encourage students to come up with their own and provide context for their statement in their discussion.*

10 minutes

Break the class into groups – number the groups, so they say their verses in order.

- Give each group one of the wishes that they came up with together.
- They need to think of two or three consequences of that wish - they don't all have to be negative, they could be good, bad or silly!
- Use these to create a verse. It needs to have three or four lines (adjust depending on group size)

Line 1 What you wished for (could start with: we wished for, we wanted, I asked for, I got...)

ALL But then...

Line 2 Consequence

Line 3 Consequence

Line 4 Consequence

EXAMPLE

Whole group: When what you wish for comes true...

Child 1 We wished that we could watch tv forever!

Whole group But then

Child 2 Our eyes went square

Child 3 we never got any daylight

Child 4 and we all talk like cartoon characters!

Each person in the group has a turn to say a line. Some can say theirs in pairs, depending on group size.

Performance Skills

- Add one action to each line.
- How are they using their voices, could be as simple as talking loudly and clearly, or adjusting their tone and expression.
- Choose one word in their sentence to emphasise.

10 minutes

When all have practised, stop the class so they can practise the chorus together.

Clap a rhythm (simple pat clap and clap, repeat).

Repeat until they can say in unison along with the rhythm.

Whole group: When what you wish for comes true...

When they are ready, add in each verse in the order the groups were numbered.

Tip: *The class should stop clapping when each group performs their verse, and start again for the refrain.*

Plenary/Assessment for and of Learning

Review the purpose of a Chorus and ask children to highlight what skills they demonstrated.

The following can be displayed on the whiteboard as the children self-assess.

- The main role of the chorus in Greek Theatre is to entertain, engage and excite the audience.
- Greek Chorus can also be used to develop arguments
- Greek chorus can make scenes more dramatic and interesting.
- The chorus always does not need to think or act together.
- Different tones of voices can be used to show the characters emotions and statuses.
- Facial expressions can also be used to enhance the plays.

SESSION 3

ARIADNE ON THE BEACH – FILM AND WRITING FROM ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE



RESOURCES:

1. Video: Greek Myths Unplugged – Ariadne on the Beach



2. Individual writing materials



DURATION: **Film and Discussion** (20 minutes), **Writing from another perspective** (30 minutes)

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

History

- Create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analysis.

English

- Increase familiarity with myths, legends and traditional stories.
- Check that the stories make sense to them, discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context.
- Draw inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence.
- Identify the audience for and purpose of the writing, select the appropriate form and use other similar writing as models for their own.
- Note and develop initial ideas, drawing on reading and research where necessary.
- Extend confidence, enjoyment and mastery of language through public speaking & performance.

Learning Objective: To write an account from a different point of view.

Key Vocabulary: myth, empathy, perspective

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the lesson, pupils will be able to:

- Summarise the story of the Minotaur
- Retell a myth from the perspective of another character.
- Discuss writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar
- Select appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning
- Compose and rehearse sentences orally.
- Assess the effectiveness of their own and others' writing and suggest improvements



ACTIVITY:

Story recap, Film and Discussion (20 mins)

Recap the story of The Minotaur (ask the class if they already know it)

Minotaur Synopsis

- The Minotaur is the son of King Minos of Crete, half-bull, half-man, the result of a punishment from the sea-god Poseidon. The Minotaur lives in a huge labyrinth (a maze), underneath the Cretian palace.
- Many years ago, the King of Athens fought and lost in a war with King Minos of Crete. The punishment for Athenians ever since was to send seven men and seven women to Crete every year, to be sacrificed to a terrible monster called the Minotaur.
- In the original myth, the hero is Theseus, the Prince of Athens. Theseus goes to Crete to slay the minotaur.
- Theseus is helped by Princess Ariadne of Crete, who gives him a magical red thread to find his way around the maze.
- Theseus saves the Athenians from the maze and sails from Crete with Ariadne. But Theseus betrays Ariadne, even after she saved him, and abandons her on the island of Naxos.
- His father, King of Athens, asked Theseus to put up a white sail if he survived the quest and his crew to put up a black sail if he failed. But Theseus forgets to put up this sail, and fearing disaster, the King jumps into the sea.

Now we hear it told through the eyes of the Minotaur's sister, Ariadne...



WATCH VIDEO: (11 minutes)

Greek Myths Unplugged – Ariadne on the Beach



Questions for the Group:

- What was it like to hear the story from another perspective?
- What did we learn from this version of the story that we didn't know before?
 - Ariadne's plan
 - Her relationship with Theseus
 - Her empathy for her brother
- Ariadne says "Finally I'm free". What makes Ariadne free at the end?
 - *Is it also that having your voice heard can make you free?*
- Most of the Greek myths were told through the eyes of their heroes, who were men. In this version we find our she-ro. There are lots of women in Greek myths with interesting stories to tell - can they think of any they know?



