



Prometheus and Pandora

2_A

Introducing the Read-Aloud

10 minutes

Where Are We?

On a world map or globe, have students locate the country of Greece. Remind students that the myths they will hear over the next several days originated in, or were first told in, ancient Greece.

What Have We Already Learned?

Remind students that they heard about twelve important Greek gods and goddesses in the previous read-aloud. Ask students what makes a god or goddess different from a human being. (A god or goddess is believed to be immortal, or never dies, and has supernatural powers, whereas a human being is mortal and does not have magical powers.) Using the Greek Gods Posters, have students name each of the Greek gods they heard about in the previous lesson. Have students share what the ancient Greeks believed each god/goddess was in charge of.

Essential Background Information or Terms

Share the title of the read-aloud with students. Remind students that myths are fictional stories that try to explain events or things in nature, teach moral lessons, and entertain listeners. Share with students that Greek myths have many characters, both mortal and immortal. Remind students that the word *immortal* refers to living creatures that never die, and the word *mortal* refers to living creatures that will eventually die. Ask students what kinds of immortal characters might be found in myths. If students have difficulty remembering this, guide the discussion so that they remember that gods and goddesses were often the main characters in Greek myths and were believed to be immortal. Ask students what kinds of mortal characters might be found in myths. Tell students that today's Greek myth is a story that tries to explain how the first mortal creatures were created.

Meet the Characters

Note: You may wish to add to the Character Chart as you introduce the characters in this read-aloud.

Tell students that in today’s read-aloud, “Prometheus and Pandora,” they will hear more about the Greek gods. Ask students to name the king of the Greek gods and ask a student to point to the poster of Zeus. Ask students if Zeus was mortal or immortal.

Note: When meeting the characters before each read-aloud, you may wish to place a small marker of some kind, such as a bright sticky note, on the posters of the gods and goddesses who play a role in that day’s story.



← **Show image 2A-1: Prometheus and Epimetheus creating**

Tell students that in today’s myth, they will hear about two brothers whose long names have special meanings that are related to what happens in the story. Say each of the names Prometheus and Epimetheus and ask students to say the names as you repeat them. Tell students to think about whether Prometheus and Epimetheus were mortal or immortal as they listen to the story.



← **Show image 2A-7: Curious Pandora coming down to Earth with a sealed box**

Ask students who else they think will be in this myth based on its title. Ask students what they notice about the image. Tell students to listen carefully to the myth to hear if Pandora is mortal or immortal.

Purpose for Listening

Tell students to listen carefully to find out who made the first mortal creatures according to Greek mythology. Remind students to also think about whether each character in the story is mortal or immortal.



Prometheus and Pandora

← Show image 2A-1: Prometheus and Epimetheus creating

Long, long ago there were two brothers named Prometheus [pruh-MEE-thee-us] and Epimetheus [EP-ih-MEE-thee-us]. Their names fit them perfectly. Prometheus means “**foresight**,” or “thinking ahead,” in Greek, and Epimetheus means “**hindsight**,” or “thinking afterward.”

Prometheus was quite clever and was always planning ahead in an effort to make things better for himself and for those around him. On the other hand, his brother, Epimetheus, was always doing foolish things without thinking.¹

The ancient Greeks believed that it was Prometheus who first created human beings and that it was his brother who made all of the other creatures. Zeus gave the two brothers gifts to give the living things. So while Prometheus scooped up some river clay and began to make human beings in the likeness of the gods,² his brother Epimetheus made all sorts of animals and gave them all the good gifts. The animals could see, smell, and hear better than humans, and they had fur to keep them warm, unlike man, who shivered in the cold.³

- 1 What does *foolish* mean? Which brother thinks ahead? Which brother is foolish and does not think ahead?
- 2 or to look like the gods
- 3 Who can point to Prometheus in the picture? Who can point to Epimetheus? How were the animals that were created by Epimetheus different from the humans that were created by Prometheus?



← Show image 2A-2: Zeus complimenting Epimetheus and questioning Prometheus

Zeus, king of the gods, noticed all of these new animal creatures hopping, swimming, flying, growing, and walking on the earth. Zeus told Epimetheus, “These toys of yours are quite **amusing**.⁴ Some of them make me laugh, like that—what did you call it—‘elephant’? What an imagination you have! Others are quite beautiful in their own way. This morning I was watching your dolphins leap and play in the water. They are very graceful.”⁵

To Prometheus he said, “But these humans of yours . . . what good are they? The other creatures are bigger, faster, or stronger.

- 4 or funny
- 5 or smooth and elegant in their movement

Humans just sit around. I think you should get rid of them and try something else.”

Prometheus, however, had something in mind when he created humans. He suggested, “Please be patient, great Zeus. I think you will be surprised and pleased at how quickly humans can learn and how useful they can be. Why, I plan to teach them to pray to you! Wouldn’t you like that?”

