



GREEK MYTHOLOGY INTRO

Gods, Heroes & Legends of Ancient Greece

⚡ What is Greek Mythology?

Greek mythology is the body of stories and legends from ancient Greece, dating back to around 1200 BCE. These myths were central to Greek religion, culture, and identity — passed down through oral tradition, poetry, and art for centuries.

Key Ancient Sources

Homer

The Iliad & The Odyssey

Hesiod

Theogony & Works and Days

Ovid

Metamorphoses



Sacred Stories

Explained natural phenomena, human nature, and the origin of the world



Art & Drama

Inspired epic poetry, theater, sculpture, and painting



Lasting Legacy

Shaped Western literature, philosophy, language, and culture

The Creation of the World

I

Chaos

In the beginning there was only Chaos — a vast, dark void from which all existence emerged.

II

The Primordials

From Chaos came Gaia (Earth), Tartarus (Underworld), Eros (Love), and Nyx (Night).

III

The Titans

Gaia and Uranus (Sky) gave birth to twelve Titans, led by Kronos who overthrew his father.

IV

The Olympians Rise

Zeus, son of Kronos, led his siblings in a ten-year war (the Titanomachy) to seize power.



The Twelve Olympians

Dwelling atop Mount Olympus, the twelve Olympian gods ruled over every aspect of the mortal and immortal world.

Zeus

King of Gods
Sky & Thunder

Hera

Queen of Gods
Marriage

Poseidon

Sea, Storms
& Earthquakes

Athena

Wisdom
& Warfare

Apollo

Sun, Music
& Prophecy

Artemis

Moon, Hunt
& Wilderness

Ares

War
& Bloodshed

Aphrodite

Love
& Beauty

Hermes

Messengers
& Thieves

Hephaestus

Fire
& the Forge

Demeter

Harvest
& Agriculture

Dionysus

Wine
& Festivity

Zeus & Hera



Zeus

King of the Gods

Zeus overthrew his father Kronos and became the supreme ruler of the gods. He wielded the thunderbolt, controlled the weather, and upheld justice and order among gods and mortals alike. His many love affairs produced heroes and demigods like Heracles, Perseus, and Helen.



Hera

Queen of the Gods

Hera was the goddess of marriage, family, and childbirth. As Zeus's wife, she was fiercely protective of her role and often sought vengeance on his lovers and illegitimate children. Despite her jealousy, she was worshipped as a powerful protector of women and families.



Poseidon & Athena



Poseidon

God of the Sea

Brother of Zeus, Poseidon ruled the oceans with his mighty trident. He could create storms, earthquakes, and tidal waves at will. He competed with Athena for patronage of Athens — he struck his trident to create a saltwater spring, but Athena's gift of the olive tree won the city's favor.



Athena

Goddess of Wisdom & War

Born fully armed from Zeus's forehead, Athena was the goddess of wisdom, strategic warfare, and crafts. She was the patron of Athens, and her symbol — the owl — represented wisdom. She aided heroes like Odysseus and Perseus, embodying intellect over brute force.

Apollo & Artemis

The Divine Twins



Apollo

God of the Sun, Music & Prophecy

Apollo drove the sun chariot across the sky each day. He was the god of music, poetry, healing, and prophecy. His Oracle at Delphi was the most important in the Greek world, where mortals sought divine guidance.



Artemis

Goddess of the Moon & the Hunt

Artemis was the fierce protector of wildlife and young women. She roamed forests with her band of nymphs, carrying a silver bow. She demanded chastity from her followers and punished those who trespassed in her sacred groves.

★ More Olympian Gods



Ares

God of War

Brutal and bloodthirsty, Ares represented the violent side of war. Feared but not loved, he was often depicted in conflict with Athena, who embodied strategic warfare.



Aphrodite

Goddess of Love

Born from sea foam, Aphrodite was the most beautiful of all goddesses. She had the power to make anyone fall in love, and her legendary beauty caused the Trojan War.



