

ELA: Grade 6, Lesson 15, Why Ancient Greek Mythology is Still Relevant Today

Lesson Focus: Read an informational text, “Why Ancient Greek Mythology Is Still Relevant Today”, to better understand the characteristics of Greek myths.

Practice Focus: Students will write their own Greek myth using the characteristics that are exhibited in the informational text and in the literary text “Arachne”.

Objective: Students will use the informational text to determine the characteristics of Greek myths and apply those characteristics to “Arachne” and their own Greek myth, which they will write independently.

Academic Vocabulary: vast, fascinated, relevant, gallivanting, triumph, charred, morals, philosophies, glimpse, impart, integral, immortal, inopportune, unaffected, irony, follies, hubris

TN Standards: 6.RI.KID.1, 6.RL.KID.2, 6.RI.CS.4, 6.RI.CS.5, 6.W.TTP.3

Teacher Materials:

- The Teacher Packet for ELA, Grade 6, Lesson 15
- Chart paper or white board and markers
- Example of chart:

Characteristics of Greek Myths	Arachne	My Myth
includes human characters	Arachne	
includes Greek gods as characters	Athena	
has a purpose to impart knowledge (natural phenomenon)	to explain how spiders came to be	
has a lesson	to not be boastful; to be humble	

Student Materials:

- Paper, pen/pencil, surface to write on
- Student response to Lesson 14 independent practice
- The Student Packet for ELA, Grade 6, Lesson 15 which can be found on www.tn.gov/education

Teacher Delivery Notes

- This text has some Greek names. There are some phonetic spellings provided. You may want to Google the phrases to hear the pronunciations.
- You will need to create a chart for notes prior to the lesson. See the chart above.

Teacher Do	Students Do
Opening (1 min) Hello! Welcome to Tennessee’s At Home Learning Series for literacy! Today’s lesson is for all our 6th graders out there, though everyone is welcome to tune in. This lesson is the fifth in this week’s series.	

<p>My name is ____ and I'm a ____ grade teacher in Tennessee schools. I'm so excited to be your teacher for this lesson! Welcome to my virtual classroom!</p> <p>If you didn't see our previous lessons, you can find them at www.tn.gov/education. You can still tune in to today's lesson if you haven't seen any of our others. But it might be more fun if you first go back and watch our other lessons, since today we'll be talking about things we learned previously.</p> <p>Today we will be learning about how the author uses language to build characters and to move to a resolution in the story of Arachne! Before we get started, to participate fully in our lesson today, you will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper, pen/pencil, surface to write on • Student response to Lesson 14 independent practice • The Student Packet for ELA, Grade 6, Lesson 15 which can be found on www.tn.gov/education <p>Ok, let's begin!</p>	<p>Students gather materials for the lesson and prepare to engage with the lesson's content.</p>
<p>Intro (6 min)</p> <p>I always like for us to start with a short review at the beginning of our lesson so we can reflect on what we have learned to prepare us for what we are going to learn. Let's think about the path of learning.</p> <p>In lesson 11, we mainly just read to figure out what the story was about - a mortal who has been transformed into a spider by Athena. In lesson 12, we studied the elements of the myth, <i>Arachne</i>, and how they led to the resolution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you remember the meaning of exposition? [Pause.] Yes, it means how the author reveals the main characters and setting. • Next question: What is the word that means a struggle between the main character and someone or something else? It is first introduced in the exposition. [Pause.] You got it! Conflict is the word. • What word means the development of the conflict? These are the events that lead to the climax. [Pause.] Rising action is the development of conflict. • Next question - what is the turning point of the conflict? It usually is the most exciting part of the story. [Pause.] Did you say climax? Fantastic! • Last elements questions: This word describes the results of the climax and ties together loose ends of the story. [Pause.] You are correct... resolution. 	<p>Students prepare to follow the gradual-release trajectory, understanding that they will be doing more listening at first and more "doing" toward the end of the lesson.</p> <p>Students engage in a review of lesson 11-14.</p>

