

# **MYTHOLOGY GRADES 9-12**

EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2099 Pennington Road  
Ewing, NJ 08618

Board Approval Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
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In accordance with The Ewing Public Schools' Policy 2230, Course Guides, this curriculum has been reviewed and found to be in compliance with all policies and all affirmative action criteria.
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## **Course Overview**

Through the study of classical and world mythology, students will come to appreciate the timeless pertinence of this fascinating genre. The course will concentrate on the enduring patterns and motifs of mythology and how these are reflected in literature. It will enable students to deepen their appreciation for the continuity and tradition of our literary heritage and will offer a useful critical approach to the study of literature. Critical thinking, research, small group discussions, and oral presentations will be emphasized. Students who seek an intellectual challenge are encouraged to select this course.

**Course Instructional Time: 87 minutes 5 days per week for one semester**

## **21st Century Life and Careers**

In today's global economy, students need to be lifelong learners who have the knowledge and skills to adapt to an evolving workplace and world. To address these demands, Standard 9, 21st Century Life and Careers, which includes the 12 Career Ready Practices, establishes clear guidelines for what students need to know and be able to do in order to be successful in their future careers.

### **The 12 Career Ready Practices**

These practices outline the skills that all individuals need to have to truly be adaptable, reflective, and proactive in life and careers. These are researched practices that are essential to career readiness.

#### **CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.**

In English Language Arts, it is essential for students to communicate clearly and effectively. This is demonstrated through writing with a clear purpose and an appropriate audience in mind. Students also need to clearly communicate verbally, which is practiced in the English Language Arts classroom. Effective communicators are also active listeners. These skills are essential in the academic setting and in the workplace.

#### **CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.**

Research strategies are infused throughout the English Language Arts curriculum. It is imperative for students to utilize effective research strategies in order to formulate an argument, to support a thesis, and to research across content areas. Students need to use multiple sources in order to write a comprehensive research paper. Finally, students need to discern whether sources are reliable in order to present strong pieces of information and argument essays. Research skills are essential in the academic setting and in the workplace.

#### **CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.**

In order for students to be successful in school, in life, and in their career, they need to be critical thinkers and problem solvers. In English Language Arts classes, students learn to read and write critically. Through discussions and by actively engaging in speaking and listening, students will develop the necessary skills to be critical thinkers. In order to be productive citizens of the 21st century we need to ensure students can persevere in order to reach the solution of any problem.

### **Technology Integration**

#### **8.1 Educational Technology**

All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and create and communicate knowledge.

## **8.2 Technology Education, Engineering, Design and Computational Thinking - Programming**

All students will develop an understanding of the nature and impact of technology, engineering, technological design, computational thinking and the designed world as they relate to the individual, global society, and the environment.

**Social Studies Integration** - The social studies and English departments worked to integrate Research Simulation Tasks into both sets of curricula to provide ample opportunities to respond across content areas. The Research Simulation Task requires students to analyze an informational topic through several articles or multimedia stimuli. Students read and respond to a series of questions and synthesize information from multiple sources in order to write an analytic essay.

Companion Standards 9-10 - History, Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects

Companion Standards 11-12 - History, Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects

## **Unit 1: Mythic Meaning, Structure and Creation (Pacing – 8 Days)**

### **Why Is This Unit Important?**

This unit will introduce students to the structure and purpose of myths in society. As students become familiar with the enduring patterns and motifs found in mythology, they will gain a greater appreciation for the continuity and tradition of our literary heritage as a reflection of the collective experiences of humankind to make meaning and explain the world around us. In essence, mythologies are stories told to explain things that people have questioned. For instance, every culture has a myth that explains the creation of the earth and the universe. Myths help people to understand the things that they may not be able to explain. In modern society, many scientific explanations of natural phenomena are tried and tested. However, the myths of the past still ring true for many of the cultures who believe in them, especially those myths which tell of the universe and function still as a basis for religion.

Before written language, prehistoric peoples attempted to explain how the world began or the origin of different phenomenon in nature through stories called myths. Myths from around the world reflect the culture of its people—their values, beliefs and traditions. In the folkloric tradition, myths were handed down from generation to generation by word-of-mouth. Myths from around the world explain creation often using the same or similar elements in their stories. At the same time, myths from around the world often explain the same phenomenon in nature differently. Why are there similarities? Why are there differences? What can myths teach us about the culture it represents?

