

*D'Aulaires'*  
*Book of Greek Myths*



A Reading Guide by Lisa Kelly

*Book of Greek Myths* was written by Ingri and Edgar D'Aulaire



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## Author's Note

Literary Elements and Literary Techniques are incorporated as they best illustrate them based on the book itself. In other words, I do not predetermine which terms and elements I will include in advance, aside from being aware of the age range for which the guide is designed. The best introduction to them occurs when they are presented by the book itself. I then try to bring them forward as they appear.

Ideally, I will create guides for most every book and poem included in this entire curriculum. This will provide the balance needed to provide full coverage of literary elements and techniques. While this guide may introduce one or two specific terms, another guide may introduce a few different ones. There may also be some repetition, which of course offers review and repeated exposure.

I don't wish for literature to be analyzed to the point of destroying a child's natural interest in how an author creates it, especially in the younger years. This is why I emphasize that each teacher should introduce the elements and techniques as best fits each student and situation.

## Myths

A myth, according to Merriam-Webster, is "a story often describing the adventures of beings with more than human powers that attempts to explain mysterious events or that explains a religious belief or practice".

Here are some types of characters you might meet in a myth:

- Heroes
- Heroines
- Tricksters
- Mythical Creatures or Monsters

# Lesson Notes

1. “Connection” questions and prompts were written to bridge the gap between chapter readings. They were designed to bring forth what students already know about a topic so that the new information can be connected to it.
2. Have students define the words listed under “Words to Know” either independently or together orally with the teacher. Teachers and students should locate any listed places, read and discuss any notes included at the beginning of each lesson and discuss the pronunciation of any words, as needed.
3. Students should either have the book read aloud to them or should read each chapter (or reading section) together with the teacher or should read the book independently, whichever best fits.
4. After reading, students should narrate. There are multiple narration suggestions for each chapter.
5. Any lessons in literary terms can be included or omitted as it best fits the needs of your students.

## Literary Elements and Literary Techniques

- myths
- heroes and heroines
- author and illustrator
- similes
- foreshadowing
- metaphors

## Expressions, Idioms and Word Connections

In addition to the generally included notes for Words to Know, this guide extends this with Expressions and Idioms to Know and Word Connections to Know. Both which further expand on the impact myths have on our language.

## Illustration Studies, Art Projects & Final Projects

There are 8 illustration studies within this guide and 2 [optional] art projects. Some suggestions for final projects can be found at the end of the guide.

## Constellations

The constellations are significantly tied to Greek Myths. This guide includes notes for constellations which correspond to the specific myths presented in *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*. The latter book does not include *all* of the stories behind all of the constellations; therefore, some are not included in this guide. Add or adapt this as best fits. Coloring pages for constellation maps are linked at the website [see below] and one optional art project works with constellations. Optional resources also include coloring books which would further expand on the study of constellations.

## Coloring Pages

Links to websites with free printable coloring pages of Greek Myths can be found at *A Mind in the Light*. Look under the tab “Resources” and then scroll down to “Literature”. You can find the links here under *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*.

Print some of the many Constellation Map Coloring Pages linked at the website. These would also be helpful as reference for Art Project II.

## Optional Resources

- *Constellations Dot-to-Dot* by Evan and Lael Kimble
- *Constellations of the Night Sky* (Dover) by Bruce LaFontaine

## Exam Prompts

- Describe a memorable scene. What made this scene memorable?
- Name several characters from this book. Choose two and tell about each one.

There are more exam prompts in the guide. This is a sample only.

# Reading Schedule

Reading #	Page Numbers	Titles
1	9-11	In Olden Times + Gaea
2	12-15	The Titans
3	16-23	Zeus & His Family

There are 34 readings in the guide. This is a sample only.



## *Greek Myths* –Reading 1

- \* Complete Reading 1 (pp. 9-11) from *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*.

### Before the Reading

- Connection: Use the title and cover illustration to help you predict what this book might be about.
- Words to Know: idols; distinguish between mortal and immortal.
- Words to Pronounce: Gaea and Uranus; for help with pronunciation, see the link at the website. [R: Literature –Greek Myths](#)
- Locate: Mount Olympus. There is a nice map of Greece with many locations marked at the beginning of the book.
- Note: There is an index at the end of the book.

### Literary Elements

A **myth**, according to Merriam-Webster, is “a story often describing the adventures of beings with more than human powers that attempts to explain mysterious events or that explains a religious belief or practice”.

Here are some types of characters you might meet in a myth:

- heroes
- heroines
- tricksters
- mythical creatures or monsters

What is the title of this book? What types of characters do you think that you might meet in this book?

