

9th Grade Honors Introduction to Literature -Summer Work: 2013-2014-

9th Grade Honors Introduction to Literature class not only prepares students for the rigors of upper level Honors and AP English courses, but also sets a foundation in Classical Literature (Greco-Roman Mythology, Biblical Allusions, Arthurian Legends, Shakespeare, poetry, etc), as well as modern literature, literary theory, and writing. This course is rigorous, yet rewarding. The overall goal of this course is to inspire a love of literature with a deeper understanding of its inherent value. The summer reading assignment is highly recommended, but not required. However, the first few weeks of school will be a quick overview of the following reading assignments with a test that will follow. Therefore, it behooves you to get the reading done.

The reading is not available in the library. It is online for free at:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22693/22693-h/22693-h.htm>

* The title of the text *A Book of Myths: The Original Classical Edition* by Jean Lange You can order a print copy for \$10.57 at amazon.com. Its ISBN-10 is 148615252X and the ISBN-13 is 978-1486152520. You can also download the Kindle edition for free at either the Gutenberg Project website or Amazon.com.

Along with the readings, students are highly encouraged to take notes and study the charts on the Greek, Roman, and Norse pantheon listed below. There will be a test on the pantheon of ancient gods, their realms, symbols, and stories.

Comparison chart: Greek vs. Roman

	Greek Gods	Roman Gods
Description:	Gods in Greek Mythology, i.e. the collection of stories or myths of the ancient Greeks about their gods, heroes and the natural world.	Gods in Roman mythology, i.e. the mythological beliefs about gods in the city of Ancient Rome.
Time period:	Iliad distributed 700 years before the Roman civilization. No exact date for start of civilization.	Came 1000 years after the Greeks.
Literary source:	Greek myths chronicled in the book the Illiad by Homer.	Roman myths chronicled in the book Aeneid.
Origin of mythology:	Not known.	Many Roman gods borrowed from Greek mythology and myths of Roman creation from Greeks.
Nature of gods:	Gods and goddesses based on human personality traits such as Love, Honor, Hatred, Dignity, as well as their roles in life determined by what they were god of, like:	Deities named after objects rather than human personality traits.

	Greek Gods	Roman Gods
	Zeus: Sky/weather, Hades: The underworld, Poseidon: Sea, Aquatics, etc.	
Afterlife:	Importance of the physical life on earth rather than eventuality of the afterlife.	Mortals did good deeds on earth to be rewarded in the afterlife. They strove to gain their place among the gods in heaven in the afterlife.
Traits:	As gods were based on human traits they each had characteristics that determined their actions.	Gods and goddesses not gender specific so their individual characteristics were not central to the myths.
Role of mortals:	Deities were important for the progression of life but mortals were just as important as it was their contribution in society that in the end mattered.	Myths rooted in brave, heroic deeds of gods not mortals as mortal life was not important after death.
Actions of mortals and gods:	Individualistic: actions of the individual were of more consequences than actions of the group.	Not individualistic.
Revered traits:	Creativity more important than physical works. They revered the poet.	Focused on actions rather than words. They revered the warrior as sacred.
Physical forms:	Greek gods had beautiful bodies where gorgeous muscles, eyes and hair would enhance their looks.	Gods did not have a physical appearance – represented only in the imagination of the people.

Origins

Greek mythology was chronicled in the epic *Illiad* by Homer. Roman mythology was chronicled in the book *Aeneas*. Greek mythology came about 700 years before Roman mythology. According to one myth the brave Greek soldier, Aeneas after the battle between Greece and Asia traveled and found Italy where he created a new mythology – Roman. Greek mythology could have originated from the Egyptians as they lived before the Greeks and also believed in a pantheon of gods. Roman mythology came about 1000 years after Greek mythology. Many Roman gods are borrowed from Greek gods but have different names and often different traits.

Traits

Greek gods are given a beautiful, perfect physical appearance while Roman gods are not given physical form and represented only in the imagination of the people. Greek gods are mainly based on human personality traits like Love, Hate, Honour, Dignity and therefore myths related to them are shaped by these traits. Roman gods are based on objects or actions rather than personality traits. The actions of gods and mortals in Greek myths are

more individualistic, the deeds of an individual are more influential than that of the group. Roman mythology is much less individualistic.

