

In the Beginning...

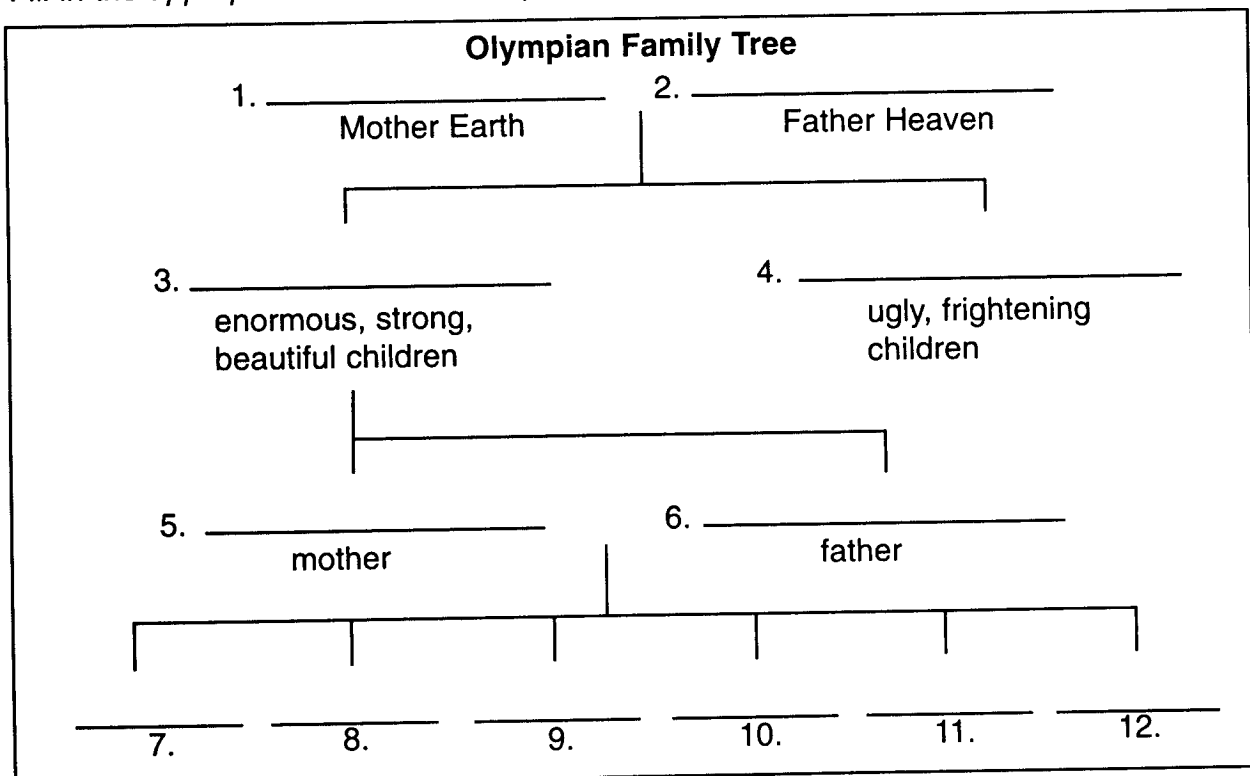
In the beginning, all was nothingness. Some say the nothingness was noisy chaos, and others suggest that all was silent. Although no one could say how or when, the nothingness became light, and day was followed by night. Then came love. With love, Mother Earth (Gaea) and Father Heaven (Uranus) came into being. Because of their love, they had many children. They had two kinds of children: Titan children and monster children. The Titan children were enormous, strong, and beautiful. The monster children were ugly and frightening.

Uranus disliked his monster children and locked them underground in the darkest part of the earth. However, Gaea was heartbroken and asked her youngest son, Cronus, who was one of the Titans, to rescue them. He agreed. To thank him for his help, Mother Earth gave her son Cronus and his sister Rhea, who was also a Titan, rule of heaven and earth.

Cronus and Rhea married each other and had six children. Each time Rhea presented Cronus with a child, however, he swallowed it. Rhea was horrified. When her sixth child was born, she wrapped a rock in a blanket instead of the baby and presented it to Cronus. He swallowed the rock, believing it to be a baby. Rhea then sent her sixth child, Zeus, to the island of Crete to be raised. Once Zeus had grown up, he and Rhea fought against Cronus to make him vomit the five swallowed children, now fully grown.

Zeus divided the world among himself, his brothers (Hades and Poseidon), and his sisters (Hestia, Demeter, and Hera). Thus began the final generation of rule by the Olympians.

Fill in the appropriate names to complete the Olympian Family Tree.



Meet the Greek Gods

High atop Mount Olympus, the gods and goddesses lived in beautiful palaces. Sometimes, the gods and goddesses, or deities, became involved in the lives of people on earth. Most of the time, however, they attended to their duties as Olympians.

The gods and goddesses possessed all of the admirable, and not so admirable, traits of mortals. Therefore, the Olympians could be unselfish or greedy, forgiving or judgmental, generous or cruel.



Zeus *god of the heavens and earth, ruler of weather, giver of justice*

Zeus ruled over all with his lightning and thunderbolts. His symbols were the sharp-eyed eagle and the mighty oak tree. Zeus was married to Hera although he had many affairs with goddesses and mortals.

Hera *goddess of marriage and married women*

Hera was the jealous wife of Zeus. As a mother, Hera chose the cow as her symbol. As a queen, she used the splendor of the peacock to remind mortals of her power.