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An **author** is a person who has written something. An **illustrator** is a person who has illustrated a book. He or she has explained or decorated a book, etc. with pictures.

Who are the authors of this book? Study the illustrations in this book.

- \* Who are the illustrators of this book?
- \* Tell what you like best about the illustrations.
- \* What would the story be like without them?
- \* What colors do they use?
- \* Do the pictures look realistic? Why do you think so?
- \* Do you think they spent a little bit of time on each picture or a lot of time?

*Ans. Key: Ingrid and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire are the authors and illustrators of this book.*

## After the Reading

### Narration Suggestions

- Tell of “Olden Times” and of Mother Earth.
- If you could meet Mother Earth, then what would you like to ask her or tell her.
- Draw a picture of Mother Earth. Give your picture a title or caption and share it with someone, telling about it.

## Greek Myths –Reading 2

- \* Complete Reading 2 (pp. 12-15) from *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*.

### Before the Reading

- Connection: Tell of Mother Earth.
- Words to Know: smiths, sickle, sprites, titan and titanesses
- Words to Pronounce: Cyclopes, Tartarus, Pontus, Zeus, Rhea and Cronus
- Locate: Greece and Crete
- Note: There are obvious “close” relationships implied with these stories [incestuous], but will probably not be readily obvious to many children of this level. Consider editing or discussing as best fits your family.



### After the Reading

#### Narration Suggestions

- Tell of the Titans
- Should Uranus have thrown his children into Tartarus? Should Cronus have swallowed his children? Should Rhea have tricked Cronus?
- Describe Uranus and Cronus. How are they alike? How are they different from each other? In what ways must Mother Earth and Rhea handle their husbands?
- Draw a picture of any scene from this reading section. Give your picture a title or caption and share it with someone, telling about the scene depicted.

#### Illustration Study

Study the illustration on the opposing page of “The Titans” –p. 13.

- \* Describe this illustration.
- \* What feelings are shown by Mother Earth? How do we know this?
- \* Where are the titans and titanesses?
- \* Where are the Cyclopes?

## *Greek Myths* –Reading 10

- \* Complete Reading 10 (pp. 56-62) from *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*.

### Before the Reading

- Connection: Tell of Hermes and the role he plays with the dead.
- Words to Know: stagnant, swineherd, dismal, murky and pauper
- Words to Pronounce: Hades, Styx, Charon, Cerberus, Persephone, Demeter, Rhadamanthus, Erinyes, Lethe, Triptolemus and Elysian
- Expression & Idioms to Know: Discuss “free will”. What is meant by this? Discuss “Elysian Fields”. [Elysian Fields are referenced as a place or time of perfect, happy contentment.]
- Locate: “Persephone Kidnapped Here” and Olympus
- Constellation: Virgo (The Maiden –often thought of as Demeter or Persephone)

### After the Reading

#### Narration Suggestions

- Tell of Hades and his underground realm. Describe how Persephone became his queen.
- Give an account of the story behind how the seasons came to be. Why does so little grow in the winter? Why does growth begin anew in the spring? What do you know of the seasons in relation to the earth’s revolution around the sun?
- Draw a picture of the palace of Hades. Give your picture a title or caption and share it with someone, telling about it.
- Divide a sheet of paper into two halves. On one side draw what the earth looks like when Persephone is with Hades and on the other side draw what earth looks like when Persephone is with her mother, Demeter. Give your picture a title or caption and share it, telling about it.
- Should Hades have taken Persephone?
- Is the underworld a just place?
- Illustrate what you imagine the Elysian Fields might have looked like. In what ways is this place similar to Valhalla from the Norse Myths? Different?

## Illustration Study

Study the second full page illustration from “Persephone” –p.61.

- \* Describe this illustration.
- \* Name the four figures in the foreground in the picture. What do you see in the background?
- \* Where are the Elysian Fields? Where might the river Styx be? Where is Charon?
- \* What might this picture look like if in color? Describe it. [What parts would be in what color?] What role does the lack of color play in this illustration?

## Literary Techniques

**Similes** compare two things that are unlike and use the connecting words like or as.

Find the simile in the following lines:

*“Sooner or later, all mortals came to Hades. Once inside his realm, they whirled about forever like dry leaves in a cold autumn wind” (56).*

- What is being compared to what? Why?
- Note the illustration on the facing page –p. 57. Do you see what looks like “dry leaves” whirling about in the picture? What are these? What mood does this illustration give? Tell about it.
- Draw a picture to illustrate this simile and copy the simile underneath or above it.
- How does the simile enhance the reading?



