

## Zeus

Ancient Greeks believed that twelve gods called the Olympian gods lived on the top of Mount Olympus. They got their name because of where they lived. They made up the Greek pantheon. Pantheon means either a group of all the gods of a religion or a temple of worship for all the gods. These beliefs are part of Greek mythology, which are stories believed as true by a culture and that is developed in order to explain concepts relating to the beginning of the universe and other natural phenomena and events. The Greek gods did not create the universe, but they are symbols for natural phenomena, such as the sky, thunder, light, and the moon. They also symbolize concepts, such as wisdom, justice, and love. They may also stand for and represent other activities, such as hunting, war, and archery.

The god Cronus was married to the goddess Rhea. In Greek mythology, though Cronus is not the first god, but he is considered the first king of the universe. He believed that he would be overthrown by one of his children, so it is said that he swallowed his children as soon as they were born. However, when Zeus was born, his mother, Rhea, wrapped a stone in swaddling clothes for Cronus to swallow. She, thus, saved Zeus and had him brought up in a cave in Mount Ida in Crete. When Zeus became stronger, he forced his father Cronus to cough up the children he had swallowed. With the help of his brothers and sisters, they overthrew Cronus from the throne.

Zeus had two brothers and three sisters. When they overthrew Cronus, the three brothers divided the universe between them. Zeus became god of the heavens, Poseidon became god of the sea, and Hades became god of the underworld.

According to the famous poet Homer, who wrote the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Zeus was considered the supreme god and ruled over the gods and goddesses in Greek mythology. He also ruled over humans. He was the god of thunder, god of the sky, god of rain, cloud gatherer, and god of justice. He is usually shown as a bearded man with long hair holding a thunderbolt in his right hand. His messenger was a strong eagle. He is usually symbolized by a thunderbolt, an eagle, a bull, or an oak. Zeus also had the ability to shape shift.

There are many stories about Zeus. Some talk about him being a protector, a god responsible for justice. Other stories describe him as a womanizer, having many affairs with many goddesses, mortal women, and nymphs. He was married to the goddess Hera, who was known to be a very jealous wife. Some stories are about Zeus' relations and how Hera finds out or tries to get back at Zeus.

Zeus had a huge amount of children. Some he had from Hera, others he had from other goddesses, mortal women, and nymphs. Some of his children were gods and goddesses, such as Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Athena, Hermes, Hephaestus, and Dionysus. Other children were half god and half mortal, such as Hercules.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Zeus Questions

### Multiple Choice:

1. The Olympian gods got their name from:
  - a. Mount Olympus
  - b. The Olympic Games
  - c. The goddess Olympia
  - d. All of the above
  
2. The Ancient Greek gods symbolized:
  - a. Nature and natural phenomena
  - b. Concepts
  - c. Activities
  - d. All of the above

### Matching:

- |                   |                                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| _____ 3. Hades    | a. god of the heavens             |
| _____ 4. Poseidon | b. god of the dead and underworld |
| _____ 5. Zeus     | c. god of the sea                 |

### List three things of which Zeus was a god, according to Greek mythology:

6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

### List three of Zeus' children:

9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Zeus Answers

### Multiple Choice:

1. The Olympian gods got their name from:

- a. Mount Olympus
- b. The Olympic Games
- c. The goddess Olympia
- d. All of the above

2. The Ancient Greek gods symbolized:

- a. Nature and natural phenomena
- b. Concepts
- c. Activities
- d. All of the above

### Matching:

  b   3. Hades

a. god of the heavens

  c   4. Poseidon

b. god of the dead and underworld

  a   5. Zeus

c. god of the sea

### List three things of which Zeus was a god, according to Greek mythology:

god of thunder  
god of the sky  
god of rain  
cloud gatherer  
god of justice  
god of the heavens

### List three of Zeus' children:

Apollo  
Artemis  
Ares  
Aphrodite  
Athena  
Hermes  
Hephaestus  
Dionysus  
Hercules