

English 8 – Introduction to Mythology: Influence and Etymology Assignment

Myths are stories that come to us from our past to teach us of the history, culture, and values of countless civilizations. They show us the world that once was, and show us that people in the past weren't so different to people today. In showing us this, myths reveal important, lasting aspects of human nature, and instruct us on how to behave and live our lives.

One of the founding characteristics of myths is that they are enduring: their events, characters, and messages have lasted over time, in some cases for thousands of years. This week, we will take a look at the evidence of that influence.

Part 1: Influence in Pictures

Using your Internet super-sleuthing skills, find evidence of how ancient world myths still have an influence in the lives we lead today.

Choose any world mythology you already know (Indigenous Peoples, Celtic, Greek, Egyptian, Norse, Chinese, African, or anything else).

- Find THREE visual examples of how this mythology (characters, events, etc.) still influences the world today. Consider how this influence is featured in: art, music, movies, architecture, or anywhere else
- For each example, explain in a short paragraph (2-3 sentences) why this mythology is influential.
- You must cite your image sources by providing the URL (internet address) to took the image from.

EXTENSION: Choose **THREE** separate world mythologies for your three examples, if you want the challenge ;-)

Part 2: Influence in Words

Etymology:

1. study of word origins: the study of the origins of words or parts of words and how they have arrived at their current form and meaning

2. history of a word: the origin of a word or part of a word, or a statement of this, and how it has arrived at its current form and meaning. An etymology often shows the different forms the word has taken in passing from one language to another, and sometimes shows related words in other languages.

For **Part 2**, you will be given a phrase/expression; your task is to find out the etymology of the phrase/expression from Greek mythology. Again, you will be using your internet super-sleuthing skills to find the etymology of your chosen phrase.

- ✓ **Criteria:**
- ✓ Research – you must provide a footnote stating the bibliographic information (website title, author, and address) on where you got your research from and you must save your research.
- ✓ Using your research, you are to write a one-page explanation of where your saying came from; include the following:
 - What myth does your saying come from? (If your myth is a really long one, please summarize the main events of it).
 - Include an example of how this saying is used today and what implications/connotations are attached to this saying.

Example write up:

English 8 Etymology Assignment

Student Name

Block Z

Saying: "opening a Pandora's box"

The saying "opening a Pandora's box" originates from the myth of Pandora. After Prometheus tricked Zeus three times in order to help mankind, Zeus was ready to exact vengeance on him and the best way to harm Prometheus was to hurt his beloved morals. So Zeus hatched a complex scheme involving Prometheus's brother, Epimetheus (meaning "after-thought"). Zeus ordered Hephaestus to create a wife for Epimetheus. Hephaestus obliged creating her from the Earth; moreover, the other gods and goddesses gave her lovely gifts thus making her irresistible – her name was Pandora, meaning "gifts of all." However, Zeus also gave Pandora a "gift" and it was **insatiable curiosity**. According to the myth, Pandora pestered her husband many times in order to try to persuade him to open the box. For example, one time she stated: "Perhaps there is a treasure inside. It must be something wonderful, or your brother would not be having you guard it so carefully!" However, every time Pandora tried to persuade her husband, Epimetheus, to open the box, he steadily refused. Sadly, Pandora's curiosity could not be silenced. Giving into it, Pandora opened the box when her husband's attention was elsewhere. Suddenly, "dozens of cruel, stinging little spites flew from the [box]. In a great cloud they swarmed out, stinging her and Epimetheus in all parts of their bodies before they flew off in all directions." All mankind's troubles were present in the swarm such as Vice, Fury, Madness just to name a few. The only respite given to the unfortunate couple was Hope – the lone virtue able to live with all of mankind's troubles.

Modern Context:

This expression relates to being controlled by curiosity and its consequences to submitting to it. Moreover, if one were to say this expression in modern times, it would clearly have a **negative connotation** to it. For example, if someone stated at a meeting: "Well, we can discuss what the implications of this decision would be, but that would be opening a Pandora's box." Clearly, the speaker is implying that the decision is not only a controversial one, but a decision with many issues and/or problems attached to it, so if the group were to discuss the decision, they would have to tackle all the problems associated with it.

Reference: Bennett, John., and Kerr, Moira. *Myth*. Ontario: Clark Publishing, 1966. (this is a citation for a book, not a website)



PART 1 and PART 2 can be submitted together on ONE document, emailed as a Word or PDF document, an image, or a Google Doc.

Sayings to research...

YOU WILL BE ASSIGNED A SAYING; YOU DON'T GET TO CHOOSE

1. Beware of Greeks bearing gifts - ELLA
2. Everything he touches turns to gold - LIAM
3. It is the task of Sisyphus - JACOB
4. The apple of discord - SHAE
5. To fight like a Trojan - OLIVER
6. To have an Achilles heel - HEIDI
7. A Cassandra utterance - MACEY
8. The face that launched a thousand ships - MADDIE
9. A Herculean task - BRAYDON
10. An Icarian adventure - KEIRA
11. Between Scylla and Charybdis - OWEN
12. Hydra-headed evils - KOBE
13. As wise as Nestor - NASH
14. As difficult as the judgement of Paris - TYLER
15. The thread of Ariadne - EVERETT
16. Uglier than Medusa - FINLEY
17. The Siren's call - JENNA
18. As faithful as Penelope - CHLOE
19. To pile Pelion on Ossa - NORMAN
20. The lotus eaters/lotus eating - SADIE
21. Stentorian roar - BRODY
22. To be a mentor - FREDDY
23. To hector - JANE
24. He's like an Adonis - RYLAN
25. A tantalizing offer - SUNSIA
26. You're such a narcissist - VICTORIA