ACTIVITY:

Writing the Minotaur's story (30 mins)

Group Discussion (10 mins)

We've heard Ariadne's story - how would the Minotaur tell their version of the story?

Work in pairs to discuss what he would say based on the information displayed on the board.

Show on the whiteboard:

Things we know about the Minotaur:

- He was born this way, it's not his fault.
- His father betrayed a god, who made the Minotaur become one of King Minos's sons.
- He is marginalised, feared and alienated.
- He is isolated and abandoned in the maze, with no option to leave.
- He is tormented by 14 people every year.
- The only food he is offered is people, he has no choice but to behave in a 'cannibalistic' way.

Questions for the class:

- Can we empathise with the Minotaur?
- How does this change how we view the other characters?

Individual Writing (20 mins)

Ask the class to write a short monologue for the Minotaur.

Suggested structure:

- What is it like for the Minotaur living in the maze?
- How does the Minotaur react when Theseus arrives?
- How does the Minotaur feel about being betrayed by his sister Ariadne?

SUPPORT: Provide sentence starters for pupils to use in their monologue.

Ask pupils to focus on one question.

CHALLENGE: Pupils have a choice to answer all the questions but mostly focus on engaging the reader through imagery (metaphor, simile, personification etc.)



Plenary/Assessment for and of Learning

Children to perform their monologues to the class. The following checklist can provide scaffolding for peer-on-peer feedback.

- Show expression that suited my character and the mood of the piece
- Stay in character
- Have a clear point of view and focus.
- Speak loudly and clearly
- Keep the audience engaged.
- Have a strong opening and closing.

SESSION 4

NARCISSUS – FILM AND GROUP DEBATE



RESOURCES:

1. **Video: Greek Myths Unplugged – Narcissus**



DURATION: **Film and Discussion** (20 minutes), **Group Debate** (30 minutes)

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

History

- Create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses.

English

- Increase familiarity with myths, legends and traditional stories.
- Draw inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence.
- Distinguish between statements of fact and opinion
- Provide reasoned justifications for their views.
- Extend confidence, enjoyment and mastery of language through public speaking & performance.

Learning Objective: To consider arguments for and against.

Key Vocabulary: myths, narcissist, debate

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the lesson, pupils will be able to:

- Discuss and brainstorm both sides of an issue
- Form effective arguments and provide evidence.
- Listen to and challenge others views constructively
- Speak clearly and confidently in a group



ACTIVITY:

Story recap, Film and Discussion (20 mins)

Recap the story of Narcissus (ask the class if they already know it)

Narcissus Synopsis

- Narcissus was the beautiful son of a river god and water nymph.
- When he was born he was given a prophecy: he would live a long life, but only if he never really knew himself.
- He grew up and had many admirers, but left them all broken hearted.
- One day, he found a pool of water and was enchanted by the beauty of his own reflection.
- He spent all day and night admiring himself, looking at every detail of his beauty.
- When he reached out his reflection reached back, and when he went to kiss so did his reflection. But every time he went to hold what he saw his reflection disappeared.
- He stared at himself for so long that he didn't eat or drink and vines grew around him.
- Eventually, Narcissus disappeared into the earth and his reflection vanished. He was replaced by a tall beautiful flower leaning towards the water – the Narcissus flower.



WATCH VIDEO: (9 minutes)

Greek Myths Unplugged – Narcissus



Questions for the Group

- Who did we see in this film? What happened?
- How does it connect with the Narcissus myth?
- Do you know what the word narcissist means? (Someone who is self-centred and only interested in the admiration of themselves)
- Does this myth still teach us anything today? Did they recognise anything from their worlds in the film?



ACTIVITY:

Class Debate Tennis – 30 minutes

Your class will hold two debates. Choose two of the following topics.

- Selfies should be banned
- Self love is a form of selfishness
- Social media has made the world a better place
- The internet stops people from connecting with the real world

10 minutes

Split into four groups. Each discussion point is given to two groups, with one told to argue for and the other against.

Give them time to think of their arguments and share them together as a group. They might want to make notes - remind them that these should be brief and not scripts to read.

20 minutes

Bring everyone back together and choose who will debate first. The other group will be the audience while this group is debating, and will need to vote at the end.

Explain that each side will take it in turns to present an argument. You will throw an imaginary ball in the air and bat it to the side who goes first. After the person on that team has presented their point, they throw the ball in the air and bat it to the other side. That side can choose if they want to think on their feet and respond to the other team's point, or present one of their prepared points (*remind the groups that this is a team activity: they should allow each other to speak and be supportive*).

Start the debate by introducing the statement, and the two sides who are for or against.

