SCHOOLTIME
PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

The activity addresses PA Academic Standards CC.1.4.5.V, CC.1.4.5.W

Types of Myths

Research Project

This project invites students to explore the types of myths featured in **Schooltime: Myths & Legends** by working in teams to conduct research and share their findings.

STEP 1: Divide class into teams of at least three students each.

STEP 2: Assign each team one of the featured myth types:

- **Creation:** Myths about how the world came to be
- **Etiological:** Myths that explain why something is the way it is
- **Founding:** Myths that describe how a society was founded
- **Hero:** Myths about the epic journey of a hero
- **Morality:** Myths that explain how to act
- **Trickster:** Myths featuring a character who challenges the status quo



The Creation Story of the Maya
Source: Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian

STEP 3: Using the attached recommended resources as a starting point, have each team locate as many examples of their type of myth as possible, taking note of these details:

Origin: Where is the story from?

Characters: Who are the main characters? Are there any interesting supporting or minor characters?

Plot: What happens? How is it an example of your myth type?

Questions: What questions do you have? Is anything confusing? Do you wish you knew more about any specific elements from the story?

Source: What is the source of your information? Is it reliable? Why?

STEP 4: Locate at least one more reliable resource not on the list that relates to the type of myth you are investigating. What is the resource? Why is it reliable? Note these details:

Source: How did you find your new resource? What makes it credible?

New Learnings: What did you learn from this resource that you did not know?

Verification: What information or previous research did this resource verify?

Questions: What questions do you still have?

STEP 5: Summarize your findings. What should people know about your myth type? Do you have a favorite example from the myths you identified? Why?

STEP 6: Use the attached map to mark the geographic origins of the myths you identified. How else will you share your findings with the rest of the class?

STEP 7: Have teams take turns presenting their findings. Once complete, create a comprehensive map showing the geographic origins of all of the myths identified.

Recommended Resources

All titles are available through Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Birkett, Tom. *Legends of Norse Mythology.* Illustrated by Isabella Mazzanti, Wide Eyed Editions, 2023.

Includes four major myths: The Story of the Nine Worlds, The Story of Thor's Hammar, The Story of Poetry, and The Story of Ragnarök. Also includes a detailed guide to Norse gods, giants, monsters, and mythical beings accompanied by vibrant full-page color illustrations.

Caldwell, Stella. *The Amazing Book of World Mythology.* Buster Books, 2025.

Contains myths from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Central America, and South America. Organized in six categories: In the Beginning, Gods and Goddesses, Journeys and Quests, Fantastic Worlds, Monsters and Mythical Creatures, and Magic and Trickery. Includes illustrations from artists around the globe reflecting the myths of their homelands.

Cargill-Martin, Honor. *She Speaks: The Women of Greek Myths in Their Own Words.* Illustrated by Camelia Pham, Magic Cat Publishing, 2024.

Written from the perspective of eight Greek female characters: Pandora, Medusa, Medea, Atalanta, Ariadne, Helen, Penthesilea, and Circe. Includes references to primary and secondary sources for further reading.

Hamilton, Edith. *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes.* 75th anniversary illustrated edition, Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2017.

Seminal resource on Greek mythology written by pioneering scholar Edith Hamilton, first published in 1942. Content is organized thematically, including creation and early heroes, stories of love and adventure, heroes before the Trojan war, and heroes of the Trojan war.

Napoli, Donna Jo. *Treasury of Egyptian Mythology.* Illustrated by Christina Balit, National Geographic, 2013.

Includes 20 myths, each featuring a different Egyptian god or goddess. Organized to highlight how the myths connect, with topics ranging from the creation of colors, why the Nile floods, the perils of envy, and the value of service.

***Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales.* Edited by Nelson Mandela, Norton, 2002.**

A collection of 32 stories from across the African continent (primarily central and southern Africa), compiled by Nobel Peace Prize-winner Nelson Mandela. The 2002 edition includes full-page color illustrations; the 2004 edition is formatted as a chapter book and does not.

Ward, Marchella. *Gods of the Ancient World: A Kids' Guide to Ancient Mythologies.* Illustrated by Xuan Le, DK Publishing, 2023.

Contains myths from many different parts of the world, including Africa, Asia, Europe, New Zealand, and North America. Organized in four categories: How the World Began, Gods Helping Humans, Rulers of Nature, and Keeping Humans in Line.

Map


Greenland
Canada
United States
Russia
China
India
Australia
Mexico
Brazil
Argentina
Kazakhstan
Mongolia
Indonesia
New Zealand
0 500 1000 miles