6 or useful and valuable

7 What do you think is going to happen?



Zeus agreed that this sounded like a fine idea. “Very well, I will give humans time to prove they are worthy.⁶ If they do not do so, however, you will have to get rid of them.”⁷

← **Show image 2A-3: Prometheus asking Zeus for fire for the humans**

Prometheus felt sorry for the humans, though. They had no fur to keep them warm, nothing to light the darkness, and nothing with which to cook their food. Humans needed fire, especially if they were to prove themselves. He asked Zeus for this gift for the humans, but Zeus refused. “Fire,” he said, “is just for the gods.”⁸

8 Do you remember who, according to Greek mythology, is the god of fire? It’s Hephaestus, the blacksmith of the gods.

Prometheus knew the humans needed fire. “With fire,” he thought to himself, “they can soften metal and bend it into shapes to make tools. With these tools they can plow fields, fish and hunt for food, cook that food, and build shelters in which to live. With fire, humans can also honor the gods with sacrifices. Human beings need fire, but getting it for them will be very dangerous.”

← **Show image 2A-4: Prometheus stealing fire from Mount Olympus**

Prometheus knew that up on Mount Olympus, where most of the gods lived, there was one carefully guarded fire. The gods and goddesses used this fire to cook their food. From this same fire, however, came the dangerous lightning bolts that Zeus would fling through the sky. In fact, all fire came from this one source.



Zeus had said, “Fire is too dangerous for these **ridiculous** humans to use wisely. Only we gods and goddesses shall have it.”⁹ Yet Prometheus was determined to bring fire to humans, even if it meant disobeying the king of the gods.

9 The word *ridiculous* means laughable or silly. Why do you think Zeus thinks the humans are ridiculous?

10 Fennel is a plant that has small yellow flowers and parts that can be eaten.

11 How do you think Zeus is going to react when he finds out Prometheus disobeyed him?



Prometheus picked a stalk of fennel and carried it up to Mount Olympus.¹⁰ When no one was looking, he dropped a burning coal from the fire into the plant's hollow center, where no one could see it. Then he carried the plant, with the fire hidden inside, down to the earth.¹¹

← **Show image 2A-5: Enraged Zeus standing over Prometheus**

Not long after that, Zeus noticed smoke rising from the earth. Gazing down in amazement, he saw that humans were now doing all sorts of wonderful new things. Zeus thought, "It seems human beings really are worth keeping around." At the same time, however, he was furious when he found out that humans possessed¹² fire when he himself had forbidden this.

Guessing at once who was responsible, Zeus promised, "I will teach Prometheus and these human beings of his that they must obey me. And I know exactly how to do it."

Soon after this, Zeus ordered Prometheus chained to the side of a mountain. Every day, an eagle would come and peck away at Prometheus's liver. But because he was immortal, he never died and every night his liver grew back again.¹³

12 or had

13 What does *immortal* mean?



← **Show image 2A-6: Zeus and the gods creating Pandora with her gifts**

Now, Zeus was still angry that humans had fire, but he decided to let them keep it and instead punish man in another way. "To punish man, I will use another human—a very special human."

Zeus ordered one of the gods to make the first woman. He then asked each of the goddesses and gods for some wonderful quality or talent for this new human, explaining, "I want someone who possesses all of the most wonderful characteristics. I shall name her 'Pandora.'"

The name *Pandora* means "all gifts." The gods gave her the gifts of beauty, persuasion, intelligence, and curiosity.¹⁴

14 Persuasion is the ability to cause someone to agree with your opinion, like when you write a persuasive essay.



← **Show image 2A-7: Curious Pandora coming down to Earth with a sealed box**

When Zeus finally sent Pandora down to the earth as a gift to Epimetheus, he sent her with a closed box and warned her to never open it. Pandora, however, desired to know what was in the box. She fought against her curiosity, but day after day, night after night, the question nibbled away at her. Pandora would often sit and look at the box, wondering, wanting to open it, but always stopping herself.¹⁵

15 Do you think Pandora is going to open the box? What would you do?

16 Based on the way it is used in this sentence, what do you think *gaze* means?

17 What do you think is going to happen next?

One day, when none of the housekeepers or servants were around, Pandora went to gaze at the box.¹⁶ Finally she thought, “Surely one little peek cannot hurt.” She stood up and studied the closed box one last time before she took a deep breath and opened the lid.¹⁷



← **Show image 2A-8: Pandora opening the box**

Out of the box burst all of the frightening, saddening, anger-causing, **terrifying** evils and sorrows.¹⁸ Greed, hate, anger, pain, disease, disaster, and death swarmed from the box and around Pandora. She tried to shove them back inside, but she was too late. Out they flew in all directions.¹⁹

18 The word *terrifying* means frightening, or full of terror.

19 How do you think Pandora felt when all of these terrible things burst out of the box?

By the time Pandora was able to replace the lid back on the box, only one thing remained: hope.