Once everyone has had a chance to speak, bring the debate to a close and ask the class to vote - everyone can vote, including the debaters. Switch over to the second debate teams and repeat.

SUPPORT: Pupils are provided with sentence stems to form their argument.

CHALLENGE: Pupils are encouraged to use a various sentence stem categories and provide clear examples/evidence with their statement.

Sentence Stems for Debate

Clarifying

Is it your position that.....?
To be clear, you're saying that..
Could you elaborate?

Building On

Adding to what X said,
If we change X's position just a little, we can see..
Furthermore

Paraphrasing

Put another way, you're saying...
Is it fair to say that you believe?
I hear you saying that.....
In other words, you are suggesting that...

Summarising

More than anything else, I believe that.
My argument, in one sentence is...
Overall, what I'm trying to say is.
The key point is that.

Agreeing

I agree with Y because..
Z's point about X was important because...
The evidence for Z is overwhelming
when you consider that..
Despite disagreeing about Y, I agree
with Z that.

Disagreeing

I see it differently because....
The evidence I've seen suggests
something different.
Although some of that is fact, some of it is
opinion as well.
I agree that ..., but we also have to consider that.

Plenary/Assessment for and of Learning

This is a great opportunity for pupils to give each other feedback and find ways to improve their debating skills. The following exemplar might be useful:

1. Organisation and Clarity: viewpoints and responses are outlined both clearly and orderly.	Unclear in most parts	Clear in some parts but not over all	Most clear and orderly in all parts	Completely clear and orderly presentation
2. Use of Arguments: reasons are given to support viewpoint.	Few or no relevant reasons given	Some relevant reasons given	Most reasons given: most relevant	Most relevant reasons given in support
3. Use of Examples and Facts: examples and facts are given to support reasons.	Few or no relevant supporting examples/facts	Some relevant examples/facts given	Many examples/facts given: most relevant	Many relevant supporting examples and facts given
4. Use of Rebuttal: arguments made by the other teams are responded to and dealt with effectively.	No effective counter-arguments made	Few effective counter-arguments made	Some effective counter-arguments made	Many effective counter-arguments made
5. Presentation Style: tone of voice, use of gestures, and level of enthusiasm are convincing to audience	Few style features were used; not convincingly	Few style features were used convincingly	All style features were used, most convincingly	All style features were used convincingly

Optional extension: you could extend it into a longer session which follows a more formal debating style. This article has some useful tips for planning.

SESSION 5

EPILOGUE AND WORLD MYTHS -FILM AND RETELLING MYTHS



RESOURCES:

1. Video – Greek Myths Unplugged – The Epilogue



2. World Myths – Appendix
3. Large paper for each table and pens
4. Stopwatch or whiteboard countdown



DURATION: Film & Activity (30 minutes)

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

History

- Create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses.

English

- Increase familiarity with myths, legends and traditional stories.
- Check that the stories make sense to them, discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context.
- Listening to and discussing a wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks.
- Using dictionaries to check the meaning of words that they have read
- Identifying themes and conventions in a wide range of books
- Retrieve and record information from non-fiction
- Participate in discussion about both books that are read to them and those they can read for themselves, taking turns and listening to what others say

Key Vocabulary: myths, epilogue, culture

Learning Objective: To retell a myth briefly and sequentially.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the lesson, pupils will be able to:

- Retell myths in an engaging way
- Explain their understanding of the text
- Prioritise information that is given
- Listen and collaborate with one another.



ACTIVITY:

Watch Epilogue and Discover World Myths – 30 minutes



WATCH VIDEO: (2 minutes)

Greek Myths Unplugged – The Epilogue



15 minutes – Read world myths

Give a world myth to each table to read together.

Ask the groups to jot answers to these questions on the big sheet of paper. Explain that it's helpful if they help each other by writing down what someone else is saying.

- What is the story about?
- Who is in it?
- What happens in it?
- What do the lessons mean to us today?
- Extension question: Thinking about what Deanna said about changing the stories, is there anything you want to do to update it? Would you change characters, location, or tell it from a new perspective?

10 minutes – Timed Retellings

In their groups they will work together to retell the myth to each other in different amounts of time.

- 2 minutes
- 1 minute
- 30 seconds
- 10 seconds
- 5 seconds

Those with longer times have to try and fill that whole time with details, and those with shorter times have to be very concise and clear.

Tip: *Time the groups – each group will be retelling their story at the same time, so the class might be noisy and they'll need to listen carefully.*

SUPPORT: *Pupils are given pictures to sequence or a graphic organiser to help with their retelling.*

CHALLENGE: *After each retelling, pupils can suggest what is essential to the story for the next person to keep in their retelling.*

Keep the sheets from each table if you intend to follow up with the drama activity.

Plenary/Assessment for and of Learning

Individually, pupils reflect on their learning of a specific myth.