Greek Gods and their Roman Counterparts

Greek God (English name)	Roman Counterpart	Domain
Aphrodite	Venus	Goddess of Love
Apollo	Phoebus Apollo	God of Light
Ares	Mars	God of war
Artemis	Diana	Virgin goddess of the hunt, wilderness, wild animals, childbirth and plague. In later times she became associated with the moon.
Athena	Minerva	Goddess of wisdom
Demeter	Ceres	Goddess of grain/crops
Dionysus	Bacchus	God of wine
Eros	Cupid	God of love
Hades	Pluto	God of underworld
Hecate	Trivia	Goddess of witchcraft, crossroads, and justice
Helios	Sol	The sun God
Hephaestus	Vulcan	God of fire
Hera	Juno	Queen of the Gods
Hermes	Mercury	Messenger of the Gods
Nike	Victoria	Goddess of victory
Pan	Faunus	God of woods and pastures
Poseidon	Neptune	God of the sea
Zeus	Jupiter	King of Gods

Afterlife

In Greek mythology, the afterlife does not hold much importance. In fact, gods and mortals are regularly snatched from the afterlife and brought in to the present showing no concern for the afterlife. It is much more concerned with the physical life on earth as opposed to the afterlife. Mortals are remembered and rewarded for their good deeds on earth.

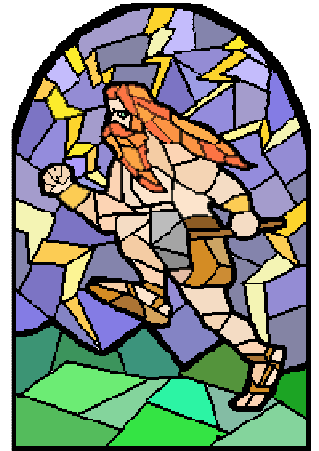
In contradiction, the Romans did good deeds to secure their place in Heaven. They could even earn a place among the gods and through their life on earth strove towards this goal.

Role of mortals

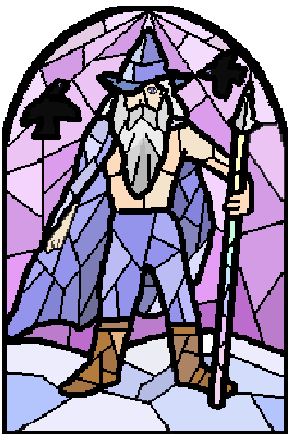
Deities were important for the progression of life in Greek mythology, but mortals were just as important, since it was their contribution in society that mattered in the end.

In Roman mythology the heroic deeds of gods were more important as the actions of mortals as man's life did not matter once good status in the afterlife had been achieved.

*http://www.diffen.com/difference/Greek_Gods_vs_Roman_Gods



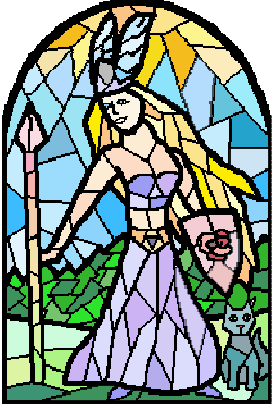
Norse Pantheon



Odin : (or, depending upon the dialect Woden or Wotan) was the Father of all the Gods and men. Odhinn is pictured either wearing a winged helm or a floppy hat, and a blue-grey cloak. He can travel to any realm within the 9 Nordic worlds. His two ravens, Huginn and Munin (Thought and Memory) fly over the world daily and return to tell him everything that has happened in Midgard. He is a God of magick, wisdom, wit, and learning. He too is a psychopomp; a chooser of those slain in battle. In later times, he was associated with war and bloodshed from the Viking perspective, although in earlier times, no such association was present. If anything, the wars fought by Odhinn exist strictly upon the Mental plane of awareness; appropriate for that of such a mentally polarized God. He is both the shaper of Wyrð and the bender of Orlog; again, a task

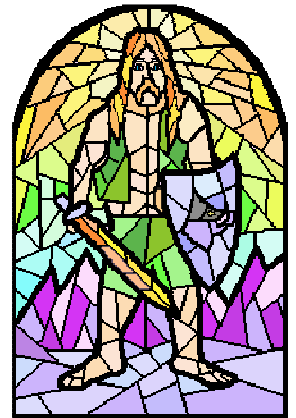
only possible through the power of Mental thought and impress. It is he who sacrifices an eye at the well of Mimir to gain inner wisdom, and later hangs himself upon the World Tree Yggdrasil to gain the knowledge and power of the Runes. All of his actions are related to knowledge, wisdom, and the dissemination of ideas and concepts to help Mankind. Because there is duality in all logic and wisdom, he is seen as being duplicitous; this is illusory and it is through his actions that the best outcomes are conceived and derived. Just as a point of curiosity: in no other pantheon is the head Deity also the God of Thought and Logic. It's interesting to note that the Norse/Teutonic peoples also set such a great importance upon brainwork and logic. The day Wednesday (Wodensdaeg) is named for him.

