

A Guide for Using

D' Aulaires'

Book of

Greek Myths

in the Classroom

*Based on the book written by Ingrid and
Edgar Parin D'Aulaire*

*This guide written by Cynthia Ross
and illustrated by Theresa M. Wright*



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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Sample Lesson Plan	4
About the Authors	5
Book Summary	6
Before the Book (<i>Pre-reading Activity</i>).....	7
Vocabulary Lists.....	8
Vocabulary Activity Ideas	10
SECTION ONE: Olden Times, Gaea and the Titans (<i>pages 8-15</i>).....	11
◆ Quiz Time	
◆ Hands-on Activity— <i>In the Beginning</i>	
◆ Cooperative Learning Activity— <i>Create a Volcano</i>	
◆ Curriculum Connections— <i>Math: Odd or Even</i>	
◆ Into Your Life— <i>Journal Entries</i>	
SECTION TWO: Zeus and His Family (<i>pages 16-69</i>)	16
◆ Quiz Time	
◆ Hands-on Activity— <i>Paper Weaving</i>	
◆ Cooperative Learning Activity— <i>Mythology in Astronomy</i>	
◆ Curriculum Connections— <i>Language Arts: Prefixes and Suffixes</i>	
◆ Into Your Life— <i>Shield of the Gods and Goddesses of Mount Olympus</i>	
SECTION THREE: Minor Gods (<i>pages 70-107</i>)	21
◆ Quiz Time	
◆ Hands-on Activity— <i>Mapping Skills</i>	
◆ Cooperative Learning Activity— <i>Masks for a Greek Play</i>	
◆ Curriculum Connections— <i>Language Arts: “Prometheus”</i>	
◆ Into Your Life— <i>Prometheus</i>	
SECTION FOUR: Mortal Descendants of Zeus, Part I (<i>pages 108-147</i>).....	28
◆ Quiz Time	
◆ Hands-on Activity— <i>Puppets and Plays</i>	
◆ Cooperative Learning Activity— <i>Pantomime</i>	
◆ Curriculum Connections— <i>Science: Poseidon’s Domain</i>	
◆ Into Your Life— <i>Melampus, Friend to the Animals</i>	
SECTION FIVE: Mortal Descendants of Zeus, Part II (<i>pages 148-189</i>)	33
◆ Quiz Time	
◆ Hands-on Activity— <i>I am Theseus</i>	
◆ Cooperative Learning Activity— <i>A Name Is a Name</i>	
◆ Curriculum Connections— <i>Math: Mythical Math</i>	
◆ Into Your Life— <i>Earthquake in a Bottle</i>	
After the Book (<i>Post-reading Activities</i>)	38
Book Report Ideas	
Research Ideas	
Culminating Activity	41
Unit Test Options	43
Bibliography.....	46
Answer Key	47

About the Authors



The d'Aulaires are author-artists. Ingri Maartenson Parin d'Aulaire was born on December 27, 1904, in Kongsberg, Norway, daughter of Per Maartenson who was the director of Royal Norwegian Silver Mines, and Line Sandsmark. She attended Kongsberg Junior College, the Institute of Arts and Crafts in Oslo, Norway, and then studied art at the Hans Hofman School of Art in Munich, Germany. This is where the d'Aulaires met. She also attended the Academie Scandinave, the Academie Gaugin, and the Academie Andre L'Hote in Paris, France.

Edgar is the son of a noted Italian society painter, Gino d'Aulaire. His mother was an American, Ella Parin. He was born in Switzerland, lived in Paris and later in Florence. He used his mother's maiden name for his artistic works. Edgar Parin d'Aulaire began his career by illustrating fifteen books which were published in Germany.

Ingri and Edgar married on July 24, 1925. In 1929 they traveled to America where they were introduced to the world of children's books with the publication of *The Magic Ring*. They settled in New York in 1929 and resided on their farms, Lea Farm in Wilton, Connecticut, and Upper Lea Farm in South Royalton, Vermont. They became naturalized citizens in 1939.

Edgar and Ingri worked separately on their art until they met the late Anne Carroll Moore who suggested that they combine their talents and create picture books for children. Their illustrations are created through the use of a traditional method of drawing directly on lithograph stone. This is then adapted to acetate separations.

The d'Aulaires have toured Europe, North Africa, and the United States to acquire material for a long list of distinguished children's books. They have never written a book unless they first lived in the regions that provided the background for their folktales. As a result, the d'Aulaires produce a relaxed, humorous, and earthy quality in their picture books.