The big ideas embedded through this unit are:

- Whether passed down orally or retold in a literary format, myths follow identifiable patterns and contain common motifs.
- Myths are stories which provide an understanding of the world around us.
- Myths straddle the line between folklore, religion, fiction and science.
- The purpose of myths is to explain the unexplainable, to amuse, to unite and to educate.

### **Enduring Understandings:**

- Myths follow specific patterns and contain similar motifs which set them apart from other types of stories.
- Myths are stories meant to entertain and inform.
- Creation myths provide an insight into the workings of the human mind and have been understood to reveal divine mysteries, primitive science and justifications for human behavior.

**Essential Questions:**

- Why study mythology?
- What are the common patterns and motifs found in myths?
- How do different cultures explain the beginning of the world, the origin of man, or natural phenomenon? How is it explained that each continues to function?
- How do different peoples explain how man was created?
- What are the similarities and differences in creation myths from around the world?
- What unique cultural traits are revealed in myths?

**Acquired Knowledge:**

- Myths from all cultures contain common patterns and motifs.
- The purpose of myths is to explain, inform and amuse.
- Cultures create stories to interpret their origins.
- Differences in creation myths reflect the uniqueness of the geographic location of each culture.

**Acquired Skills:**

- Identify the structure and purpose of selected myths.
- Explain the similarities between myths from different geographic locations.
- Form theories about myths from discussions.
- Matrix cultural data from myths.
- Present findings through a variety of ways: maps, matrixes, oral presentations, murals, books.
- Create an original creation myth that is reflective of a particular culture and is consistent with its environment.

**Assessments:**

Formative:

- Graphic organizer to classify myths according to purpose (benchmark).
- Class discussions to explore the message of the myths and make personal connections.
- Cultural matrixes.

Summative:

- Project: Using knowledge of and references to classical mythology, students will create an original creation myth on a mural which reflects geographic considerations.

### **Instructional Materials:**

Core:

- *World Mythology: An Anthology of the Great Myths and Epics* by Donna Rosenberg
- *Myths and their Meaning* by Max J. Herzberg

Supplemental:

- Films: *Clash of the Titans* (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1981); *Those Fabulous Folks on Mt. Olympus: An Introduction to Greek and Roman Gods* (Meriwether Publishing, 1986):
  - NOTE: Films will be used to supplement reading material and will not be used to replace reading in this course. The learning goal for using videos will align with CCRA .RL.7 (integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words).

### **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

- Have students study one type of natural disaster and have them connect the scientific explanation to an ancient myth addressing the same kind of disaster.
- Make artifacts to accompany myths. Include statues and drawings of gods, various kinds of altars built to honor them, or tools or utensils that might have been used to worship them.

## **Technology Connections:**

- Helpful websites:
  - Mythology and Literature for High School Teachers from the Center for the Liberal Arts, University of Virginia at <http://www.virginia.edu/cla/classics/mythology-and-literature-for-high-school-teachers/>
  - Timeless Myths: Classical Mythology at [www.timelessmyths.com](http://www.timelessmyths.com)
  - Mythology Teacher at <http://www.mythologyteacher.com/>

## **Suggested Learning Activities:**

- Adjust questions on an assignment or assessment to meet the diverse needs of learners (i.e., short answer vs. essay; multiple choice with five options vs. three options; questions that require recall vs. those that require analysis, etc.).
- Have students work collaboratively to create the criteria for assessment based upon what is learned in class; allow them the opportunity to negotiate the criteria that will be used to determine success.

## **Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:**

### Reading Standards for Literature:

- RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- RL.11-12.5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
- RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

- RL.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.
- By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at grade level or above.

### Writing Standards:

- W.11-12.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
  - Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
  - Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
  - Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
  - Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
  - Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
- W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above).
- W.11-12.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- W.11-12.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
  - Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., “Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics”).

- W.11-12.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes.