Discussing the Read-Aloud

15 minutes

Comprehension Questions

10 minutes

If students have difficulty responding to questions, reread pertinent passages of the read-aloud and/or refer to specific images. If students give one-word answers and/or fail to use read-aloud or domain vocabulary in their responses, acknowledge correct responses by expanding the students’ responses using richer and more complex language. Ask students to answer in complete sentences by having them restate the question in their responses.

1. *Inferential* Myths often try to explain how things came to be in the world. What does this myth attempt to explain? (how humans and animals were created; how evil and sorrow came into the world)



← **Show image 2A-1: Prometheus and Epimetheus creating**

2. *Literal* According to Greek mythology, who made the first mortal creatures? (Prometheus and Epimetheus) Which name means foresight? (Prometheus) Which name means hindsight? (Epimetheus) What kinds of creatures did they make? (Prometheus made humans, and Epimetheus made animals.)
3. *Inferential* What other characters are in today's read-aloud? (Zeus, Pandora) Which of these characters is an immortal Greek god? (Zeus) Which is not? (Pandora)
4. *Inferential* Why do you think Zeus finds Epimetheus's creations amusing? (because of how they look, move, etc.)
5. *Inferential* Why doesn't Zeus like Prometheus's human creations, even calling them ridiculous? (They aren't as fast, strong, or big as the other creatures.)
6. *Inferential* Why does Prometheus steal fire for the humans? (Without fire, humans wouldn't be able to prove themselves to Zeus; they wouldn't be able to cook food or keep themselves warm; etc.) Where does Prometheus have to go to steal the fire? (Mount Olympus)
7. *Inferential* How does Zeus punish Prometheus for stealing the fire? (He chains him to the side of a mountain and has an eagle peck at his liver.)
8. *Literal* Who else does Zeus want to punish? (the humans) Who does Zeus use to punish man? (Pandora)



← **Show image 2A-8: Pandora opening the box**

9. *Inferential* Zeus sends Pandora down to Earth with a closed box and strict instructions not to open it. Does Pandora follow Zeus's instructions? (no) What happens when she opens the box? (Frightening and terrifying evils and sorrows come out of the box to cause people pain.) What is the one thing left inside the box? (hope)

[Please continue to model the *Think Pair Share* process for students, as necessary, and scaffold students in their use of the process.]

I am going to ask a couple of questions. I will give you a minute to think about the questions, and then I will ask you to turn to your neighbor and discuss the questions. Finally, I will call on several of you to share what you discussed with your partner.

10. *Evaluative Think Pair Share:* There is an expression that warns people against opening “Pandora’s box.” What do you think that expression means? How is it related to this myth? (This expression means that something is a source of unexpected troubles and pain, and it is best to try to avoid it. Pandora could have avoided the pain and trouble by not opening the box.)
11. After hearing today’s read-aloud and questions and answers, do you have any remaining questions? [If time permits, you may wish to allow for individual, group, or class research of the text and/or other resources to answer these questions.]

Word Work: Amusing

5 minutes

1. In the read-aloud you heard Zeus say to Epimetheus about the animals he created, “These toys of yours are quite *amusing*.”
2. Say the word *amusing* with me.
3. If something is amusing, it is pleasantly funny.
4. The kittens were amusing to watch as they rolled around and jumped on each other.
5. Have you ever experienced something amusing? Try to use the word *amusing* when you tell about it. [Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase the students’ responses: “_____ was amusing because . . .”]
6. What’s the word we’ve been talking about?

Use a *Sharing* activity for follow-up. Directions: In the read-aloud, Zeus thought the elephant was amusing. Are there any animals that you think are amusing? Share with your partner which animal you think is amusing and why. Make sure to use the word *amusing* when you tell about it.



Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day



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Extensions

20 minutes

10 Sequencing the Read-Aloud (Instructional Master 2B-1)

Materials: blank sheet of paper; scissors; glue or tape

Tell students that they should review the images on Instructional Master 2B-1 carefully to determine what event is depicted in each image. Then they should cut out the six images and glue or tape them, in the proper sequence, on a blank sheet of paper.

Greek Myths Journal (Instructional Master 2B-2)

Tell students that they will be continuing their journal to help them remember important information they learn in this domain about the Greek gods and Greek myths. Have students share which gods and/or goddesses they heard about in today's read-aloud. (Zeus) Ask students to share any other characters they heard about in today's read-aloud. (Prometheus, Epimetheus, Pandora)

Show students Instructional Master 2B-2. Tell them that for today's journal entry, they should write "Prometheus and Pandora" on the title blank. They should then write two to three sentences about one of the characters to help them remember who s/he is, what s/he does in today's myth, and why s/he might have been important to the ancient Greeks. After writing two to three sentences, students may also draw a picture in the rectangle to illustrate the information.