- Prompts:
- Before this lesson, I felt...
- This particular myth has made me think about...

Extension

Thinking about what Deanna said about changing the stories, is there anything you want to do to update it? Would you change characters, location, or tell it from a new perspective?

APPENDIX

WHY THE SUN IS BRIGHTER THAN THE MOON (CAMEROON)

In this beautiful creation story from the Wuté people of Cameroon, the Sun and the Moon were friends who once shone with equal brightness in the sky, until the Sun tricked the Moon and the two parted ways.

The Story of why the Sun is brighter than the Moon

Before the beginning of time, the Sun and the Moon shone as brightly as each other in the sky. They were best friends and admired each other greatly. Sun shone brightly with her children, the little sun rays of light while Moon's children were sprinkled across the sky, glittering all around her.

But Sun grew angry that she had to share the sky, she wanted it all to herself. Early one morning, as the earth was waking up, she came up with a plan. Sun called out across the sky to Moon, "Let's go and relax in the river for a while," dazzling Moon with one of her best smiles.

"That's a great idea," said Moon, smiling back.

"Once you see the water getting lovely and warm from my sunrays, join me," said Sun.

Little by little, Sun lowered her rays under the clouds and whispered to her children, "Come quick. Use your sunbeams to set fire to these branches and chuck them into the river!" She then hid.

Sun's children did as they were told and the river water began to heat up. When Moon saw the steam rising she thought it was time to go in but as soon as she did her silver shimmer began to dim, she became dull and faded. Sun rose from her hiding place and grinned proudly at her lies.

"Uh oh, what is going on?" shrieked Moon. "Sun, I thought you were in the water too! How could you trick me? Now my silver glow has disappeared. I will never shine brightly again."

Sun replied "You will still shine, just not as brightly as me," unable to hide her happiness. Moon floated up back into the bright blue sky, she was mortified and broken. Her bright glow had vanished, so she only crept out after dark, when Sun was sleeping.

But because sun was always warm during the day it caused the earth to be too hot. Moon peeked from the edge of the sky and noticed that people all around the world began to suffer and die. She saw fires ruin lands, famines as food was unable to grow and devastation because of the heat.

The world is in chaos and it is partly Sun's fault. She's so selfish and greedy, thought Moon, so she came up with an idea. One night, Moon turned to Sun and said, "Our children are suffering, there is not enough food for them to eat."



Sun regretted her trick and replied with tears in her eyes. “You are correct, Moon. I can’t stand watching our children suffer in this way.”

Moon took a deep breath and said that the only thing to do was to end the lives of their children so that they are spared from any more pain. Tears trickled as she spoke. Heartbroken, Sun agreed with Moon. “We will stop our children’s suffering and put out their light, but you must go first.” Moon agreed to collect her children first, and place them in the river. She told Sun that when she saw the river flow silver with her children’s sunbeams, that meant her children were gone and it was Sun’s turn.

The next morning, just before Sun had risen, Moon took a journey across the earth and instructed her children to take the clay from the mountains and melt it into the river.

When Sun woke up and saw the shimmers of clay in the river, she assumed it was the light from Moon’s children. With a heavy heart, she collected her own children around her and blew out their light. Only Sun’s light now shone in the sky.

It came time for Sun to set, she was about to close her eyes when she saw Moon’s children scattered across the sky. They were still there, shining brightly all around their mother.

Realizing she said “I’m sorry for tricking you into dimming your glow with the water, Moon. It was a horrible thing I did.

Moon replied, “I’m sorry for tricking you too.”

“I hope that we can be friends again.”

And they agreed. They are happy to give each other their space in the sky and play games together again.

That is why the Sun is brighter than the Moon. Sun remains alone in the sky during the day, shining her brilliant light upon the earth. Moon shines her silvery glow at night with her children for company. They are the beautiful stars twinkling brightly all around her.

CREATION STORY (HOPI TRIBE – NATIVE AMERICA)

The Hopi tribe, originating in North-eastern Arizona, is not unique in having a creation story. However, it is a great myth to analyse with your class as it describes humans as seeing the Earth as their mother; hence the term Mother Earth, and is believed to be a lesson in the importance of preserving the Earth. This story is also called a Native American “emergence myth”. Hopi means ‘the peaceful ones’.

The Creation Story

At the beginning of time, only two living beings existed. Spider Woman, the Earth Goddess, was the master of the mysteries of the Below and Tawa, the Sun God, controlling everything in the Above.

In time, Tawa and Spider Woman agreed that there should be more living things. So, Tawa divided himself and the God of All Germs emerged. Spider Woman did the same, and the Goddess of Hard Ornaments emerged, creating things like coral and shells. More gods and goddesses were created as time went on and more living things came to inhabit the Below.