<p>During lesson 13, we focused on the conflict. Conflict is the major problem between the main character of the story and someONE or someTHING else. Who is the conflict between in our text? [Pause.] That's right. The conflict in our text is between Arachne, a mortal, and Athena, an immortal. As a result of the conflict, Arachne is transformed into a spider.</p> <p>In our last lesson, lesson 14, we dove into how the author used descriptions to help us understand the characters before and after Arachne's transformation. I asked you to imagine that you are Arachne <i>after</i> your transformation to a spider.</p> <p>Take a minute to reread what you wrote. [Pause.] I'm going to read an example to you. I want you to listen for how the student used descriptive language to show how Arachne felt about her transformation into a spider. Also, see if you hear how the student used descriptions from our chart.</p> <p>I arise daily to the beautiful task of weaving threads of fine silk with my slender, agile legs. What, to Athena, was meant to be a curse has only allowed me to focus more on my skills- which only improve with each passing, dewy morning. Now, mortals pass and marvel at the glistening array of tapestries I have created. The pride, Athena felt with her seemingly miserable punishment, must haunt her as my works appear everywhere - even in her own home. My weaving is beyond anything Athena can fashion. I laugh at her attempts and plot to use my artistries for her demise.</p> <p>Ooo... what did you hear? Did you hear how the student used details from the original story and chart? [Pause.] I heard descriptions of the spider's legs but in positive words- slender and agile. Agile means able to move quickly. This student also included details about the dewy morning and how the weaving glistens in the sun. How does Arachne feel in this version? [Pause.] I heard details that made me think she is proud of her work - "beautiful task", "glistening array", and "works appear everywhere". I also heard she is wanting revenge with the words: plot and demise. Demise means death.</p> <p>Today, our goal is to think about how ancient Greek origin myths are relevant to our lives today. We will begin with me showing you what that looks like as we read a new informational text. Then, there will be time for us to work together to brainstorm what you want your myth to be about. Finally, I will assign you independent work that you can complete after the lesson ends.</p>	<p>Students reread own writing from lesson 14.</p> <p>Students listen to a sample writing for descriptions of how Arachne feels.</p>
<p><u>Teacher Model/Read-Aloud</u> (15 min)</p>	

Today we will read an informational text titled “Why Ancient Greek Mythology is Still Important Today.” I bet by looking at the title you can already tell me what this article is about. What do you think the central idea of the text is? [Pause.]

If you said “The Importance of Greek Myths” then you are right! This article gives a lot of good information about the importance of Greek myths, but it also gives us good information on the characteristics of Greek myths. As we read today, we are going to focus on the characteristics of Greek Myths. We will use the characteristics that we find in the article to compare to the Greek myth we read this week, “Arachne”! We will also use these characteristics to help write our own Greek myth.

So for starters, let’s make a chart that we can use to help us organize our thoughts and collect our evidence. With your paper and your pencil draw a header line and make a chart that has 3 columns like this.

[Pause and model drawing the chart or show them a sample chart (slide L15-A) that has not been filled in. It should look like this and use up about half of the page:]

CHARACTERISTICS	“ARACHNE”	MY MYTH

Great! Now in capital letters, let’s write the header for each column. In the first column, write: CHARACTERISTICS [Pause and model writing “characteristics”. As you write, spell the word out to help students as they write.] C-H-A-R-A-C-T-E-R-I-S-T-I-C-S.

Great! We will use this column to jot down the characteristics of Greek myths that we find in our informational text.

In the middle column, in capital letters write: “ARACHNE” [Pause and model writing “Arachne”. As you write, spell the word out to help students as they write.] A-R-A-C-H-N-E. Also, put quotation marks around this word because it is a title of a short story.

Excellent! Now let’s label the last column. In capital letters, write: MY MYTH [Pause and model writing “MY MYTH”.]

Great job! Now we are ready to start reading. Remember that as we read, we are gathering details that describe the

Students will make predictions about what the article is about today.

Students will follow the teacher’s directions to set up their note taker.

characteristics of Greek myths. At the end of today's lesson, you'll have to write your own Greek myth, so pay close attention.

Are you ready? [Pause.] Let's go! For starters, let's look at the title:

"Why Ancient Greek Mythology is Still Important Today"

- Mythology is a strange word, but I bet you've heard it before. Remember, -ology means "the study of" so what do you think the word mythology is the study of? [Pause.]
- If you said "myth" you are 100% correct! So when I read this title I know that what it is really saying is "Why is the study of Ancient Greek myths still important today?"
- Let's find out as we read!

[Show slide L15-B.] If there is one subject that is still widely taught today, it has to be the subject of ancient Greek mythology. It isn't just taught as part of a literature curriculum at school but is also part of most history lessons. Some people might wonder why the world is still so hung up on ancient Greek myths when they are nothing but stories and they came from thousands of years ago. However, one look at the vast amount of ancient Greek-themed movies and literature today, people will quickly come to the conclusion that the world is still fascinated with Greek mythology though they might not always be able to say why.

- In that last sentence what do you think the word "fascinated" means? [Pause and point to or highlight this word.]
- That's right! "Fascinated" means "interested". This section of text explains that people are still interested in Greek myths. We know this because of all the books and movies that retell these ancient stories. Have you ever read Percy Jackson books or seen the movies? [Pause.]
- Interesting. Or should I say fascinating. Let's keep reading.

