Questions

**Greek Mythology Series**

**About Greek Mythology**

Greek mythology is the body of myths and folklore about the gods and goddesses, heroes, and other supernatural and mythical features of ancient Greeks. The stories can shed light on Greeks' own cult and ritual practices, as well as the religious and cultural life of ancient Greece and its civilization. The Greek myths are believed to have been acquired and transmitted by oral story-telling that began in the 18th century B.C. Greek mythology has had an extensive influence on arts, language, culture and literature of Western civilisation, and is also a rich source of inspiration for some writers and artists from ancient times to the present.

Reading stories from Greek mythology can enhance readers’ understanding of the English language and literature as there are a lot of English words and phrases with origins in Greek mythology, for example, “atlas”, “marathon”, “Achilles’ heel” and “touch wood”. Reference to Greek myths is common in classic literary works, such as Christopher Marlowe’s “The Face that Launch’d a Thousand Ships”, Lord Byron’s “Prometheus”, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. The following is a collection of five well-known stories from Greek mythology.

* **The Apple of Discord – The Story of the Trojan War**
* **The Story of Echo and Narcissus**
* **Pandora’s Box**
* **King Midas and the Golden Touch**
* **The 12 Labours of Hercules**

**The Apple of Discord – The Story of the Trojan War**

**Background**

The Trojan War was the greatest war in ancient Greek history. Homer, a blind poet, documented the events of the Trojan War back in 800 B.C. in *The Iliad*, the first of his two epic poems about the ancient Greeks. The story selected is adapted from Homer’s work and it chronicles the battle based on the real Trojan War. In Homer’s work, the fight among the goddesses for the golden apple was presented as the catalyst for the Trojan War.

Read the story from the link below and answer the following questions:



https://qrgo.page.link/daAub

1. Why wasn’t Eris invited to King Peleus and Thetis’s wedding?
2. King Peleus and Thetis forgot Eris when they planned their guest list.
3. Eris was known for being poor and would only bring an apple as a present.
4. King Peleus and Thetis wanted to avoid conflict and have a peaceful party.
5. Eris could not get along with other gods and goddesses who attended the wedding.
6. What did the following goddesses promise to give Paris in exchange for his favour?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Goddesses | Bribes offered to Paris |
| (a) | Hera |  |
| (b) | Athena |  |
| (c) | Aphrodite |  |

1. Which of the following is not an accurate description of the suitors’ vow?
2. The vow was intended to avoid conflicts and ensure peace.
3. The vow required all suitors to protect Helen and her husband when they were in danger.
4. The suitors’ vow helped Agamemnon to form a Greek army against Troy.
5. Artemis was angry about the vow and started a terrible storm.
6. Who was not a suitor of Helen according to the story?
7. Menelaus
8. Agamemnon
9. Odysseus
10. Achilles
11. Put the events in the correct order to show Odysseus’s plan to enter the walls of Troy.
12. The Greeks pretended to give up fighting and retreat by water.
13. Odysseus ordered a large hollow wooden horse to be made to hide soldiers inside.
14. The Trojans broke down the wall to take the big horse into the city.
15. The Greeks attempted to capture Troy in vain for a decade.
16. A Greek soldier spread rumours that the large wooden horse carried the god’s favour.
17. (iv) 🡺 (ii) 🡺 (i) 🡺 (v) 🡺 (iii)
18. (iv) 🡺 (i) 🡺(ii) 🡺 (v) 🡺 (iii)
19. (ii) 🡺 (iv) 🡺(v) 🡺 (i) 🡺 (iii)
20. (ii) 🡺 (i) 🡺 (v) 🡺 (iii) 🡺 (iv)
21. Which of the following adjectives best describes Odysseus?
22. stubborn
23. caring
24. resourceful
25. compassionate
26. What happened after the Greeks entered the city of Troy?
27. Menelaus found Helen and killed her.
28. The Greeks carried out mass killing and destruction.
29. The Greeks took all the royal Trojan treasure.
30. The Trojan horse was burnt.
31. *“The Trojan Horse was ultimately the demise of the Trojans, and still stands today as evidence that brains, not brawn, will often win the battle.”* “Brain(s)” and “brawn” are often used in idiomatic expressions in English. Based on the excerpt above and the following examples, what do you think is the meaning of the word “brawn”?

