

When we lose our myths we
lose our place in the universe.

Madeleine L'Engle

quoteancy



Learn how to identify and appreciate the deep mythology of our world, and the skills of our ancestors to create your own myth story.

Discover: What is a myth?

Myths are stories told that help us to identify who we are. Every culture all over the world, past and future, uses myth stories to explain something important to them. A collection of myths from the same people is known as a mythology. For instance tales of Zeus, Hercules, and the people of Greece make up the Greek Mythology. Today scholars use these stories to understand the ancient Greek people, their politics, their religion, and to understand how they used these stories to relate to each other.

Myths aren't pure fantasy. Many myths are based on the world around us. Many cultures have myth stories that relate the people to the sky, the earth, their origin, and their beliefs. The story of Sky Woman tells the origin of North America along with the origin and practice of growing corn, beans, and squash:

According to the Iroquois people, the earth began when Sky Woman, who lived in the "upper world," peered through a hole in the sky and fell through – toward an endless sea. The animals saw this, and knew that she would need a place to land, so they took soil from the bottom of the sea and spread it onto the back of a giant turtle. This "Turtle island" is what we now call North America.

Sky Woman had become pregnant before she fell, and when she landed she gave birth to a daughter. When the daughter became a young woman she too became pregnant (by the West Wind) with twin boys. She died in child-birth and was buried in the "new earth" by Sky Woman. Three sacred plants grew from the ground where her body was buried – corn, beans, and squash. These plants allowed her to provide food for her sons and later all humanity. These special gifts assured the spiritual and physical survival of the Iroquois people.

Adapted from the story as told by John Kahionhes Fadden, a Mohawk Iroquois, and director of the Six Nations Indian Museum in Onchiota, NY. [Corns, beans and squash...long live the three sisters. Organic Gardening (08973792). Nov 96, Vol 43 Issue 8, p37.]

In the story of Sky Woman, you can see how some parts of the story are based on real observations, while others are rooted in Iroquois tradition. Learn the full story of Sky Woman. Try and identify parts of the Sky Woman story that reflect understanding nature, parts of culture, and parts of tradition.



When we lose our myths we lose our place in the universe. ~ Madeleine L'Engle

Many cultures have their own stories about the same things we see every day. For instance, every culture has their own understanding of the sun just as the Egyptians did. Every culture also has an origin story. Many cultures have stories that talk about the afterlife, seasons, the beginnings of traditions, and other things that are important to those cultures.

Identify myth stories from 6 different cultures. Find a similar story in 2 different cultures and compare them. How are they the same? How are they different?

There is one important thing to remember. There is a big difference between a myth and a legend.

Myth:

A traditional story about a historical event but portrayed as supernatural. They typically explain the beginning of a cultural practice or a natural event.

Legend:

A story about human actions that is plausible but highly unlikely. They typically portray extraordinary people performing extraordinary acts.

Connect: Mythology in Today's World

Many popular stories that you encounter every day are actually how our society shares our mythology. Popular books like Harry Potter, the Hunger Games, and even superhero stories like Batgirl, Wonder Woman, and the Avengers are forms of mythology. We understand these stories as works of fiction, but they also reveal a lot about our culture, behavior, and our beliefs.

How do you identify a work of modern mythology? Usually these stories have supernatural elements and create a world of rich history.

Find a superhero story (or movie) and try to find the parts of the story that are similar to other myth stories you have read. Discuss the story with your troop/family and talk about the things in the story that reveal parts of our culture, history, and beliefs. Then discuss the parts of the movie that were similar to other myth stories that you have learned about.

Myth stories can also be purely fictional. The key to telling the difference between a piece of fiction and a work of myth is to find parts of the story that reveal the history and culture of the world in which the characters live. Fantasy stories, like Harry Potter, are great examples of these types of stories because the author has to create an entire world and culture so that you can understand how the characters behave and what are capable of.

Find a fantasy story and find the parts that are similar to classic myth stories that you have read. Discuss with your troop/family about these similarities. Then discuss the details of this story that were new that helped create a modern myth.



Take Action: Creating Mythology

Part of the beauty of mythology is that it takes into account different perspectives. Remember mythology is how people relate to their world. Anyone can create mythology!

With your troop create your own mythological world.

Feel free to be as creative as you want, but remember to include:

- Natural phenomena
- Your history
- Your daily habits
- Your beliefs
- Interpretations of things that are important to you

Write these ideas down.

Then craft a story based on your mythology.

