

Creating Your Own Mythology – lesson plan

Overview: What purpose does mythology serve? Students will discuss why myths exist, and how using mythology made the Erec Rex books richer. Then, in groups, they will create their own mythology exploring themes important to them.

Objectives: Students will

- (1) understand that our life now, while very different, still has ties to our distant past
- (2) critically think about *Erec Rex: The Dragon's Eye* to look at hidden subtext
- (3) learn about word webs
- (4) explore the power of their own writing to amuse, clarify and explain
- (5) come away with a better understanding of why mythology exists

Materials:

- (1) The book, Erec Rex: The Dragon's Eye

Teaching Plan:

Word Web: Have students write a question at the top of a piece of paper. It should be something that they do not understand completely, for example: How does a television work? Or, Why do we have only one president at a time?

Then, under this question, they will make a word web. In the middle of the paper, they will write a word, and circle it. The word should be a noun, the subject of the question they have written above (such as “television” or “president.”)

For ten minutes, students will create a web on the page. First they will write down any words that come to mind at all around their initial word (“radio, announcer, screen, broadcast, etc.”) and circle these words, connecting them to the first word with lines, like a web. Then, they will look at each new word on the page, and write words around them as well that come into their mind that have to do with those words.

At the end, they will have a paper filled with circled words, connected to each other by lines, like a giant web. This brainstorming exercise should be kept for later use.

Reading: Students should read *Erec Rex: The Dragon's Eye*, Chapter Eight, pages 85 – 104.

After reading, discuss:

-How many of the creatures and things in this chapter were from a “real” mythology?

(Answer: the Calais twins, the Hydra, the Dragon, the Minotaur, the Cyclops)

-How many things were invented by the author? (Answer: Identdetector, Water Wall, the Ginglehoffer, the Giant Mosquito, cloudsicles, Aniballs.)

-Which did you like better, the mythology created by the author, or the ones she drew from past cultures? Or did you like the mix?

-What has mythology done for us in the past, before we knew much about how the earth works? Is there a place for mythology today?

-Have they, themselves, come up with answers for things they don't understand? What kinds of things did they make up to help explain things to themselves?

Creating Mythology:

-Students should get in small groups of 3 – 4. They should look at each other's word webs, and come up with a question that they want to explore with their own mythology. The word webs will be spring points for their imaginations.

-The group will then write an "ancient Greek" style myth, explaining the answer to their question as the ancient Greeks did, using gods and goddesses. The kids can make up their own gods or use those from Greek or Roman mythology.

-Next, the group will write a modern myth, explaining the same question in a completely different way.

-Students will practice acting out both of the myth stories they created, assigning each other roles to play, and writing lines.

-After rehearsing, each group will act out the two myths in front of the class. The class will then vote, by a show of hands, which story they preferred: the ancient Greek style myth, or the modern myth story. Then they can discuss why.

Assessment:

Students are evaluated on the content and presentation of the two myths, both performed and handed in for a grade. They may also be graded on conduct, participation, and cooperation.

Extensions:

Kaza Kingsley used mythology to make her story more vibrant. Students may also take the personal myths they have written and write short stories based on them. They may or may not incorporate classical Greek or other mythology into their stories.

Myths of the past were passed through the ages in many ways. Just as important as storytelling (oral history,) art was a way to share mythology. Students may draw or paint pictures of the myths and legends they created. These can be posted in the classroom.

Drama was yet another way to hand mythology from generation to generation. As a class, pick a favorite myth, such as the story of King Midas or Persephone, research it, and create a play based on the characters. Act out the play as a class.

A lot of characters from ancient mythologies have problems or flaws that represent a weakness we all have. Students may create a character that illustrates a certain type of problem that kids today often have. They can create a story based on how that character learns to change their ways and improve.

Mythology was present all around the world in the past, not just Ancient Greece and Rome. Pick another system of mythology and read about it. Norse (Viking) and Celtic mythology are good starting points!

Suggested Reading:

D'Aulaires Book of Greek Myths, by [Inгри D'Aulaire](#), [Edgar Parin D'Aulaire](#)

D'Aulaires' Book of Norse Myths, by [Inгри D'Aulaire](#), [Edgar Parin D'Aulaire](#)

D'Aulaires' Book of Trolls, by [Inгри D'Aulaire](#), [Edgar Parin D'Aulaire](#)

Classic Myths to Read Aloud: The Great Stories of Greek and Roman Mythology,
Specially Arranged for Children Five and Up by an Educational Expert, by William Russel

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