Examples:

1. *John has both brains and brawn. He is good at both studies and sports.*
2. *Tim is all brawn and no brains and always gets into trouble.*
3. wisdom
4. manners
5. good appearance
6. physical strength
7. In the story, the Greek soldiers were able to take the city of Troy after a fruitless ten-year siege by hiding in a giant wooden horse. “The Trojan horse” (or in brief “Trojan”) is now used as an idiomatic expression and metaphor in English to mean:
8. a person who is hard-working and determined
9. a programme to attack the computer system
10. a trap intended to deceive and undermine a rival
11. a well presented but useless gift
12. “Apple of discord” is often used as an idiomatic expression in modern English. Based on the story and the following examples, which do you think is NOT a meaning of the expression?

Examples:

1. *Zoe and Susan are no longer talking to each other. What is the apple of discord?*
2. *The right to host the next Olympic Games is an apple of discord between the two countries.*
3. *The ancestral property has become an apple of discord among the siblings.*
4. a source of trouble or unhappiness
5. a topic to be avoided for social reasons
6. an issue that sows anger and jealousy
7. a cause of argument or rivalry

**Extension: Think and Share**

1. If you were Paris, which goddess would you give the golden apple to? Why?
2. A femme fatale is an irresistibly attractive woman who leads men into danger, downfall or destruction. Would you consider Helen a femme fatale? Why or why not?

**The Story of Echo and Narcissus**

**Background**

“Echo and Narcissus” is a myth from Ovid's book of poetry, *Metamorphoses*. Narcissus was the son of the river god Cephissus and the nymph Liriope in Greek mythology. He was known for his beauty and well-loved by many, but he treated his admirers with disdain and contempt, which drew upon him the vengeance of the gods. Being made to fall in love with his own image reflected in a pool of water, Narcissus became one of the many tragic figures of Greek mythology. Ovid, the Roman poet, enriched the story of Narcissus with different elements and introduced the myth of the mountain nymph Echo into the story.

Read the story from the link below and answer the following questions:



https://qrgo.page.link/3z12f

1. What did Echo do to anger Hera?
2. She played with Zeus in icy waterfalls.
3. She prevented Hera from catching Zeus red-handed flirting with the nymphs.
4. She talked to Hera impolitely.
5. She teased Hera and made fun of her.
6. How did Hera punish Echo?
7. She made Echo fall in love with Narcissus.
8. She turned Echo into an ugly woman.
9. She muted Echo and took away her voice.
10. She made Echo repeat just the last words of others’ speech.
11. Put the events in the correct order based on the story.
12. Echo could not eat and sleep after Narcissus’s death.
13. Echo appeared before Narcissus and hugged him.
14. Echo was reduced to a mere voice heard in the mountains.
15. Echo was rejected and she decided to live in a cave.
16. Echo saw Narcissus hunting in the woods.
17. (iii) 🡺 (i) 🡺 (ii) 🡺 (v) 🡺 (iv)
18. (ii) 🡺(iv) 🡺 (v) 🡺(i) 🡺 (iii)
19. (v) 🡺 (ii) 🡺(iv) 🡺 (i) 🡺 (iii)
20. (iii) 🡺 (iv) 🡺 (ii) 🡺 (v) 🡺 (i)
21. Which of the following descriptions of Narcissus is FALSE?
22. He fell in love with his own reflection in the water.
23. He said goodbye to Echo before he took his last breath.
24. He died from love sickness.
25. He turned into a beautiful flower.
26. Which of the following adjectives does not describe Narcissus?
27. humble
28. arrogant
29. self-centred
30. vain
31. In this story, both Echo and Narcissus were sufferers of unrequited love. What does “unrequited” mean?
32. romantic
33. mutual
34. one-sided
35. spiritual
36. Writers often use similes to make the description more vivid. Complete the following sentences by identifying what the following things are compared to and provide reasons.
37. Echo’s heart is compared to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because they are both \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
38. The eyes of Narcissus in the reflection are compared to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because they are both \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
39. The cheeks of Narcissus in the reflection are compared to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because they are both \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
40. The adjective “narcissistic” originates from the story of Narcissus in Greek mythology. “Narcissistic” is used to describe someone who:
41. behaves in a dangerous way that may jeopardise one’s life.
42. shows an unselfish concern for the welfare of others.
43. sticks to one’s opinion and is unwilling to change.
44. has excessive admiration for oneself and an inflated sense of self-importance.

