

Greek Mythology Unit Study & TTRPG

By: Sarah S. Johnson, MEd

A short time after my original epiphany, inspiration struck me again. This time, it came in the form of a mutual interest. My daughter and I love musicals. We also love a good fantasy story with serious character development built in. So it was no surprise that we both fell in love with *Epic: The Musical*, the concept musical by Jorge Rivera Herrans based on Homer's *The Odyssey*. At some point after my daughter introduced me to *Epic* and pulled me into the world of D&D (not at the same time... these are separately intense obsessions), I realized that D&D could be a very valuable teaching method. It would take some work to adapt an existing D&D campaign, but the framework existed. Similarly, I noticed that the overlap between a D&D adventure and a story like *Epic* or *The Odyssey* (a classic hero's journey) is significant. There are enough similar elements that the story is well-suited to being a D&D adaptation. The hero's journey format and the new musical adaptation make it both an engaging and relevant story. I had already seen evidence of that within our own community and through the growing social media popularity of *Epic* and Jorge Rivera Herrans. My daughter and her friends were suddenly more interested in studying Greek mythology.

The following is my unit study plan. It's a work in progress. My hope is that someday soon it will be a fully developed unit study plan and TTRPG. As with all of my favorite curriculum planning projects, this one will be injected with creativity, adaptations for my individual group, and plenty of collaboration with talented and knowledgeable educators and gamers.

- A. Literature: *The Odyssey* by Homer. Students could read this on their own, but I think for many students, it would probably be more engaging and digestible as small excerpts or summaries (with discussion) sprinkled throughout the unit/game.
- B. History: The Trojan War has been taught as part of Greek mythology, but there is increasing evidence that it may have actually occurred around 1,180 BC¹. Art history and architecture could be added within the descriptions of interior surroundings. I think the character creation process could be a wonderful opportunity to include some historical context as well, by having students answer some key questions about their character's backstory, social class, family, appearance, what their life would have been like, etc.
- C. Mythology: Greek
- D. Geography: European and Middle Eastern; map skills for the geographic area, and also for interior spaces when possible (this could also connect back to history by using architecture)
- E. Writing: Students would chronicle their character's backstory and physical appearance using descriptive writing skills.
- F. Government/Politics: Monarchy, wartime politics

- G. Mathematics: Character creation formulas, dice rolls, formulas for skill proficiencies, advantage/disadvantage, hit points, damage, and health.
- H. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving: Figuring out solutions to multiple-step problems for students to find their way through/out of places and past enemies.
- I. Working Collaboratively/Social Skills: Figuring out solutions to multiple-step problems for students to find their way through/out of places and past enemies, specifically by working together and using each person's unique skills.
- J. Visual Arts: Students can draw their characters, gods, and monsters from Greek mythology, and help create a map of the area to be explored.
- K. Performing Arts: Incorporating *Epic: The Musical* would be my choice here. Clips can be shown, or students can watch or listen to it in its entirety. D&D can always be considered a performing art in its own right, even without outside source material. As long as there are people who want to become their in-game character, there will be performing arts.

For younger students, I think this model can still be used with some modifications. First, I would use a simplified version of character creation for them.² Next, I would use different source material and simplify the academic areas of study (generally just making everything more age/grade-level appropriate). Sticking with the Greek Mythology theme, The Percy Jackson Series would work pretty well. If you want to go in a completely different direction, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and The Wonderful Wizard of Oz could be great sources for D&D adventures.

¹ "Trojan War." Editors. *The History Channel*, Updated 2025, <https://www.history.com/articles/trojan-war>

² Russell, Brian. "Dungeons and Dragons for Kids." *Underfold Comics*, 2018, updated 2021, <https://theunderfold.com/2018/08/14/simplified-dungeons-and-dragons-for-young-kids/>

***Please reach out to learn more or to collaborate on this project!
I would love to hear from you!***

Find me on Discord: sj4gamers