

Ten Characteristics of a Myth

1. Natural Phenomenon: A myth is a story that is, or was considered, a true explanation of the natural world (something in nature) and how it came to be.

2. Characters: are often non-human and are typically gods, goddesses, supernatural beings or mystical “first people.”

3. Setting: is typically ancient and set in a world very similar to our own, but with supernatural monsters or areas.

4. Theme is emphasized by the **Setting:** may take place in a supernatural world AND our present day world. Myths do this to emphasize the basic human behaviors (character traits) that are important in any setting.

5. The Supernatural: Myths possess events that bend or break natural laws.

6. Cultural Values: Promotes “Social Action”—myths try to tell people how to act and live according to the core values and beliefs of the culture. The heroes often possess these values.

7. Mystery: Myths have sense of mystery, or the unknown.

8. Dualities: (or complete opposites such as night/day, good/evil) often play important roles in the plot of a myth.

9. Language: Myths often have an emphasis on language... Mythical heroes are often sophisticated storytellers.

10. Metaphors: Myths are often metaphoric—that is, myths are created to comment or analyze a real world questions like:

- Why are we here?
- Who are we?
- Why are we living? What is our purpose? (What is the meaning of life?)



Adapted from “What is a Myth?” by Mary Magoulick www.facutly.de.gcsu.edu

Myth Notes GO: The Role of Myths in Ancient Greece

Read textbook pages 363 – 368. Take a quick bullet note for each paragraph.

Paragraph 1	Myths have been passed down for thousands of years. Ancient Greece is best known for myths.
Paragraph 2	
Paragraph 3	
Paragraph 4	
Paragraph 5	
Paragraph 6	
Paragraph 7	Each _____ or _____ worshipped by the Greeks played a specific role in _____.
Paragraph 8	
Paragraph 9	
Paragraph 10	
Paragraph 11	
Paragraph 12	
Paragraph 13 Different Cultures, Similar Myths	Myths are similar from culture to culture possibly because certain _____ of life are important or _____ to people everywhere.
Paragraph 14	
Paragraph 15 How Myths Spread	
Paragraph 16	Eventually, myths were _____ down in a format similar to a _____.
Paragraph 17	
Paragraph 18	
Paragraph 19 How Do We Know About Greek Myths?	There are several ways we have learned about myths:

Summary of pages 363 – 368:-