**Extension: Think and Share**

1. Tragic heroes usually have admirable qualities that earn them sympathy of the audience, but also have flaws or make mistakes that ultimately lead to their own downfall. Would you consider Narcissus a tragic hero? Why or why not?
2. If you could talk to Hera, how would you persuade her to forgive Echo and not to punish her?

**Pandora’s Box**

**Background**

“Pandora’s Box” is a Greek myth that comes from a set of epic poems titled *Works and Days* by Hesiod. Written during the 7th century B.C., these poems centre around how Pandora, the first woman on Earth, was created by Gods and how the gift Zeus gave her ultimately ended the Golden Age of humankind. “Pandora’s Box” is considered one of the most descriptive myths of human behaviour in Greek mythology. It not only shows the weaknesses of humans, but also explains the root of evils and misfortune in the world. The myth of “Pandora’s Box” has been catching the imagination of artists and appears in different art forms. The version of the myth selected is retold by Louis Untermeyer (1885-1977), who was an American poet, anthologist, critic, and editor.

Read the story from the link below and answer the following questions:



https://qrgo.page.link/S8dkV

1. Why was Zeus, the Lord of Olympus, angry at the beginning of the story?
2. Prometheus had little sympathy for mankind.
3. Prometheus stole the fire from Olympus to help mankind.
4. Epimetheus was too harmless and slow-witted.
5. Prometheus and Epimetheus had a subtle plan to plot against Zeus.
6. Imagery is a literary device involving the use of descriptive language that draws on the five human senses. Imagery can be divided into five types based on the senses appealed to:
7. Visual imagery appeals to our sense of sight.
8. Auditory imagery appeals to our sense of hearing.
9. Olfactory imagery appeals to our sense of smell.
10. Gustatory imagery appeals to our sense of taste.
11. Tactile imagery appeals to our sense of touch.

The following excerpt describes how Pandora was made. Identify the types of imagery used in the underlined parts and write the letters in the spaces provided. There may be more than one answer to each underlined part.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Excerpt | Imagery used |
| Hephaestus took some river clay that had (a) flakes of gold in it and began to make a lovely girl. In with the clay he mixed (b) the fragrance of a river rose, the (c) sweetness of Hymettus honey, the (d) smoothness of a silver dolphin, (e) the voices of larks and lake-water, (f) the colour of sunrise on snow, (g) the warmth of a sunny morning in May. Then he summoned the Four Winds to breathe life into the new creation. |  |

1. What did the following goddesses give Pandora? Fill in the blanks with ONE word only.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Goddess | Power / gift given to Pandora |
| (a) | Aphrodite |  |
| (b) | Athene |  |
| (c) | Hera |  |

1. What is the meaning of the name “Pandora”?
2. all endowed
3. the first lady
4. a dowry casket
5. empty-handed
6. Why did Zeus give Pandora the casket (a box of magic) as her dowry when she married Epimetheus?
7. to please the goddesses that adorned Pandora
8. to challenge Hermes, who conducted Pandora to earth
9. to bless the marriage and congratulate the couple
10. to take revenge and put a curse on mankind
11. What did Epimetheus tell Pandora to do with the box?
12. open it to catch a glimpse
13. burn it in the fire
14. put it out of sight and mind
15. sell the box in an auction
16. What prompted Pandora to open the box?
17. curiosity
18. stupidity
19. vanity
20. anger
21. What happened after Pandora opened the box?
22. Epimetheus was upset and blamed Pandora for the trouble she created.
23. Epimetheus and Pandora were attacked by the poison of Malice.
24. The spirits of all that were evil, sad, and hurtful were released into the world.
25. Pandora lost all her dowry and was disconsolate.
26. Which of the following best describes the ending of the story?
27. a resolved ending where order is restored and problems are solved
28. a long-view (a crystal ball) ending which tells readers what happens to the characters in the future over a long period
29. a tie-back ending which comes full circle to arrive back where the story starts
30. a bittersweet ending which closes the story on a positive note, but with a mix of sadness and loss
31. “Pandora’s box” has become an idiomatic expression in modern English. Which of the following is **NOT** the metaphorical meaning of the idiom?
32. a source of hope and faith
33. chaos and endless troubles arising from a simple mistake
34. a cause of unforeseen problems and extensive threats
35. a curse in disguise

**Extension: Think and Share**

1. There is an old saying, “Curiosity kills the cat.” Pandora opened the casket out of curiosity, which caused the misfortune of the human race. How far do you agree that curiosity leads to trouble?
2. After Pandora opened the box and released all evils, Epimetheus said, “The fault is mine… I should have burned the box… After all, you are what you are—only a woman—and what else could one expect of a woman.” From Epimetheus’ speech, what can you infer about his views on women? Do you agree with his comment on women?