**\*Note: also reference the corresponding NJSL standards for grades 9-10**

## Mythic Meaning, Structure and Creation [Benchmark Assessment]

**DIRECTIONS:** Select four myths read in class, one to represent each of the categories listed below. In the table below, categorize each myth and provide information from the text to explain why that particular myth represents the category you selected. Support your categorizations based upon specific evidence from each myth.

Family Drama Myths	Creation Myths	Threshold Myths	Trickster Tales

## **Unit 2: The Classical Tradition as a Reflection of Society (Pacing – 18 Days)**

### **Why Is This Unit Important?**

This unit will introduce students to the Greek pantheon and classical mythology so that they will be able to identify two purposes of mythology as maintaining order in society and preserving cultural ideals. The big ideas embedded through this unit are:

- The classical Greek pantheon of gods reflects the overall outlook of its culture.
- Classical mythology provides models for individuality and accountability in society.
- The interactions explored in myths between the classical Gods and Goddesses themselves and the mortals they rule over reflect specific and universal cultural concerns.
- Even if myths aren't real, they reflect real social and ethical concerns throughout time.

### **Enduring Understandings:**

- The Gods of ancient cultures reflect the overarching attitudes of the time.
- Cultural tradition and individual responsibility are often addressed and sometimes reconciled through the myths of a culture.
- The attributes, attitudes and interactions of classical gods display universal and specific cultural concerns.
- While the elements of classical mythology are tied to the core values and experiences of its origin, they may also be applied to society today.

### **Essential Questions:**

- How does the Greek pantheon reflect the overall outlook of its culture?
- How does classical mythology reconcile individual responsibility with responsibility to society?
- In what ways does classical mythology suggest humanity embrace and/or rebel against cultural tradition?
- What lessons can we learn from the study of ancient Greek mythology that can be applied today to address social and ethical attitudes?

**Acquired Knowledge:**

- The qualities of classical gods and goddesses display the cultural ideals of ancient Greeks.
- Knowledge of the classical pantheon and the myths of its members provide insight to the beliefs of the time as well as today's common core beliefs.
- Interaction between and among gods and mortals display what is important to a person as a member of society and as a member of the human race.
- Analyzing the ethical and social messages of classical mythology will enhance one's understanding of the ethical and social concerns in modern society.

**Acquired Skills:**

- Identify the members of the classical pantheon.
- Explain the significance of the relationships between and among the Greek gods and goddesses as a reflection of the ancient culture's social structure and prevailing attitudes.
- Analyze the interactions between gods and men and the message such relationships and interactions portray about personal and societal responsibility.
- Evaluate current societal concerns and use classical stories to offer solutions that address them.

**Assessments:**

## Formative:

- Graphic organizer to show the relationship between the gods and goddesses
- Journal responses to explore the message of the myths and to make personal connections
- Completed rebellion and responsibility charts

## Summative:

- Project: Using knowledge of and references to classical mythology, students will create an original Public Service Announcement Skit which addresses current societal and ethical concerns

## Benchmark:

- Unit test including a written response to an open-ended question

## **Instructional Materials:**

Core:

- *World Mythology: An Anthology of the Great Myths and Epics* by Donna Rosenberg
- *The Encyclopedia of Mythology* by Arthur Cotterell
- *Interdisciplinary Unit: Ancient Greece (Challenging)* Published by Teacher Created Materials, Inc.
- *Myths and their Meaning* by Max J. Herzberg

## **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

- When studying ancient Greek mythology, the study of art would be a clear interdisciplinary connection. Students can locate artistic renderings of a Greek god or goddess and create a PowerPoint that connects the original myths to the work of art. Students can further compare and contrast the information provided in the myth to the symbols and images in the work of art.
- To connect to history, students can research Greek society and make connections to the message of social mores as presented in the myths.

## **Technology Connections:**

- Helpful websites:
  - Encyclopedia Mythica at [www.pantheon.org](http://www.pantheon.org)
  - Mythweb at [www.mythweb.com](http://www.mythweb.com)

## **Suggested Learning Activities:**

- Students can be placed with a learning buddy to read and study about ancient Greece and Greek mythology. Partners can be assigned by the classroom teacher to provide support for students who may need it and to challenge students who work at that end of the spectrum.
- Journal prompts can be differentiated to meet the diverse needs of students in an English elective.

