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MythBusters: Exploring Mythology and Folklore from Around the World

“It is history constructed in spurts, in sudden bursts of imaginative activity, and it takes the form of stories delivered in spoken Apache...it is history without authorities— all narrated place-worlds, provided they seem plausible, are considered equally valid—and the idea of compiling “definitive accounts” is rejected out of hand as unfeasible and undesirable...For the place-maker’s main objective is to speak the past into being, to summon it with words and give it dramatic form, to *produce* experience by forging ancestral worlds in which others can participate and readily lose themselves.”— From *Wisdom Sits in Places* by Keith H. Basso

It is a Ninth Grade curricular requirement that students are introduced to mythology while also reading Homer’s *Odyssey*. This introduction usually follows the tradition of using this one text and sticking to only a Greek or Roman definition of mythology and studying Greek and Roman gods and goddesses. I would like to take this idea of teaching mythology and the *Odyssey* a step further by encouraging students to explore mythology from a global perspective. By using a variety of texts from different cultures and introducing students to different types of myths and areas of folklore from around the world, I hope that students will not only discover what makes these stories unique, but also what they have in common.

This unit will not only concentrate on studying myths and stories from outside sources, but also the stories and experiences of the students themselves. By allowing students to create their own meaning from the texts and activities used in this unit, I plan to encourage what Peter Smagorinsky calls “exploratory talk.” This type of talk in the classroom “changes the purpose of discussion from transmitting official knowledge to constructing new knowledge” (11). For example, one of the first assignments that students will be given is a research project where they research myths from a particular part of the world before choosing one to share with the class.

Some of these places of study will include Africa, Germany, Russia, Japan and America. After sharing what they have learned about these places and the myths that they have discovered, the class will discuss what each of these stories have in common. What was each tradition trying to accomplish by telling and re-telling these stories? Through this exploratory discussion the class will then come up with a working definition of a myth. I prefer letting students discover this knowledge for themselves rather than having me impose an official definition on them before they have had a chance to read any type of text. The definition that the class comes up to is also free to change throughout the unit as I introduce new texts, or the class learns about myths from other cultures and how they work within that culture.

Another type of exploratory activity that I have planned for this unit will introduce students to modern day folklore and urban legends. One type of folklore that I will encourage the class to participate in is the telling of one's most embarrassing moment. Whenever this topic comes up most people have a story that they can fall back on and use to contribute to the conversation. Many times people will use the same story in different situations as long as the conversation has shifted to the appropriate topic. The act of telling and re-telling this same embarrassing story is a way for someone to contribute to a type of oral tradition. I also think that Ninth Graders would have a wealth of knowledge about embarrassing moments that they could use in this story telling activity. Similarly, the topic of urban legends is also relevant to students at this time. In the atmosphere of high school alone, inside and outside of classrooms, students tell each other stories. Urban legends are bound to make their way into these stories and conversations among students.

When dealing with the beliefs of other cultures, especially when discussing mythology,

deities, and at times the creation of other beings, I realize that there may be objections from parents or other authorities. These people might fear that by teaching this unit I would in some way be promoting the idea of polytheism, or possibly undermining some of their traditional beliefs be they religious or philosophical. However, I will assure these parents or other authorities that we will be studying these texts and cultures from a completely literary standpoint. My goal of teaching this unit is in no way to proselytize these students into a particular way of thinking or method of believing in terms of a culture or religion. In fact, by including a wide array of materials and differing perspectives in this unit I know that I will not be teaching in favor of one world view. I am simply presenting ideas that already exist in the world to students through the lens of storytelling and allowing them to create their own meaning and knowledge from these texts through the discussions and activities that I have planned for this unit.

Some people might ask why using texts from other cultures and time periods is relevant to students today. One reason is that “the material within them is worth engaging with because their themes are central to an understanding of a particular culture, whether national, local, or distant” (Smagorinsky 2008). For example, students may wonder why they still have to read the *Odyssey*— a text that has been around for thousands of years. To introduce this text I plan on playing a game called Six Degrees of Separation. The *Odyssey* is the story of a soldier’s return home after battle and the challenges that he faces along the way. To illustrate this idea of Six Degrees of Separation I plan on asking each student if he/she knows a person who knows someone, or that they themselves, are serving our country overseas. Doesn’t it make sense to think that these people we know today will also face challenges when they return from battle just

as Odysseus did?

There is also a great deal of literary significance in the texts that I plan to use in this unit, many of which are alluded to in other literary works that students will read throughout their educational careers. This unit will encourage students to build a foundation in mythology that is not narrowly focused by concentrating only on ancient Greek or Roman myths, but instead incorporates myths and folklore from places and cultures around the world. This way, students will have a better chance of creating meaning and knowledge that may be that much closer to the knowledge and experiences that they already possess.

Overall, my main goals for this unit are to help students discover what these different kinds of stories have to offer, and how these stories not only relate to their lives, but also to the lives of the people who originally told them. In my daily lesson plans, I will include specific questions that I would like students to focus on while completing that day's activities. Examples of these questions are as follows: How might stories change overtime? How does a story that originated from an oral tradition get to be retold? What are some challenges that characters face in the *Odyssey*? How might students choose to face similar challenges that they encounter? What is an example of a classic Greek myth? How might this myth be modernly represented today?

