

# WHAT IS A MYTH?

The story of Hercules is a myth. This means that it probably never really happened and is merely just that - a story.

Myths are powerful stories from many years ago which every country and culture seems to have. The themes in these stories usually include the fight between good and evil and contain a moral code or rules. Characters can be gods, goddesses, animals and humans with special powers. These stories have no basis in fact or a natural explanation.

These stories have survived throughout the years. Before the printed word, storytellers let the tales be known and songs or ballads were written about the deeds of the characters in the tales.



The first known myth was told in 2,300 BC - about 1,000 years before the Greek myths began. This told the story of Gilgamesh and was written on clay tablets. You can see fragments of this in the British Museum.

**TASK:** There are many other Greek myths that you could find out about. Some of these are mentioned in the film 'Hercules' by Hercules' trainer Phil who even claims to have trained the mythological heroes Jason and Perseus himself! These myths include:

- King Midas and the Golden Touch
- Pandora's Box
- Jason and the Golden Fleece
- Perseus and the Gorgon
- Pegasus and Bellerophon

Choose one of the myths above (or any others that you can find out about) and write the story. Read your story to your family. If you are brave enough you may even want to act out a myth. You could use mime and have a narrator to explain the story or act the story out using words as well as actions.

You may want to look at myths from Great Britain. These could include stories such as:

- Saint George and the Dragon
- The Loch Ness Monster
- Beowulf and Grendel

OR, myths from other cultures: Anansi - Caribbean Rama & Sita - India