## **Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:**

### Standards for Reading Literature:

- RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
- RL.11-12.7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (e.g., Shakespeare and other authors.)
- RL.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.

### Standards for Reading Informational Texts:

- RI.11-12.1. Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.), to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- RI.11-12.2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text, and analyze their development and how they interact to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RI.11-12.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
- RI.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.
- By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above.

**\*Note: also reference the corresponding NJSL standards for grades 9-10**

### **Unit 3: The Hero's Journey (Pacing – 18 Days)**

#### **Why Is This Unit Important?**

This unit will introduce students to the work of Joseph Campbell and his theories, so that they will be able to identify and create an epic adventure story utilizing all eight components of the hero's journey. The big ideas embedded through this unit are:

- The hero's journey isn't just a pattern from myth; it's the pattern of life.
- The hero's journey is reflected everywhere, from television comedy to great literature to the experiences of our own lives.
- The success or failure of a hero in his or her quest reflects the culture in which his or her story was created.
- Even if the characters aren't real, the journeys they take and challenges they face reflect real journeys and challenges a reader can learn from.

#### **Enduring Understandings:**

- The 'journey' as a pattern of human experience which has been captured in mythology and in popular entertainment.
- Being able to identify elements of the hero's journey and explain the apparent success or failure of a hero is a useful tool in self-discovery.
- Archetypal elements in myths point to the universality of the human experience, while the particular elements of quests reflect the values of a specific culture.
- The elements of a myth are always tied to the core values and experiences of its origin.

#### **Essential Questions:**

- Why study the hero's journey? What are the eight steps of the hero's journey?
- How is the hero's journey similar in ancient myths and popular culture?
- What qualities do all heroes possess? How does the hero reflect the human experience?
- How does a hero and his quest personify the dreams and desires of the society that spawned this hero?
- How does a reader identify the values important to a society when reading a particular epic or story or watching a film?
- How is the hero's journey similar to the pattern of our own lives? How is the hero's quest representative of an internal psychological journey as well as an external physical transformation?

### **Acquired Knowledge:**

- While the story of the journey first manifested itself in ancient myths and legends, the pattern is still prominent in literature today.
- Knowledge of a culture's hero stories provides insight into its beliefs, many of which can be applied to contemporary society.
- The hero's journey duplicates the stages of the rite of passage which allows the successful hero to return to his world with all of the respect, rights and privileges his status implies.
- The *eight steps transformation* is a single process and individual adventure towards growth and transformation.
- When someone refuses the call or fails to complete the hero's journey, a reader is better able to understand his or her faults and weaknesses, many of which can be applied to the reader him- or herself.
- One's 'voyage' can be outward into a physical unknown or inward to a psychological unknown; the challenge is to meet each test for growth and change.

### **Acquired Skills:**

- Identify common mythic elements in ancient heroic myths and modern adventure films.
- Explain the significance of the physical and psychological challenges faced by successful and unsuccessful heroes in relation to the lesson each provides.
- Apply Campbell's idea of archetypes and use it to map out the underlying structures in a hero's journey or 'mono-myth'.
- Employ all elements of the hero's journey when creating an original myth.

### **Assessments:**

#### Formative:

- Graphic organizer (i.e., Venn diagram) to compare myths and adventure films or to compare heroes across myths (benchmark).
- Journal responses or reading responses to explore the message/theme of the myths and to make personal connections.
- Complete mono-myth maps.

#### Summative:

- Project: Using knowledge of the eight stages of the hero's journey, students will create an original storybook for an original hero.

Benchmark:

- Hero's Journey Benchmark: Hero Myth's Comparison Chart

### **Instructional Materials:**

Core:

- Works of Joseph Campbell:
- "The Hero's Adventure"
- "Masks of Eternity"
- "Love and the Goddess"

Supplemental:

- Films: *The Odyssey* (Redbird Films, 2006), *Star Wars* (Lucasfilm, 1983), *O' Brother, Where Art Thou?* (Universal Pictures, 2000):
- NOTE: Films will be used to supplement reading material and will not be used to replace reading in this course. The learning goal for using videos will align with CCRA .RL.7 (integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words).