They have many books to their credit and have been honored with the American Library Association Caldecott Medal for their book *Abe Lincoln* in 1939 and the Catholic Library Association Regina Medal in 1970 for continued distinguished contributions to children's literature. They are also members of the Authors Guild of America of the Scandinavian-American Foundation. Their twenty picture books for children have been translated into German, French, Burmese, Norwegian, Turkish, Japanese, Korean, and Braille.

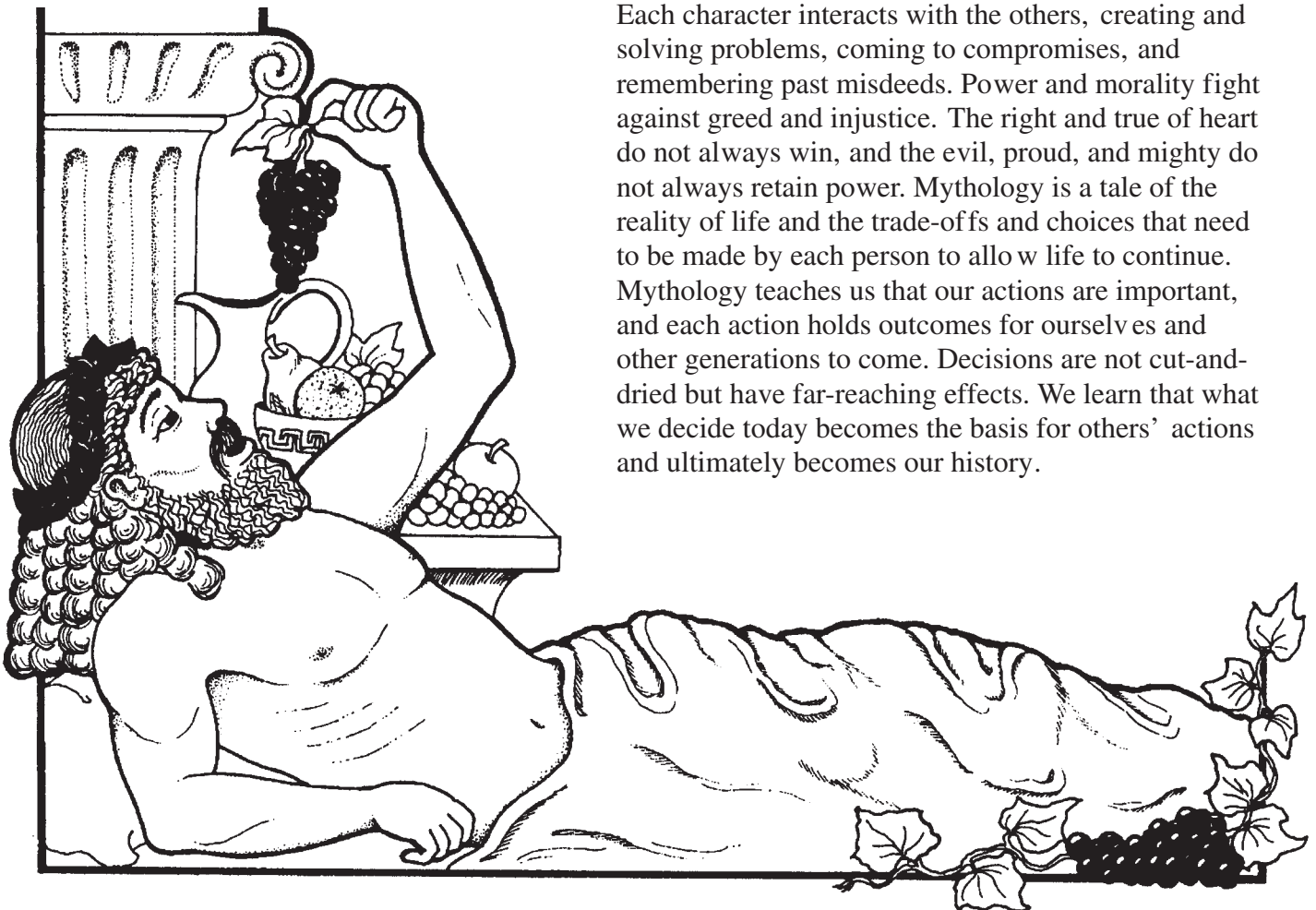
D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths

(1962, Doubleday)

(Available in Canada from Doubleday Dell Seal, U.K from Doubleday Bantam Dell,
and Australia from Transworld Publishers)

D'Aulaire's Book of Greek Myths is a well-known book containing Greek myths that have been adapted for children. The stories are organized around Zeus and his family, minor gods, and their mortal descendants. It is rich in complex illustrations, filled with symbols that bring to life the classical tradition of myth. The prose is straightforward and easy to read aloud, the stories thrilling and concise. Each story is easily read at one sitting, leaving class time for discussion and/or activities.

