Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Question Bank: Stories from Greek Mythology**

1. What was there at the beginning of the universe?

At the beginning of the universe, there was only ‘chaos’ or a state of complete disorder and confusion. All matter-whether solid, liquid or gas- was jumbled together and had no shape.

1. How did the Gods create the world?

The Gods decided first to bring about some kind of order. They picked up the lightest substance from the jumbled mass and made it in the sky. They chose the next lightest substance and created the created the gently blowing breeze. The heavier particles sank to the bottom and formed the earth while the rest turned into water and became the sea, on which the earth floated.

1. Why were the Gods not satisfied?

The Gods were not satisfied as they felt that the earth looked bare and empty. So they raised bits of the earth to create hills and mountains. They scooped out valleys and divided the land into forests, fields and plains. Then they made rivers and lakes. Before long stars appeared in the sky. Birds, fish and other animals appeared on the earth. But there were no human beings.

1. What did Zeus feel? Who was he?

Zeus was the king of the Gods and he felt that humans should be created to inhabit the earth.

1. Who are Titans? And, which two Gods were given in the responsibility to create the human?

The Gods belonged to the race of supernatural beings called Titans and among them were two brothers Prometheus and Epimetheus. The Gods entrusted the job of creating humans to these brothers. They were also told that the humans beings should be given the necessary qualities to look after themselves.

1. How did the brothers create humans?

Prometheus decided to create the first human being whom he would model him after the Gods and Epimetheus would give him the qualities that would match his looks. While Prometheus was busy creating man, Epimetheus was distributing gifts to the animals. He gave wings to the birds, claws and fur to the animals and shells to the tortoises so that they might all be comfortable. Then he gave the animals swiftness, boldness, power and strength. He was so carried away that he forgot to keep any special gifts for man.

1. Which special quality did Prometheus decide to give human beings? Where was it found?

The special quality that Prometheus decided to give human beings was the gift of fire. This gift only belonged to the Gods and no one else was allowed to have it. The Gods, who lived on Mount Olympus kept fires burning all the time in special vessels, which they guarded carefully.

1. What was Prometheus going to do regarding the gift?

Prometheus knew that Gods would never agree to share the gift of fire with man or anyone else on earth. But he made up his mind to steal fire from the gods and give it to human beings, whom he had created so lovingly. The Gods would be angry if they came to know what he had done and would surely punish him; but he decided to take the risk.

1. How did Prometheus go to Mount Olympus?

One dark night, Prometheus quietly made his way to Mount Olympus the home of the gods, unseen by anyone. He quickly grabbed a burning piece of wood from one of the fires and hid it in his bosom. He returned to the earth with the fire burning into his skin. He gave fire to humans and taught them how to use it.

1. What happened after giving the gift to the human beings?

The gift given to them gave them tremendous power for now they could do a lot of things with fire. They made pots and pans, produced tools for ploughing the land and doing many other things. They also used fire to light up their homes and to keep themselves warm.

1. How did the Gods come to know that human beings had the gift? What did the king of Gods do?

One night when Zeus the king of the Gods looked down from his palace and saw lights shining on the earth, he understood at once that fire had been stolen from Mount Olympus. Zeus understood that it was Prometheus who could have done that. He immediately summoned the other gods to his palace to decide the best form of punishment.

1. What punishment was given to Prometheus?

The Gods decided o send a beautiful woman down to the earth and use her to punish Prometheus and the human beings that he created. Zeus also decided to give a more severe punishment later.

1. Mention the observation made by several Gods who were sent to Earth.

Several Gods were sent to find out what the human beings created by Prometheus were doing. These Gods reported that human beings were perfectly happy and they were leading a life of bliss. The gods saw that the first human beings were good and innocent. The air on the earth was pure and fresh. The sun shone brightly all the year round and the earth was full of delicious fruits and fragrant flowers. No one knew the meaning of hunger, sickness or death. They had everything they needed and were totally content.

1. Cite Zeus’ plan of sending a woman on Earth.

Zeus planned that he would sending a woman on Earth who would be specially charming and each God would give her a special gift. So the Gods joined hands to create a divinely beautiful woman with very special gifts. They named her Pandora. Hermes, the messenger of the Gods, took Pandora down to the earth and presented her to Prometheus as a special gift from Zeus. But Prometheus did not trust Zeus and wisely refused to accept the gift. Epimetheus, on the other hand was more trusting. He could not believe that such an exquisite creature could harm them in any way, so he married Pandora despite Prometheus warning him not to do so.