### **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

- To connect to history, students can investigate and chart different ancient civilizations to determine how heroic elements display political, social and geographic considerations.
- Students can be asked to research common psychological theories in relation to the mono-myth and hero psychology.

### **Technology Connections:**

- Hero: The Archetypal Hero in Literature, Religion and Popular Culture at <http://tatsbox.com/hero/>
- Teacher resource sites such as Web English Teacher (<http://www.varsitytutors.com/englishteacher>) and Read, Write, Think ([www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org)) have wonderful lesson plans to support this unit of study.
- *The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell on His Life and Works* is available on Google Books.

### **Suggested Learning Activities:**

- Students can be provided the opportunity to work collaboratively (self-selected or assigned by the teacher) to provide supports for struggling readers while using gifted readers as tutors and group leaders.
- Graphic organizers or classroom activities can be differentiated to meet the varying needs of students in the class.
- The teacher can differentiate by providing tiered activities for students and/or groups.

### **Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:**

#### Reading Standards for Literature:

- RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- RL.11-12.5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
- RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
- RL.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.

**\*Note: also reference the corresponding NJSL standards for grades 9-10**

## **Unit 4: Epic Literature (Pacing – 10 Days)**

### **Why Is This Unit Important?**

This unit will introduce students to the structure and purpose of epics in society. As students become familiar with the enduring patterns and motifs found in epics, they will gain a greater appreciation for the continuity and tradition of our literary heritage as a reflection of the collective experiences of humankind. Throughout this unit, students will read and view a variety of excerpts from classic and contemporary epic poems, novels and film. They will discover how epic heroes illustrate traits, perform deeds and exemplify certain morals that are valued by the society from which the epic originates, but also share commonalities with epic heroes of other times and places. They will examine similarities in content such as the hero's code of honor, his/her nearly supernatural ability to overcome great obstacles, elements of myth and folklore, vast landscapes and frequent speeches (which are a likely throwback to the oral tradition). They will examine the conventions of the original epic in its poetic form, including epic meter, the use of an invocation, epithets and formulaic language. They will learn how epics have evolved from poetry to prose narratives, plays and films. Ultimately, students will write an essay wherein they compare and contrast the features of a classical epic and a contemporary one, citing specific examples from the texts that are examined; they will note connections to their own lives as well. The big ideas embedded through this unit are:

- Epic poetry and sagas follow identifiable patterns and contain common motifs.
- Epics are stories which provide an understanding of the past as well as the world around us.
- Differences between epics stem from cultural traits and traditions.
- The characters and conflicts in epic poetry have evolved over time.
- Situations presented in epics have lasting appeal and influence because they allow for symbolic as well as literal interpretations.
- Mythology is about the human experience; the stories are the dreams of humanity.

**Enduring Understandings:**

- Epics follow specific patterns and contain similar motifs which set them apart from other types of stories.
- Epics are stories meant to entertain and inform.
- Epics provide an insight into the workings of the human mind and have been understood to reveal divine mysteries, primitive science and justifications for human behavior.
- The epic conventions found in myths (the hero, influence of deities, high adventure, the role of fate, monsters and the fatal flaw) are used in modern lore, storytelling and fantasy films.

**Essential Questions:**

- What are the common patterns and motifs found in epics?
- What are the similarities and differences in epic poems from around the world?
- What unique cultural traits are revealed in epics?
- How has the formula used in epic poetry set a standard for later literary works and evolved over time?
- Why do authors and filmmakers use recurring themes from ancient literature and what do they offer contemporary readers?

**Acquired Knowledge:**

- Epics from all cultures contain common patterns and motifs.
- The purpose of epics is to explain, inform and amuse.
- Cultures create epics to interpret their origins and express their beliefs.
- Differences in epics reflect the differences in cultures.
- The epic has evolved over time to incorporate both old and new conventions, taboos and viewpoints.

**Acquired Skills:**

- Identify the structure and purpose of selected epics.
- Explain the similarities among epics from varying cultures.
- Form theories about why epics differ from culture to culture.
- Analyze and present findings of several epics.
- Explore the enduring impact and influences of epics in modern literature, film and art.

