

Myths and Heroes WORKSHEET

Whenever indicated, use the links to access specific Web pages in order to complete the worksheet
+ Add personal commentary and/or illustrations when necessary.

Myths

TWO DEFINITIONS: <http://urbanlegends.about.com/cs/folklore/f/mythology2.htm>

1. It is a **religious story** no matter from which culture and will therefore involve the existence and activities of a supernatural being, such as a god, a demigod, a goddess, or several such entities. It is believed to be essentially true by those in the society for whom it is one part of a cultural mythology.

The word "myth" has also — ever since the time of Herodotus, a Greek writer and historian in the 4th century B.C.E. — come to be used to designate a story or the understanding of some matter as fictional and even downright false.

Illustration: PROMETHEUS: <http://urbanlegends.about.com/cs/folklore/f/mythology2.htm>

Prometheus is one of the Titans from Greek mythology. He helped create (and then befriend) mankind. He gave humans the gift of fire even though he knew Zeus would not approve. As a result of this gift, Prometheus was punished as only an immortal could be. Prometheus was one of the Titans, a gigantic race, who inhabited the earth before the creation of man.

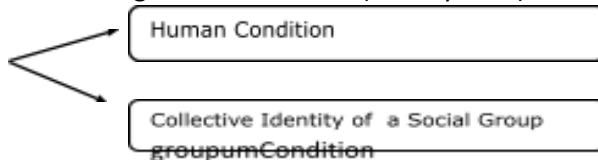
Illustration: URBAN LEGENDS: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_legend

2. It will seek to explain at least some aspect of the **origin or manner of things** (where people came from, how rainbows first came to be, why whales have blow spouts, why people and animals feel hunger) if not of the very universe itself.

An urban legend, urban myth, urban tale, or contemporary legend, is a form of modern folklore consisting of stories that may or may not have been believed by their tellers to be true.

The **Bunny Man** is an urban legend that probably originated from two incidents in Fairfax County, Virginia, in 1970, but has been spread throughout the Washington D.C. area. There are many variations to the legend, but most involve a man wearing a rabbit costume ("bunny suit") who attacks people with an axe.

MYTHS



Example: AFRICAN MYTHS: <http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/A-Am/African-Mythology.html>

Like myths from other parts of the world, those of the African peoples reflect beliefs and values. But while the mythologies of many cultures are carefully preserved relics of ancient times, African myths and legends are still a meaningful part of everyday life. Some African myths deal with universal themes, such as the origin of the world and the fate of the individual after death. Yet many spring from the continent's own settings, conditions, and history.

NOWADAYS



Illustrations:

<http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Mi-Ni/Modern-Mythology.html#ixzz2gP8Z1tB6>

More or Less than Human. A number of modern myths explore what it means to be human. In 1912 the American writer Edgar Rice Burroughs created the character Tarzan, the son of an English nobleman raised by apes in the African jungle. Like earlier myths about people raised by animals, the Tarzan story features animals with admirable

"human" qualities and people with brutish "animal" qualities. Tarzan himself combines the virtues of animal strength and civilized honor.

[http://www.unboundmedicine.com/medline/citation/7872031/\[The_myth_of_the_good_savage\]](http://www.unboundmedicine.com/medline/citation/7872031/[The_myth_of_the_good_savage])

The myth of the Good Savage assumes people to be naturally good, but civilization has led them into the realm of violence, hatred, and cruelty. Besides being naturally good, nice-minded people, "good savages" were also useful, obedient people, most likely to be easily exploited by Europeans--a source for the historical drama to come.

Heroes/Heroines

TWO DEFINITIONS:

1. GREEK MYTHOLOGY: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero>

A hero (heroine for a female), in Greek mythology and folklore, was originally a demigod, their cult being one of the most distinctive features of ancient Greek religion. Stories of heroism may serve as moral examples. In classical antiquity, cults that venerated deified heroes such as Heracles, Perseus, and Achilles played an important role in Ancient Greek religion.

2. LATER: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero>

The larger-than-life hero is a more common feature of fantasy (particularly sword and sorcery and epic fantasy) than more realist works.

VARIOUS TYPES

1. BIBLICAL FIGURES/MYTHOLOGICAL HEROES:

---> http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_culture_heroes

In Abrahamic religions, Noah or Noé or Noach, was the tenth and last of the antediluvian Patriarchs. The story of Noah and the Ark is told in the Genesis flood narrative. He could represent a biblical hero.

---> <http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/7-famous-heroes-in-the-bible/>

Abraham is a great hero of faith and it is by faith that he is considered righteous (Galatians 3:6). Because of his faithfulness that covenant is passed on to us.

2. LITERARY /FICTIONAL CHARACTERS:

---> **In novels:** <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero>

The word "hero" or "heroine" is sometimes used simply to describe the protagonist of a story, or the love interest, a usage which can conflict with the superhuman expectations of heroism. The larger-than-life hero is a more common feature of fantasy (particularly sword and sorcery and epic fantasy) than more realist works. An example could be Mme. Bovary.

