

Sixth Grade Summer Reading Assignment

BOOK: *Mythology* by Edith Hamilton

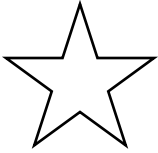

ASSIGNMENT:

You will need to read sections 4 through 14 (pages 95-290) of Edith Hamilton’s *Mythology*. The purpose of this book is to help you become familiar with the myths and characters of Ancient Greece and Rome. As you read, remember that these are the stories that the people of Ancient Greece and Rome not only knew by heart but believed. Try to imagine a world in which Athena could come to aid you in your troubles or Zeus could fall in love with you. This is a world in which everything – from the fire in your hearth to the flowers in the field to the mighty roaring sea – was alive and imbued with a spirit.

The Ancients told stories (myths) about what they saw in the world to explain phenomena they couldn’t understand or how they came into existence. For example, they would explain a storm as an effect of two gods fighting. See how many of these “story explanations” (or myths) you can find throughout your reading.

Annotate: As you read this book you might be a bit overwhelmed by how many gods and goddesses there are, and it might be tricky to keep all of these stories straight. Try some of the following annotation strategies to help you be able to reference the content of the book for future discussions.

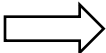
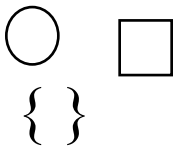
Sixth graders begin with simple forms of annotations: stars for big/important ideas and questions marks for sections you do not understand. As you progress in your skills, you should add more substantial content and dialogue to your annotations.

	Put a star next to any BIG IDEA, theme, or message the author is trying to tell you. (For example, when a character learns a lesson, solves a problem, or comes to an important realization, put a star in your book to mark this as an important piece of the text.) If we discuss a passage for a long time in class, mark it with a star! You may choose to label your stars and/or write brief summaries.
	Put a question mark by any material you don’t understand or when you are confused by a certain character’s actions or motivations. As you grow in your annotating skills, write a brief question or the reason you’re confused in the margin. If you ask about it in class and get the answer, jot that down, too!

Additional symbols that you'll add later are:

KEY WORDS	Add brief comments to the symbols identifying why something was important, major themes, what you have a question about, and/or summarizing the main ideas with one to two key words.
+ / -	Write a plus "+" next to ideas you agree with and a minus "-" next to ideas (or actions characters take) that you don't agree with. (You may choose to explain why in the margins or even write a summary of what you agreed with or disagreed with at the end of each chapter or section.)

And...some additional symbols and annotating tricks are:

<u>Underlining</u> and Highlighting	Underline and highlight important and significant passages in the text. These can be passages that show a particular truth, demonstrate a character's virtue (or lack of), hint at a change in the storyline, or just speak to the reader of the story in a powerful way.
Write in the Margins	Summarizing and writing key words is great, but sometimes you need more. So, write more. If a character has several names, it will help you know who they are talking about if you write it down. If the text is a bit tricky to understand, write down the explanations that your teacher gave in class. Do you see a character changing? Is there something foreshadowed in the text? New word? Write a brief definition.
	See a connection with another part of the book OR with another author you've read? Mark it with an arrow and note briefly what it reminds you of using one or two words.
	Circles, Squares, and Brackets can be used in a number of ways when annotating. If a word or name is particularly important, find a way to mark it. You'll soon discover that you have your own ways of telling yourself things about the text with the way that you annotate

The Reading Guide: The following assortment of questions are to help guide you through your reading. Annotate and take notes to ensure you have a complete understanding of the book and are ready to discuss it on the first day!

Chapter 4, The Earliest Heroes: Who are they and what are their stories? pp. 95-120

1. Prometheus and Io
2. Europa
3. The Cyclops
4. The Flower Myths

Chapter 5, Cupid and Psyche. pp. 121-134

5. How does Psyche compare in beauty with her sisters?
What plan does Venus have for Psyche?
6. What happens when Cupid meets Psyche?

Chapter 6, Eight Brief Tales of Lovers. pp. 135-159

7. How does the Pyramus and Thisbe myth explain the deep red color of the mulberry bush?
8. How does the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice explain the sweetness of the nightingale's song?
9. How does the myth of Ceyx and Alcyone explain the idea of Halcyon days?
10. How does the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea illustrate the power of love?
11. How does the myth of Baucis and Philemon illustrate nature as a symbol of eternal love?

Chapter 7, The Quest of the Golden Fleece. pp. 160-180

12. What is the Golden Fleece? Why does Jason seek the Golden Fleece?
13. How does the King of Colchis treat Jason when he arrives?
What tests does he put Jason through?
14. How does Medea figure in these events?
What does Jason do to Medea at the end?

