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Learn Through Experience

ODYSSEY

A simulated journey through the world of classical Greek mythology

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Teacher Guide

PURPOSE

This interaction unit helps students enjoy and understand Greek mythology while they experience an interdisciplinary approach to several advanced thinking processes. By participating in ODYSSEY, students will also develop an appreciation of mythology's continuing influence on our modern world. Specifically students will experience the following:

Knowledge

- introductory background materials to Greek history and culture as found in Greek mythology
- familiarity with many Greek myths
- understanding of the elements of literature (figurative language, characterization, plot, satire, tone, antonyms/synonyms, point of view, setting)

Attitudes

- appreciation of how myths affect beliefs
- appreciation of how beliefs affect behavior
- appreciation of how the use of imagination makes life more interesting

Critical thinking skills

- imagining
- categorizing
- problem solving
- comparing/contrasting
- making inferences

Cooperative learning skills

- participating in creative projects
- making decisions in a group
- helping a group succeed by doing one's work
- helping one another succeed through peer teaching

You may wish to use these lists to help you write behavioral objectives, if your district requires you to do so.
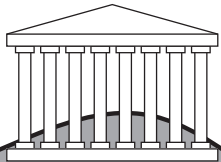
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OVERVIEW

In a simulated ascent of Mount Olympus, students read eight classical myths and enhance their reading and writing skills by completing exercises associated with each myth.

Organized into six teams, they cooperate with one another in order to overcome "obstacles" (critical or creative thinking activities). After three rounds of reading myths, completing exercises on these myths, and meeting the obstacles' challenges, the teams face their final big cooperative task: that of working in an activity group to produce some sort of class presentation ranging from a Chart of Gods to a Trial of Prometheus.

At the conclusion of ODYSSEY, all participants receive an ODYSSEY ACHIEVEMENT CERTIFICATE while the three teams who accumulated the most points receive a gold, a silver, or a bronze ODYSSEY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD.

8 myths ...
6 teams ...
4 rounds ...

More children are involved in learning when group processes are used.

WHY COOPERATIVE LEARNING? Having students work in activity groups is an important aspect of this simulation. Students working together in groups have the opportunity of achieving a common goal. A group can achieve more than a single individual by sharing knowledge, by creating group spirit, and by providing encouragement to each other as a part of the learning process. Children like to talk together. Combining ideas often leads to more solutions than with individual effort. Encouraging children to rely on themselves and one another will help them to develop responsibility and gain confidence and independence.

This simulation has varying tasks:
- Some are completed by group members working together.
- Some are completed alone by individuals.
- Some are a separate individual's responsibility, but the individual can receive help from other group members.

As teacher you should emphasize that when an individual succeeds, this success also affects the group's progress. According to David and Roger Johnson, two authorities on cooperative learning, classroom cooperation increases individual students' achievement.
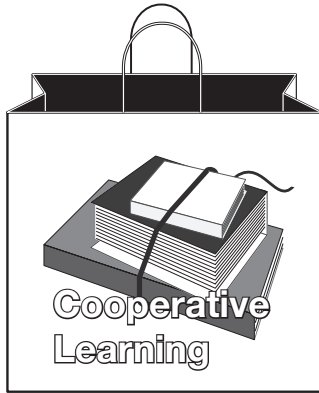
> "Within a cooperative group, students have a vested interest in making sure that other people do well. They start to celebrate when other people learn. Anything they can do to help their groupmates learn the material better, retain it longer, get a better grade on the test, benefits them, too. That produces committed relationships in which students really care about each other and provide assistance and help when needed. It promotes more *positive peer relationships*, better *social skills*, more *social support*, and, partly for that reason, *higher self-esteem*."
>
> —(Brandt, p. 17)

You end up with a "cheering section" urging each student to work to maximum capacity.

HETEROGENEOUS GROUPING We recommend that as teacher you be responsible for *grouping students*. Students should be put together *heterogeneously*. Select at least one capable student for each group. This will lead to challenging and modeling of the higher ability students and involvement of the lower ability students.
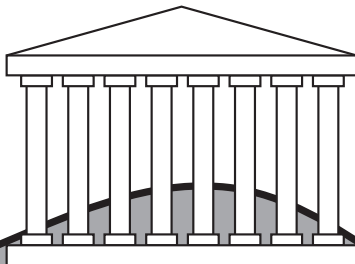
Teacher Guide

COOPERATIVE LEARNING - 3

Personal growth involves far more than rote learning of facts and procedures.