**King Midas and the Golden Touch**

**Background**

“King Midas and the Golden Touch” is one of the most famous Greek myths. It was retold in different versions, with the most notable one in Ovid’s, *Metamorphoses* Book XI. The historical King Midas ruled the Near Eastern Kingdom of Phrygia in the late 8th to early 7th centuries B.C. He made Phrygia the wealthiest and most powerful kingdom at the time. The legend of King Midas turning everything he touched to gold was a purely fictional story developed by the Greeks and Romans based on some degree of historical reality. King Midas did not have a literal golden touch, but his successful rule inspired writers to create such legends about him.

Read the story from the link below and answer the following questions:



https://qrgo.page.link/DujCz

1. Which of the following adjectives does not describe King Midas at the beginning of the story?
2. powerful
3. greedy
4. content
5. wealthy
6. “Roses of every shade grew there, and on warm summer nights the air was heavy with their fragrance.”

In the above description of King Midas’ garden, which two senses are appealled to?

1. sight
2. hearing
3. smell
4. taste
5. touch
6. Which of the following descriptions of Silenus are true?
7. He was part man and part animal.
8. He was addicted to alcohol.
9. He was the son of Dionysus.
10. He was powerful but quick-tempered.
11. He was a good entertainer and storyteller.
12. (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)
13. (i), (ii), (iv) and (v)
14. (ii), (iv) and (v)
15. (i), (ii) and (v)
16. Why was Silenus worried that Dionysus might be angry with him?
17. He finished all Dionysus’s wine and held an empty wine jar.
18. He was drunk and acting foolishly again.
19. He was trespassing Dionysus’s garden.
20. He roamed the world in search of adventure without Dionysus’s consent.
21. Why did Dionysus grant King Midas a wish?
22. to honour King Midas and show respect
23. to ask King Midas to overlook his foolishness
24. to thank him for taking care of Silenus
25. to trick King Midas and teach him a lesson
26. Arrange the events in the correct order based on the story.
27. King Midas turned his food and drinks into gold.
28. King Midas got the power of a golden touch as a gift from Dionysus.
29. King Midas turned his daughter into a lifeless statue.
30. King Midas turned the flowers and bushes in his garden into gold.
31. (ii) 🡺 (iii) 🡺 (i) 🡺(iv)
32. (ii) 🡺 (i) 🡺(iii) 🡺 (iv)
33. (ii) 🡺 (i) 🡺 (iv)🡺 (iii)
34. (ii) 🡺 (iv) 🡺 (i) 🡺 (iii)
35. Match the following feelings with the four events to show the change in the mood of King Midas. Put the letters in the table.
36. grief
37. doubt
38. joy
39. regret

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Event | Feeling |
| 1. King Midas turned his food and drinks into gold. |  |
| 1. King Midas got the power of a golden touch as a gift from Dionysus. |  |
| 1. King Midas turned his daughter into a lifeless statue. |  |
| 1. King Midas turned the flowers and bushes in his garden into gold. |  |

1. What was the way to undo the curse of the golden touch?
2. to kneel beside Dionysus and beg for forgiveness
3. to wash the curse off in the water of River Pactolus
4. to walk for many miles over rough and stony ground
5. to jump into the river and never return home
6. Which proverb/idiom below can express the moral of the story?
7. Be careful with what you wish for.
8. Do as you would be done by.
9. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.
10. Never look a gift horse in the mouth.
11. It is common to hear “everything someone touches turns into gold” in modern English. The idiom “the Midas touch/the golden touch” comes from this myth and is used to mean that someone has…
12. supernatural power.
13. insatiable greed.
14. a good fortune.
15. a contented mind.

**Extension: Think and Share**

1. There is an old saying, “A contented mind is a perpetual feast.” At the end of the story, King Midas learned his lesson and became content. Are you content with your life? Share your view on the proverb with reference to your life experience.
2. What are some of the precious and priceless things that money cannot buy? List them and choose one that you would like Dionysus to give you if you were King Midas. Share your answers and the reasons with your classmates.