**Assessments:**

Formative:

- Graphic organizers to chart epic elements
- Epic reader/viewer response scrapbook
- Epic comparison debate

Summative:

- Tests and quizzes including written responses to open-ended questions
- Epic magazine assignment
- Formal oral report comparing, contrasting and exploring the influence of epics in modern literature, film, or art

Benchmark:

- Essay comparing the journey of Odysseus to one's personal journey

**Instructional Materials:**

Core:

- *The Illustrated Bullfinch's Mythology: The Age of Fable* (Macmillan, 1997)
- *World Mythology: An Anthology of Great Myths and Epics* by Donna Rosenberg
- *The Five Minute Iliad and Other Instant Classics* by Guy Nagan

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**

- Students can connect to history by creating a timeline highlighting cultural details from prehistoric, early Greek culture, the Dark Ages, the Archaic Period, the Classical Age and Hellenistic Periods to identify and analyze epic conventions.
- Students can create illustrated maps based on epic adventures and locations.

**Technology Connections:**

- A Story of Epic Proportions: What Makes a Poem an Epic? at [http://edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=587](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=587)

### **Suggested Learning Activities:**

- Independent study opportunities can be provided for students, which can be differentiated based upon reading level or student interest.
- Open-ended activities can be provided and choice of activity can be permitted.
- Students can explore or investigate based upon student interest.

### **Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:**

#### Reading Standards for Literature:

- RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- RL.11-12.5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
- RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
- RL.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.

Writing Standards:

- W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W.11-12.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
  - A. Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., “Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics”).

**\*Note: also reference the corresponding NJSL standards for grades 9-10**

## **Unit 5: Comparative Mythology (Pacing – 12 Days)**

### **Why Is This Unit Important?**

This unit will give students a chance to explore mythology beyond the basics they may have had in the past and give them a multi-faceted view of world mythology as seen today. By looking at mythology comparatively, students will be encouraged to consider topics such as the repercussions of war, vanity and greed, the workings of fate, the nature of love, the roles of women in society, revenge and forgiveness, the meaning of life and national identity and to discuss the implications that each theme has on a specific culture and across cultures. While mythology has traditionally been considered a narration of events that could not be explained by ancient man, recent research suggests this narrow definition no longer holds true. Recent literary experts argue that myths can encompass the goodness that people are expected to show; they can demonstrate the virtues and values that are important in a culture. The big ideas embedded in this unit include:

- Myths are stories which seek to explain the natural world and the nature of man.
- Most cultures have their own mythologies which show a sensitivity to geological, societal and human concerns.
- Myths often express a culture's attitude towards power, love and life in general.
- Through the study of creation, fertility, and/or hero myths, common threads of values across cultures and geographic locations become apparent.
- A culture's myths may serve as cautionary tales about human behavior and what will happen in the afterlife; they may also provide insight into the virtues and values important to a people.

### **Enduring Understandings:**

- Most cultures have a unique set of stories which serve to preserve their principles and values.
- Each culture has searched to explain the unexplainable through mythological stories.
- Human beings are remarkably alike, regardless of their geographic location or the time in which they lived.

**Essential Questions:**

- What characteristics are found in different types of myths?
- What natural phenomena, supernatural phenomena and afterlife phenomena do myths explain?
- What differences in cultures' mythic explanations can be attributed to geographical, historic, societal or other factors?
- What universal values can be derived from comparing different cultures' mythologies?
- How are concerns related to power, love and life addressed in a variety of myths?

**Acquired Knowledge:**

- Most cultures have their own mythologies which show a sensitivity to geological, societal and human concerns.
- Myths from many different cultures share commonalities (i.e., common themes such as the repercussions of war, vanity and greed, the workings of fate, the nature of love, the roles of women in society, revenge and forgiveness, the meaning of life and national identity).
- The function of myths has traditionally been to explain the unexplainable, but recent literature argues that myths can communicate the goodness and virtue important to a culture.

**Acquired Skills:**

- Categorize myths according to various functions.
- Read, analyze and evaluate a variety of mythology/folklore of literary merit from civilizations and countries around the world and explain its cultural significance.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between a culture, its mythology and the individual.
- Read, discuss and comprehend the explanatory myths, morality myths and hero/journey myths.
- Compare myths from cultures, expanding beyond Greece and Rome.
- Use print, electronic databases and online resources to access information, organize ideas and develop writing.
- Work cooperatively with group members, distributing labor equally among all members.

