MYTHICAL PEOPLE, PLACES, & CREATURES

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There have always been stories that have been told and retold about strange creatures, mysterious places, and incredible people. They come to us either as legends, myths, folk or fairy tales, and fables.

We will begin this unit with a review the similarities and differences among these different types of stories.

Next, we will take look at some of the more popular examples of these stories like: Atlantis, Unicorns, The Tortoise and the Hare, and Robin Hood.

Then, students will choose one of these topics to research and develop their expertise on the subject.

Finally, everyone will have an opportunity to create their own new, fantastic tale.

What are Myths?

Myths are made up stories that attempt to explain **how our world works** and **how we should treat each other**. The stories are usually set in times long ago, before history as we know it was written.

People have always asked questions like “How did our world come to be?” or “Why do tornadoes happen?” Some myths **answered** **these questions**.

In other myths, gods or “super-beings” used their powers to make events happen. Sometimes the stories were the adventures of gods, goddesses, men and women.

These myths described the big things that happened to people and the choices they made. They might be about triumph (achieving something), tragedy (losing something), honor (doing the right thing), being brave even when you are frightened, or being foolish and making mistakes. People might be heroes in these stories and gods and goddesses could use their powers to help them or make things more difficult for them.

Around the world, myths were shared by **groups of people** and became part of their culture. Storytellers have passed the stories on from generation to generation and through families. Some myths are told in many cultures, but with variations in the events or characters. For example, most cultures, tribes or groups of people have their version of how our world came to be.

For early people, myths were like science because they explained how natural events work. Today we don’t always know if myths are true or not. Some of the stories or characters may seem impossible, and science gives us different explanations for some of our questions. But people all over the world still like to read myths and we all like to think about what they might mean.

“Myth” comes from the Greek word “mythos” which means “word of mouth”.

What are Legends?

Legends are also stories that have been made up, but they are different from myths. Myths answer questions about **how the natural world works**, and are set in a time long-ago, before history was written.

Legends are **about people and their actions or deeds.** The people lived in more recent times and are mentioned in history. The stories are told for a purpose and are based on facts, but they are not completely true.

Either the person never really did what the story says, or the historical events were changed. The purpose was to make the story more interesting or convincing, or to teach a lesson, like knowing right from wrong.

Examples of people in English legends are King Arthur, Robin Hood and Queen Boadicea. A man who may have been King Arthur is known to have lived in the 5th or 6th century. But the stories about the Knights of the Round Table and Merlin the Magician may not be true. The point of the story was that the knights and their king defended their people and helped them.

The character and deeds of Robin Hood may have been based on someone else. Robin of Loxley lived in Nottinghamshire around the time of the story, and he did help the poor. But did he live in Nottingham forest with a band of robbers? Probably not, but helping other people is important and the legend hasn’t been forgotten.

Boadicea was first female queen in Britain. History tells us she lived in the 1st century and led her people in their fight against the Romans when they invaded. The Romans won and conquered Britain. Boadicea was captured and died in prison, but legends say that she escaped and fought on. This story was intended to encourage people in countries invaded by the Romans, to resist and fight.

Like myths, legends are passed down from generation to generation.

What are Fables?

A fable is another type of story, also passed down from generation to generation, and told to teach a lesson about something.

Fables are about animals that can talk and act like people, or plants or forces of nature like thunder or wind. The plants may be able to move and also talk and the natural forces cause things to happen in the story because of their strength.

The most famous fables were written by a man called Aesop. We know them as Aesop’s Fables, and he wrote more than 600 of them.

I’ve retold some of my favorite Aesop’s Fables for you. You can read about the [Fox who thought he was cleverer than the Cat](http://www.planetozkids.com/oban/legends/fox-cat-aesop-fable.htm), or how the [Tortoise won a race against the Hare.](http://www.planetozkids.com/oban/legends/the-hare-and-the-tortoise-aesop-fable.htm)

What are Folk or Fairy tales?

Folk and fairy tales are stories written specially for children, often about magical characters such as elves, fairies, goblins and giants. Sometimes the characters are animals.

Hans Christian Andersen is famous for writing **fairy tales**. He was born in Denmark in 1805. Examples of his stories are “The Little Mermaid”, “Thumbelina” and “The Red Shoes”.

In Copenhagen there is a statue of the little mermaid, sitting on a rock on the beach at the harbor, in memory of the writer.

Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm were brothers, born in Germany in 1785 and 1786. They are famous because they collected together many old fairy tales from different parts of Germany and wrote them down for people to read. We know them as the Brothers Grimm and their collection includes “Cinderella” and “The Frog Prince”.