The Land of Shimmering Waters, or Earth, lay between the Above and the Below. Tawa and Spider Woman began to sway and sing, creating the first song, The Song of Life, then they created rushing winds and flowing waters setting them free across Earth.

Tawa began to imagine birds flying, fish jumping, trees rustling, and animals walking upon the land. So, Spider Woman molded Tawa’s thoughts out of clay creating birds, fish, trees and animals.

Spider Woman also created humans, in the shape of the Gods but not as powerful. She cradled them in her arms while Tawa looked upon them and they sang the Song of Life to these new humans, and as they did, the humans opened their eyes, beginning to breathe and live. The first two humans were twins who were sent to opposite sides of the Earth to balance it out. Spider Woman and Tawa declared that the other humans would multiply and spread across the Earth.

As the humans spread, Tawa knew they had done a good job so told the humans he would leave them alone and that he and Spider Woman would watch over them and come if called upon. But they must always remember the earth is a gift to them and they must look after it as so.

After hearing the human’s promises Spider Woman disappeared into the Below and Tawa continued to journey across the sky.

The Hopi tribe believes that the God of the Sun and the Goddess of the Earth gave them life and are still hugely important, guiding them throughout their lives. They see the Earth as a mother figure and also link singing and music to rituals, ceremonies and festivals. They believe that each form also has a spirit and that the Earth must be respected and nurtured. The Hopi Creation Story is a reminder of the importance of preserving stories and maintaining connection to the land.

MĀUI STORY (POLYNESIA)

Māui is a character from Māori and Polynesian mythology. Though the stories about him do sometimes differ, he is always depicted as a clever, talented trickster. He's a demigod, and he has supernatural powers, but still looks human. There are lots of stories about Māui. It's said that he's responsible for the emergence of New Zealand and Hawaii from the ocean, and that he fished the islands up from the depths of the sea. He also slowed down the sun and discovered fire.

Māui and the Sun

Māui was a trickster demigod, able to use magic. Every night, he would sit with his brothers around a fire. The brothers all complained that the days were too short and there wasn't enough time to finish all their work. There weren't enough hours of sunlight.

Māui listened to their complaining and promised he'd find a way to tame the sun. His brothers all laughed at him. "You don't stand a chance," they said. "He's far too powerful. He'll burn you to death."

"I think you're forgetting I was the one who fished up this land," said Māui, boldly. "Nothing is impossible."

Māui already had a plan. He was going to use the jaw bone of his ancestor, Muri-ranga-whenua, to slow down the sun.

"I'll need your help," he told his brothers, "But I'll be able to do it."

Getting started the next day Māui asked his brothers and the other members of his whanau, or family, to gather as much harakeke as possible. Harakeke is a flax often used for creating yarn or fabric so once they had enough, he told them to weave it all together into ropes. Then, they turned these ropes into a gigantic net. This net was so huge - bigger than anything they had ever made before, big enough to capture the sun.

Armed with this gargantuan net, Māui also needed to use his magic powers. He said a magical karakia prayer over the net, instilling it with the strength of a thousand men.

Once the net was ready, Māui and his brothers had to find the sun. They knew the sun slept in the East, in a deep, cavernous pit. They travelled all the way East, until they reached it. They saw the pit and peeked over the edge, at the bottom was the sun, Tamanuiterā, sleeping. Māui and his brothers hid in caves and behind trees until Tamanuiterā woke up.

Slowly, they began to feel warmer. The opening of the pit began to glow, Tamanutiera was waking up. Suddenly getting worried, one of Māui's brothers whispered, "What are we doing? We'll be burned alive!"

But Māui had already started running back to the edge of the pit. He threw the magical net over and shouted at his brothers to pull the ropes tight.

Tamanuiterā, the sun, tried to rise but found himself trapped in the net. He pushed and pushed trying to get free but the magic net, and the strength of Māui and his brothers, contained him. Tamanuiterā was angry and began spitting fire, molten rock and shouting to be freed. But Māui drew on his magical powers and asked his ancestors for strength.



Utilising this strength, he drew the jaw bone of Muri-ranga-whenua to attack the sun. The magic was extremely powerful and the sun cried out in pain. “What have I done?” he asked. “Why are you hurting me?”

Māui explained to Tamanuiterā that he always flew too fast across the sky. ‘We never have enough time to do our work,’ said Māui. The sun coughed some more fire and ash. “We will release you if you promise to fly slower. Do you promise to give us more time to do everything we need?” Roared Māui.

Tamanuiterā knew he didn’t have a choice. He agreed and Māui told his brothers to let go of the ropes. Very slowly, Tamanuiterā rose into the sky. Māui’s brothers were all very impressed with Māui, and very glad that he had proved them wrong.

From that day on, Tamanuiterā moved slowly across the sky every day, giving humans more daylight. Māui was forever known as ‘the man who tamed the sun’.