---> **In modern movies:** <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero>

In modern movies, the hero is often simply an ordinary person in extraordinary circumstances, who, despite the odds being stacked against him or her, typically prevails in the end. In some movies (especially action movies), a hero may exhibit characteristics such as superhuman strength and endurance to the point of the hero being nearly invincible. Examples of modern heroes are Harry Potter, Bilbo Baggins, Luke Skywalker...

3. SUPER-HEROES: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero>

A superhero is a type of fictional stock character possessing extraordinary or superhuman powers^[1] and dedicated to protecting the public. A good example could be Wonderwoman.

4. HISTORICAL/NATIONAL HEROES WITH POLITICAL/SOCIAL/CULTURAL INFLUENCE:

http://www.adherents.com/people/100_heroes.html

---> **Abraham Lincoln/George Washington/Franklin Delano Roosevelt/John F. Kennedy**

Lincoln led the United States through its greatest constitutional, military, and moral crisis—the American Civil War—preserving the Union, abolishing slavery, strengthening the national government and modernizing the economy.

Washington was the first President of the United States (1789–1797), the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War, and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

Roosevelt, 32nd President of the United States (1933–1945), served for 12 years and four terms until his death in 1945, the only president ever to do so, and a central figure in world events during the mid-20th century, leading the United States during a time of worldwide economic depression and total war.

John F. Kennedy was the 35th President of the United States, serving from January 1961 until he was assassinated in November 1963.

---> **Martin Luther King, Jr./Rosa Parks**

Martin Luther King, Jr. as an American clergyman, activist, humanitarian, and leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement. **Rosa Parks** was an African-American civil rights activist, whom the U.S. Congress called "the first lady of civil rights" and "the mother of the freedom movement".

---> **Napoleon Bonaparte/General De Gaulle/Winston Churchill**

Napoleon Bonaparte was a French military and political leader who rose to prominence during the latter stages of the French Revolution and its associated wars in Europe.

General De Gaulle was a French general and statesman who led the Free French Forces during World War II. He later founded the French Fifth Republic in 1958 and served as its first president from 1959 to 1969.

Winston Churchill was a British politician who was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Churchill was also an officer in the British Army, a historian, a writer, and an artist. He is the only British Prime Minister to have received the Nobel Prize in Literature, and was the first person to be made an honorary citizen of the United States.

---> **Mahatma Gandhi**

Mahatma Gandhi was the preeminent leader of Indian nationalism in British-ruled India. Employing nonviolent civil disobedience, Gandhi led India to independence and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world.

---> **Nelson Mandela** is a South African anti-apartheid revolutionary and politician who served as President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999.

5. REAL-LIFE HEROES WITH PERSONAL SKILLS IN A PARTICULAR FIELD:

---> **Steve Jobs:** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steve_Jobs (+ **Bill Gates** ?) Steve Jobs was an American entrepreneur, marketer, and inventor, who was the co-founder, chairman, and CEO of Apple Inc.

---> **Felix Baumgartner**

Felix Baumgartner (born 20 April 1969) is an Austrian skydiver, daredevil and BASE jumper.

---> **Sportsmen/women / Artists/ Scientists**

Sir Anish Kapoor, RA (born 12 March 1954) is an Indian-born British sculptor.

6. EVERYDAY LIFE HEROES / EVERYMAN HEROES:

---> **Firefighters/Police Officers/Rescuers/Doctors Without Borders/...**

Greenpeace is a non-governmental environmental organization with offices in over forty countries and with an international coordinating body in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Greenpeace states its goal is to "ensure the ability of the Earth to nurture life in all its diversity"

7. CONTEMPORARY VIRTUAL HEROES:

---> **You Tube**

Norman Thavaud (born 14 April 1987) is a French humourist and blogger known for his short comical YouTube videos. Each of his videos have received at least two million views, some receiving over 7 million.

---> **SocNets**

Mark Elliot Zuckerberg (born May 14, 1984) is an American computer programmer and internet entrepreneur. He is best known as one of five co-founders of the social networking website Facebook.

8. ANTI-HEROES:

---> **In post-modern fictional works:** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fictional_antiheroes

Jay Gatsby, a young, mysterious millionaire with shady business connections (later revealed to be a bootlegger), originally from North Dakota. He is obsessed with Daisy Buchanan, whom he had met when he was a young officer stationed in the South during World War I

---> **In real life:**

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_Assange

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Snowden

Julian Assange is an Australian editor, activist, publisher and journalist. He is known as the editor-in-chief and founder of WikiLeaks, which publishes submissions of secret information, news leaks and classified media from anonymous news sources and whistleblowers.

Edward Snowden (born June 21, 1983) is an American computer specialist, a former CIA employee, and former NSA contractor who disclosed up to 200,000 classified documents to the press. Snowden is considered a fugitive by American authorities who have charged him with espionage and theft of government property. He is currently living in Russia under temporary asylum.

