

A Midsummer Knight's Reading

Freshman - 2019-2020

All incoming Freshman scheduled to take either English 9 or English 9 Honors are expected to complete a Summer Reading packet.

In order to prepare for some of the material that is covered in the Freshman English classes, students must read Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes by Edith Hamilton. (ISBN-10: 0446574759 / ISBN-13: 978-0446574754) You may check the book out from your local library, or purchase it as a book or Kindle edition, whichever is preferred. A **very limited** number of books are available to borrow in the main office. As books go, it's actually a pretty useful one to have in your home collection. The first major unit we will be covering is mythology, the stories of which are the foundations of many modern tales and which are often alluded to in classical literature (Shakespeare, especially, LOVES to use mythological allusions). You may find that this book can help you understand some of the references in other literature you will be reading during your high school (and even college) years.

You will read selections or chapters from the book and answer questions. These selections are meant to ensure that all students have a more equitable understanding of classical mythology and can approach the beginning of the year on the same step. Some students have a vast knowledge of mythology from reading books like the Percy Jackson & the Olympians series by Rick Riordan. Some students have no exposure to classical mythology and think that Chris Hemsworth's portrayal of *Thor* is an accurate representation of a Norse god. This assignment is meant to "level the playing field," so to speak.

There are a total of 12 sections/chapters to be read and 10 assignments to be completed. Answers are to be in complete sentences unless otherwise noted. These will be graded on content (80%) and grammar/spelling/mechanics (20%). These assignments, called Journals, will be a mixture of note-taking, creative writing, and personal opinion-- in other words, everyone's journals should be unique and you can't "fail" a journal unless you don't do it. The journals are meant to give us an idea of your reading skills, your writing skills, your critical thinking skills, and your creativity. You will need to check the Table of Contents of whatever edition of the book you are using to find the appropriate stories. Please note that the sections you will be reading are usually subsections within specific chapters; some are long, some are only a paragraph or two. You should try to complete at least 2 assignments per week.

The sections you are to read are listed below, in the order they appear in the Table of Contents.

1. The Titans and the 12 Great Olympians
2. Demeter (Ceres)
3. How the World and Mankind Were Created
4. Orpheus and Eurydice
5. Pygmalion and Galatea
6. Theseus
7. Hercules
8. *Prologue*: Judgement of Paris
9. Midas
10. Arachne (found in the chapter "Brief Myths Arranged Alphabetically")
11. Introduction to Norse Mythology
12. The Norse Gods

Summer Projects are **due** the first day of school, **Tuesday, September 3, 2019**. 10% will be taken off the grade for each day the assignment is late. **NO PROJECTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER Friday, September 6th 2019.** This assignment will count as your first quiz grade.

Every attempt should be made to submit the Summer Reading packet **electronically**, directly to the teacher you have for Freshman English. You will receive your schedules and find out who your English teacher will be later this summer. For your convenience (and ours) you can submit your assignments online through a Google Form (<https://goo.gl/forms/kg4GqREPq6E9Q4ov2>). This is the most preferred way of turning in this Summer Reading Packet. Another option is to create a Google Doc and share it with your English teacher (second best option). You can also create a Microsoft Word document and email the completed document to your English teacher (third best option). Finally, if you cannot submit the summer packet electronically, you can bring in a hard copy with you the first few day of school,. Please make sure these hard copies are typed, double-spaced or **very neatly written**.

Here are the email addresses of the English Department members teaching General Education and Honors Sections of English 9:

Gerry Bossard - bossardg@wctech.org

Jasmine Slowik - slowikj@wctech.org

Please direct any questions regarding the summer packet to Mrs. Slowik (slowikj@wctech.org). She'll generally respond to your emails within 24-48 hours.

Good luck and we look forward to meeting all of you!



Journal #1 - Read the selection titled “The Titans and the Twelve Great Olympians”, which is found within Part One, Chapter 1- The Gods. The beginning is about the Titans and then the subsequent pages are about the Olympian gods.

1. There were many gods that served different functions in ancient history. Choose one of the Olympians or Titans and discuss how this character is a reflection of who you are today. Which one is most like you? What characteristics do you share?

Journal #2 - Read the selection, “Demeter (Ceres),” which is in Part One, Chapter 2 - The Two Great Gods of Earth.

1. Rewrite your own version of the myth of Persephone's abduction (you call it kidnapping, I call it surprise marriage), but make Hades a sympathetic character. Tell it from his perspective and show that he had a good reason to sweep her away.

Journal # 3 - Read Part One, Chapter 3 - How the World and Mankind were Created.