Examples of Possible Topics

Atlantis Bermuda Triangle Shangri-La Oz

100 Acre Wood Hogwarts Narnia Neverland

Middle Earth Wonderland

Phoenix Unicorn Leprechaun Dragon Minotaur

Griffin Bigfoot Giant Loch Ness Monster

Chupacabra

Robin Hood Santa Clause Cinderella Frog Prince Easter Bunny Tooth Fairy

Websites

Creatures

<http://mythicalarchive.com/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_legendary_creatures>

places

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_mythological_places>

<http://www.eaudrey.com/myth/Places/index.htm>

<http://www.decodedstuff.com/15-mystical-places-that-ruled-over-the-human-imagination/>

Greek/Roman

<http://greece.mrdonn.org/greekgods/index.html>

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MYTHICAL PEOPLE, PLACES, & CREATURES

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Topic \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

List at least 5 interesting facts you have learned about your topic.

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MYTHICAL PEOPLE, PLACES, & CREATURES

Images

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ HR # \_\_\_\_

Topic \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please use this page to make a colorful sketch of your topic.

Tell Your Tales

Once you have a collection of facts from at least three different resources (and have recorded details for your bibliography), then you should start working on a method to share what you’ve learned about your topic.

You may choose to create a poster, a 3-D model with a written explanation, a PhotoStory, a PowerPoint presentation, a song or poem, or you could dress in a way that represents your topic and present information about it to the group.

UNTOLD TALES

Now it is time for you to tell us about a new creature and place that come from your creative imagination. Each student must create their own, but may later have them interact with the creatures or places of another classmate.

You will write a story of at least two pages based on an adventure of your new creature in this mythical place. Please keep your location here on Earth, but you can go into the past or future as far as you like.

Be sure to tell us about any special powers or abilities of your legendary character. Does your character work alone (like Spiderman), or is he part of a team (like Batman & Robin)?

When you tell about your new place, please take time to describe what it looks like, where it is, and what other creatures live there, too. Remember to make it mysterious enough that only you have discovered it.

Extra Credit

Use some form of illustration to show us a picture of your new place, or make a doll of your new creature.

REFERENCES

Websites

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Books

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**Citing Your References**: When you write your bibliography list all of your references. Formats for each type of publication follows (there are different formats for different media):

* **Web Site:** Author(s) if appropriate. *Title of Site or web page*. URL of site, date of publication (the earliest copyright year listed).

Example:

"Shelbyville Central Schools."  Available at: http://www.shelbycs.org.  30 August 2001.

* **Book:** Author(s). *Title of book*. Edition. Location of publisher: Name of Publisher, year of publication.

Example:

Paulsen, Gary.  Hatchet.  New York: Puffin Books, 1987.

* **Encyclopedia:** *Title of encyclopedia*, volume of encyclopedia used. Location of publisher: Name of Publisher, year of publication, pages where the article is located.

Example:

Brookstone, Steven.  "Networking."  World Book Encyclopedia.  2002 ed., vol. 13, p. 55.

* **Magazine or Journal:** Author(s). "Title of article." *Name of magazine*, Volume.issue (date): pages where the article is located.

Example:

Fly Fishing."  Field and Stream.  29 August 2002: 31-33

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Last | First | HR# | Topic |
| Agnew | Samuel | 28 | Merlin |
| Callahan | Dylan | 28 | ? |
| Michalewicz | Brett | 28 | Hydra |
| Sreenivan | Rohan | 28 | Big Foot |
| Best | Daniel | 29 | Santa Claus |
| Burbank | Wesley | 29 | Hydra |
| Cote | Abbigail | 29 | Athena |
| Glover | Loren | 29 | Davy Jones |
| Hanning | Aiden | 29 | Pheonix |
| Hilliard | John | 29 | Atlantis/Zodiak |
| Martin | Andrew | 29 | Atlantis |
| O'Brien | Aileen | 29 | Unicorn |
| Phillips | Grace | 29 | Bermuda Triangle |
| Remick | Aiden | 29 | Pheonix |
| Amrani | Omar | 30 | Vampire |
| August | Simon | 30 | Zombies |
| Bartus | Daniel | 30 | Shangri-la |
| Hunt | Andrea | 30 | Dragons |
| Lodge | Annie | 30 | Athena |
| Lyna | Michael | 30 | Nine Relms |
| Mennon | Gauri | 30 | Neverland |
| O'Hara | Avery | 30 | Bermuda Triangle |
| Trimper | Sean | 30 | Hades |