Chapter 8, Four Great Adventures. pp. 181-195

15. How does the myth of Phæthon explain the poplar trees that grow along the bank of the river Eridanus?
16. Why does Bellerophon believe that he can be equal to the gods?
What does Bellerophon forget?
17. How does the myth of Otus and Ephialtes also show the foolishness of trying to rise above the gods?

Chapter 9, Perseus. pp. 196-207

18. How is Perseus' birth magical?

Chapter 10, Theseus. pp. 208-223

19. Before Theseus can go to Athens and claim King Aegis as his father, what great test of strength is he required to perform?
Why is Theseus loved by the Greeks before he ever meets his father?
20. What kind of ruler is Theseus when he becomes King of Athens?

Chapter 11, Hercules. pp. 224-244

21. What happens to Hercules when Hera sends madness to possess him?
Is he considered guilty of his crimes?
What happens after Hercules completes the twelve labors?

Chapter 12, Atalanta. pp. 245-252

22. What declaration does Atalanta make about marriage?
And how does Melanion (Hippomenes) win her as his bride?
23. What part does Paris play in the war?
What about Achilles?
Who was Hector?
What is probably the most memorable scene from this section?

Seventh Grade Summer Reading Assignment

BOOK: *Man of Blessing: A Life of St. Benedict* by Carmen Acevedo Butcher

Hello future 7th graders!

This summer, as an introduction to Medieval Omnibus, you will be reading *Man of Blessing: A Life of St. Benedict* by Carmen Acevedo Butcher. While you do not need to complete a formal assignment or project over the book this summer, you do need to be reading carefully and thoughtfully, as you will be assessed over the book when you return in August. To that end, we offer the following questions to guide your reading:

- What was the world like when Benedict was alive?
- What miracles does Benedict perform, and what lessons do they teach us?
- Benedict spends time living both in isolation and in community. What are the benefits and problems with each?
- What is humility? How does Benedict demonstrate it?
- What is obedience? How does Benedict demonstrate it?
- What makes Benedict a good Christian leader?

Come to school prepared to discuss these ideas in detail, as they will set the stage for much that we will be reading together this fall. (Also, this is an excellent opportunity to practice your newly acquired annotation skills! Remember that a book which has been annotated with these questions in mind will be an invaluable tool during class discussions our first week back.)

We look forward to seeing you next year!

--7th Grade Teaching Staff

Eighth Grade Summer Reading Assignment

BOOK: *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift,
Parts I & II: A Voyage to Lilliput & A Voyage to Brobdingnag

OVERVIEW:

Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* was originally published in 1726. On one level, it is a **parody** of the travel narratives that had become popular during the Enlightenment (notably, James Cook's *Travels*, which recounts voyages to Tahiti, New Zealand, and Australia and was a best-seller in its day).

The book is also a **satire** that can be read as a Christian response to Enlightenment ideals of progress, a response based in both ancient learning and a Christian understanding of the fallenness of humanity and its inescapable consequences for human institutions and human power. Through Swift we see how the Church (Swift was both a priest and strong defender of the Anglican Church in Ireland) provides the necessary corrective to political and scientific innovations that may temporarily mask but will ultimately reveal man's fallenness.

- **parody** – a humorous imitation of another, usually serious, work
- **satire** – the literary art of ridiculing a folly or vice in order to expose or correct it. The object of satire is usually some human frailty; people, institutions, ideas, and things are all fair game for satirists. Satire evokes attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation toward its faulty subject in the hope of somehow improving it.

READING:

Read the first two parts of *Gulliver's Travels*, Part I: A Voyage to Lilliput and Part II: A Voyage to Brobdingnag (pp. 21-139). Some questions to consider while reading – What does Swift seem to be satirizing in each part? What is the significance of Gulliver's size in each part? How can Part II be read as a response to Part I?

TRAVEL JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT:

For the first two parts of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, you will write a travel journal in which you track Gulliver's, uh, travels from the point of view of one of the members of his company as you read through the text. Use the attached pages to create **three** entries for **Part I** and **three** entries for **Part II**. Each entry will include **both** a written account **and** illustration (to the best of your ability. Detail is required, color is appreciated.) Your goal is to show (in pictures and words)

what a member of Gulliver's company would see if he had accompanied our narrator on his journeys.

Think of the written portion of the journal entries as a creative spin on the standard narrative summary. They should still address the Who? What? When? Where? How? and Why? of the portion of the book that is the basis for each entry. They should also demonstrate thoughtful and thorough engagement with the entire text. This assignment is due on the first day of school.

