

GREEKING OUT

HELLO, I'M THE
ORACLE OF
WI-FI. I'LL BE
GUIDING YOU!



BASED ON THE
HIT PODCAST!

NEW YORK
TIMES BEST
SELLERS



EDUCATORS' GUIDE

About the Books:

FROM THE CREATORS OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS' WILDLY SUCCESSFUL **GREEKING OUT** PODCAST, THESE LIVELY TIE-IN BOOKS DELIVER A CLEVER TONGUE-IN-CHEEK RETELLING OF CLASSIC GREEK MYTHS AND STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD.



GREEKING OUT

This kid-friendly collection of tales from Greek mythology showcases familiar favorites from the well-loved *Greeking Out* podcast as well as brand-new, never-before-aired stories. Join Persephone on her journey through the mystifying depths of the Underworld. Venture onward with Heracles as he tackles his twelve death-defying labors. And join mythological figures you may not have heard of before, including scheming gods and goddesses, honorable—and not so honorable—heroes, and magnificent monsters.



GREEKING OUT HEROES AND OLYMPIANS

Want to know the greatest feats and the funniest secrets of the gods and heroes of Greek mythology? You're in the right place. Told in the hilarious, kid-friendly voice that's sent the *Greeking Out* podcast to the top of the charts, these stories of heroic victories, perilous adventures, and plain old mischief are sure to delight kids and adults alike. Plus, fans of the Percy Jackson series will love discovering the real myths behind their favorite (and least favorite) characters.

In this book, you'll encounter a god kidnapped by pirates, sheep used as camouflage, a super-shiny fleece, some dangerous metalworking, the world's most perfect animal, a really heavy boulder, and much more.



GREEKING OUT TALES FROM THE UNDERWORLD

Hold on tight as *Greeking Out* goes to the dark side, bringing you scary (and surprisingly funny) tales of life, death, and everything in between!

Get ready for twenty bone-chilling stories of the Underworld—from ancient Greece and around the world—as told by the team behind the smash-hit podcast and *New York Times* best-selling book series.

Venture to the edge of life itself from the safety of your living room! In these stories, you'll encounter a very ill-advised bid to kidnap the queen of the Underworld, an Egyptian god of death who weighs your heart against a feather, the treacherous and winding road to the Norse afterlife, and much more. Tales of fearsome gods, fantastical monsters, and literally death-defying heroes of the spirit world are told in the in the entertaining and approachable style that has propelled the *Greeking Out* podcast to the top of the charts.

As well as favorite frightening tales from Greek mythology, you'll hear unforgettable stories from ancient Egypt, Scandinavia, Mesopotamia, the Philippines, China, Central America, and more.

Playful illustrations coupled with cheeky storytelling and real information about life (and death) in the ancient world—delivered by the all-knowing Oracle of Wi-Fi—make this collection of fabulous fables an essential addition to your library.



About the Authors and Illustrator:



KENNY CURTIS

has worked more than thirty years in children's programming as a performer, writer and producer. He is one of the creators of National Geographic Kids' *Greeking Out* podcast series, which he hosts and cowrites alongside his daughter, Jillian Hughes. Together, Kenny and Jillian have helped develop a number of well-known kids' content offerings for partners and platforms like Pinna, Tinkercast, Kidz Bop, and 8 Pound Gorilla Records. But Kenny may be best known as the human behind the long-running radio program The Animal Farm show on SiriusXM's original family music channel, Kids Place Live.

JILLIAN HUGHES

is a professional writer with a heart for the kids and family industry. She's a writer for National Geographic Kids' *Greeking Out* podcast series, and has contributed to other platforms including Pinna, Tinkercast, and iHeart. She also works as a copywriter crafting marketing collateral for numerous industries. While she enjoys working with all her clients, she is especially partial toward collaborating with Kenny—who just happens to be her dad.

JAVIER ESPILA

is a Spanish illustrator who has been devouring cartoons ever since he was old enough to sit upright in front of the TV. This had the unfortunate consequence of causing serious inflammation of the brain, rendering him unsuitable for any job that requires him to lift anything heavier than a pencil. In recent years, his condition has deteriorated, and he is now forced to write absurd and fantastic stories to alleviate the constant pressure on his skull. He lives with his wife and his two daughters, who help him by alternating cartoons with video games.



