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## *Did you know?*

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- The king of all the gods was Zeus, who was in charge of the weather.
- The Greeks thought that lighting bolts were Zeus' weapons and that he threw them when he was angry.
- The Olympics began as a festival of different sports, held to honour Zeus.
- The Ancient Romans also believed in some of the same gods as the Greeks did, but the Romans called them by different names
- The most famous temple in Greece was the Parthenon in Athens. Inside stood a giant statue of Athena, the patron goddess of the city.

## The 12 Olympian gods and goddesses.

Zeus – king of the gods, and god of the sky; his main weapon was thunderbolts

Hera – wife of Zeus and queen of the gods, and also the goddess of marriage and family

Hades – brother of Zeus and Poseidon, and god of the Underworld

Hermes – son of Zeus and messenger of the gods; he'd help deliver people to the River Styx in the Underworld

Demeter – goddess of agriculture and the seasons

Poseidon – brother of Zeus and Hades, and god of the sea

Athena – daughter of Zeus, goddess of wisdom, and patron god of Athens

Ares – son of Zeus and god of war

Apollo – twin brother of Artemis, son of Zeus and god of the sun and music

Artemis – twin sister of Apollo, daughter of Zeus and goddess of hunting and animals

Aphrodite – daughter of Zeus and goddess of love and beauty

Dionysus – son of Zeus, god of wine and celebrations, and patron god of the theatre



## Ancient Greece

with Miss Eddison  
Class 4



## Who was the best of them all?

The Greeks loved to share stories about brave heroes and their great adventures.

Everyone's favourite hero was Heracles (the Romans called him Hercules). Heracles was Zeus's son. He was so strong he could kill a lion with his bare hands. He also sailed with Jason and the Argonauts to find the Golden Fleece and he performed 12 'impossible' tasks.

Heracles was very brave, but he was killed when he was tricked into putting on a poisoned robe. However, Zeus liked Heracles so much that he took him to Mount Olympus and made him immortal.

Because the gods had their own personalities, stories about them were told to explain why they acted the way they did – this is called mythology.

In addition to gods, the Greeks believed in mythical creatures such as centaurs (half human, half horse) and Cyclopes (monsters with only one eye). These would often show up in mythology too.

## Greek Temples

### WHAT WERE THEY LIKE?

The Greeks built temples to their gods and goddesses. Some temples were small, while others were very grand and beautiful with amazing decorations.

Every city in Greece had a 'patron' god or goddess. People believed patron gods protected them from harm. When people needed help from the gods, they went to the temple to pray. They might go if they were feeling sick, going on a journey or worried about the harvest on the farm. To please the gods, people brought gifts of money, flowers, food and drink.

They offered these gifts as sacrifices. Animals, like cattle, were sometimes killed as sacrifices. Then people feasted on the roasted meat.

### THE DEAD?

The Greeks believed that the dead went to the Underworld. This was an underground kingdom ruled by the god Hades.



## What is Greek mythology?

### EXPLAINED

The Greeks believed that gods and goddesses watched over them. These gods were a bit like humans, but they lived forever and were much more powerful. They felt human emotions, like love, anger and jealousy, and they did not always behave themselves.

The Greeks thought the gods lived high above Mount Olympus, in a palace in the clouds. From here, they kept an eye on life below. From time to time, they would interfere with what was going on. They could send storms if they were angry and decide who was victorious in wars. Sometimes they even played tricks on humans too.