Work Cited

Basso, K. "Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache." University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque. 1940. p.32.

Smagorinsky, P. "Teaching English By Design: How to Create and Carry Out Instructional Units." Heinemann. Portsmouth, NH. (2008).

Goals and Rubrics

Goal 1: Group Presentation: Researching Myths from Around the World

Before we start looking at any particular story in class, I would like students to research different myths and legends that come from various parts of the world. Here, I am giving students the opportunity to choose a particular area of the world, or history, that interests them and pick a myth that comes from that area to share with the class. After each group shares its myth with the class I plan on having a class discussion about what these stories have in common. This way, students will be able to make the connection between the stories they have discovered and the different elements that make these stories myths. During this discussion, I will also introduce students to specific vocabulary words that they will come across in this unit such as, but not limited to, myth, fable, fairytale, hero and folklore.

I will allow students to form their own groups, but there can be no less than three and no

more than four people in a group. Also, there cannot be more than one group researching the same area.

Each 3-4 member group will research myths from one of the following areas of the world:

-Africa

-Germany

-Greece (ancient Greek myths)

-Japan or -China

-America (Native American myths)

-Russia

-Great Britain (Celtic or Welsh myths)

While researching myths from its chosen area of the world, each group will be required to not only choose a myth from that area to share with the class, but they will also need to include the following information in their presentation:

- Any elements of the myth that make it unique to that area of the world

- Specific characters, gods or goddesses, or heroic figures that appear in the myth

- Any information about the purpose of the myth; if the students cannot locate a purpose in their research then they must come up with a possible purpose as a group.

- A work cited page to inform the class of where they compiled their information from.

- A visual accompaniment to the presentation: These accompaniments can be, but are not limited to, illustrations of a character or characters in the myth, illustrations of the setting of the myth, or another visual representation of the groups choice. Any alternate visual accompaniment to the group presentation must be approved by the teacher at least two days prior to the

presentation.

Students will be given a total of five days to complete this research project. Two of these days will be spent in the media center gathering research and choosing a myth to share in the presentation. Three other days will be spent in the classroom and/or computer lab finalizing the group presentation and completing the visual accompaniment. Any alternative visual accompaniments must be approved by the teacher on the first day of classroom and/or computer lab work.. The sixth day of the project will be reserved for the group presentations. If time permits on this day the class will then discuss the commonalities and differences between the myths presented by the groups. If there is not time to begin this discussion, then the students will be asked to consider these commonalities and differences before returning to class to begin the discussion during the next day of class.

Rubric for Group Presentation:

Category	4	3	2	1
Individual Participation	Student fully contributes to conducting research and actively participates in group presentation.	Student contributes somewhat to research and participates somewhat in group presentation.	Student either contributes to research and does not participate in the group presentation, or does not contribute to research, but does participate in presentation.	Student does not contribute to research and does not participate in group presentation.
Quality of Research Presented	Research included is interesting and completely relevant to the presentation.	Research included is somewhat interesting and somewhat relevant to the presentation.	Research included is at times confusing and lacks cohesion with the presentation.	Research included has elements of incorrect information and does not align with the presentation.

Visual Accompaniment	Visual is neat and contributes to the understanding of the myth.	Visual lacks somewhat in neatness, and lacks somewhat at contributing to the understanding of the myth.	Visual accompaniment is not neat and distracts from the understanding of the myth.	Visual accompaniment is not included
Work Cited	A work cited page in MLA format is included with no errors.	A work cited page in MLA format is included with 1-2 errors.	A work cited page in MLA format is included with 2-3 errors.	A work cited page has more than 3 errors, or does not follow MLA formatting, or is not included at all.
Inclusion of Required Additional Elements	Includes each of the additional required elements in group presentation.	Includes some of the additional required elements, but lacks one of the elements.	Includes some of the additional required elements, but lacks two or three of the elements.	Lacks more than three of the additional required elements.

_____ / 20pts

Goal 2: Dialogue Journal

As we work on different activities in class, I would like students to keep a journal in which they write and reflect on what we are reading and discussing in class. This journal can either be handwritten, or take on an electronic format such as a blog. Students will be given the option to share their journals with other class members either by trading handwritten journals with each other, or allowing other students access to their blog. Time in class will be given if students want to share journals with other class members, but handwritten journals will only leave the classroom with the author of that journal.

In these journals, students will be asked to reflect on either the readings we are doing in class, or the class discussions that result from these readings, or both. These journals will allow students to comment on what they are reading, ask questions, or explain why they do or do not

enjoy a text that we are reading. I plan on responding to these journals every other week, and then giving them a grade towards the end of the unit. I am estimating that there will be 8-10 total journal entries. In keeping these journals, students must do the following:

- Complete one journal entry for each of the journal assignments given throughout the unit.

- Mention at least one reference to the text we are reading, or the topic we have been discussing in class, at the time the entry is completed

Sometimes I will prompt students at the end of a discussion, or study of text, with thoughts they could include in their journal entries that week. For example, I may ask if they agree or disagree with what a certain character did, or what they would have done in that character's situation.