Exploring the Greeking Out Books Through Class Discussions and Writing Prompts

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS MAY BE UTILIZED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ANY OF THE MYTHS OFFERED IN *GREEKING OUT*, *GREEKING OUT HEROES AND OLYMPIANS*, AND *GREEKING OUT TALES FROM THE UNDERWORLD* AND MAY BE ADAPTED FOR FURTHER STORY ANALYSIS.



- From your reading of the *Greeking Out* books, which myths are your favorites? What was it about these stories that you like best and why?
- *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians* shares that “Unlike some classic fables and fairy tales, Greek myths don’t always have a clear ‘moral’ or a happy ending.” Why is that important, and what can be learned from these complex stories?
- The concept of an “underworld” or a place for the dead or a lower realm of existence is certainly evident in Greek mythology but equally present in various mythologies from all over the world. What are similarities and differences between them did you discover while reading?
- What are your takeaways about the relationships between the characters featured in the specific myths you read?
- Given what you’ve discovered from your reading of *Greeking Out*, *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians*, and *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld*, what role do objects of power play for these characters? Why are symbols like Zeus’s thunderbolt, Poseidon’s trident, or the Monkey King’s staff important to these gods and symbolically important to other characters?
- Several mythologies feature a system of judgement for souls. Why do justice and judgment seem important to storytellers around the world?
- Based on what you’ve observed in your reading of *Greeking Out*, *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians*, and *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld*, how do each of the characters view themselves? Is this similar or different from how others see them? If so, in what ways?
- What role did the setting have on the myths you chose to read? Do you believe it would change the story in any profound ways if the story took place anywhere else? Are there ways in which the setting impacts the characters or impacts the tone of the story?
- Trickster characters often cause chaos and unforeseen consequences in myths. Trickster characters often cause chaos and unforeseen consequences in myths. How do these characters contribute to the overall narrative and themes of myths? What makes their inclusion significant?
- Are there any ways you can see yourself being like any characters in the myths you read? If so, in what ways? If you can’t, in what ways are you different?
- How would you describe your chosen myth’s conflict? What actions or events lead to a resolution of the conflict?
- Do the myths’ resolutions help you better understand something about the human condition or our natural world? If so, in what ways?
- What are the personality traits of each of the characters in this myth? How do those traits affect them? What is it these characters desire? Do they struggle in any way, and are there any consequences for their desires?
- As a reader, what do you think of the choices made by the cast of mythological characters featured in *Greeking Out*, *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians*, and *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld*?
- What do you believe motivates these individual mythological characters, and specifically, what do you think is important to them and why?
- What are your biggest takeaways or lessons you learned from these myths in *Greeking Out*, *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians*, and *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld*?

Writing Prompts

TO OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEEPER REFLECTIONS WHILE READING THE *GREEKING OUT* BOOKS, THE FOLLOWING WRITING PROMPTS MAY BE UTILIZED WITH THE READINGS AND STUDY OF ANY OF THE MYTHS OFFERED IN *GREEKING OUT*, *GREEKING OUT HEROES AND OLYMPIANS*, AND *GREEKING OUT TALES FROM THE UNDERWORLD*.



- ◆ Discuss the various motivations for journeys to the Underworld in the myths featured in *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld*. What do characters seek (e.g., rescue, immortality, advice, a loved one), and what are the consequences, both positive and negative, of these journeys?
- ◆ One of the most common takeaways from the stories from the *Greeking Out* books is that gods are each flawed in their own individual way. Choose two different gods (e.g., Zeus, Hera, Loki, Apollo, Ra, Izanami) and analyze their character flaws as depicted in the myths you read. Discuss how these flaws drive the plot of their respective myths and contribute to the overall takeaway of the tale.
- ◆ Analyze how the concept of hubris is presented in the *Greeking Out* myths. Discuss at least two specific instances where a character's arrogance or excessive pride leads to negative consequences and explain the lessons drawn from these events.
- ◆ Explore the theme of relationships and family dynamics within the mythological stories offering in the *Greeking Out* books. How do familial bonds (e.g., parent-child, sibling, marital) influence events and character actions, particularly in stories involving the Underworld or divine intervention?
- ◆ The *Greeking Out* books include Oracle of Wi-Fi observations that provide modern-day observations or "pro tips." Analyze how these comments from this Oracle bridge ancient mythology with contemporary life and offer a unique perspective on the timeless themes within the stories.
- ◆ Compare and contrast the depictions of the Underworld across at least three different mythologies presented in the *Greeking Out* books (e.g., Greek, Egyptian, Japanese, Chinese, Maya, Norse, Mesopotamian, Hindu, Philippine, Aztec). Discuss their rulers, inhabitants, and the typical journey of souls.
- ◆ Analyze the role of trickster figures in the myth featured in the *Greeking Out* books, such as Loki, Sun Wukong, Sisyphus, and even Zeus or Hera at times. How do their actions, often driven by selfishness or mischief, impact the larger narratives and the lives of other characters?