## **Assessments: Suggested assessments, but not limited to those listed**

### Formative:

- Journal writing or responsive writing after reading a work
- Graphic organizer (i.e., Venn diagram, comparison chart) to compare
- Write an original myth representing a specific culture during a specific period in time

### Summative:

- Tests and Quizzes

### Benchmark:

- Contrast myths across cultures
- Compare themes from myths to personal experiences or contemporary issues
- Create a board game to help high school students understand mythology, specifically focusing on myths across cultures

## **Instructional Materials:**

### Core:

- *Learning Works Enrichment Series: Mythology, Archaeology, Architecture* by Diane Sylvester and Mary Wieman
- *Learning Works Enrichment Series: Egyptians, Maya and Minoans* by Susan Matthics
- *World Mythology: An Anthology of the Great Epics* by Donna Rosenberg

## **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

- Students can incorporate math skills by creating an Aztec calendar.
- Like the ancient Egyptians, the Mayan wrote in hieroglyphics, small pictures that stood for words or ideas. Students can use their art or technology skills to design hieroglyphics to symbolize what is important to them.

## **Technology Connections:**

- Electronic texts are available at <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html>
- Your Guide to the Gods: Mythology with a Twist! at [www.godchecker.com](http://www.godchecker.com)

### **Suggested Learning Activities:**

- Student groups can be assigned for group investigations; groupings can be mixed-ability or interest groups.
- Differentiated graphic organizers can be provided to support students when reading and as a prewriting tool before writing.
- Mini-lessons can be planned to meet the needs of the diverse student group. Whole group mini-lessons can meet the curricular needs of all students, but small group mini-lessons would allow the teacher to differentiate instruction based upon need. Mini-lessons can be presented to several different groups, some who struggle and others who need advanced lessons to push them beyond the basic curriculum.

### **Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:**

#### Reading Standards for Literature:

- RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
- RL.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.

### Reading Standards for Informational Texts:

- RI.11-12.1. Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.), to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- RI.11-12.2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text, and analyze their development and how they interact to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RI.11-12.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
- RI.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.
- By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above.

### Writing Standards:

- W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W.11-12.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
  - A. Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., "Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics").

**\*Note: also reference the corresponding NJSL standards for grades 9-10**

## **Unit 6: Mythology Applied: The Art of Allusion (Pacing – 18 Days)**

### **Why Is This Unit Important?**

This unit on mythological allusions will help students understand references that are otherwise only read about in their respective mythological texts. As students read their assigned selections, they will not only focus on the stories themselves, but they will also learn how the references are used in each selection, how references affect meaning and how such references help a reader to understand the nuances provided by additional information. The unit will also introduce students to popular myths that are still commonplace in modern times as part of aesthetic language, each of which relies heavily on the assumption that people know what the reference is about and should know the intended meaning.

Myths are not only a part of the past but also an integral part of everyday modern life and of our cultural heritage. Today, allusions to myths are found in ordinary conversations, in songs, sermons, ads and brand names. Thus, knowledge of ancient mythology will enhance everyday life. Myths are exciting to learn on their own merits and have the power to help us understand ourselves and how we relate to the world around us. The big ideas embedded in this unit include:

- When a person borrows a word or a phrase from another work of literature, history, religion, art, or other events, factual or fictitious, an allusion or reference is made to an ancient story or myth.
- Writers or speakers use brief references to enhance the meaning of an expression or to provide depth to a character or plot.
- With just a word or two, an individual can create expanded descriptions or images, provided the reader knows what is being referred to in the text.
- Mythological allusions can be found in literature, art, advertising and other fields of study.

### **Enduring Understandings:**

- Allusions are stylistic devices used by authors and artists to provide an additional level of meaning.
- Allusion is used to explain or clarify a complex idea through a brief reference.
- Though myths may not seem to have a place in contemporary society, mythological allusions and clichés permeate our everyday language.
- The inferences gleaned from mythological allusions affect thoughts, actions, emotions and even decisions in life.

