

Grade 10 • Unit 2: The Key Elements of Greek Mythology

LESSON 2.4

Common Elements and Themes in Greek Mythology

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## Lesson 2.4



## Common Elements and Themes in Greek Mythology



**Fig. 1.** Identifying the elements and themes in myths allows you to better appreciate and understand them further.



### Introduction

The elements of Greek mythology are similar to those of a narrative. Each story in Greek mythology has characters, setting, plot, and theme(s). In this lesson, you will learn about these common elements and themes.

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**Objective**

In this lesson, you should be able to determine common elements in other popular Greek myths.

**DepEd Competency**

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to appraise the unity of plot, setting and characterization in a material viewed to achieve the writer's purpose **(EN10VC-IVc-29)**.

**Warm-Up****Quad Activity****Procedure**

1. Form groups of four.
2. The following box contains some elements and themes in Greek mythology.
3. Find all 12 words.
4. Share your answers in class.

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G	O	D	S	G	O	S	S	M	P	Q	L	V	N	A
O	M	O	N	S	T	E	R	S	B	H	E	R	P	O
D	V	E	N	G	E	A	N	C	E	M	V	U	N	S
D	U	H	E	R	O	E	S	B	A	H	I	U	F	X
E	I	R	O	E	L	O	V	E	U	C	L	O	J	U
S	F	A	T	E	Y	O	D	A	T	N	C	I	E	R
S	P	P	I	C	M	A	G	F	Y	Y	K	I	N	J
E	E	E	A	E	P	S	H	U	I	L	O	V	N	J
S	D	N	O	L	U	B	W	E	E	N	P	Q	W	H
M	D	K	O	B	S	E	A	J	U	P	I	T	A	G
U	N	D	E	R	W	O	R	L	D	A	E	O	R	L

## Guide Questions

1. Cite an example of a Greek myth that shares one of the themes that you identified.
2. Cite an example of a Philippine myth that shares one of the themes that you identified.



## Learn about It



## Vocabulary

mythical  
(adjective)

based on a myth or existing only in the mind or imagination

recur  
(verb)

come up again

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motif (noun)	an idea or subject that is repeated in a story
futile (adjective)	useless, pointless
inevitable (adjective)	absolutely happens

**Essential Question**

How can the themes in Greek mythology be related to current issues?

**Elements in Greek Mythology**

It is notable that in Greek mythology, stories always involved **characters** who are gods and goddesses, heroes, or mythical beings.

The **setting** for most Greek myths is ancient Greece, although there are some that are set in Mount Olympus or other fictional and mythical places such as the underworld.

The **plot** of most of these stories has a distinct beginning, middle, and end, although some stories are interrelated.

**Themes** are universal ideas in a literary work (i.e., fate, revenge, reward for goodness and punishment for evil, etc.), while **motifs** are recurring structures that help develop the theme (e.g., beauty, love).

**Themes in Greek Mythology**

Various themes and motifs present in Greek mythology include the following:

- Fate** – Many characters in Greek mythology attempt to alter their fate, but all their attempts always end up being futile. In the stories, the attempt of a character to

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change his destiny only leads to the fulfillment of the prophecy. This is because of the three Fates, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who controlled the destiny of both men and gods alike.

- b. **Reward for goodness and punishment for evil** – In Greek mythology, gods or goddesses judge the actions of men and reward or punish them accordingly. Mortals are punished for their pride, arrogance, and/or disobedience. Those who challenge or disobey the gods are made to suffer; they may have to endure eternal punishment, be transformed into monsters, or turned into natural phenomena.
- c. **Love** – Many stories in Greek mythology involve love, but love is treated in a different way from our modern-day notions of love. In Greek myths, love is often unrequited and also often ends in tragedy. When love forms between mortals and gods, it rarely works out. Some stories also depict one party as loving strongly (often the woman) only to be left by her lover later on.
- d. **War** – In Greek myths, war is depicted as an inevitable part of existence, and it is considered an honor to die while fighting in war. Gods and goddesses also often take sides and get themselves involved in conflicts between mortals.
- e. **Vengeance** – Many Greek myths feature characters who avenge themselves or their loved ones. This leads to even more bloodshed, as bloodshed begets bloodshed.
- f. **Beauty** – The idea that being beautiful is better is evident in Greek myths since the Greeks valued beauty and perfection. However, beauty causes trouble in Greek mythology. This can be seen in the stories of Narcissus as well as in the story of Helen of Troy.