[Show slide L15-C.] For those who think that ancient Greek mythology stories are nothing more than a bunch of outdated tales, they just happen to be wrong. For sure, these stories may have been written hundreds if not thousands of years ago, but it is good to remember they were written by wise men who had a hand in helping shape modern thinking. These great men, Aristotle and Sophocles to name a few, were not mere storytellers; they didn't spend their days weaving tales just because they wanted to and had nothing to do. They were too

Students will learn about what the word mythology means.

Students will follow along as the teacher reads.

good for that and this is why their Greek myths have withstood the test of time and are relevant until today. In fact, they might even still be relevant a hundred years from now.

- Before I ask you questions about his paragraph, let's make sure we can pronounce the names. [Pause and point to or highlight Aristotle and Sophocles.] **Repeat after me: Aristotle.** [Pause.] **Excellent! Let's try the next one. Repeat after me: Sophocles.** [Pause.]
- Great job! These are a few of the people who actually wrote Greek myths. But why are we still reading their stories thousands of years later? [Pause.] There's a word that appears at the end of the paragraph. The word is "relevant". [Pause and point to or highlight relevant.] Relevant means "closely connected".
- Let me reread the last two sentences and let's think about what this paragraph is trying to say:
- "They were too good for that and this is why their Greek myths have withstood the test of time and are relevant until today. In fact, they might even still be relevant a hundred years from now."
- Now that I know what "relevant" means, I know that this paragraph is trying to show that we can still connect to Greek myths even though they were written so long ago. Let's think about why Greek myths are relevant today as we read the next paragraph.

[Show slide L15-D.] **What are Greek Myths?**

To some people, Greek myths are these epic tales of gods and goddesses gallivanting about the earth, achieving all sorts of impossible tasks. They are stories of people dealing with the gods and either they come out triumphant or they end up bloody and charred or turned into animals and plants. Indeed, a person who doesn't look beyond the surface will think these tales are nothing more than flights of fancy by old story-tellers from the past but a deeper look at the stories will tell you more than that. These myths aren't just legends and while they are "just stories" they are stories with a purpose and reason. A deeper look at Greek myths should reveal morals, philosophies, and even warnings.

- This is a great paragraph for us to analyze because it tells us a lot about the characteristics of Greek myths. What are some of the characteristics of Greek myths that appear in this paragraph? What do Greek myths almost always have in them? [Pause.]
- I bet you found some good characteristics. Let's put a few on our chart. In the column that says "Characteristics" make a bullet point and write: includes

Students practice pronouncing words, they answer questions and learn the meaning of new vocabulary words.

Students will follow along as the teacher reads.

Students will add notes to their note taker.

humans [Pause and model writing “includes humans”.]

What else do Greek myths include? [Pause.]

- **Let’s put another bullet point and write: includes Greek gods** [Pause and model writing “includes Greek gods”.]
- **There’s a few more points I’d like us to get from this paragraph, so let me read a few lines again and see if we can gather more characteristics.**
- **“These myths aren’t just legends and while they are “just stories” they are stories with a purpose and reason. A deeper look at Greek myths should reveal morals, philosophies, and even warnings.”**
- **What’s another characteristics we could include?** [Pause.] **That’s right! We could include that Greek myths have a purpose or a reason. Sometimes they have a moral or a warning. For our chart let’s make another bullet point and write: has a purpose** [Pause and model writing “has a purpose”.]
- **Sometimes the purpose of a Greek myth is to explain a natural phenomenon. What was the natural phenomenon that was explained in “Arachne”? [Pause.] Correct! “Arachne” explains the origin story of spiders.**
- **Let’s look at one more sentence: “They are stories of people dealing with the gods and either they come out triumphant or they end up bloody and charred or turned into animals and plants.”**
- **Triumphant means victorious or successful. Are the humans in Greek myths always successful? [Pause.] Not really. In “Arachne” the human is changed into a spider. That’s not quite a triumphant ending for Arachne.**
- [Show slide L15-E.] **Right side of the chart should look like this so far:**

CHARACTERISTICS
-includes humans
-includes Greek gods
-has a purpose

- **Phew! That paragraph had a lot of information in it. Let’s move on to the next one.**

[Show slide L15-F.] **These tales rarely have the happily-ever-after endings people are so used to these days but remember, they weren’t written for entertainment—they were written with a higher purpose. One wouldn’t expect such great minds to waste their time telling a story for the sake of telling a story; they had to have purpose and they had to impart knowledge. In truth, these myths give people a chance to glimpse at the way the Greeks lived and how they thought back then. It might seem**

Students will check their note taker to ensure they have the same notes as the teacher.

