

Focus	Objectives/Standards
Introduction to Mythology	<p><i>Reading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and analyze characteristics of the folk literature, myths. RL 3.1</li> <li>Identify and analyze feature of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images. RL 3.6</li> <li>Build background knowledge of Sumerian culture before reading myth, clarifying main ideas. RC 2.3</li> <li>Clarify an understanding of text by taking notes. Start graphic organizer. RC 2.4</li> </ul> <p><i>Language</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify new words using context. RW 1.4</li> <li>Identify and use semicolons in compound sentences. WC 1.1, 1.3</li> </ul> <p><i>Listening and Speaking</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulate their ideas in both small and/or whole group settings, as a speaker as well as listener. LS 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5</li> </ul> <p><i>Writing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarify meaning of text through notetaking, listing ideas on a graphic organizer. RC 2.4; WS 1.1, 1.3</li> </ul>
Assessments	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written notes and discussions during reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Text: “What Are Myths” (focused read aloud)</li> <li>Text: Why Read Literature? How to Read Literature, PH pp. 760-761</li> <li>Text: “Sumerian Achievements” Holt, Ancient Civilizations, pp. 67-68</li> <li>Text: “From the Epic of Gilgamesh” Holt, p. 72</li> <li>Graphic organizer, “Myth Matrix”</li> </ul>

**BEFORE READING** (Prentice Hall, p 760)

- Let students know they will be following along and taking notes as teacher reads, “What About Myths.” Explain that you are going to read aloud the introduction from “Why we Read Myths,” an informational article about mythology and its influence on language and culture. As you read, the students will be following along with their eyes and think about the following questions:
  - What is a myth?
  - Why do we read them?
  - What civilizations have myths?
- Discuss responses in small groups. Share whole group and chart ideas.

**READING** (Prentice Hall Anthology)

- Have students turn to p. 760 in their anthologies. Students read the page and respond to the question: *Why do we read literature?* Let the students know they will be reading “Arachne” and “Pericles’ Funeral Oratrimon.”
- Turn to p. 761. Read the page and respond to the question: *As proficient readers, how do we read literature?* Let students know they will be reading about the civilizations they have studied in social studies and the myths from those cultures.

**BEFORE READING** (Holt, pp. 67-68 and 72-73)

- Explain to the students that before reading each myth, they will be reading background information on the ancient civilization.
- Hand out text, “Sumerian Achievements” p. 67 from Holt.
- Hand out graphic organizer, “Myth Matrix.”
- Set the purpose for reading:  
*What are we finding out about the Sumerians? What are their accomplishments/achievements?*

**READING** (Holt, pp. 67-68 and 72-73)

- *Read pages 67-68. Discuss information in partners or small groups. Fill out first column of graphic organizer, responding to the questions above.*
- Students read the myth on pp.72-73, focusing on columns 2-4 on the graphic organizer. Teacher facilitates conversation during the reading, following the guidelines on the sidebars of the teacher’s edition. To comprehend the text, students will need to discuss the sidebar questions as a group. When reading about Sumerian culture, students need to understand the role of the gods in people’s lives.
- Students respond orally and in writing to the questions in columns 2-4 on the graphic organizer.
- Teacher note: Optional additional myth related to the Sumerian culture, “Epic of Gilgamesh: He Who Saw Everything.”

**LANGUAGE (Language Conventions-WC)**

*Teacher note:* Language lessons are best taught using the context of the reading and after the first read. When teaching language conventions, use a sentence from the text to explicitly teach the skill. Students can reread text to find more examples. Students should apply the learning to their own writing. For example:

Ask students to read the following sentence from the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of the epic.

He nodded his head and shook it, menacing Gilgamesh; and on him he fastened his eye, the eye of death.

Ask: *What do you notice about this sentence?*

- There are two independent clauses combined with a semicolon.
- Independent clauses can be separated by a conjunction or a semicolon.

Have students look through the text for more examples of compound and/or complex sentences.

Lessons to refer to in Prentice Hall

- Refer to the back of the textbook (R21 – compound sentences).
- Refer to lesson on semicolons, PH p. 732. WC 1.3
- Refer to the following lessons:
  - Independent Clauses, p. 567
  - Simple/Compound sentences, p. 488
  - Compound/Complex sentences, pp. 514, 538

**LANGUAGE** (Vocabulary RW)

Read the following sentences from the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. *What does the underlined word mean? How do you know?*

Then Gilgamesh called to Shamash and his tears were flowing, “O glorious Shamash, I have followed the road you commanded but now if you send so succor how shall I escape?” Glorious Shamash heard his prayer and he summoned the great wind, the north wind, the whirlwind, the storm and the icy wind, the tempest and the scorching wind; they came like dragons, like a scorching fire, like a serpent that freezes the heart, a destroying flood and the lightning’s fork.

- Students may say they know because the book tells them at the top of the page.
- Others may say they figured it out through context. If so, ask what specific words helped? Students may have looked at words or phrases before the underlined word or after the word, which is what you want the students to do.

*Teacher note:* Encourage students to share their strategies for figuring out new words through the unit.

# Why We Read Myths

## Introduction

In everyday language, we use the word “myth” to refer to an accepted belief. We classify stories about a particular culture’s gods, goddesses, and ancestors as myths. Most cultures of the world have creation myths, stories that explain how the world was created. Myths often explain how the world works, how the physical, psychological, or spiritual world developed. We refer to and read about Greek, Roman, and Egyptian mythology. It is the thread that connects the identity of past, present, and future civilizations.

Scholars used to study myths as the literature or stories of “primitive” or long-ago cultures. Now, as a culture, we talk about the importance of myths in our ancestors’ lives and in our lives today. The myths that people told long ago are considered by many scholars to be the beginning of science before written language developed.

In this sense, myths were a way to “know” about the world that could be seen and the world that could not be seen. Myths were ways to help our ancestors explain stars in the sky, the seasons, day and night, life and death. Today, the study of myths helps us understand the ideas that shape different cultures. Hero myths, for example, help us understand how beliefs about courageous and noble behavior influence popular movies and books, and why the “heroes” of one culture may seem exotic or unusual to another.

Myths are present in every culture and in all times of history. The patterns, stories, and even the details contained in some myths are found among all cultures. Many people believe that mythology is a shared heritage that began with the earliest people on earth and passed from generation to generation through oral storytelling. Myths are a pattern of beliefs that give meaning to life.

Adapted from: *Parallel Myths* by J.F. Bierlein and Nanette Koelsch, Quality Teaching for English Learners, WestEd