Warm-Up

Research and Writing about a Mythical Character

Lesson Question
How do you use research to write about the cultural significance of a mythical character?

Lesson Goals

- **Develop** a topic using evidence from research.
- **Incorporate** information and sources effectively.
- **Write** an informative essay.
- **Revise** writing to include formal tone and style.

Words to Know

*Fill in this table as you work through the lesson. You may also use the glossary to help you.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>style</strong></th>
<th>a particular way in which something is done, created, or performed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>paraphrasing</strong></td>
<td>restating something that was originally said or written by another person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cite</strong></td>
<td>to quote a passage, book, or any words originally stated by someone else as evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>credible</strong></td>
<td>believable or trustworthy as an authority on a subject</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Greek Mythological Characters

Pandora was a mortal woman who received a box from the gods. When she opened it, she let all the evil out into the world.

Perseus was a half-god and very brave. He slew Medusa and the Kraken.

Prometheus means “forethought.” He was very influential because he brought fire to all of humankind.
Today’s Writing Prompt

A writing prompt is a set of instructions on how to write your essay. It has all the information you need to be successful when writing your essay.

The writing prompt addresses four key areas:

**Topic:** What will you write about?
- A character from Greek mythology

**Audience:** Who will read your writing?
- Your peers and adults

**Purpose:** Why are you writing?
- To communicate information

**Product:** What will you write?
- An informative essay
Research and Writing about a Mythical Character

Instruction

Part 1

Steps for Researching an Informative Essay

Steps for researching and writing an informative essay include:

1. Coming up with a **strong** research question
2. Gathering information from **credible**, or reliable, sources
3. Finding and including appropriate **facts** and **details** in the essay

Forming Effective Research Questions

A strong research question:

- is linked to the **topic** of the writing prompt.
- must be **answerable**.
- cannot be a simple fact.
- should be **complex** and compelling.
- should be specific enough to fit the assigned length.

The assigned length in this case is going to be **five** paragraphs.
### Effective and Ineffective Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective research question</th>
<th>Ineffective research question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What myth does Prometheus appear in, and what is it about?</td>
<td>Why is Greek mythology important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is <strong>clear</strong> and <strong>complex</strong> enough to write an essay on.</td>
<td>• It is <strong>not specific</strong> enough to write a focused essay on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It can be answered through <strong>research</strong>.</td>
<td>• It is not linked to the <strong>topic</strong>, which asks about a specific myth, not mythology in general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It will help the writer respond to the <strong>writing prompt</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluating Sources: Internet Sources

Credible Internet sources

- Government sites (ending in .gov)
- Educational sites, such as college and university sites (ending in .edu)
- Organization sites, such as museums, libraries, and nonprofits (ending in .org)
- Online newspapers

Non-credible Internet sources

- Sites written by anonymous authors
- Sites written by individuals with no expertise on the topic
- Sites that contain outdated information
- Sites that anyone can modify
Choosing Facts and Details While Researching

**Quoting from sources:**

- Quoting a source means taking language directly from it.
- Write down useful quotations that help answer the research question.
- Keep track of the author and page number.

**Paraphrasing from sources:**

- Paraphrasing a text means restating it in your own words.
- When picking up big ideas from a source, put the language in your own words.
- Keep track of the author and page number.
Research and Writing about a Mythical Character

Taking Paraphrased Notes While Researching

Underline the pieces of information in this original text that explain why Greek mythical characters were important to ancient Greek culture.

It was not long before men saw that strong men could not work for themselves without working for others, and there came in very early the idea of service as part of the idea of heroism, and the demi-gods, who were among the earliest heroes, were servants as well as masters. Hercules, the most powerful of the heroes to Greek and Roman boys . . . . [acts in a way that is] helping other people rather than helping himself.

—Heroes Every Child Should Know, Hamilton Wright Mabie

Underline the text that paraphrases the idea that “strong men could not work for themselves without working for others.”

Historically, people recognized that strong people help both themselves and others. Helping others is part of being a mythical hero. Hercules, for example, is considered the most powerful hero to Greeks. In myths about him, his actions are meant to be helpful to others. He does not do things just to benefit himself.
Using a Web to Organize Ideas

Use an idea web to outline your topic.

Complete the graphic organizer.

Zeus's Story

- Overthrew his father, Cronus
- Became ruler of Mount Olympus
- Beat his brothers in a competition decided by fate

Zeus

Zeus's story

Why Zeus is important
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The Writing Process

Complete the graphic organizer.

- Prewriting
  - Researching

- Drafting
  - Writing a thesis statement
  - Planning body paragraphs

- Revising
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Building an Effective Draft

Complete the graphic organizer.

**Introduction**
- Thesis (topic + viewpoint)

**Body paragraphs**

**Conclusion**

Writing an Informative Essay Thesis Statement

A thesis statement includes the topic of the essay and the essay’s viewpoint.