GILGAMESH (IRAN/IRAQ)

The Epic of Gilgamesh was discovered written onto many thousands of clay tablets inscribed in cuneiform script (an old form of writing in the Middle East). It is a long poem about the universal human search for the meaning of life. Gilgamesh, King of the city of Uruk, seeks immortality and journeys to the ends of the earth and beyond. There he hears the tale of how the gods made a great flood sweep the earth and learns the different destinies of gods and mortals.

Gilgamesh and the Tree of Eternal Life

Many thousands of years ago, there was a city of Uruk in ancient Sumer which was ruled by a great king, King Gilgamesh, who was two-thirds god and one-third mortal. King Gilgamesh had magical powers and he loved a good adventure!

One day, when nothing much was happening, King Gilgamesh wearily gazed at the mountain tops, barely visible, way off in the distance. He suddenly realised, no one had ever travelled to the mountains to take a better look or to see what was on the other side. The King had heard stories, though, about an incredible plant of everlasting life that could be found just on the other side of those very mountains he was staring at, bored. So having nothing better to do, King Gilgamesh started walking.

After forty days and forty nights of walking, he came to a pass in the mountains. Two extremely big, very terrifying, demon scorpions guarded the pass. "Go back, little man," sneered the duo of demonic arachnids. "Little man?! Do you know who I am?" thundered Gilgamesh feeling the two-thirds God rising up in him. "I am Gilgamesh the GOD. Get out of my way, you stupid bugs," he roared.

And with a pop of fright, the scorpions disappeared.

Gilgamesh crossed through the pass, and entered into a clearing. In the distance, he saw a beautiful palace, it seemed to be shining slightly as sunbeams hit its walls. Near the palace was a very large, wooden boat, tilted to one side, resting on the ground. There was no city, no river, no sea; there was not even a moat. There was only a boat and the palace. He approached and knocked on the great door of the shining palace. The King and Queen who lived there opened the door and invited him to stay the night.

Over dinner, Gilgamesh asked about the boat that seemed to have run aground. "My boat!" beamed the King. "Isn't she a beauty? I built it after the gods warned me about the flood. I loaded the boat with every kind of plant and animal. When the rains came, I loaded my family as well. For six days and six nights, rain poured down. It rained so hard that my boat was soon afloat. On the seventh day, it finally stopped raining. It took a few days for the water to subside. When we opened the hatches, all the animals and all the people galloped off. We built this palace, scattered the seeds to the winds, and let all animals live. And that's how the world began for the second time. We did it! My Queen and I."

Gilgamesh shook his head in wonder. Suddenly the King's accomplishments made his own seem very small and unimportant. Gilgamesh realised that if anyone knew where the plant of eternal life might be found, the King would be that person.



Gilgamesh thanked his hosts for a most delicious dinner and took himself to bed. He was so exhausted after his long walk that he slept for six days and six nights. While he slept, the Queen convinced her husband to tell Gilgamesh the secret of everlasting life. "He seems like a good boy, he has travelled so far, and been the perfect guest" said the Queen.

When Gilgamesh woke from his sleep, he ate a hearty breakfast of mountains of pancakes and the King told him of how to find the plant of everlasting life. "You have to dive into the deepest part of the ocean. You'll know you're in the right place because you'll meet a giant octopus. Then, you have to defeat him, and cut one branch only from the tree of life."

Gilgamesh was excited. He knew he could do that. He could dive to the deepest part of the ocean and he knew right where the giant octopus hung out.

Gilgamesh set off that very day, towards the ocean. Once there, he grabbed some heavy rocks, put them in his pockets and dove down to the bottom of the ocean. He dived down to the deepest part of the ocean coming face to face with the octopus, Gilgamesh quickly hit it with the rocks he carried. While the octopus was stunned, Gilgamesh cut off one branch from the tree of life and then shot towards the surface, quickly swimming to shore.

He was going to eat this plant right away. Then he thought he might hurry into town, waving his prize. He was so excited he couldn't decide quite what to do. Happily, he curled up, hugging his branch, and fell asleep. Having watched Gilgamesh's whole journey the gods sent a snake to steal the branch while he was sleeping. Only true gods could live forever and after all Gilgamesh was only two-thirds god and did not qualify. The snake slithered quietly up to Gilgamesh and ate the plant. When Gilgamesh woke up and found the plant gone, he wasn't worried. He knew he could dive down and get another branch whenever he wanted, he'd done it once, he can certainly do it again. But the gods made sure he was always very busy with work or battles to find the time to dive back down and get another branch from the plant of everlasting life.

ANNAPURNA – GODDESS OF FOOD (INDIA)

Annapurna is a combination of two words- 'Anna' meaning food and 'purna' meaning 'filled completely'. Annapurna is the goddess of food and nourishment. She never lets her devotees stay without food.