Rubric for Dialogue Journals:

Category	10	7	4	2
Quality of Reflection	Each entry shows a great deal of thought and reflection.	Each entry shows some thought and reflection.	Each entry shows little thought or reflection.	More than three entries show a disregard for thought or reflection.
Quality of Connection	Each entry shows a great deal of connection with either the text or class discussion.	7-5 entries show some connection with the text or class discussion.	4-3 entries show some connection with the text or class discussion.	2-1 entries show some connection with the text or class discussion.
Inclusion of Entries	All 8-10 entries are included.	7-5 entries are included.	4-3 entries are included.	Journal contains only 0-2 entries.

___ / 30 pts.

Goal 3: Creative Writing Assignment or Sequel to a Literary Work

After reading several different myths, folk stories and fables, students will be asked to create a story that demonstrates their knowledge of the different elements of these kinds of stories. Each narrative must include the following and be no less than 250 words:

- A heroic character (students will be given the option of using themselves as the main character) that must perform some kind of task or complete a journey of the student's choice.
- A monster, or character that the hero must battle, outwit, or in some way overcome.
- Students must include information on where their narrative is located and give specific details about the setting.
- A visual representation of the story*. Examples could be, but are not limited to, an illustration to accompany the story, a comic book representation of the story, a visual collage (either hand-drawn or of a different media) that illustrates the characters, setting, or action in the story, a sculpture or model of either the main character or the monster-creature in the story.

If the student does not want to create a complete myth of his/her own, then he/she can choose to continue the story of a myth or folktale that we have read in class by creating a sequel to that story. Each sequel must contain the following and be no less than 250 words:

- Predictions of what happens next to each of the main characters in the story.
- The same story structure of the original text.
- A clear understanding of why the predictions are reasonable for each character.
- A visual representation of the story.

* See above for visual requirements

Rubric for the Creative Writing Assignment or Literary Sequel:

Category	10	7	4	1
Required Elements of the story or sequel	Story contains each of the required elements.	Story contains 2-3 of the required elements.	Story contains 1 of the required elements.	Story does not contain any of the required elements.
Quality of the story or sequel	The story is interesting and shows a great deal of thought and organization.	The story is somewhat interesting and shows some evidence of thought and organization.	The story shows little evidence of thought and organization and is lacking in interesting content.	The story shows no evidence of thought or organization and is not at all interesting, or the story is not complete.
Quality of Visual Accompaniment	Visual is neat and contributes to the understanding of the story.	Visual lacks somewhat in neatness, and lacks somewhat at contributing to the understanding of the story.	Visual accompaniment is not neat and distracts from the understanding of the story.	Visual accompaniment is not included

___ / 30 pts.

For this assessment, students will be given one day in class to brainstorm/plan their story or sequel and two days in the computer lab to write their story or sequel. They will then have two days of class to work on the visual accompaniment to their story, and if more time is needed they can use time at home before turning their stories and visual accompaniments in on the fifth day of class. Students will also be given the opportunity on the fifth day to share their stories and visuals with the class.

Throughout this unit, there will be other activities and assignments that will result in daily grades and completion grades. There are not any accompanying rubrics for these assignments, because they will be graded on whether or not they are completed either in class or

as homework assignments. I will give 5 points for homework assignments and 10 points for the class assignments or activities.

* The research assignment and rubric of Goal 1 was modified from:

<http://www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/VirtualLibrary/White.pdf>

List of Texts that this Unit Uses:

- 1.) Selections from Donna Rosenberg's World Mythology: An Anthology of the Great Myths and Epics (1987).
- 2.) Selections from George Shannon's book Stories to Solve: Folktales from Around the World (1985).
- 3.) Selections from Favorite Folktales from Around the World, Edited by Jane Yolen. (1986).
- 4.) Information from The Language of Literature Teacher's Addition Grade 9 Literature textbook published by McDougal Littell (2004).
- 5.) Activities from Peter Smagorinsky's Teaching English by Design: How to Create and Carry Out Instructional Units (2008)
- 6.) Comic Strip from : <http://daryld.com/2006/04/the-odyssey-subconsciously/>

Intro Activity (A detailed break-down of the time allotment for each portion of this activity is given in the next section of this unit in the daily lesson plans.)

Day 1: How might stories change overtime? How does a story that originated from an oral tradition get to be retold?

I will start this activity by reading students a short newspaper article/story. Before reading the article/story, I will instruct them to pay attention to specific details in the article/story. I will then let the students know that we will be coming back to this story before the

end of class.

Next, I will explain to the class how to play the game Telephone. While playing this game, I will be sure to remind students that chosen phrases should be school appropriate and not contain any negative or hurtful comments about other students or people.

Instructions on how to play Telephone:

1. Have the students get into some form of a circle.
2. I will start the first game by whispering a phrase to the student next to me. For example, I might choose to say, “I have a dog named Sydney.”
3. The student next to me will then whisper what he/she hears to the next student in the circle.
4. After the message gets passed to each student, the last student in the circle will announce to the class what the message has turned into. I will then tell everyone what the original message was.

One reason that I have for playing this game as an introductory activity to the unit is to show students how stories change overtime and to also discuss how some of the stories that we will be reading in class have originated from an oral tradition.

Coming back to the newspaper article/story

After finishing the games of Telephone, I will then ask students to get out a sheet of paper and re-write the previous article/story as they best remember it. Students will then have a chance to share and compare their versions of the story. As a class, we will make note of any significant or major changes that took place in the second telling of the story. I will be sure to explain to students that the changes/variations in the story are not necessarily wrong, but just an example of how stories change over time. I do not want students to feel like they had to get the

story exactly right.