- Topic: A **mythical** character and his or her story
- Viewpoint: Why this character is important to **Greek** culture
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Building Body Paragraphs

Introduction
• Thesis

Body paragraph
• Summary of the plot
• Details about the character

Body paragraph
• Cultural significance
• Details from the myth and research

Body paragraph
• Cultural significance
• Details from the myth and research

Conclusion
• Connect back to thesis
Adding Paraphrased or Quoted Information from Research into Body Paragraphs

Follow these steps to use paraphrased or quoted information to develop your body paragraphs.

1. Make a point about your topic.
2. Introduce the paraphrased or quoted text to support your point.
3. Write the quotation or paraphrased text.
4. Use quotation marks around the text only if you are using the author’s direct words.
5. Cite the source after the quotation or paraphrase using MLA format.
6. Explain how the paraphrased or quoted information supports your point.
Hercules shows many traits that were important to the Greeks. Two traits are his strength and the way he uses that strength. According to the book *Heroes Every Child Should Know*, strong people help others as well as themselves (Mabie 4). Helping others is part of being a mythical hero. The Greeks considered Hercules the most powerful hero. In myths about him, his actions are meant to be helpful to others. He does not do things just to benefit himself. Therefore, one reason Hercules’s myth is significant is because it shows the Greek belief that heroes should use strength for the good of others, not just for themselves.

## The Importance of Citations

Plagiarism is the illegal practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as your own. Avoid plagiarism by:

- keeping track of quotations.
- paraphrasing notes.
- using MLA format.
- avoiding copying and pasting information.
Drafting Your Informative Essay

1. Introduction: Introduce the points you will make in the body paragraphs. Include your thesis statement.

2. Body paragraph 1: Summarize the myth’s plot and describe the character.

3. Body paragraph 2: Explain one reason why the Greek character is culturally significant.

4. Body paragraph 3: Explain a second reason why the Greek character is culturally significant.

5. Conclusion: Summarize and extend your main point. Connect back to the thesis.
Research and Writing about a Mythical Character

The Writing Process

*Complete the graphic organizer.*

- **Prewriting**
  - Researching

- **Drafting**
  - Writing a thesis statement
  - Planning body paragraphs

- **Revising**
  - Using a formal tone
Formal vs. Informal Tone

**Formal style** involves using proper language that presents ideas objectively.

Use **formal** tone in:
- essays.
- business letters.
- presentations.
- work-related documents.

Use **informal** tone in:
- friendly letters and e-mails.
- conversations with peers outside of an academic setting.
- conversations with relatives or friends.

Identifying Formal Tone

Make sure your writing is formal by avoiding:
- abbreviations and **contractions** *(b/c, can’t)*.
- overuse of short and simple sentences. **Vary** sentence length.
- casual, **slang**, or cliché expressions *(a bunch, cool)*.
- addressing the reader or yourself *(using **you** or **I**)*.
- **opinion** statements *(I think)*.
Revising Tone and Style

*Underline the words and phrases that show the writer used informal language.*

**Informal tone and style**

Pandora *should’ve* never opened her box because it *just put everybody else in a nasty situation.*

- Uses a contraction
- Uses conversational language
- Gives an opinion

*Underline the phrases that show the writer provided facts instead of an opinion.*

**Formal revision**

When Pandora opened her box, it *released evil* and *caused problems for everyone.*

- Avoids contractions
- Uses formal language
- States facts
## Checklist for Revising Your Essay

As you revise your essay, check for:

- **Tone and style** – Did you write in a _formal_ style and avoid opinions?
- **Detail** – Did you develop your thesis statement by _supporting_ it with details and research?
- **Organization** – Did you use _transitions_ between paragraphs and sentences so the essay flows?
- **Mechanics** – Did you use _correct_ grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, including when _citing_ sources?
- **Word choice** – Did you _vary_ the length of your sentences to engage your reader?
Lesson Question

How do you use research to write about the cultural significance of a mythical character?

Answer

(Sample answer) By putting together research about the mythical character’s story and the culture the myth comes from, you can write about why the mythical character is important.
### Research and Writing about a Mythical Character

#### Review: Key Concepts

How do you use research to write about the cultural significance of a mythical character?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research to find evidence</th>
<th>Incorporate evidence into an essay</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Form a <strong>research</strong> question.</td>
<td>• Make <strong>clear</strong> points in body paragraphs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify and read from <strong>credible</strong> sources.</td>
<td>• Support your points using evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Paraphrase and quote <strong>key details</strong> from sources as you research.</td>
<td>• Use quotations and paraphrased evidence from your <strong>research</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Keep track of sources to avoid <strong>plagiarism</strong>.</td>
<td>• Explain <strong>how</strong> the evidence supports your point.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Use this space to write any questions or thoughts about this lesson.