Poseidon *god of the sea and earthquakes*

Poseidon was Zeus's brother who lived mainly in an underwater kingdom. Poseidon's symbols included a trident (a three-pronged spear), dolphins, and horses.

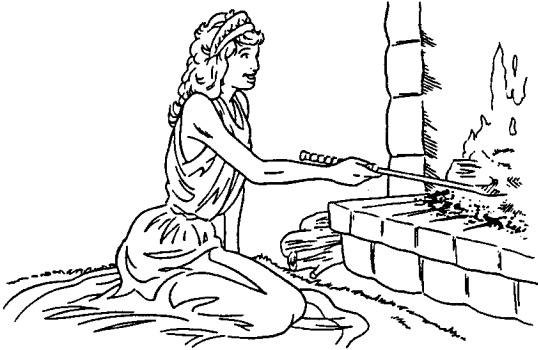


Hades *god of the underworld*

Hades could be identified by his bident (a two-pronged spear), Cerberus (his three-headed guard dog), or the cypress tree. Hades guarded all of the dead and was also in charge of the gems, minerals, and wealth of the underworld.



Meet the Greek Gods (continued)



Hestia *goddess of the hearth and home*

Hestia was known for her pure and simple life. On Mount Olympus she preferred a plain, wooden throne and the color brown. Her symbol was the hearth fire.

Demeter *goddess of all growing things*

Demeter adored her only daughter, Persephone, and the two were frequently seen together. When Demeter was sad or lonely, no plants grew and winter came to earth. Demeter's symbols were the sheaf of wheat and the cornucopia.



Athena *goddess of wisdom, statecraft, and war*

Athena is said to have emerged from Zeus's head, full grown and wearing her armor. Athena's symbols were the owl and the olive tree. Her aegis, or breastplate, was a gift from Zeus and showed the head of Medusa.

Aphrodite *goddess of love and beauty*

Aphrodite was born on the foam of the sea and rode to shore on a seashell. Her symbols included the dove, sparrow, rose, and myrtle (an evergreen shrub). Although she was married to Hephaestus, the god of blacksmiths, Aphrodite had many affairs.



Ares *god of war, hatred, and violence*

Ares was known for his short temper. He was identified by dogs, vultures, or a spear and shield.

Meet the Greek Gods (continued)



Hephaestus *god of blacksmiths, metalworkers, and craftsmen*

Hephaestus was the son of Zeus and Hera. The forge and anvil (metalworking tools) were his symbols. His favorite bird was the quail.

Apollo *god of sunlight, truth, poetry, music, and healing*

Apollo was the twin brother of the goddess Artemis. As the protector of single men, Apollo never married. A shrine of truth was dedicated to him at Delphi. Apollo's symbols were the lyre and the laurel wreath.



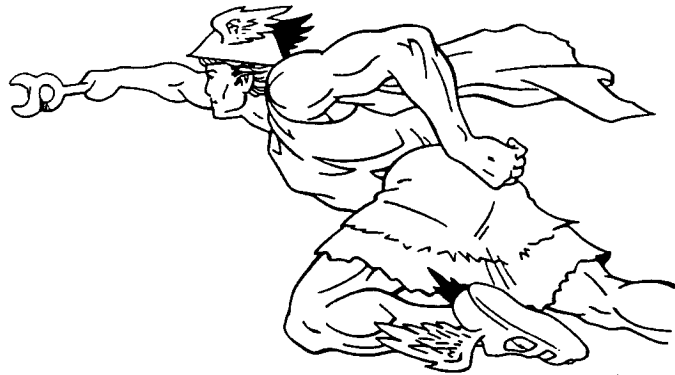
Artemis *goddess of the moon, single women, hunting, and childbirth*

Artemis ruled over hunting and the moon. Her symbols included a crescent moon crown, a stag, or a bow and arrows. She and her brother Apollo were known as the twins of light.



Hermes *god of trade, travel, and theft*

Hermes wore a winged cap and winged sandals. He carried a bag of money or a winged staff with two snakes around it. He was the messenger for the gods.



Dionysus *god of wine, parties, and drama*

Dionysus is recognized by ivy or bunches of grapes, a wine cup, or a leopard.



Olympian Review

Complete the chart below to show what you've learned about Greek mythology.

	Name	Realm	Symbol(s)
1.			owl, olive tree
2.		love, beauty	
3.			forge and anvil, quail
4.		wine, parties, drama	
5.	Poseidon		
6.			sheaf of wheat, cornucopia
7.	Hermes		
8.	Apollo		
9.		hearth, home	
10.			crescent moon crown, stag, bow and arrow
11.		marriage, married women	
12.	Ares		
13.			bident, Cerberus, cypress tree
14.		the heavens, earth, weather, justice	

Write the name of a god or goddess in the blank before his or her description.

15. _____ This Olympian created tools, weapons, and chariots for the gods. His artistry was outstanding.
16. _____ When this Olympian was upset, winter came to earth.
17. _____ This Olympian made sure that the sacred home fire on Mount Olympus never went out.
18. _____ This Olympian ruled over a gloomy kingdom.
19. _____ This Olympian's hat and sandals made him a quick messenger for the gods.
20. _____ Sailors were the people who most feared the temper of this Olympian.
21. _____ This Olympian was the ruler of all the gods and goddesses.