Daily Lesson Plans : These lesson plans are designed for a 55 minute class period.

Day 1: How might stories change overtime? How does a story that originated from an oral tradition get to be retold?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

10mins: Introduce students to the unit, and begin introductory activity by reading students a short portion of a newspaper article/story. Instruct students to pay attention to specific details included in the story. Remind students that we will be coming back to this story before the end of class.

20mins: Play several rounds of the game Telephone (see instructions for this game above in the Introductory Activity section of this unit), and as a class discuss why some of the original “messages” may have changed through the “telephone” line of communication.

5mins: Introduce students to the Dialogue Journal assignment that they will complete throughout the unit and give assignment for **Journal Entry 1** (see **Goal 2** above).

15mins: Let students begin on the journal assignment in class, but let them finish it as homework.

Homework: Journal Entry 1- In your dialogue journal re-write the story from the newspaper article the best you can remember it. Include as many specific details as you can remember. Do not worry if you think that your story is not completely accurate, but do try to give at least a synopsis of what the story is about.

Day 2: How do some stories change over time? What are some of the vocabulary terms that students will come across in this unit? What words are they familiar with already? What terms will they discover along the way?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping- Circulate around the room to make sure students completed the homework assignment from the night before.

20mins: As a class, give students the opportunity to share their re-told versions of the newspaper article/story from the day before. Discuss some of the changes that students created during their re-telling/re-writing of the story. Questions to ask: What, if any, details remained consistent from the first telling of the story with the second? What details changed? What might be some possible reasons for the changes that occurred in the different versions of the story?

5mins: Have students make 5 small groups. Introduce them to the Carrousel Activity.

Instructions for the Carrousel Activity: There will be five, small groups of students. Each group will have a large piece of butcher paper with a word written on it. For two minutes each group will make notes on the butcher paper about their assigned word. The notes can, but don't have to, include a possible definition, examples, or other thoughts that come to mind while thinking about this word together. After the two minutes, students will pass their piece of butcher paper to the next group until each piece has rotated. Two more minutes will be given for the groups to make notes on the next word or what the previous group wrote about the word.

Each piece of butcher paper should rotate around the “carrousel” of groups until each group has had a chance to work with it, and it makes its way back to the starting group.

The five words written on butcher paper for this activity are;

- 1.) Folktale
- 2.) Myth
- 3.) Fairytale
- 4.) Fable
- 5.) Legend

I plan on using this activity in order to gather information from the collective knowledge of the class as a whole. I prefer this method of helping students create their own meaning out of words and information that I present to them instead of me simply handing them a list of words to define on their own.

10mins: Have students complete the carrousel activity. (2 minutes of writing for each of the 5 groups.)

5mins: Give each group a chance to write a response to what other students have written, or add more info to their pieces of butcher paper.

10mins: Give each group the opportunity to share their “final product” of work expressed on their piece of butcher paper.

Day 3: What are some of the vocabulary terms that students will come across in this unit? What words are they familiar with already? What terms will they discover along the way?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

5mins: Have students return to their 5 small groups that they were in on the previous day. Return the pieces of butcher paper to each group.

5mins: Give each group a chance to become re-familiarized with the work they already completed from the day before.

15mins: Ask each group to come up with a possible definition for their assigned word based on the information, and possible examples, that are written on each piece of butcher paper.

10mins: Have each group share their word and definition with the class. Ask for a volunteer to keep a list of words and definitions on the board.

5mins: Pass out dictionaries to each of the groups, so they can look up the definition of their word to compare to the definition that they came up with as a group. (I suggest collaborating with other English teachers and the Media Specialists to make sure there are enough dictionaries to go around the class.)

10mins: Have each group share with the class the definition that they found for their word in the dictionary. Ask students to compare the definitions that they came up with to the ones that they

looked up in the dictionary. Questions to ask: What are the similarities? What are the differences? Can some of these definitions be combined to become more concise or applicable to how the words may be currently used today?

Day 4: What are some of the vocabulary terms that students will come across in this unit? What are some possible examples of myths from around the world?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

5mins: Pass out a handout that has been compiled from the previous day's vocabulary activity. Ask students to keep this handout in order to refer back throughout the unit to the definitions they came up with for each of these words.

10mins: Introduction of Group Presentation Projects: Researching Myths from Around the World. (See **Goal 1** above.) I hope that I have helped prepare students for achievement of this goal by giving them several opportunities to complete class work together, and have discussions, in small groups. They should also be familiar with myths by participating in the vocabulary and carousel activities the previous days of class.

5mins: Have students form their own groups of 3-4

10mins: Have each group decide on an area of the world to choose for their project. The choices of areas will be listed on the board. Choices will occur on a first come, first serve basis. One student from each group will come to me to let me know the choice of their group. Once an area has been chosen by a group it will be marked off on the board. Students will be told ahead of time that this **MUST** be done in an orderly manner, or the class will lose the opportunity to choose the area of the world that their group will study.

5mins: Take class to the media center

15mins: Have class listen to a presentation by a Media Specialist about performing research, MLA style, and giving suggestions of possible resources. This presentation would be coordinated with the Media Specialist ahead of time (this portion of the lesson plans is modified from <http://www.coe.uga.edu/~smago/VirtualLibrary/Butler.pdf>).