This children's classic traces the Greek creation myth. Beginning with a section entitled "Olden Times," the d'Aulaires introduce their readers to the creation of Mother Earth, Gaea; her union with the universe, Uranus; and the creation of their first children, the Titans, and their second creation, the Cyclopes, which causes a split between the love of their mother, the earth, and their father, the universe. Gaea marries again to the seas, Pontus. This union produces the life of the earth, nature, and mortal man. From this one family springs all the problems that will continue to face man. Struggles for power or love are part of the nature of man and gods. As the children of Gaea and Uranus rebel against their parents for love and power, a structure of behavior develops that will follow man throughout his existence. Greek myth develops like a daily soap opera.



Each character interacts with the others, creating and solving problems, coming to compromises, and remembering past misdeeds. Power and morality fight against greed and injustice. The right and true of heart do not always win, and the evil, proud, and mighty do not always retain power. Mythology is a tale of the reality of life and the trade-offs and choices that need to be made by each person to allow life to continue. Mythology teaches us that our actions are important, and each action holds outcomes for ourselves and other generations to come. Decisions are not cut-and-dried but have far-reaching effects. We learn that what we decide today becomes the basis for others' actions and ultimately becomes our history.

Before the Book

Conduct a class survey as a whole or in cooperative groups. Ask students to brainstorm all the things they either know, think they know, or want to know about Greek mythology.

Divide students into small groups. (Four is a good-sized group, if possible.) Provide a large sheet of paper and different colored pens or markers. Students' ideas should be listed on the chart as they share them. As students offer ideas, they need to tell the recorder in which column to record them. The goal of the activity is for students to generate many ideas about the topic. This is not a time for debate or discussion about the ideas.

These charts can then be saved or posted to use as a reference to verify information and change misinformation. Have students check off information as they come across it in the reading or discussion. Cross out the ideas that are incorrect. Use the ideas in the "What I Want to Know" column as topics for research projects.

This activity gets students thinking about the topic, motivates them to read, gives focus to the reading, points out errors or misconceptions in the students' knowledge, engages the students interactively with one another, and provides a map to check for ongoing learning.

What I Know	What I Think I Know	What I Want to Know

Vocabulary Lists

On this page are vocabulary lists which correspond to each sectional grouping of myths. Vocabulary activity ideas can be found on page 10.

SECTION ONE				
<i>Pages 8-15</i>				
Gaea	magnificent	countless	Titans	Titanesses
smiths	spirited	sickle	Pontus	crevices
monstrous	Uranus	twinkling	bountiful	thrones
tremendously	Cyclopes	Tartarus	wielded	boundless
sprites	clatter	flint	idols	
SECTION TWO				
<i>Pages 16-69</i>				
tormenting	nymphs	Amaltheia	droned	oxhorned
nectar	prudence	herb	herald	Aegis
descendants	ambrosia	devouring	cunningly	breastplate
altar	invisibility	venom	singlehandedly	ichor
upheavals	impenetrable	hearth	masons	iridescent
SECTION THREE				
<i>Pages 70-107</i>				
fates	repopulating	foresight	centaurs	ointment
severely	mortal	perished	plunge	shied
lavished	spiraling	savory	vessel	miseries
floodgates	desolate	eternal	swarmed	horde
virtuous	ark	forlorn	radiant	bleating
SECTION FOUR				
<i>Pages 108-147</i>				
wreath	writhing	Perseus	suitor	tyrant
ravaging	fortified	fiery	lyre	lavish
deftly	gruesome	boulder	singeing	Nereids
oracle	knoll	furrows	sacrifice	satyr
rowdy	luring	Medusa	Gorgon	wily
SECTION FIVE				
<i>Pages 148-189</i>				
intricate	avenging	leer	sinister	quest
unravel	prow	scalded	cannibal	sorceress
strait	inseparable	realm	domain	labyrinth
devour	Athenians	Minotaur	cunning	conch shell
Harpies	fleece	incantations	loathsome	sorcery