1. Summarize how Zeus and the other Olympians overthrew Cronus and the Titans.
2. Summarize how mankind was created and what Prometheus did for mankind.
3. Summarize the story of Pandora.
4. (Bonus Question, not mandatory) Compare/contrast the Greek "Deluge" with the Judeo-Christian belief in the Great Flood/Noah's Ark.

Journal #4 - For this Journal, you need to read two sections: "Orpheus and Euridyce" and "Pygmalion and Galatea", found in Part Two, Stories of Love and Adventure, Chapter 6 - Eight Brief Tales of Lovers.

1. According to Greek mythology, Chaos existed before anything else. Then came Night, followed by Love. Love, therefore, existed before even the Titans or the Gods, so it must have been very important to the Greeks. Both of these stories are considered great love stories, but on opposite sides of the spectrum -- one is a tragedy and the other has a happy ending. Within these stories, however, are themes that are relevant to love and relationships today: sacrifice, perseverance, loss, dedication, among others. What parts of these two stories appeal to your ideas and ideals regarding love?

Journal #5 - Read Chapter 10 - Theseus, in Part Three.

1. Since Theseus was the biggest hero of Athens, what do you think that says about ancient Athenian culture? What do they value? Who do they strive to be like? What traits do they admire?
2. Pick a hero from a modern adventure movie. Superheroes, action stars, boy wizards... any will do. Compare and contrast the hero to Theseus. What do you think makes a person heroic?

Journal #6 - Read Chapter 11 - Hercules, in Part Three.

1. Hercules and Theseus were two of the most popular heroes for the ancient Greeks. Both heroes had good qualities and bad ones. Which hero might be preferred in modern America today? Why (give specific details from that hero's story and specific examples about America)?
2. Which one do you like better and why?
3. (Bonus Question, not mandatory) If you saw the Disney version of "Hercules", discuss several ways (at least 3) in which the animated film is incorrect with regard to the actual stories of Hercules.
4. (Bonus Bonus, not mandatory) If you watch/ed "Hercules: The Legendary Journeys" (TV Series 1995-1999), discuss several ways that the series (or the made-for-TV movies) stayed true to the original myths.

Journal #7 - Read "*Prologue: The Judgement of Paris*" in Part Four, Chapter 13 - The Trojan War.

1. The goddesses Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite approach you one night while you're attempting to get the latest Snapchat filter to work. They show you a golden iPhone and ask you to choose which one of them should get it. In return, they each offer you something amazing. Hera offers to make you the most powerful person in the world, in terms of influence and money. Athena offers to make you the smartest person in the world- like Bill Gates, Stephen Hawking, Neil DeGrasse Tyson, and Sheldon Cooper all rolled into one. Aphrodite offers you any person in the world as your significant other (you can marry them when you're old enough). You cannot keep

the golden iPhone for yourself; you must give it to one of them and you can't break it either. Which goddess' offer do you choose and why?

Journal # 8 - Read the story of "Midas," found in Part Six, Chapter 20 - Midas -- and Others.

1. An idiom is an expression which may seem puzzling to someone who is not familiar with the language in which it is spoken, or if it's taken literally, like "kick the bucket" is an idiom meaning to die, not to actually kick a bucket. As a general rule, idioms are also very difficult to translate, except in a very roundabout way. Idioms are extremely difficult to learn, and many language learners cite them as one of the more challenging parts of thoroughly understanding language and culture. But idioms are used frequently and extensively in English and it sometimes helps to understand the origins of that expression.

There are a couple of idioms in the English language that tie to the story of Midas. *Everything s/he touches turns to gold*, to have the *golden touch* are the two most common. What do they mean in our culture/society? How does this contrast to what happened to Midas? Why do you think the meaning changed so much over time?

Journal #9 - Read the selection titled "Arachne". This particular myth can be found in Part Six: The Less Important Myths, Chapter 21 - Brief Myths Arranged Alphabetically.

1. Other than to demonstrate why it's a bad idea to make the gods angry, what other reason do you think the ancient Romans told *this* particular story? What does this story *explain*?
2. What is your favorite animal? Write a brief myth, using the Greek gods, explaining how/why that creature was created.

Journal #10 - In Part Seven, read the section, "Introduction to Norse Mythology" and then the first part of Chapter 23 - The Norse Gods.

1. There are some similarities to be found between the Greek/Roman gods and the Norse gods, but they are very few. Read over the brief descriptions of the gods and of the idea of Ragnarok. Discuss how the climate/setting of these different civilizations may have impacted the way their gods act and are portrayed.