Cooperative
Learning

Of course, all of these group skills are not always easy to learn, but spending time on them while engaged in a simulation can have a ripple effect that positively enhances a classroom environment. Students who work successfully in activity groups show positive feelings about their class as a community.

RULES FOR PLAYING

1. **Number of rounds** Play is divided into four rounds.

2. **Myths and exercises** During each round each team must read two basic myths and complete the associated exercises.

3. **Teamwork** The basic myth exercises should be completed as a team and turned in with all team members' names on them.

4. **Obstacles** Each round also has two obstacles each team must overcome. Your teacher will list these on the board and give teams a limited time in which to accomplish the tasks.

5. **Extra credit myths** Each team may also, at teacher option, do one extra credit myth per round. Your teacher will explain how to do this if extra credit materials are available.

6. **Final activity** During the last round each team prepares for one last great cooperative effort to scale the boulder whose sheer sides and massive bulk form a mighty obstacle to reaching the summit of Mount Olympus.

7. **Boulder activities** Each chairperson will draw a number of one Boulder Activity listed in this Student Guide. Once the activity has been determined, the chairperson will then assign each team member a task to help complete the project.

8. **Final awards** Award certificates will be given all team members scaling Mount Olympus, with special awards going to those teams acquiring the first most, the second most, and the third most points.

Will your team receive the First Place Award?

MYTH READING LIST

Basic Myths (Required)

- Heracles
- Atalanta
- Echo and Narcissus
- Icarus and Daedalus
- Orpheus
- Prometheus
- King Midas
- Pandora

Extra Credit Myths (Optional)

- Pan
- Persephone
- Perseus and Medusa
- Theseus and the Minotaur
- Eros and Psyche
- Jason and the Golden Fleece
- Odysseus
- Pegasus
- Phaethon

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Directions:
1. While at home alone, practice reading **aloud** all these names below so that you learn how to pronounce them correctly.
2. In class practice your pronunciation with members of your team.

- Achilles *(Uh-**KILL**-eez)*
- Aphrodite *(**AF**-roh-die-tee)*
- Apollo *(Uh-**PAUL**-oh)*
- Ares *(**AIR**-eez)*
- Artemis *(**ARE**-tum-us)*
- Atalanta *(At-uh-**LAN**-tuh)*
- Athena *(Uh-**THEEN**-uh)*
- Bellerophon *(Bell-**AIR**-oh-fawn)*
- Cerberus *(**SERB**-uh-rus)*
- Daedalus *(**DEAD**-uh-lus)*
- Demeter *(Duh-**MEE**-ter)*
- Dionysus *(Dye-uh-**NICE**-us)*
- Echo *(**ECK**-oh)*
- Eros *(**Air**-oss)*
- Hades *(**HAY**-deez)*
- Hephaestus *(Heh-**FES**-tus)*
- Hera *(**HERE**-uh)*
- Heracles *(**HER**-uh-kleez)*
- Hermes *(**HER**-meez)*
- Hestia *(**HES**-tee-uh)*
- Icarus *(**IK**-uh-rus)*
- Jason *(**JAY**-sun)*
- Medea *(Muh-**DEE**-uh)*
- Medusa *(Muh-**DOO**-suh)*
- Midas *(**MY**-dus)*
- Narcissus *(Nar-**SIS**-us)*
- Odysseus *(Oh-**DISS**-ee-us)*
- Orpheus *(**OR**-fee-us)*
- Pandora *(Pan-**DOOR**-uh)*
- Pegasus *(**PEG**-uh-sus)*
- Persephone *(Purr-**SEFF**-uh-nee)*
- Perseus *(**PURR**-see-us)*
- Phaethon *(**FAY**-thon)*
- Poseidon *(Poh-**SYE**-dun)*
- Prometheus *(Pro-**MEE**-thee-us)*
- Theseus *(**THEE**-see-us)*
- Zeus *(**ZOOSS**)*

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