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Greek Mythology

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The people of ancient Greece shared stories called myths. Myths are stories that people tell to try to explain the world around them. In the ancient world, scientists had not yet discovered why certain things happened. For example, myths explained why there was lightning, how the sun rose and set, and why the ocean had waves.

In Greek myths, gods and goddesses had special powers. Zeus, who was the most powerful of the gods, threw lightning bolts when he was angry. Zeus's daughter Athena was the goddess of wisdom, or knowledge. Zeus's son, Apollo, was the god of the sun. Apollo made the sun rise and set every day by carrying it across the sky. The god Poseidon could make the sea safe or dangerous.

The Greeks prayed to the gods and asked for their help. If sailors were going to sea, they prayed that Poseidon would not send dangerous waves. If there was lightning, people thought they had done something to make Zeus angry.

Greek myths also included stories about heroes. These stories told about people who went on long trips and visited places around the world. They also told about wars and how bravely people fought. Many of these myths were created by people, but some also contain facts. The nations may have gone to war, but the heroes may not have done all of the things the myths described.

At first, Greek myths were not written down. Many people could not read or write, so they told myths and other stories to one another. Sometimes the myths were changed by different speakers. Later, the stories were written down.

Today, books, movies, and television shows refer to Greek gods, goddesses, and heroes. These ancient stories help us understand the history of ancient Greece. They also help us understand the thoughts, beliefs, and culture of the people who lived at that time.

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