Day 5: What are some possible examples of myths from around the world? How might these myths contribute to the culture of this area in the world?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

5mins: Take class to the media center to continue research on their myths from around the world.

45mins: Students continue to work in their groups to research myths from the area of the world that they have chosen.

Continuing the Research Project

Day 6: What are some possible examples of myths from around the world? How might these myths contribute to the culture of this area in the world?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

5mins: Take class to the media center to continue research on their myths from around the

world.

45mins: Students continue to work in their groups to research myths from the area of the world that they have chosen.

Day 7: What are some possible examples of myths from around the world? How might these myths contribute to the culture of this area in the world?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

50mins: Allow students to continue working on their group projects, finalizing their group presentations, and working on the visual requirement for the project. Students will be allowed to stay in the classroom or go to the computer lab as needed.

Day 8: What are some possible examples of myths from around the world? How might these myths contribute to the culture of this area in the world?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

50mins: Allow students to continue working on their group projects, finalizing their group presentations, and working on the visual requirement for the project. Students will be allowed to stay in the classroom or go to the computer lab as needed.

Final Day of Group Projects

Day 9: What are some possible examples of myths from around the world? How might these myths contribute to the culture of this area in the world?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

50mins: Allow students to continue working on their group projects, finalizing their group presentations, and working on the visual requirement for the project. Students will be allowed to stay in the classroom or go to the computer lab as needed.

Day 10: What are some possible examples of myths from around the world? How might these myths contribute to the culture of this area in the world?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

50mins: Group Presentations to the class. I do not think that all of the groups will be able to present in one day of class. If there is not enough time in one day, the presentations will carry over into the next day of class.

Day 11: What are some possible examples of myths from around the world? How might these myths contribute to the culture of this area in the world?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

35mins: Finish group presentations.

15mins: Give students assignment for **Journal Entry 2** to start in class and if needed, complete for homework.

Assignment: As an entry in your Dialogue Journals, write about the similarities and differences between the myths that were shared in class. Also, choose one myth that was shared and write whether or not you enjoyed this myth. What parts of it did you like? Where there parts that you did not like?

Day 15: What are some possible examples of myths from around the world? How might these myths contribute to the culture of this area in the world? What purpose might storytelling have?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping- Circulate to check that each student has completed the journal entry for homework.

10mins: As a class, allow students to share the reflections they made in their dialogue journals if they wish to share.

5mins: Pass out copies of the folktale “The Sticks of Truth” for students to read.

10mins: Read students the folktale “The Sticks of Truth” from India. This story is from George Shannon’s book Stories to Solve: Folktales from Around the World. Each story in this book has something to figure out at the end of it. The solution to the story, or how the character(s) were able to accomplish their goal is also given. I will use several of these stories throughout the unit as warm-up activities, or opportunities for students to include them in their dialogue journals

“The Sticks of Truth”

Long ago in India judges traveled from village to village. One day a judge stopped at an inn to rest, but the innkeeper was very upset. Someone had just that day stolen his daughter’s gold ring. The judge told him not to worry and had all the guests gather so that he could question them. When he could not figure out from their answers who the thief was, the judge decided to use some old magic. He told them all he was going to have to sue the sticks of truth.

“These are magic sticks,” he explained, “that will catch a thief.”

He gave each guest a stick to keep under their bed during the night.

“The stick belonging to the thief will grow two inches during the night. At breakfast we will all compare sticks and the longest stick will be the thief’s.”

The next morning the judge had all the guests come by his table and hold their stuck up next to his to see if they had grown. But one after another all were the same. None of them had grown any longer. Then suddenly the judge called, “This is the thief! Her stick is shorter than all the rest.”

Once caught, the woman confessed and the ring was returned. But all the guests were confused about the sticks of truth. The judge had said that the longest stick would be the thief’s, but instead it had been the shortest stick. Why?

12mins: Individually, have students make notes and brainstorm as to what the solution to the story might be.

2mins: Reveal what the book provides as a solution to the story.

How it was Done: None of the sticks were magical. The only one to worry about being caught, the thief had cut off two inches of her stick during the night in an effort to hide its growth. But since the sticks were not magical, her stick ended up the only short one.

10mins: Acknowledge if any of the solutions provided by the students matched the solution provided in the book. Discuss other solutions given by students that may have also been feasible. Have students explain how they reached a decision about how they came up with the solutions that they did.

Day 16: How do myths, and stories, reflect the society which produces them? What is one example of a classic Greek myth?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

15mins: Introduce the class to the *Odyssey* by playing a version of the game Six Degrees of Separation. To illustrate this idea of Six Degrees of Separation I plan on asking each student if he/she knows a person, or knows someone who knows a person, who is serving our country overseas. I am using this activity to help students realize that people who are returning from battle, like Odysseus, face a number of challenges when they return home.

35mins: Begin reading the *Odyssey* aloud together as a class. I will start reading and then ask for volunteers to continue.

