

The Gods

Key Terms

- Pantheon** - the term given to gods where discussing them as a collective . Not to be confused with The Pantheon, a temple in Rome
- Iconography** - the symbols attached to a particular character when represented in an image
- Hiera** - the Greek work for religion, translates to 'holy affairs'
- Religio** - the Roman word for religion, translates to ' the correct worship of the state gods'
- Polytheism** - the belief in many gods
- Anthropomorphism** - giving human form or attributes to something that is otherwise not human
- Epithets** - an adjectival word or phrase regularly added to a name to denote a personal or physical quality
- Titan** - the beings prior to the pantheon of gods
- Chthonic** - relating to gods that were connected with earth and the underworld
- Cornucopia** - a horn shell that contained endless food and drink
- Diadem** - a crown often associated with gods or kings
- Aegis** - the breastplate or shield of Athena that contained an image of a gorgon in the centre
- Acropolis** - the highest point in a Greek city usually reserved for religion buildings
- Oracle** - an utterance, often ambiguous or obscure given by a priest or priestess said to be speaking the words of a god
- Lyre** - a small Greek harp
- Caduceus** - a travellers staff associated with Hermes
- Thebes** - a ancient city in Greece that is the focus of many mythological stories
- Thyrus** - a staff associated with the god Dionysus which was tipped with a pinecone
- Maenads** - female followers of Dionysus
- Satyr**s - half men, half goat attendants of Dionysus known to be promiscuous
- Plebs** - the lowest social class of Romans, making up the majority of the Roman population
- Cerealia** - a major festival in honour of Ceres held in Rome every year between 12th and 19th of April
- Sarcophagus** - a stone coffin especially one bearing sculpture of inscriptions
- Vulcanalia** - a festival held in Rome each year on the 23rd of August in honour of Vulcan
- Actium** - port on the west coast of Greece, it is now called Preveza
- Votive** - an offering to the gods
- Lararium** - a small shrine to the household gods (Lares) that was found in Roman homes
- Bacchanalia** - a Roman festival in honour of Bacchus

Key Knowledge

ZEUS / JUPITER

- King of the gods, skies, keeper of justice and fate of men
- He was a bearded man who wielded a lightning bolt. He could be represented with an eagle and was often depicted on a throne
- He defeated Cronos during a war with the Titans and then divided the earth between himself and his brothers. He married his sister Hera but had many children with mortal women

HERA / JUNO

- Queen of the gods, women, marriage, childbirth and family
- She wore a diadem, is often with children and sits on a throne
- She opposes the Trojans due to Paris not choosing her in the story of the Golden Apple

HESTIA / VESTA

- Goddess of the home and hearth
- Veiled head
- She was vital to their survival as they had no electricity. Every sacrifice in the home started with her.

APOLLO / APOLLO

- Music, arts, education, archery, prophecies, sun and medicine
- Bow, arrow, lyre, naked, curly hair, sun, laurel leaf
- He was born at Delphi, the site of the biggest oracle. He was also known as Phobeus Apollo which means shining. He had a twin sister called Artemis.

DIONYSUS / BACCHUS

- Wine and theatre
- Thyrus, vines, animal skin, maenads, satyrs, naked, wild animals
- He was the son of Zeus and the mortal Semele which made him an outsider. Because of this, Hera's wrath was attracted to him. He was pivotal to celebrations, both private and communal. He had his own festival - Dionysia

POSEIDON / NEPTUNE

- God of the seas, earthquakes, rivers and storms
- He was a bearded man with a trident, and often a set of horses
- He was the brother of Zeus. The Trojans never paid him for helping to build their city. He was in a contest for Athens with Athena

ATHENA/ MINERVA

- Goddess of military tactics and intelligence (war and wisdom)
- She has owl, helmet, spear and aegis, shield, Nike and armour
- She was born from Zeus' head

HEPHAISTOS/ VULCAN

- Metal working, fire and craftsmen
- He had a hammer and tongs
- He suffered from a foot injury when Zeus threw him off Olympus. He was the husband of Aphrodite

HERMES / MERCURY

- Travel, trade and messenger of the gods
- Caduceus, winged sandals, traveller's cloak
- He was the only god who could travel to the Underworld, with Dionysus. There were shrines built to him across roads.

ARTEMIS / DIANA

- Hunting, wildlife and childbirth. She was associated with the moon
- Bow and arrow, hunting dogs, the moon, wild animals
- She was associated with virginity and took care of nature

HADES/PLUTO

- Ruler of the Underworld
- He had a cornucopia and was often depicted with his wife Persephone. Cerberus is the three headed guard dog seen with him
- He abducted Persephone for a wife. He was a chthonic deity

DEMETER / CERES

- Goddess of agriculture and harvest
- Diadem, holding a bundle of wheat, grain or flowers
- Greek Society was based on agriculture and dependent on the harvest for survival. She lost her daughter Persephone

APHRODITE / VENUS

- Goddess of love and beauty
- She is depicted as rising from a sea-shell and is naked.
- She was the most beautiful woman in the ancient world and was the winning goddess in the story of the Golden Apple. She was caught by Hephistos having an affair with Ares. No-one could resist her except the three

ARES / MARS

- Brutality of war
- He is only depicted as wearing armour

GREEK RELIGION

The Ancient Greeks and Romans believed that each of their many gods were responsible for different aspects of life (for example, farming). They would choose which gods to worship based on what was important to them. They presented gifts and engaged in sacrifices in order to gain something in return, worship could be done communally as well as privately. They believed that the gods had supernatural powers but human characteristics.

Possible Questions

1. Study source A

- a. Who is labelled A and how do you know?
- b. Specially why would the Greek have worshipped this person
- c. Who is labelled B and how do you know?
- d. Specially why would the Greeks have worshiped this god?



2. Study source B

- a. Who was the god honoured during the Lupercalia and what was he the god of? (2)
- b. How did the animal sacrifice that took place during the Lupercalia differ from the scene shown in Source F? (2)



- 3. Explain why Persephone/Proserpina and Demeter/Ceres were so important to both the Greeks and Romans. (4)

Sources

Prescribed

The Homeric hymn to Demeter

Further

- Greek pottery
- Iliad - Homer
- Theogony - Hesiod
- The Homeric Hymns