The story of the Goddess Annapurna (Parvati) and Lord Shiva

Lord Shiva and his wife Goddess Parvati loved to play the game of dice. To make things even more interesting, one game they played they decided to start placing bets. Parvati bet her jewels and Shiva bet his trident. Shiva lost the game and he lost his trident. Parvati became the owner of his trident and got to keep her jewels. Desperate to win his trident back, they played another game, he bet his snake and Parvati bet her brand new trident. But he lost in this game too. As his desperation grew he played more and bet more and more of his possessions, his pipe, his drum, his rudraksha beads, even his loincloth! But he kept on losing. Eventually he lost everything including his begging bowl.

Shiva was humiliated and went to Deodar forest to hide in his shame. Seeing him and his predicament Lord Vishnu approached Shiva who told him everything about what had happened. Lord Vishnu then told Shiva to play the game again, promising him that he would win back everything he had lost in the next game. Encouraged and excited, Shiva took Lord Vishnu's advice, and went back to Parvati to play the game again.

Suddenly Shiva started to win, game after game, Goddess Parvati became suspicious of Shiva's sudden turn of fortunes that led him to win back everything. Unable to make sense of his sudden success she called him a cheat. Shiva was outraged and demanded an apology but Parvati refused which led to an argument between the two of them. Finally, Lord Vishnu appeared as he could not take the fighting anymore. He revealed to Parvati that he had been controlling the dice, moving them to his wish and their games had been an illusion. To this, Shiva added that everything materialistic was just an illusion. So no one had really won or lost. On hearing this Shiva proclaimed everything that they possessed was an illusion, nature was an illusion, matter an illusion, even the food they ate was 'Maya' which means an illusion in Sanskrit.

Goddess Parvati was furious. She was the mother of all material things, including food and she did not agree that food was an illusion. She said that calling food 'Maya' was the same as calling her an illusion, because she is the goddess of food. 'So, if you think I am an illusion, let's see how you all get on without me', she exclaimed before she disappeared, knowing she needed to show Lord Shiva and the world her importance. She wanted to see how the world would survive without food.

Her disappearance caused havoc. Nature came to a standstill. Seasons didn't change. Earth became barren. Nothing was able to grow. Lands were infertile. There were severe droughts and a huge shortage of food. The gods, humans and demons all kept praying for food as their stomach hurt from hunger.

Goddess Parvati heard the prayers and she could not bear to see everyone perishing from hunger. Her anger dissipated and she appeared in the city of Kashi, and set up a kitchen and started distributing food.

Shiva heard of her return and raced to her, he knew now he was incomplete without Shakti or power. He stood before Goddess Parvati in the city of Kashi with a begging bowl in his hands. He admitted his mistake and agreed that food could not be dismissed as an illusion - it was required to nourish the body as well as the inner soul. She fed him with her own hands and made sure everyone else was nourished too.



Since then Goddess Parvati is worshipped as the goddess of food – also known as Annapurna Devi. It is believed that if food is cooked with the spirit of holiness it becomes sacred, as Annapurna blesses it. It is also said in the holy books of Hinduism that a person who wastes food in any form gets a bad omen from Annapurna Devi.

WORLD MYTHS DRAMA SESSION



DURATION: 60 minutes

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

History

- Create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses.

English

- Increase familiarity with myths, legends and traditional stories.
- Check that the stories make sense to them, discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context.

Learning Objective: To retell a myth in a style of a performance.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the lesson, pupils will be able to:

- Use discussion in order to learn
- Elaborate and clearly explain their understanding and ideas
- improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences
- Rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.



ACTIVITY:

One Word Story Circle (Warm up: 5 - 10 minutes)

(Supports working together, focus and storytelling, thinking about the beginning, middle and ends of stories and how to create them)

- Everyone gets into a circle.
- The teacher explains that they will tell a story as a group.
- Each person will say one word and the person next to them will say the next word, and the person next to them, the next word. They should work together, creating a story that makes sense.
- Sometimes, the story will come to a natural ending but try and make sure everyone in the circle has a go once before ending the story.
- The teacher then asks what worked well about that story, and what we could do differently next time to make sure it makes sense.
- Then replay the game at least once.

Tip: *They can't always plan ahead, the story works better if they respond to the last words rather than try to take it in their own preempted direction.*

Extension: Students can use punctuation eg. say “full stop” or “question mark” as their turn.

Some prompt nouns or locations if needed: A dog, the beach, a dolphin, the moon, a bus driver, under the sea, the local shop.



ACTIVITY:

Beginnings and Endings (Bridging discussion: 5 minutes)

(Supports the students in thinking about structure or stories and how we can fit our stories into structures.)