The version of the *Odyssey* that I plan to use in this unit is a condensed version from Donna Rosenberg's World Mythology: An Anthology of the Great Myths and Epics. The back cover of this book describes the myths included in this anthology as being "told in a clear, vivid prose style that retains the major plot, characterization, and style of the original...[and it] preserves its appeal as fine literature." I chose this version of the *Odyssey* not only because of time constraints, but also because I think the prose style will be more familiar to students.

Assign students to read through Chapter 3 (p. 86) for homework in complete the assignment for **Journal Entry 3**.

Journal Entry 3 Assignment: (Taken from the Q4 section of Rosenberg's book) Why does Odysseus reveal his name to Polyphemus? Is he wrong to do so? Explain. Would you have revealed your name? Why or why not?

Day 17: What is an example of a classic Greek myth?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

20mins: Students can continue to read the *Odyssey* silently, or they can get in groups and read quietly in the hall.

20mins: Have students come back together as a class. Pass out art materials for students to construct visual representations of characters, or settings, mentioned so far in the *Odyssey*.

10mins: Give students an opportunity to share their artwork with the class if they choose to do so. Assign students to read through Chapter 6 (p.104) for homework.

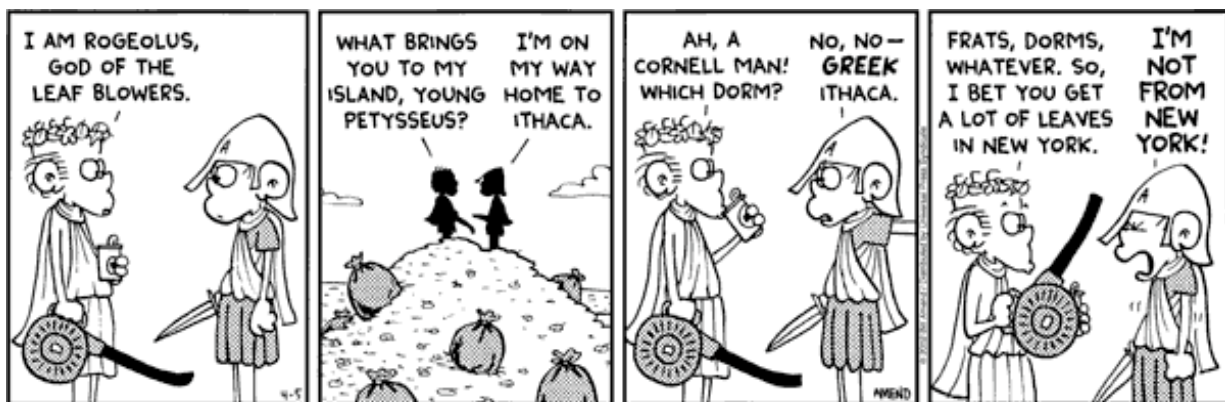
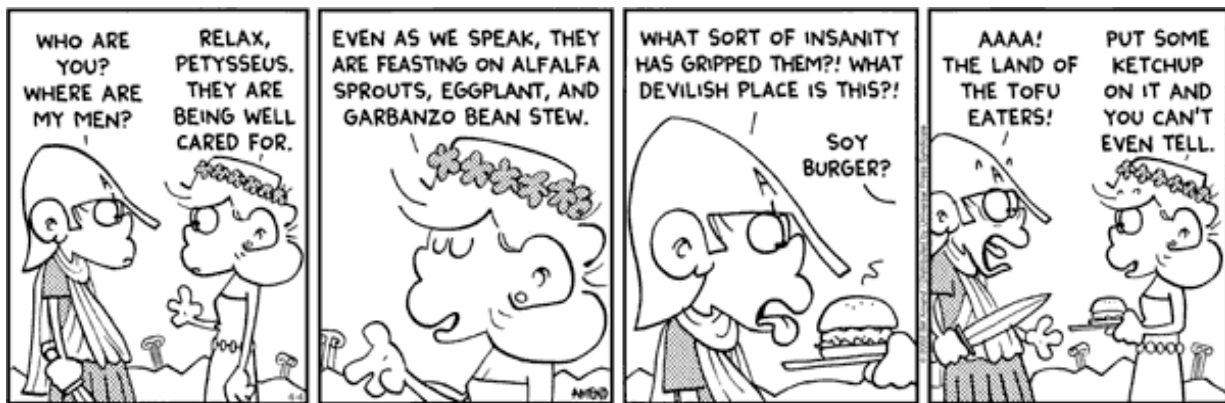
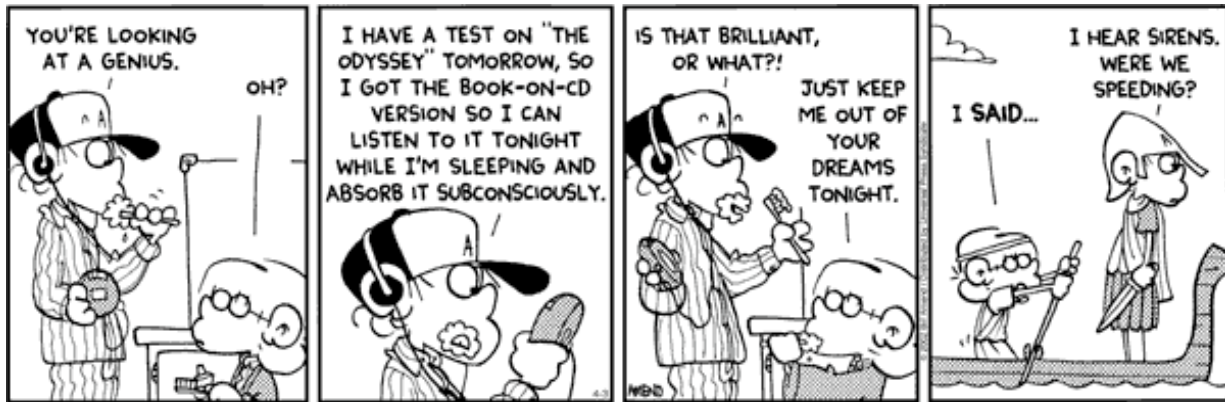
Day 18: What is an example of a classic Greek myth? How might this myth be modernly represented today?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

