

READING

The theft of Thor's hammer

LEVEL

Intermediate (B2)

NUMBER

EN_B2_3014R

LANGUAGE

English



Learning outcomes

- I can read and understand the main points in a text about Norse mythology.
- I can talk about the morals and roles of characters in myths.



Warm-up

1. **Look at** the images below. How would you describe these landscapes?
2. **Complete** the activity in the yellow box.

You can do this **in breakout rooms** or **as a class**.



You will read a story from **Norse** mythology, the tradition of myths and legends from Scandinavia.

What do you know about this part of the world? Have you ever visited? If not, would you like to?



The disappearance of the hammer

Read the text and **answer** the questions.

The Norse gods live in Asgard. Thor, the god of thunder and lightening, is its defender. His strength is almost unmatched among the gods and his most well-known possession is his hammer. It's Thor's greatest weapon against the giants who want to invade Asgard.

One day, Thor wakes up to find his hammer gone. His immediate reaction is to blame the god of mischief, Loki, who is constantly playing pranks on the other gods. When Thor accuses Loki of the theft, Loki fervently denies any involvement. After a heated argument, Thor accepts that Loki had nothing to do with it. Loki, however, decides to get to the bottom of the matter.

1. Where is this myth set?
2. Which gods are introduced in this excerpt? Had you heard of them before?



Loki decides to get to the bottom of the matter.

Write a definition for the highlighted phrase.

Share your definitions in the chat to discuss as a class.

Can you think of ways to **rephrase** the sentence?

Loki decides...



Loki's quest for answers

Read the text and **answer** the questions.

He thinks the culprit is the giant Thrym, who lives in Jotunheim, the land of the Frost Giants. In order to travel there, he borrows the goddess Freya's magical feather dress, which gives him the power of flight.

Thrym confesses to taking the hammer, but has conditions for its return. He will only give the hammer back if Freya agrees to marry him. When Loki returns to speak to Freya, she flatly refuses to marry Thrym and is offended by the mere suggestion.

1. How does Loki travel to the land of the Frost Giants?
2. How does Freya react to Thrym's proposition?



Complete and order the text

Fill in the gaps. Then put the text in the **correct order**.

- a** Thor confronts Loki, believing that the god of _____ has once again _____ on him.
- b** Loki vows _____ the mystery of the stolen hammer and travels to the land of the _____.
- c** He awakes one day to find that his greatest _____, his hammer, is gone.
- d** His suspicions prove to be correct. The giant Thrym is the _____.
- e** Thor is the defender of Asgard, whose strength is _____ among the rest of the gods.
- f** Thrym agrees to return the hammer on _____ that he can marry the goddess Freya.

- weapon
- to play a prank
- mischief
- unmatched
- Frost Giants
- to get to the bottom of
- culprit
- condition

1

2

3

4

5

6



The disguise

Read the text and **answer** the questions.

The gods convene a council. If Thrym were allowed to keep the hammer, it would spell the end for Asgard. They decide that Thor should dress up as a bride to trick Thrym. Thor's pride prevents him from taking up this suggestion immediately, considering it offensive to propose that he, the god of thunder, should dress as a woman. Eventually, he is persuaded, realising that this is the only way he can retrieve his weapon and save Asgard.

Thor is dressed in a wedding dress, Freya's amulet, and many gemstones. He goes to Jotunheim to marry Thrym, along with Loki, the trickster, who is acting as a bridesmaid. Thor's face hidden by a veil. Thrym is delighted that Freya has accepted his proposal of marriage.

1. Why is it important that the hammer is returned to Thor?
2. What solution do the gods come up with?



Vocabulary match

Match the words and phrases from the text (1-6) with a definition (a-f).

1

veil

2

to retrieve

3

a council

4

amulet

5

to spell the end (for)

6

to trick

a

to find and get something back

b

an object – often a necklace – worn to protect against evil or disease

c

to make someone believe something that is not true

d

a covering worn over the face

e

a group of people chosen to represent and make decisions for a larger group

f

to lead to the end of something



The feast

Read the text and **answer** the questions.

A giant feast is prepared and Freya eats and drinks a huge amount: half a dozen fish, an ox, a cake, and a lot of beer. Thrym is both awed and slightly nonplussed by how much his bride can eat, saying that he has never seen a woman who is able to eat so much. Loki tries to explain this away by claiming that Freya, in her excitement for the wedding, had not eaten for 8 days before then and was now ravenous.

Another close call comes when Thrym lifts the veil from Thor's face and sees his flaming red eyes. Once again Loki steps in and says that Freya's elation had prevented her from sleeping for a whole week.