Hermes

Messenger God

Swift Hermes served as messenger of the gods and guide of souls to the underworld. He was the patron of travelers, thieves, and merchants — cunning and quick-witted.



Hephaestus

God of the Forge

Cast from Olympus as a child, Hephaestus became the divine craftsman. He forged Zeus's thunderbolts, Achilles' armor, and the chains that bound Prometheus.

Heroes of Greek Mythology

Mortal or semi-divine figures whose extraordinary deeds echoed through the ages.

Heracles

Son of Zeus. Completed the twelve legendary labors, battling monsters and performing impossible feats to earn his immortality.

Perseus

Slayer of the Gorgon Medusa. Armed with divine gifts, he saved Princess Andromeda from a sea monster.

Achilles

Greatest warrior of the Trojan War. Virtually invulnerable except for his heel — his one fatal weakness.

Odysseus

King of Ithaca and master strategist. His ten-year journey home from Troy is one of literature's greatest adventures.

Theseus

Hero of Athens. Navigated the Labyrinth and slew the fearsome Minotaur with the help of Ariadne's thread.

Jason

Led the Argonauts on the quest for the Golden Fleece, sailing to the edge of the known world.



The Trojan War

The most famous conflict in Greek mythology — a ten-year siege that united gods and mortals in epic struggle.

The Spark

Paris of Troy judged Aphrodite the fairest goddess and was rewarded with Helen, the most beautiful woman, wife of King Menelaus of Sparta.

The Gathering

Menelaus rallied the Greek kings — Agamemnon, Odysseus, Ajax, Achilles — and launched a thousand ships toward Troy.

The Siege

For ten years the Greeks besieged the walled city. Achilles killed Hector, Troy's champion, but was later felled by Paris's arrow to his heel.

The Horse

Odysseus devised the Trojan Horse — a hollow wooden giant filled with warriors. The Trojans brought it inside, and that night, Greece won the war.

The Odyssey

Odysseus's ten-year journey home from Troy



Key Encounters

- The Cyclops**
Trapped by Polyphemus, Odysseus blinded the one-eyed giant to escape
- Circe's Island**
The enchantress turned his men to swine before becoming an ally
- The Sirens**
Odysseus tied himself to the mast to hear their deadly song
- Scylla & Charybdis**
Navigated between a six-headed monster and a deadly whirlpool
- Return to Ithaca**
Disguised as a beggar, he reclaimed his throne and reunited with Penelope

Central Themes

Nostos (Homecoming)

The deep longing for home drives every decision Odysseus makes.

Cunning over Strength

Odysseus survives by wit and deception, not brute force.

Loyalty & Endurance

Penelope's faithfulness and Odysseus's perseverance are central.

Divine Interference

Gods help and hinder — Athena protects, Poseidon punishes.



Mythical Creatures

Medusa

A Gorgon with snakes for hair whose gaze turned mortals to stone. Slain by Perseus.

Minotaur

Half-man, half-bull dwelling in the Labyrinth of Crete. Defeated by Theseus.

Cerberus

The three-headed dog guarding the entrance to the Underworld. One of Heracles' labors.

Hydra

A multi-headed serpent that grew two heads for each one cut off. Killed by Heracles.

Pegasus

A divine winged horse born from Medusa's blood, later tamed by Bellerophon.

Sphinx

A creature with a woman's face and lion's body that posed deadly riddles to travelers.



The Enduring Legacy

Greek mythology lives on in every corner of modern culture.

- Our planets, constellations, and days of the week bear names from Greek myths
- Literature from Shakespeare to modern fantasy draws on Greek archetypes
- Words like "odyssey," "narcissism," and "chaos" derive directly from mythology
- Hollywood continues to retell these stories in blockbuster films and TV
- Democracy, philosophy, and theater all trace roots to the mythological worldview
- Psychology uses mythological figures — Oedipus, Narcissus, Electra — as frameworks

The myths of Greece are not relics of the past — they are mirrors of the human experience.