15mins: Share the Foxtrot Comic Strip representation of the *Odyssey* with the class. (This idea comes from English teacher Stacy Blomquist)

Comic found at: <http://daryl.com/2006/04/the-odyssey-subconsciously/>

35mins: Pass out art supplies and allow students to brainstorm and create their own comic strip versions of a scene they've read so far in the *Odyssey*. Encourage them to modernize what they've already read so far. For students who do not feel like they can, or don't want to, draw a comic strip give them the option of writing a scene where they modernize the *Odyssey* into a movie script. This option will allow students who feel more comfortable writing to express what they've learned and read in written form. Let students know that at the beginning of class the



next day they will have the option of sharing their “modern” version of a scene from the *Odyssey* with the class. Allow them to finish the project for homework if needed.

Day 19: What is an example of a classic Greek myth? What are some challenges that characters in this myth face? How might students choose to face similar challenges that they encounter?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

40mins: Continue reading the *Odyssey* aloud as a class. Finish the story if possible (p. 104-113). The rest of the class period may be needed to get through the story.

10mins: If time permits give students a chance to start on the assignment to **Journal Entry 4**. This assignment will be a focus to the next day’s class discussion.

Journal Assignment:

After finishing the *Odyssey*, think about and write a journal entry addressing **one** of the following questions. Choose a question to concentrate on (from the Q6 section of Rosenberg’s book). 1.) Have Odysseus’ experiences changed his personality by the end of the story? Has he acquired any qualities that he lacked earlier? Explain. 2.) Many consider Penelope as one of the great women in literature. Why might this be true? Do you like her? Why or why not? In addition to reflecting on one of these questions, bring up one other question that you have about the story. It can be about a specific character, something that happened in the story, or an attribute that you saw connected throughout the story, or any other topic, pertaining to the *Odyssey*, of your choosing.

Remind students that Dialogue Journals will be taken up during the next class, and that they will be expected to have four complete journal entries in their journals.

Day 20: What are some challenges that characters face in the *Odyssey*? How might students choose to face similar challenges that they encounter?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

5mins: Ask students to get out their dialogue journals and reflect on what they wrote for homework the night before. Allow them to make additional notes if necessary, but the majority of the assignment should have already been finished.

Fish Bowl Discussion Activity (adapted from p. 33 of Peter Smagorinsky’s book Teaching English by Design: How to Create and Carry Out Instructional Units)

15mins: Introduce students to the Fish Bowl Discussion activity. Have students get into a large circle, but leave room for at least 6 or so students to gather on the inside of the circle. Instruct the students that only the students on the inside of the circle may participate in the discussion. I will take volunteers to be on the inside of the circle. Pass out index cards to the students on the outside of the circle. Tell them that these index cards may be used to pass questions or comments to the students on the inside of the circle. During the discussion, a student may switch from the inside to the outside if a member of the outside circle quietly taps the shoulder of an

inside member. However, this switching of circles cannot take place until after the first 10 minutes of discussion.

35mins: Participate in Fish Bowl Discussion as a class. I will open the discussion to the members inside the circle by asking them to address and discuss the questions that they were to have answered in their dialogue journals the night before. If the discussion seems to falter, I also plan to ask students on the inside, or outside, to contribute their own personal questions that they were to have come up with.

5mins: Ticket-Out-the-Door: Students must turn in their dialogue journals as they leave class.

Day 21: What are some other examples of myths, or folktales, that include heroes? What do students consider to be the defining attributes of a hero?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

5mins: Introduce Chalk-Talk Activity. Here, the word hero will be written on the board. Next, each student will have the opportunity to come to the board 1-2 at a time and write something that comes to mind when they think of this word. Students can write directly about the word hero, or about something that has previously been written by another student. Each student will be instructed to make at least one trip to the board to contribute to the activity. There will soon be a word-web of ideas and thought bubbles spreading across the board.

15mins: Perform Chalk-Talk Activity with the students. I may decide to also come to the board and participate in this activity with the students.

20mins: Discuss what students wrote about during this activity. Here, I will simply point to something on the board and ask for whoever wrote it to elaborate on his/her idea. Some of the attributes of a hero found in literature that I plan to include in the activity and discussion are:

(From p. 890 The Language of Literature Teacher's Addition Grade 9 Literature textbook published by McDougal Littell)

- 1.) A hero is a larger-than-life figure, usually male (however, the hero doesn't always have to be male.
- 2.) He embodies the ideals of a nation or race
- 3.) He usually takes part in long, dangerous adventures and accomplishes great deeds
- 4.) These adventures and deeds usually require courage and superhuman strength

After I point out the attributes of a hero that I included, I will acknowledge if anyone else included similar information, or information about Odysseus as being a hero.