Students will follow along as the teacher reads.

hopelessly outdated and unimportant but the exact opposite of that is true

- What does the phrase “impart knowledge” mean? [Pause.] If you said to give knowledge or to communicate knowledge, you’re right!
- The purpose of these stories wasn’t necessarily to entertain people, it was to impart knowledge. What type of knowledge do you think is important? [Pause.]
- Think about this as we keep reading.

[Show slide L15-G.] What is the importance of Greeks?

Most people will not really notice it unless they are told to do so, but there are so many Greek influences around the world today. In fact, it is impossible to go around to completely understand the basics of things like fine arts, literature, and performing arts without touching on some Greek myth. These myths were an integral part of ancient Greek culture because this was how they passed down lessons from one generation to the next without things getting boring and dull. Anyone who has ever picked up a book on Greek myths or seen a movie inspired by one can attest to its action-packed nature. Some might wonder what the point is to just passing down stories—stories that were made up and were in no way true but that was the beauty of Greek mythology in ancient times. They became the perfect way to impart lessons without being dull or boring.

- I see the word “impart” again in the last sentence. Let me reread it: “They became the perfect way to impart lessons without being dull or boring.” Do you remember what impart means? [Pause.]
- Let’s make this our final characteristic on our chart. Put a bullet point and write: “impart a lesson” [Pause and model writing “impart a lesson”.] [Show slide L15-H.]
- Let’s think about what types of lessons myths might impart as we continue to read.

[Show slide L15-I.] What did these myths do?

These myths were told to people and it helped them realize the difference between right and wrong. It helped them come to terms with how they should be humble and never think themselves immortal or they might just be proven wrong in the most horrible and inopportune of ways. Also, these tales tell people of heroes and how true greatness was achieved by those who dared while at the same breath, showing the flaws of these heroes.

Any modern person who reads or hears of Greek myths will be hard-pressed to stay unaffected. They are simply that good and

Students will follow along as the teacher reads.

Students will answer questions about vocabulary words.

Students will add to chart.

Students will follow along as the teacher reads.

this proves just how relevant they still are. Anyone can pick up a book of Greek myths. For sure, they will get something from it.

- So Greek myths are relevant because they can teach good lessons. What do you think the lesson of “Arachne” was? [Pause.]
- Maybe the lesson was that Arachne should have been humble and not brag about her skills. Do you think a lesson like that is still important for people today? [Pause.]
- I think so too. For your independent practice, you’ll have to write your own Greek myth and that myth will have to have a lesson. So think about what might be a good lesson to include in your writing.

[Show slide L15-J.] **Why study Greek myths?**

Reading and hearing about Greek mythology is one thing but why are modern people still made to study them? The answer to that is very simple: to learn. People still study the ancient Greeks and their myths much in the same reason they study other cultures and that is so they can learn from it. After all, when you study a culture as progressive as that of the ancient Greeks, you really can’t help but learn lessons. These myths, for their part, show modern people a glimpse of how they thought in the past, what they considered important, how their morals worked, etc. Another reason to study those Greek myths is because they have contributed a lot to classic and modern literature in the form of symbols.

- We can learn a lot about the ancient Greeks by reading their myths. We can figure out what was important to them and how they thought about things. Even if their stories are not scientifically accurate, it’s still interesting to see the way they thought about things.
- Let’s finish our reading.

[Show slide L15-K.] It has been said that simply by studying or even just reading some of these myths, people can learn how to control their actions or at least think better of what they do. After all, a lot of these stories tell tales of how human follies, stupidity, and even hubris get people in trouble. In a sense, these myths serve as a warning for people on how they should and should not be. The irony of the situation is that most people still tend to go with their follies, choose to make stupid decisions, and have hubris. It is almost comical how these myths capture human behavior in the ancient times that are still alive and kicking today.

- Before we end, let’s make sure we understand some of the words that appear in this paragraph. Listen to this line: “After all, a lot of these stories tell tales of how

Students will follow along as the teacher reads.