Extend the Learning: Greeking Out Extension Activities Cont.



I'LL BE THERE FOR YOU!

No matter the myth's origin, friendship and love play a significant role in Greek myths and those featured in other world mythologies. Have readers select a favorite character featured in one of the *Greeking Out* books and do some literary investigation. Does this character already have a best bud or perfect person for them? Is it a best friend or romantic partner? If so, analyze what makes them a dynamic duo or a swoon-worthy pair. If they don't, what kind of person are they looking for? Ask readers to create a character analysis of the character they selected and use it to write a brief profile of what kind of character would be a great mate for them.

GIFT GIVING

Have readers select five or more gifts that would be perfect to give to one of the gods or goddesses in *Greeking Out*, *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians*, and *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld*; while these gifts can be tangible or intangible, they should be things that he/she would really want or need. Be sure readers provide an explanation for each gift and why it is appropriate is attached.

YOU GODS GOTTA HAVE FRIENDS

Just like we do in our everyday lives, the mythological characters featured in *Greeking Out*, *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians*, and *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld* need friends. Have readers imagine themselves as the best friend of a mythological character and write a letter offering support, encouragement, or guidance for a task or quest they hope to accomplish. Be sure they explain what it is they think they can do, and if they want in on the adventure, include themselves in the plans.

DESIGN A GREEKING OUT BOARD GAME

The *Greeking Out* books provide readers with an ideal opportunity to put their creative imaginations to work. Allow them to use their expertise and enthusiasm to create a board game based on the famous adventures of the heroes and heroines featured in the three volumes. There are many sample stories that are rich in details and adventures, including Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece, the Labors of Hercules, and Odysseus and the Cyclops. Allow readers to choose a favorite story from *Greeking Out*, *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians*, and *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld* and note the details they wish to include in the game. Then write a rule book and design and produce the necessary accessories: board, cards, dice, spinners, etc. Invite your readers to exchange their games and provide feedback to each other on the ease of use and playability of their creations.



Extend the Learning: Greeking Out Extension Activities Cont.



FAMILY TREE

Have readers pick a favorite character from the *Greeking Out* books and create a family tree based on the information they learn in *Greeking Out* and other resources they can find about the various gods, goddesses, and heroes who have passed through their character's life. Family trees can be illustrated with pictures and accompanied by short descriptions of each individual's importance in the character's life.

WHERE'S THE FUN IN DYSFUNCTION? MYTHOLOGICAL GODS AND FAMILY DYNAMICS

One thread that runs through all the *Greeking Out* books and a hallmark of Greek and other world mythologies showcased in the series is the impact of complicated families and often how their dysfunction even impacts those outside of their units. Have readers select one of the stories that spotlight a family dynamic and analyze the relationships of that family. Ask them the following: *From what you've learned through your reading, would you consider the relationships to be positive or troubled? Do you see any evidence of positive family dynamics?* Offer an opportunity for further examination and have them draft a brief summary of their findings.

CHARACTER "TO-DO" LIST

Remind readers that like us, literary characters have tasks they need to complete. Begin by having readers select a deity of their choice from *Greeking Out*, *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians*, and *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld*. Next, have them create a list of the most important tasks at hand for that character with explanations as to why those tasks are so necessary.

LANGUAGE SCAVENGER HUNT: GREEK INFLUENCE IS EVERYWHERE

Remind readers that Greek mythology's influence is evident in our daily language. Working as a team, ask your readers to research words or phrases we still use today that come from Greek myths or ancient Greece. For instance, remind them what it means to have an "Achilles' heel." The team that finds and collects the most modern terms directly influenced by Greek mythology wins!