You can try to make:

- A short movie
- A short play
- A short story
- Illustrated images

Remember to share your mythology with your troop, family, and with Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails.

Share on facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/GSNMT>) or email us at gsnmtinfo@nmgirlscouts.org.



Myth Madness



All age levels must complete 1 & 2	
Daisies	Pick one additional requirement
Brownies	Pick 2 additional requirements
Juniors	Pick 4 additional requirements
Cadettes, Seniors, Ambassadors & Adults	Pick 5 additional requirements

1. Identify the mythology from 6 different cultures. Find a similar story in 2 different cultures and compare them. How are they the same? How are they different?
2. Learn about a goddess. List the characteristics associated with her. What are admirable qualities? Which are less desirable?
3. Draw a picture of a mythical creature and write a short paragraph about your creature.
4. Write a skit of a myth and act it out.
5. Pick a mythical creature and write a short story about it.
6. Make up a puzzle (like crossword puzzle or word search etc.) or a trivia quiz with a mythological theme.
7. Watch an age appropriate rated movie with mythical beasts in it. Write a short review of the film including how accurately the mythical beast was portrayed.
8. Make puppets of characters from myths or of mythical beasts. Put on a puppet show.
9. Learn what cryptozoology is. Plan an expedition to find a mythical animal. Include where in the world you will go and what special equipment you might need.
10. Host a costume party where everyone comes dressed as a mythical creature or character from a myth.
11. Learn about a local legend or myth. Share what you have learned with your troop.
12. Look for mythical creatures, gods and goddesses and other myths in today's world. For example look for products like cars or cleaning products named after them. Ask your parents or another adult for help.

Created by troop 104

Updated – 4/25/11 – AEL



Patches may be purchased at La Tienda with a completed form.

Name: _____

Troop: _____

Service Unit: _____

Date patch started: _____ Date patch completed: _____

Patch Evaluation:

Favorite part of patch: _____

Least favorite part of patch: _____

One activity that I would add to this patch program: _____

Myth Madness suggested bibliography.

*Gods and goddesses of the ancient Maya Leonard Everett Fisher. : Fisher, Leonard Everett.; 299.73 Fisher (1999).

*Gods and goddesses of the ancient Norse Leonard Everett Fisher. : Fisher, Leonard Everett.; 293.211 Fisher (2001).

*The gods and goddesses of ancient China Leonard Everett Fisher. : Fisher, Leonard Everett.; 299.51 Fisher (2003).

Gods and goddesses in Greek mythology Michelle M. Houle. : Houle, Michelle M.; 398.20938 Houle (2001).

*The gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt Leonard Everett Fisher. : Fisher, Leonard Everett.; 299.31 (1997).

Roman myths, heroes, and legends by Dwayne E. Pickels. : Pickels, Dwayne E.; 292.13 Pickels (1999).

Greek and Roman mythology A to Z : a young reader's companion Kathleen N. Daly. : Daly, Kathleen N.; 292 Daly.

Myths and legends from around the world by Sandy Shepherd ; illustrated by Tudor Humphries. : Shepherd, Sandy.; 398.2 Shepherd

A world treasury of myths, legends, and folktales : stories as told by Renata Bini ; illustrations by Mikhail Fiodorov. : Bini, Renata.; 291.13 Bini (2000).

The illustrated book of myths Neil Philip, author ; Nilesh Mistry, illustrator. : Philip, Neil.; 291.13 Philip (1995).

Women warriors : myths and legends of heroic women Marianna Mayer ; illustrated by Julek Heller. : Mayer, Marianna.; 398.082 Mayer (1999).

Bigfoot and other legendary creatures Paul Robert Walker ; illustrated by William Noonan. : Walker, Paul Robert.; 001.944 W183 (1992)

*In the beginning : creation stories from around the world told by Virginia Hamilton ; illustrated by Barry Moser. : Hamilton, Virginia.; 398.2 Hamilton (1988).

The seven days of creation adapted from the Bible and illustrated by Leonard Everett Fi : Fisher, Leonard Everett.; 222 Fisher (1981).

Marduk the Mighty and other stories of creation Andrew Matthews ; illustrated by Sheila Moxley. : Matthews, Andrew.; 291.13 Matthews (1997).

*Creation : read-aloud stories from many lands retold by Ann Pilling ; illustrated by Michael Foreman. : Pilling, Ann.; 291.24 Pilling (1997).

*especially recommended

Movies: The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad, Hercules (Disney), Fantasia (Disney)

Updated – 4/25/11 – AEL