1. How was the relation between Epimetheus and Pandora in the very beginning?

The relation between Epimetheus and Pandora was very nice in the very beginning. They were happy together and they would walk hand in hand through the cool forest, gathering sweet ad delicious fruits and nuts. Pandora would sit under the shade of trees weaving garlands of sweet-scented flowers. Sometimes she sang in her melodious voice while Epimetheus listened, enchanted. Often, they saw together in quiet contentment listening to the song of the birds.

1. What happened one afternoon?

One afternoon, as Epimetheus and Prometheus walked along the river, they saw a traveller in the distance. It was Hermes, who had come to pay them a visit. he was dusty and weary after a long journey.

1. Why had Hermes come?

Hermes said that he was on his way to deliver a message for King Zeus but it was a long way off and he was already very tired. He asked if he could leave his box there for a while. Epimetheus readily agreed and Hermes went on his way after promising to come back for the box very soon.

1. How did Pandora react on seeing the box? What did Epimetheus remember?

Pandora was curious about the contents of Hermes’ box. She wondered why it was so heavy. Epimetheus remembered Prometheus’ warning not to trust the Gods. So he told her to leave the box alone as it did not belong to them.

1. Did she obey her husband’s instructions? What happened as a result of it?

No, she didn’t obey her husband’s instructions. She said that she just wanted to take peep inside and see what was there inside. She assured that she would not touch anything inside and Hermes would never know that anybody had the box.

1. How did Epimetheus try to make amends with Pandora who was annoyed?

Epimetheus tried to make amends by inviting her to visit the rose garden. But Pandora refused to be pacified and Epimetheus decided to leave her alone for a while. He had no doubt that she would soon join him in the garden.

1. Describe the box that Pandora was going to open.

The box was made up of dark wood with beautiful carvings all over and it was securely tied up with a golden cord fastened with an elaborate knot. Although Pandora was confident that she would be able to undo the knot if she tried and proud of her deft fingers and her ability to weave, for a long time she couldn’t succeed. The knot was very intricate that no matter how hard she tried, she just could not undo it.

1. Did Pandora give opening of the box up?

No, Pandora did not give up as strange whispering sounds seemed to be calling out to her from within. She was about to give up in despair but the knot came undone and the golden cord fell on the ground leaving the box open.

1. What did Pandora hear as she put her ears on the lid of the box?

Pandora heard fluttering voices from within that pleaded her to open the box and set them free. The voices inside begged of her to let them out and free them from that dark and gloomy prison.

1. What had Zeus filled in the box?

Zeus had filled it with all the evil things that he could think of. There were vices, crimes, diseases and everything else that could make life miserable for humans. Each of these looked like a dirty brown wasp with a sting.

1. What happened as soon as Pandora opened the lid?

As soon as Pandora opened the lid, they came fluttering out and filled up the whole place. They stung Pandora and Epimetheus who had come in to see what Pandora was doing. The wasps flew out through the door and windows and stung the people who were dancing and making merry in the garden. Their shouts of joy soon turned into cries of pain.

1. What happened to people opening the box?

Pain, anger, quarrel and sickness were totally unknown to Epimetheus and people of the golden age. But when these evil spirits stung them, something totally new happened. Tempers flew, people quarreled and fought with one another. They fell sick and their bodies ached with pain. Epimetheus and Pandora argued, each blaming the other for this sad state of affairs.

1. What did Pandora do when she heard the voices coming again from within the box?

Pandora was first hesitant to open the box. She did not want any more of creatures escaping from the box but Epimetheus said that the very first time when she was told not to touch, she touched in spite of his warning and so now nothing worse could happen again and so to open it to let the last one out too. Thus, Pandora walked up to the box and lifted the lid once again with trembling fingers.

1. What emerged out of the box?

A little snow-white bird flew out of the box. A cool and healing breeze swept over the whole place as it fluttered its wings.

1. What was the name of the bird? What did it do after coming out?

The bird’s name was Hope and she said she would heal the wounds caused by the others. Hope flew all over the place and touched the people who were suffering. She lessened their pain and made their life bearable, although they could never get back to the golden age again.

1. What did Epimetheus ask Hope? What did she reply?

Epimetheus asked Hope if he would stay with her for ever and ever. To that Hope replied that she would be there as long as people need her. She said smilingly that she promised never to leave. She said that there would be times when people would think that she has vanished but she would be there.