10mins: Pass out copies of, and start to read, the Chinese folktale "Li Chi Slays the Serpent" Tell the students that they will finish the story the following day in class.

Day 22: What are some other examples of myths, or folktales, that include heroes? When have students ever witnessed something heroic, or felt like heroes themselves?

5min: Attendance/Housekeeping

10min: Finish reading "Li Chi Slays the Serpent" aloud as a class

5min: Take students to the computer lab to work on the assignment for **Journal Entry 5**

35min: Have students complete journal assignment. Dialogue journals will be handed back while the class works on the next journal entry.

Journal Assignment:

Write at least two paragraphs about a time in your life when you either felt heroic, or when you witnessed something heroic. This experience does not have to be a first-hand account. You can write about something that someone else told you, or even something that you saw a character do in a movie or TV show. Be sure to include as many specific details as possible about what makes this particular event heroic.

Day 23: When have students ever witnessed something heroic, or felt like heroes themselves? How do myths, and stories, reflect the society which produces them?

5min: Attendance/Housekeeping- Circulate to make sure each student has completed journal assignment from previous day.

10min: Allow students to share the experiences that they wrote about if they wish

10min: Read the story “Fishing” from George Shannon’s Stories to Solve: Folktales from Around the World to the class. Repeat key details when necessary as students consider solutions to this story.

“Fishing”

One fine summer day two fathers and two sons went fishing at their favorite lake. They fished and talked all morning long and by noon everyone had caught one fish. As the two fathers and two sons walked back home, everyone was happy because each had a fish even though only three fish had been caught.

Two fathers and two sons. Only three fish and no fish were lost. How can this have happened?

10mins: Individually, or in pairs, allow students to brainstorm solutions to this story. Then, reveal the puzzling details from the story.

How it Was Done: Only three people went fishing. A boy, his father, and his grandfather: two sons and two fathers.

10mins: Acknowledge if any of the solutions provided by the students matched the solution provided in the book.. Have students explain how they reached a decision about how they came up with the solutions that they did.

10mins: Pass out the Apache folktale “Coyote Fights a Lump of Pitch” for students to start reading silently. Instruct them to finish reading the story for homework.

Day 24: How do myths, and folktales, reflect the society which produces them? How might students personally interpret these myths and folktales?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

10mins: Introduce Four-Square Activity. From pages 39-40 of Peter Smagorinsky's book Teaching English by Design: How to Create and Carry Out Instructional Units

Four-Square Activity:

Each student will take out a piece of paper and fold it into four squares. In the upper left-hand corner, students should draw a visual representation of their understanding of the story ("Coyote Fights a Lump of Pitch") that they completed last night. In the upper right-hand corner, they should include a written explanation of their visual representation. This explanation should be written in a kind of casual form of language that student's might use when talking to friends, or each other. In the lower-left hand corner, students should write a written explanation using more formal language that they might use when talking to a teacher. In the lower-right hand corner, students are to create a found poem derived from the original language of the story.

I plan on completing this activity myself and sharing what I've created with the class as an example of what I would like them to do.

40mins: Complete Four-Square Activity

Day 25: How do myths, and folktales, reflect the society which produces them? How might students personally interpret these myths and folktales?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

15mins: Allow students to share with the class the results of their four-square activity.

10mins: Introduce students to the final project of the unit– the Creative Writing Assignment or Sequel to a Literary Work (see **Goal 3** above).

8mins: Let students brainstorm silently to decide with option they would like to choose for the project.

2mins: Take students to the computer lab

15mins: Have students begin work on creative project

Day 26: How might students personally interpret different myths and folktales?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

2mins: Take students to the computer lab

48mins: Have students continue to work on creative project

Day 27: How might students personally interpret different myths and folktales?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

2mins: Take students to the computer lab

48mins: Have students continue to work on creative project

Day 28: How might students personally interpret different myths and folktales?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

2mins: Take students to the computer lab

48mins: Have students continue to work on creative project

During this time I will be helping students generate ideas, stay on task and work to finish their projects. I will also remind them throughout the time they are working on these projects exactly what is expected to be included in the project. Hopefully, this may help them manage their time wisely.

Day 29: How might students personally interpret different myths and folktales?

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

2mins: Take students to the computer lab

48mins: Have students continue to work to finish creative project. Projects must be turned in by the end of class on this day. If the student needs to finish for homework than 3 points will be taken off of the final grade. Also, remind students that they will need to bring their dialogue journals to class the next day.

Day 30: How might students personally interpret different myths and folktales? The last day!

5mins: Attendance/Housekeeping

25mins: Allow students to share their final projects with the class if they wish to do so.

20mins: Have students complete the assignment for **Journal Entry 6**

Journal Assignment: In your dialogue journal write a brief reflection about your experiences throughout this unit. What did you enjoy most? What did you enjoy least? What portions of the unit should be taught again (to a different class)? What parts would be better left out? Feel free to include any other feelings about what you've learned in this English class so far.

5mins: Ticket-Out-the-Door: Before leaving students must turn in their dialogue journals that should have all 6 completed entries included.

