

English II (Stout)

Greek Mythology Writing Response, EXTRA CREDIT

Due: Wed. Sept. 6th on Turnitin (NOT accepted late for partial points)

Point Value: Max 2% added to final course average

Read the selected myths and stories from *Bulfinch's Mythology* (PDF handout included in email) and compose 3-4 full pages of a typed and polished response (double-spaced, standard font).

Read and respond to at least five of the **myths** listed below:

1. Apollo and Daphne – Apollo pursues her and she transforms into a tree to escape him
2. Pyramus and Thisbe – “Romeo & Juliet” tale in which two lovers slay themselves thinking each other is dead
3. Cephalus and Procris – Cephalus is tricked into slaying her because of Aurora’s jealousy
4. Diana and Actaeon – Diana is angry with the hunter, so she transforms him into a beast and he is slain by his own hunting dogs
5. Phaeton – Apollo’s son arrogantly wishes to drive his chariot (*counts as two myths*)
6. Pygmalion – falls in love with his own sculpture
7. Venus and Adonis – Venus warns him against the dangers of ‘manly’ pursuits
8. Cupid and Psyche – Aphrodite is jealous of Psyche’s beauty; she is ordered to complete various tasks to be united with her husband Cupid (*counts as three myths*)
9. Echo and Narcissus – falls in love with his own image
10. Clytie – transforms into a sunflower to appease Apollo
11. Hero and Leander – hero who swims the Hellespont
12. Minerva – the goddess and Arachne compete in a contest of weaving
13. Niobe – proud mother who angers goddess Latona with her pride
14. Chapter 15 (XV) about Perseus - Perseus slays Medusa and the Sea Monster; battles Phineus over the betrothal to Casiopeia (*counts as two myths*)
15. Chapter 16 (XVI) on Monsters - Sphinx and Oedipus, Pegasus and Chimaera, Centaurs, Pygmies, Gryphon (*counts as two myths*)
16. Jason and the Golden Fleece
17. Hercules (*counts as two myths*)

Tip: It will work in your favor to read *more* text, not less, since it will give you more ideas to write about and respond to. Avoid page-counting and looking for shortcuts when prioritizing your reading!

Consider the following **questions** to enhance your insights and inferences:

1. What inferences can we make about the values and characteristics of the Ancient Greeks based on their myths and deities of worship?
2. What values can we determine about the Ancient Greeks based on the themes and lessons of their stories?
3. How did the Ancient Greeks view the human condition and various aspects of life?
4. Why did the gods of Ancient Greece magnify certain characteristics and flaws?
5. How are the values of the Ancient Greek storytellers similar or different to those of our modern time?
6. Why are myths and oral tradition vital to ancient cultures and communities?

In order to earn full extra credit, consider the following **tips**:

1. Format the composition with a standard-sized font and produce 3-4 full pages without extra spacing or margins.
2. Specific citations and quotes are not required; but refer regularly to specific details from the reading from all five stories you have chosen. Demonstrate that you have fully read and comprehended each selected piece. Be clear which specific stories you are referring to.
3. Do not spend much time summarizing or retelling the stories. Spend most of your writing making inferences and connections. Try to unify the piece with a major unifying idea.
4. Find your own structure and organization. The piece should feel like a fluid exposition, not a list of answers to questions. It is not meant to be a 5-paragraph essay.
5. Simplify your style. Don't lose the reader by over-elongating your phrasing or repeating basic concepts in order to fill the page space.

*At the end of your 3-4 full pages, list the titles of "Selected Stories" you have chosen to provide an informal 'bibliography'.

Purpose: This side-unit is extra credit, and therefore the purpose is to satisfy students who are interested in further enrichment. The Greek tradition plays a vital role in the literature, culture, and history of Western civilization; unfortunately it has gone by the wayside in modern schools in the name of 'progression' along with many other staples of the "traditional" education model. An awareness of the Greek tradition will carry you far into the world of adult academia and in your role as a citizen of the world.

The purpose of this unit is NOT to accommodate the needs of struggling students who need last-minute points to bring their grade up. Therefore, it is only available at the beginning of the semester for those who freely choose to pursue it.