### Let's Check In

Form a group of three and create an illustration showing the relationship between two Greek mythology themes. Show your illustration on a cartolina and share your work and explain in class.

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## Key Points

- The common elements in Greek mythology include **characters**, **setting**, **plot**, **theme**, and **motif**.
- Some of the **common themes** in Greek mythology are **fate**, **reward** for goodness and **punishment** for evil, **love**, **war**, **vengeance**, and **beauty**.



## Check Your Understanding



Fill in the blanks with the correct answer.

1. The elements of Greek mythology are similar to those of a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. It is notable that in Greek mythology, stories always involve \_\_\_\_\_ who are gods and goddesses, heroes, or mythical beings.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ for most Greek myths is ancient Greece, although there are some that are set in Mount Olympus, or other fictional and mythical places such as the underworld.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ of most of these stories has a distinct beginning, middle, and end, although some stories are interrelated.
5. There are various \_\_\_\_\_ and motifs present in Greek mythology.

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**Answer the following questions. Choose the letter of the correct answer.**

1. Prometheus, a Titan god, was tied to a high mountain in the Caucasus where an eagle repeatedly eats at his liver which regenerates afterward. It is his punishment for giving man the gift of fire. What element of Greek mythology is highlighted in the summary?  
a. characters      b. setting      c. plot      d. theme
2. The Sky and the Earth have children called the Titans. However, because of the Sky's fear that his children will one day overthrow him, he put them away in the depths of the Earth. Enraged, the Earth plotted a scheme with her children to slay the Sky. And so, led by the youngest Titan, Kronos, the Titans defeated the Sky. What theme in Greek mythology is highlighted in the summary?  
a. love      b. war      c. fate      d. vengeance
3. One of the lessons that one can learn from the story of Arachne is that Greek deities are vengeful. Arachne boasted that she is a better weaver than the goddess Athena. Both then engaged in a weaving contest where it was said that both the scenes that Arachne portrayed in her work, and the fact that she indeed is a good weaver angered the goddess of wisdom and she turned Arachne into a spider. What element of Greek mythology is highlighted in the summary?  
a. characters      b. setting      c. plot      d. theme
4. One of the saddest tales in Greek mythology is the story of the musician, Orpheus and his wife, Eurydice. Eurydice unfortunately died, and Orpheus was overwhelmed by grief that he was determined to bring his wife back to life. So, he journeyed to



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the underworld and pleaded with the god of death, Hades, to let him return to the world of living with his wife by playing sad music. Hades approved with one condition: as they make their way out of the underworld, Eurydice will only follow Orpheus, and the latter cannot in any way look back and look at Eurydice. As they began their journey, Orpheus was in doubt that Eurydice was really following him, so he looked back. Unfortunately, Eurydice was really there, and because Orpheus looked back, his wife was taken back to the underworld forever. What theme in Greek mythology is highlighted in the summary?

- a. love                      b. war                      c. fate                      d. vengeance

5. When Oedipus was born, a prophecy was cast upon him. The prophecy said that he would murder his father and marry his mother. Out of fear that the prophecy will come true when Oedipus grows up, his parents left him in the forest to die. However, a shepherd found him and took him to his wife where they decided to take care of Oedipus. When he grew up, he learned about the prophecy, and oblivious to the fact that the shepherd and his wife only adopted him, he decided to run away because he thought the prophecy was about his adopted parents. On his journey, he met a man whom he had a fight with, and Oedipus killed him. Oedipus then reached the kingdom of Thebes where a sphinx challenged him to solve a riddle, and if he did, he would take the queen who was widowed to marriage. He solved the riddle and took the widow as his wife. He then found out that the man he killed was his father, and the woman he married was his mother. So, the prophecy came true. What theme in Greek mythology is highlighted in the

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summary?

a. love

b. war

c. fate

d. vengeance



**Write T if the statement is true or F if it is false. If false, write the correct statement**

1. Many characters in Greek mythology attempted to alter their fate, but all their attempts always ended up being futile. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Many stories in Greek mythology involve love, but love is treated in a different way from our modern-day notions of love. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. In Greek myths, war is depicted as an inevitable part of existence, and it is considered an honor to die while fighting in war. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Many Greek myths feature characters who avenge themselves or their loved ones. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The idea that being brave is better is evident in Greek myths since the Greeks valued beauty and perfection. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Let's Step Up!**

Which god or goddess do you think would make a good president? Why?

Form a group with three to five members and write a campaign speech to answer this question. Include your chosen god or goddess' characteristics that will make him/her an effective leader. Present your campaign speech in class.

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