WHAT'S IN THE MOON?

Almost every culture in the world has a myth explaining the origin and purpose of the moon or offers a special nod to its existence. In "The Moon Falls in Love," readers discover the story of Selene and how the Greeks interpreted the magic and mystery of this shining orb in their sky. In *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld*, Sidapa, the Philippine god of death, develops a very special relationship with Libulan, the moon god. Using library and internet resources, have readers select a different world mythology featured in *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld* book and examine that culture to discover their explanation of the origin and purpose of the moon or why it's deemed special. After their research is complete, have them use a presentation tool of choice to showcase the version they have discovered.



Extend the Learning: Greeking Out Extension Activities Cont.



GUIDE TO THE GREEKS!

These books are filled with lots of names—whether they're gods, goddesses, monsters, magical creatures, or a bunch of giants, it's easy to forget who somebody is (or have a tough time pronouncing those pesky giants' names), *Greeking Out*, *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians*, and *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld* books offer a handy-dandy, Oracle of Wi-Fi-approved guide to places, characters, and terms in these tales from Greek and world mythologies.

Using the guide, have readers select a god, goddess, monster, magical creature, or giant and do a research deep dive to discover more about their selected character, being sure to use additional library and internet resources to discover the following:

- ☐ Physical description
- ☐ Relationship to other important mythological characters
- ☐ Explanation of any significant connections to mythological figures
- ☐ Any additional important information (such as special abilities or powers)

Have them prepare a digital exhibit with a poster or slide show designed to inform others about their mythological figure as a means of create more background knowledge to support readers of the *Greeking Out* books.

SOME GODS ARE UNDERDOGS!

Greeking Out, *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians*, and *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld* highlights a number of important figures of Greek mythology and other world mythologies, the history of gods extends beyond those sitting on Mount Olympus.

Divide your students into pairs and have them research and develop a biographical presentation of a lesser-known deity from Greek or another world mythology, especially those featured in *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld*.

Use the space below to have them fill out the basic facts about their chosen deity. Then have them take turns presenting their findings about their selected god.

1. Name of god:
2. Origin of god:
3. Known for:
4. Little known fact:
5. Related to:

GODS WANNA CONNECT TOO!

The stories of the major players in *Greeking Out*, *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians*, and *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld* have been passed down to us from ancient Greece and the world's mythological stories, but if these characters lived in our time, they would likely use the same social media platforms that are popular today. After putting your readers in small groups, ask them to select a Greek god or goddess of their choice and create faux social media page for that character, being sure to complete all the pertinent information, like education, relationships, groups to follow, pages to like, as well as 2–3 status updates with hashtags.



Extend the Learning: Greeking Out Extension Activities Cont.



CONNECTING WITH COMICS

Put your readers in small groups, and have them select a favorite scene from a myth featured in *Greeking Out*, *Greeking Out Heroes and Olympians*, and *Greeking Out Tales from the Underworld* and illustrate a comic for that myth. Be sure to provide art supplies like strip paper, markers, and colored pencils. Alternatively, let them use tablets or computers to access a digital comic strip creator like one of these <https://www.storyboardthat.com/create/worksheet-graphic-novel> or one of your choosing. After they finish, let them share their stories and display them for other visitors.

CRAFT A CREATION MYTH

One of the hallmarks of myths from around the world is they were often used to explain natural phenomena. The challenge is to create an original myth to explain some natural phenomenon or land formation. It could be anything from the origin of hurricanes to how or a mountain range was created. Put readers in small groups and use following points to guide the creation of an original myth.

- ❑ The story must involve at least two Greek or world myth gods or goddesses but is not limited to just these two.
- ❑ The original myth must explain a natural phenomenon or a geological feature (a sea, polar ice cap, a mountain range, etc.).
- ❑ The story should include details about the Greek or world myth gods and goddesses and should show their understanding of their powers, symbols, and personalities.

This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock, an associate professor in Library Science Department in the College of Education at Sam Houston State University. Dr. Brock holds a Ph.D. in Library Science, specializing in children's and young adult literature.

GREEKING OUT



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