**The Labours of Hercules**

**Background**

Hercules (in Roman) or Heracles (in Greek) is regarded as the greatest of all Greek heroes because of his immense strength and unflinching courage. Tales about his life were retold by different Greek writers such as Euripides, Pindar, Sophocles and Ovid. “The Labours of Hercules” focuses on twelve difficult feats performed by Hercules during the twelve years he served Eurystheus, the king of Tiryns, to atone for his crimes of killing his children and wife. This cycle of adventures has become canonical and is often known as the “Twelve Labours”.

Read the story from the link below and answer the following questions:



https://qrgo.page.link/4Ljo9

1. Which of the following is not a skill that Hercules possessed?
2. wrestling
3. archery
4. playing music
5. calligraphy
6. What kinds of life did Pleasure and Virtue offer for Hercules’ choice?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | kind of life |
| (a) | Pleasure |  |
| (b) | Virtue |  |

1. Why did Hercules go to Delphi to find the oracle?
2. He wanted to cure his madness.
3. He wanted to take revenge on Hera.
4. He wanted to express repentance for the crime committed.
5. He wanted to ask the oracle for power and glory.
6. Symbolism means the use of a concrete object or image to represent some abstract qualities and ideas. After killing the Nemean lion in the first labour, Hercules was always dressed in the skin of the Nemean lion. What might the lion skin symbolise?
7. his will power and bravery
8. his barbaric and savage nature
9. his triumph and glory
10. his love of animals
11. Number the following based on the order Hercules dealt with them in the story. The first and last items have been done for you as examples:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | the Stymphalian birds |  |
|  | the golden girdle of Hippolyte |  |
|  | the hind of Ceryneia |  |
|  | Cerberus | 12 |
|  | the apples from the tree of Hesperides |  |
|  | the nine-headed Lernaean Hydra |  |
|  | the stables of King Augeias |  |
|  | the oxen of Geryon |  |
|  | the Erymanthian boar |  |
|  | the Cretan bull |  |
|  | the Nemean lion | 1 |
|  | the mares of Diomedes |  |

1. Match the following creatures with the appropriate descriptions. Put the letters in the table.
2. the Hydra in Lerna
3. the Stymphalian birds
4. the Erymanthian boar
5. the bull on the island of Crete

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Feature** | **Creature** |
| 1. Its body was huge and it could breathe fire. |  |
| 1. A new head would grow when one head was cut off. |  |
| 1. Its tusks were of the length of a man’s arm. |  |
| 1. The claws and beaks were brass and the feathers could pierce the skull of a person. |  |

1. What did Hera do to Hercules out of vengeance?
2. sending two poisonous snakes to bite baby Hercules
3. creating two women named Pleasure and Virtue to challenge Hercules
4. making Hercules insane and commit murder
5. making Hercules a slave of King Eurystheus
6. causing two giant crabs to claw Hercules’ feet
7. spreading rumours to make the Amazons fight with Hercules
8. (i), (ii), (iv) and (v)
9. (i), (iii), (iv) and (vi)
10. (i), (iii), (v) and (vi)
11. (i), (iv), (v) and (vi)
12. Which of the following gave Hercules help and guidance in his twelve labours? Choose two answers.
13. Athene
14. Hermes
15. Hades
16. Persephone
17. Hercules is often regarded as an embodiment of pathos, which means an emotion of pity and compassion, in Greek literature. In what ways can Hercules evoke readers’ sympathetic pity?
18. He was driven to madness and destruction of his family.
19. He made a wrong decision in his life in choosing Virtue over Pleasure.
20. He was alone to fight with the ordeals and beasts without any support.
21. He experienced great struggles and suffering before achieving glory and immortality.
22. (i) and (iii)
23. (i) and (iv)

C. (i), (ii) and (iv)

D. (i), (iii) and (iv)

1. The adjective “herculean” originates from this myth. Based on the story and the following examples, what do you think is the meaning of the adjective “Herculean”?

Examples:

1. *Revamping this building is a Herculean task.*
2. *This research project requires a Herculean effort.*
3. needing a large sum of money
4. needing luck and God’s grace
5. needing help and support
6. needing strength and determination

**Extension: Think and Share**

1. Hercules’ labours can be seen as metaphors for difficulties and adversities in our life? What tactics or lessons did you learn about handling challenges in your life from Hercules’ story?
2. What are the qualities of heroes? Would you consider Hercules a hero? Can you think of another figure who also demonstrates immense strength and courage in today’s world?