Stay in the circle and discuss what types of beginnings and endings we like from our favourite stories.

Discussion prompts if needed.

Can they think of any examples of :

- Beginning at the end so the audience knows what’s to come but not how we get there.
- A cliffhanger so it leaves the audience wanting more!
- A conclusion where all story parts are tied up in a neat bow and everything is explained.

Introduce the idea that every story starts with an inciting incident- an event that sets the plot in motion or thrusts the main character into action.

Examples of endings and inciting incidents.

- In *Harry Potter*, Harry turns eleven and starts getting letters from Hogwarts.
- In *The Lion King*, Simba’s father dies.
- In *Despicable Me*, Gru wants to steal the moon and adopts three children as part of his plan.



ACTIVITY:

Building our Myths (Main Activity: 15 minutes)

Allows the students to explore everything that makes up a story and how to make it entertaining for the stage.

Decide how long each group should have to tell the story (somewhere between 2 - 4 minutes),

Divide the class back into their World myth groups and give them the myth stories and their notes. Give them a few minutes to decide which parts of their retellings they really like or are absolutely essential - did they have anything about the stories they want to change or update?

Tell the class that they will be performing their stories to each other.

Introduce some tools which might help them to build their stories:

- **Character Voice** can reflect characteristics of that person.
For example: age, background, status, human or animal or mythical creature!
- **Physical Expression** are parts of the story shown through actions instead of through spoken storytelling? Actions can help to reflect emotions or characters in individual performances, or of the group, and use physical expression together to present locations or big events.
- **Soundscapes** can reflect the weather or the location the story is set in eg, thunderstorm, a journey on the sea, a busy street, a forest at night.

Then give each group time to decide and rehearse on their retelling, making it clear they will be performing their retelling back to the rest of the class.

Tip: *The sooner they get on their feet the better; groups who spend a long time discussing often find it harder to perform at the end!*



ACTIVITY:

Retelling our Myths (Conclusion: 20 minutes)

Embeds everything the students have worked on during the session. Support performance and drama skills and allows students to explore what preparation is like compared to performance.

One group at a time will perform their retelling of their myth to the group.

Before any groups perform their retelling the teacher should discuss what the students think makes a really good audience, eg.

- Not talking over the performance.
- Be respectful of the performers.
- Applauding at the end.

You can also remind the performers:

- Make sure you are moving around so your back isn't towards the audience all the time.
- Think about turning out to the audience and not in, to the other performer.
- Clear, loud voices

Each group performs and everyone applauds.

Give general positive feedback after everyone has performed. They will be able to give each other feedback in the closing activity



ACTIVITY:

Magic Box (Cool Down: 5-10 minutes)

Supports reflection, embedding what the class has achieved that day and finishes the session off in a positive way.

Everyone gets into a circle either on chairs or on the floor.

Mime picking up an imaginary box and open it. They explain that this box can be as big or as small as it needs to be - the box is different for each person, and as we pass it round we are going to put in our most memorable moment from today's session.

If anyone needs a prompt you could ask: "What was your favourite part of the myths you heard or you told?"

FURTHER RESOURCES

Here is a list of resources that we have found interesting or useful, they might supplement your existing topic work on Ancient Greece or help you to refresh it.

Greek Myths

- **30 of the most famous tales from Greek mythology**
- **Ted Ed YouTube playlist - myths from around the world**
- **Best 29 Greek myths**

Impact of Greece on modern world

- **6 ways the ancient Greeks changed the world**
- **11 Greek influences and contributions to today's society**
- **BBC Bitesize: How did the ancient greeks change the world?**
- **7 things the ancient greeks gave us**

Critical Reading

- **Reclaiming the ancient world: towards a decolonised Classics**
- **Why Greek myths are relevant for all time**

Education resources for KS2 Ancient Greece

- **BBC Teach (Free)**
- **BBC Bitesize (Free)**
- **British Museum: Workshops and resources (Free/Paid)**
- **KS2History: Lesson Plans (Paid)**
- **Historical Association: Scheme of work (Paid)**
- **Hamilton Trust: Scheme of work (Paid)**
- **Teachwire: Greek Mythology resources (Free/Paid)**
- **List of short online games (Free)**

Books

- **Meet the... Ancient Greeks, James Davies**
- **Treasury of Greek Mythology, National Geographic**
- **African and Caribbean Folktales, Myths and Legends**
- **Illustrated Myths from Around the World**
- **Myth Atlas: Maps and Monsters, Heroes and Gods**
- **Myths and Legends of the World, Lonely Planet Kids**



GREEK MYTHS UNPLUGGED

Engagement Pack compiled by Unicorn Engagement with **Gabrielle MacPherson** (Writer/Facilitator), **Chioma Anyanwu** (Teacher) and **Beth Carter** (Classics consultant)

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