<p>human follies, stupidity, and even hubris get people in trouble.” Do you think words like follies or hubris are positive or negative words? [Pause.] If you said negative, you’re correct! We can figure that out by looking at the context, did you notice that those words appear in a list? “Follies, stupidities, and hubris”. The word stupidities helps us understand that follies and hubris are negative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The word follies means foolishness and the word hubris mean arrogance. Do you think Arachne showed hubris when she challenged Athena? [Pause.] Yes, Arachne did show hubris and that was why she got in trouble. If Arachne had been humble, maybe things would’ve turned out differently. 	<p>Students will follow along as the teacher reads.</p> <p>Students learn the meaning of new vocabulary words.</p>
<p>Guided Practice (7 min) [Show slide L15-L.] We have taken lots of notes today about the characteristics of myths. Your job today is to write your own myth. Let’s review those characteristics together and as we read, we will stop to let you think about the details you want your myth to include. Ready? [Pause.]</p> <p>Before we write our own myth, let’s see how the characteristics of Greek myths fit with “Arachne”. Take a moment to fill in the middle column. If you get stuck on a column, don’t worry I’ll help you. Try to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about the human that was in “Arachne” Who was it? [Pause.] • Think about the Greek god that was in “Arachne”. What was her name? [Pause.] • Think about the purpose of the story. What natural phenomenon did “Arachne” explain? [Pause.] • What animal did the human turn into? [Pause.] • What was the lesson in “Arachne”? [Pause.] <p>Okay, let’s review: Who was the human character? [Pause.] Great! Arachne was the human character. [Pause and model writing “Arachne”.] [Show slide L15-M.] Now for the My Myth column you’ll have to choose a character name. You can do that later. Let’s move on to the next characteristic.</p> <p>Who was the Greek god in “Arachne”? [Pause.] That’s right! It was Athena. [Pause and model writing “Athena”.] [Show slide L15-N.] You’ll have to choose a Greek god to include in your Greek myth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Show slide L15-O.] Look at this list of Greek Gods and Goddesses and think about which one you want to write about. • Gods: 	<p>Students will review the characteristics of a myth from their note taker.</p> <p>Students choose a god or goddess character for their myth story.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Apollo was the god of music ○ Hermes was the god of travel ○ Poseidon was the god of the seas ○ Zeus was the god of weather ● Goddesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aphrodite was the goddess of love and beauty ○ Athena was the goddess of wisdom ○ Demeter (du-mee-ter) was the goddess of nature ○ Iris was the goddess of rainbows ○ Persephone was the goddess of spring and flowers ○ Thetis was the goddess of the sea ● Take a few seconds and decide which one you will choose for your story. [Pause about 15 seconds.] Excellent! <p>Next let's focus on the purpose. That is to impart knowledge and teach us things. These are things that are often natural phenomenon within nature. For example, raise your hand if you have heard of Thor. [Pause.] Excellent! He is pretty well known. He is a German god of thunder, lightning, and storms. It is said that the sound of thunder is caused by his hammer!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Let's think back to our Arachne story. What was the purpose? [Pause.] Excellent! It explained how spiders came to be. [Pause and model writing "explains how spiders came to be".] [Show slide L15-P.] This is similar to Thor and his hammer. ● You will need to determine what natural phenomenon you want your myth to explain. ● I chose the goddess Iris. I think I might want to explain how the rainbow came to be. Hmmm... the rainbow has seven different colors. Maybe I can explain how each of those colors came from nature. Like Iris used the grass to create the green color, and she used the seas to get the blue color. ● Take a few seconds and think about if you want to explain how something in nature came to be. <p>The last characteristic is that there needs to be a lesson. What do you think the lesson is in "Arachne"? [Pause.] If you said "to be humble" or "to not brag about your skills", I think you are spot on! Let's write "to not brag" on our paper. [Pause and model writing "to not brag".] [Show slide L15-Q.]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greek myths have lessons that we can learn from. When you write your Greek myth, be sure to include a lesson in your story. 	<p>Students will choose whether they want their myth to have a lesson or to explain how something in nature came to be.</p>
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<p>Independent Work (3-4 min)</p> <p>I'm about to read aloud the independent practice. Be sure to write down the task. I will read the task twice. [Show slide L15-R.]</p> <p>So now that you've filled in your chart, you're ready to write a Greek myth. Use the details that you've already gathered and write a Greek myth that includes the characteristics that we've learned today.</p> <p>Your Greek myth should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• include a human and a Greek god as characters• have purpose which is to explain a natural phenomenon• include a human turning into an animal or plant• include a lesson <p>Let me repeat the instructions for your independent work. Today you will write a Greek myth using the characteristics that we studied.</p> <p>Make sure to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a human and a Greek god as characters• purpose which is to explain a natural phenomenon• a human turning into an animal or plant• a lesson• what you learned from lesson two about exposition, conflict, climax, rising action, and resolution	
<p>Closing (1 min)</p> <p>I enjoyed working with you today! I learned so much about the characteristics of Greek myths and it was fun to see those characteristics in "Arachne". Thank you for inviting me into your home. I look forward to seeing you in our next lesson in Tennessee's At Home Learning Series! Bye!</p>	