1. What is Thrym's impression of his bride at the feast?
2. How does Loki manage the situation?



The return of the hammer

Read the text and **answer** the questions.

Finally, it is time for Freya to give her gems to Thrym as a bride payment. As she is preparing to do this, Thrym knows it is time to fulfil his side of the bargain and goes to get Thor's hammer to hand back to him.

He puts the hammer into Freya's lap for good luck and it is at the sight of his weapon that Thor flies into a rage. He kills Thrym and his entire household, securing the future of Asgard.

1. What do you think about the ending of the story? Is it what you expected?
2. Has your opinion about any of the characters changed since the beginning of the story?



Vocabulary match

Match the words and phrases from the text (1-6) with a definition (a-f).

1

awed

2

nonplussed

3

ravenous

4

a close call

5

elation

6

to fly into a rage

a

to get very angry all of a sudden

b

a narrow escape from danger or a situation that almost goes very wrong

c

amazed

d

extreme happiness

e

surprised and confused; unsure how to act

f

extremely hungry



Character analysis

What are the **attributes** of these characters, based on the text you have read?
What **role** does each character play in the story?

1

Loki

2

Thor

3

Freya

4

Thrym



Discuss

The use of disguise is **a common trope** in stories throughout history...

**Do you think disguise
is a good solution to
Thor's problem?**

**How else could the problem
have been solved?**





Discuss

What are some key themes in the myth?



What do you think is the 'moral' or message of this myth?



End of the lesson

Idiom

Tit for tat

Meaning: to do something bad to someone because they did something bad to you

Example: I hate all this petty tit for tat. Let's deal with this like adults!



Additional practice



Vocabulary review

Review these words and phrases from the text. **Write a sentence** using one of the words or phrases into the chat.



nonplussed

lap

entire

a close call

to fly into a rage

to deny

unmatched

to confess

veil

to trick



Fill in the gaps

Complete the sentences using the words in the red box.

1 Thor is often shown holding a _____.

2 Children left alone are often up to _____.

3 The person who does the crime is the _____.

4 A _____ is a huge meal, often for a special occasion.

5 If you are _____ you are extremely hungry

culprit
mischief
hammer
feast
ravenous



What do you remember from the story?

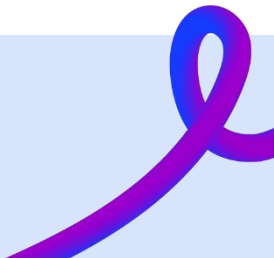
Review new words and phrases.

Which character lent belongings to other characters? What did they lend and why?

Who convened a council? What was the purpose of the meeting?

Which characters had a heated argument? What was the outcome?

Which character flew into a rage during a wedding feast? Why?





Answer key

P.4: 1. Asgard 2. Thor, Loki

P.5:

to get to the bottom of sth.: to discover the truth; to find out what really happened; to solve a mystery

Potential answers:

Loki decides to find out what really happened to Thor's hammer

Loki decides to discover the truth about the theft/disappearance of Thor's hammer.

Loki decides to solve the mystery of the theft/disappearance of the hammer.

P.7:

Gaps: (a) Mischief; played a prank (b) to get to the bottom of; Frost Giants (c) weapon (d) culprit (e) unmatched (f) condition

Order: 1. (e) 2. (c) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5. (d) 6. (f)



Answer key

P.8: 1. Thor needs the hammer to defend/to save Asgard. 2. They suggest that Thor should dress up as a bride to trick Thrym.

P.9: 1. (d) 2. (a) 3. (e) 4. (b) 5. (f) 6. (c)

P.10: 1. Thrym is awed and nonplussed (by how much his bride can eat). / Thrym is surprised because he has never seen a woman who is able to eat so much. 2. Loki tells Thrym that Freya has not eaten for 8 days before the wedding, so she is now ravenous.

P.12: 1. (c) 2. (e) 3. (f) 4. (b) 5. (d) 6. (a)

P.20: 1. hammer 2. mischief 3. culprit 4. feast 5. ravenous



Summary

A Norse myth:

- *to get to the bottom of; veil; to retrieve; council; amulet; to spell the end (for); to trick*
- *awed; nonplussed; ravenous*
- *a close call; elation; to fly into a rage*

Talking about the morals of myths:

- *I think disguise is a good/poor solution to Thor's problem...*
- *The moral of this myth was...*



Vocabulary

to get to the bottom of

veil

to retrieve

council

amulet

to spell the end (for)

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awed

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