Thor, or Donnar: also known as the Thunderer, was considered to be a son of Odin by some, but among many tribes Thor actually supplanted Odin as the favorite god. He is considered to be the protector of all Midgard, and he wields the mighty hammer Mjollnir. Thor is strength personified. His battle chariot is drawn by two goats, and his hammer Mjollnir causes the lightning that flashes across the sky. Of all the deities, Thor is the most "barbarian" of the lot; rugged, powerful, and lives by his own rules, although he is faithful to the rest of the Aesir. The day Thursday (Thorsdaeg) is sacred to him.

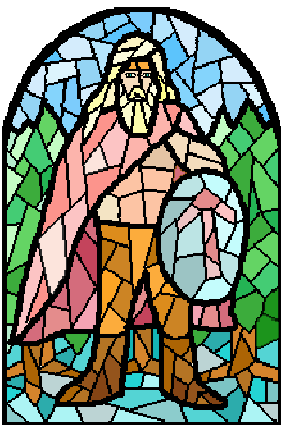


Freya is considered to be the goddess of Love and Beauty, but is also a warrior goddess and one of great wisdom and magick. She and her twin brother Freyr are of a different "race" of gods known as the Vanir. Many of the tribes venerated her higher than the Aesir, calling her "the Frowe" or "The Lady." She is known as Queen of the Valkyries, choosers of those slain in battle to bear them to Valhalla (the Norse heaven). She, therefore, is a psychopomp like Odhinn and it is said that she gets the "first pick" of the battle slain. She wears the sacred necklace Brisingamen, which she paid for by spending the night with the dwarves who wrought it from the bowels of the earth. The cat is her sacred symbol. There seems to be some confusion between herself and Fricka, Odin's wife, as they share similar functions; but Fricka seems to be strictly of the Aesir, while Freya is of the Vanir race. The day Friday (Frejyasdaeg) was named for her (some claim it was for Fricka).

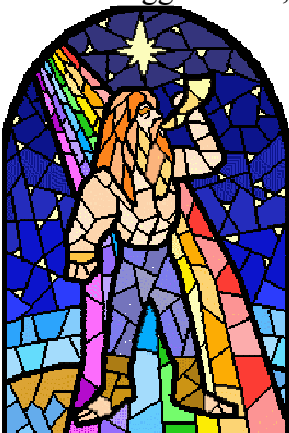
Freyr (Fro Ingwe) is Freya's twin brother. He is the horned God of fertility, and has some similarities to the Celtic Cernunnos or Herne, although he is NOT the same being. He is known as King of the Alfs (elves). Both the Swedish and the English are said to be descendents of his. The Boar is his sacred symbol, which is both associated with war and with fertility. His golden boar, "Gullenbursti", is supposed to represent the daybreak. He is also considered to be the God of Success, and is wedded to Gerda, the Jotun, for whom he had to yield up his mighty sword. At Ragnarok, he is said to fight with the horn of an elk (much more suited to his nature rather than a sword.)



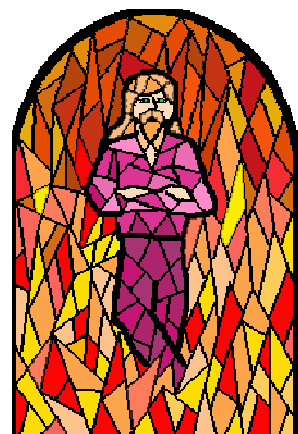
Tyr: (or Tiw, Ziw) is the ancient god of War and the Lawgiver of the gods. He sacrifices his hand so that the evil Fenris wolf may be bound. At one time he was the leader of the Norse Pantheon, but was supplanted by Odin much later. There is nothing to indicate how this occurred; one assumes that he simply "stepped back" and let Odin assume the position of leadership. Tyr is excellent in all manners of Justice, fair play, and Right Action.



