

Myths

Myths come from the Ancient Greek word 'mythos,' which means a story or speech or narrative. Myths are the old tales and stories that came to us from very long ago and are found among many countries and cultures. There are Egyptian myths, Greek myths, Roman myths, Japanese myths, Indian myths, etc. Myths originate in cultures and are or were believed to be true.

Mythology is the study of myths and refers to a collection of myths that belong to a culture or a religion. Myths were developed to explain and answer questions that our ancestors could not. Myths were used to explain the creation of the universe, disasters, supernatural events, or anything that could not be explained at the time. Myths were created by the cultures so that the people could deal with all their questions about the universe and what is in it. Myths in a sense were the substitutes for knowledge of modern science and historical investigations.

Myths also serve other purposes. They explain the activities of countries and cultures. They provide a culture with a shared set of values and offer guidelines by which the country should live. Moreover, some gods or characters in myths are used to act as role models for children and inspire in them values, such as courage and intelligence.

There are many different types of myths and different classifications of them. Amongst some of the types are:

1. Creation myths: these are myths that deal with stories about the beginning of the universe, meaning how the universe was created. Often in these types of myths, there are gods, animals, and huge struggles between different forces.
2. Nature myths: these explain phenomena and events that take place in nature, like the sun rising; rain; dew, etc
3. Ritual myths: these myths explain certain rituals that take place in society and they are usually related to ceremonies held for the gods and are carried out in places of worship or temples.
4. Catastrophic myths: these myths are centered on major catastrophes and disasters.
5. Etiological myths: they are also sometimes known as origin myths, as they explain the origin of proper names or the origin of practices (such as the Olympic Games).

Name _____

Date _____

Myths (Cont'd)

Myths are sometimes confused with sagas, legends, folklores and fairy tales. Legends and sagas are intended to be a part of history. They usually are about a battle or a journey that is so heroic or adventurous that it needs to be remembered. Legends and sagas are heroic long stories based on real non-fictional people. Since they happened so long ago and have been passed down for so long and retold many times, there are parts that were forgotten or added or embellished and exaggerated to the extent that we no longer know how an event happened exactly.

Folklores, folk tales, and fairy tales are stories that are considered mainly fictional and can have as characters humans or non-humans. The same folktale or fairy tale can be present in many different countries and cultures, but may be called a different name.

Myths, legends, and folklore are not mutually exclusive in stories. This means that a story can contain all three or maybe just two of these types of stories.

Name _____

Date _____

Myths Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. Myths, folklore, and legends are:
 - a. Mutually exclusive
 - b. Not mutually exclusive
 - c. The same
 - d. None of the above

2. The word myths comes from the Ancient Greek word 'mythos' and means:
 - a. Speech
 - b. Narrative
 - c. Story
 - d. All of the above

Matching:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| _____ 3. Folklore | a. Usually have fictional characters |
| _____ 4. Sagas | b. Explained things such as the beginning of the universe or why the sun rises and sets |
| _____ 5. Myths | c. Usually talk about heroic battles or journeys |

List three types of myths:

6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

True or False:

- _____ 9. Sagas and legends were meant to be part of history and are based on non-fictional characters.

- _____ 10. Myths had many purposes amongst which were to inspire values and act as guidelines on how to live.

Name _____

Date _____

Myths Answers

Multiple Choice:

1. Myths, folklore, and legends are:

- a. Mutually exclusive
- b. **Not mutually exclusive**
- c. The same
- d. None of the above

2. The word myths comes from the Ancient Greek word 'mythos' and means:

- a. Speech
- b. Narrative
- c. Story
- d. **All of the above**

Matching:

 a 3. Folklore

a. Usually have fictional characters

 c 4. Sagas

b. Explained things such as the beginning of the universe or why the sun rises and sets

 b 5. Myths

c. Usually talk about heroic battles or journeys

List three types of myths:

Creation myths

Nature myths

Ritual myths

Catastrophic myths

Etiological (origin) myths

True or False:

 T 9. Sagas and legends were meant to be part of history and are based on non-fictional characters.

 T 10. Myths had many purposes amongst which were to inspire values and act as guidelines on how to live.