**Essential Questions:**

- Why do authors, artists and others use allusions to mythology? What is the benefit of such references?
- How does knowledge of mythological allusions enhance the meaning of a literary work or abstract concept?
- To what extent do people still use classical clichés, proverbial expressions and conversational phrases that have their origins in classical mythology?
- What other fields use mythological references?

**Acquired Knowledge:**

- Authors use allusions to convey multiple meanings to the reader.
- Mythological allusions are used in modern society to help an audience clarify and expand meaning.
- Allusions appear in poetry, advertising, film and everyday conversation.
- The fields of science and psychology also rely heavily upon mythological allusions.

**Acquired Skills:**

- Recognize allusions as stylistic devices.
- Identify the origin of common mythological allusions in the arts and sciences.
- Interpret mythological references in a variety of sources.
- Use mythological allusions in writing and speaking.

**Assessments:**

Formative:

- Match mythological references to modern interpretations.

Summative:

- Write a formal essay in defense of the use of allusion by an individual
- Design a skit using words and allusions from classical mythology.
- Research and report upon mythic allusions in poetry, modern song lyrics, art, science and advertising.

Benchmark:

- Create a new product based around a mythic allusion (benchmark).

## **Instructional Materials:**

Core:

- “Conclusion: Other Applications of Mythology” from *Myths and Their Meaning* by Max J. Herzberg

Supplemental:

- Film: *Creatures Fantastic: Man Beasts* (Dorling Kindersley):
  - NOTE: Films will be used to supplement reading material and will not be used to replace reading in this course. The learning goal for using videos will align with CCRA .RL.7 (integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words).

## **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

- To connect to science, students can research the mythic origin of constellations and select a group of stars and devise a myth to account for its presence.
- Students can research the use of myths and mythical allusions used by musical composers.

## **Technology Connections:**

- Greek Mythology Today and the Myth of the Month at <http://thanasis.com/myth.htm>
- Teaching resources and activities focusing on mythological allusions are available for download at <http://www.mythologyteacher.com/It's%20Only%20an%20Allusion.pdf>.
- The Art of Allusion at [www.artcyclopedia.com](http://www.artcyclopedia.com)

## **Suggested Learning Activities:**

- Students can think-pair-share and the teacher can monitor for readiness.
- Open-ended activities can be assigned by interest or by student reading level.
- The teacher can jigsaw activities to hold all students accountable for reading but to differentiate by assigning only sections of a full text.
- Games and tournaments allow all students to become involved while allowing the teacher to assign roles or differentiate questions to assess student knowledge.

## **Applicable New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts:**

### Reading Standards for Literature:

- RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed.)
- RL.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (e.g., Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
- RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement.)
- RL.11-12.7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (e.g., Shakespeare and other authors.)
- RL.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above with scaffolding as needed. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at grade level or above.

**\*Note: also reference the corresponding NJSL standards for grades 9-10**

## Sample Standards Integration

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills & Career Readiness Practices**

**CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.**

**CRP11. Use technology to enhance productivity.**

In Unit 2, using knowledge and references to classical mythology, students are asked to create a public service announcement which addresses current societal and ethical concerns. First, student will communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. This will be the basis for the creation of the public service announcement. Next, students will employ their technological skills to create a broadcast for the public service announcement. They can utilize the green screen to create a broadcast or can film their production to release for others to view.

### **Technology Integration**

**8.1.12.C.1: Develop an innovative solution to a real world problem or issue in collaboration with peers and experts, and present ideas for feedback through social media or in an online community.**

In Unit 5, students will research (using online data bases and other online resources) and collaborate with peers through blog platforms and/or Google docs. Their goals are multidimensional: students may choose to explain the cultural significance of mythology and why it's still relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century or compare themes from myths to personal experiences and/or contemporary issues.

### **Interdisciplinary Connection**

**Social Studies:**

**6.2 World History/Global Studies: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically and systematically about how past interactions of people, cultures, and the environment affect issues across time and cultures. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions as socially and ethically responsible 35 world citizens in the 21st century.**

In Unit 2, students will conduct research about ancient civilizations to understand how mythology has transcended thousands of years and is still relevant now. Students will understand how societal mores of the past are connected to moral and ethical decisions we make today.