Loki, the Trickster, challenges the structure and order of the Gods, but is necessary in bringing about needed change. He is also known as the god of Fire. Neither an Aesir or a Vanir, he is of the race of Ettins (Elementals) and thus possesses some daemonic qualities. He is both a helper and a foe of the Aesir; he gets them out of predicaments, but spawns the worst monsters ever seen on the face of the Earth: the Fenris Wolf and Jormurgandr, the Midgard Wurm. His other children include the goddess Hel (Hella, Holle), and Sleipnir, Odin's 8-legged horse; these beings are at least benign, if not somewhat terrifying to behold.

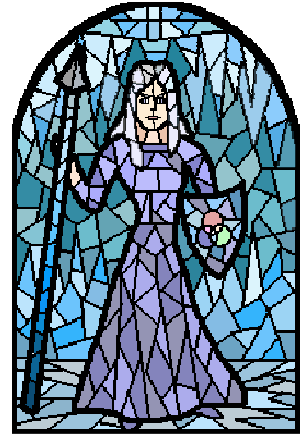


Heimdall is the handsome gold-toothed guardian of Bifrost, the rainbow bridge leading to Asgard, the home of the Gods. The rainbow bridge seems to be a common symbol in many religious traditions other than Norse Heathenism. In the Vedic tradition, it represents the Antakaranha of humanity (connection between the body and the soul). Other traditions see it as a message from the Gods, or a Bridge between the Gods and Mankind. This would tend to indicate that the Norse/Germanic people were aware of the presence of an



overshadowing Soul for each individual, as well as a group or tribal intelligence. It is Heimdall who is to sound the signal horn to the Aesir that Ragnarok, the great destruction (or transformation?) is beginning.

Skadi is the Goddess of Winter and of the Hunt. She is married to Njord, the gloomy Sea God, noted for his beautiful bare feet (which is how Skadi came to choose him for her mate.) Supposedly the bare foot is an ancient Norse symbol of fertility. The marriage wasn't too happy, though, because she really wanted Baldur for her husband. She is the goddess of Justice, Vengeance, and Righteous Anger, and is the deity who delivers the sentence upon Loki to be bound underground with a serpent dripping poison upon his face in payment for his crimes. Skadi's character is represented in two of Hans Christian Anderson's tales: "The Snow Queen" and "The Ice Princess."



Frigga (Frigg, Fricka), Odin's wife, was considered to be the Mother of all; and protectress of children. She spins the sacred Distaff of life, and is said to know the future, although she will not speak of it. Some believe that Friday was named for her instead of Freya (see above), and there is considerable confusion as to "who does what" among the two.

The Norns (Urd, Verdande, and Skuld), are the Norse equivalent of the greek Fates. It is they who determine the orlogs (destinies) of the Gods and of Man, and who maintain the World Tree, Yggdrasil.

The goddess of the dead and the afterlife was **Hel (Holle, Hulda)**, and was portrayed by the Vikings as being half-dead, half alive herself. The Vikings viewed her with considerable trepidation. The Dutch, Gallic, and German barbarians viewed her with some beneficence, more of a gentler form of death and transformation. She is seen by them as Mother Holle; a being of pure Nature, being helpful in times of need, but vengeful upon those who cross her or transgress natural law.

Odin's son, **Baldur**, the god of Love and Light, is sacrificed at Midsummer by the dart of the mistletoe, and is reborn at Jul (Yule). Supposedly his return will not occur until after the onslaught of the **Ragnarok**, which I see as a cleansing and enlightenment more than wanton, purposeless destruction. Baldur's blind brother **Hodur** was his slayer, whose hand was guided by the crafty Loki. He is married to the goddess of Joy, **Nanna**.

Other Gods and Goddesses include **Sif (Sifa)**, the Harvest Goddess; **Forseti**, the god of Law and Justice; **Bragi**, the bard of the Gods and muse of Poetry; **Weiland (Weyland)**, the Smith of the Gods, **Idunna**, the goddess of Youth and Beauty; **Vidar and Vali**, the sons of Odin who will survive **Ragnarok**; **Magni** and **Modi**, the sons of Thor; **Eostre**, the goddess of Spring and of fertility, **Hoenir**, the messenger of the Aesir; **Sunna and Mani**, the Sun and Moon; **Ullr**, the God of the Hunt; and **Nerthus**, Goddess of the Sea and of Rivers.

*<http://wizardrealm.com/norse/gods.html>

Good Luck and Happy Reading,

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