

- Helen's decision to leave Sparta with Paris causes a ten year war in which many great warriors are killed. In the end, she returns to her husband and lives happily ever after. What is your opinion about her character? How can she live "happily ever after" after causing such devastation?
- The gods and goddesses enjoyed meddling in events during the Trojan War. How did their meddling change the outcome of human lives?

### Follow-up Activities

- Many Olympian gods supported either the Greeks or the Trojans. Clarify who was on whose side by having your students create a Venn diagram to organize the mortal and immortal supporters. Discuss the relationships discovered in the diagram.
- *The Iliad* is a classic example of an epic. Discuss the heroic qualities found in the characters of the Trojan War with your students. They can create their own epics using help and ideas from classic epics found on [webpages.csus.edu/~sac21044/epic.html](http://webpages.csus.edu/~sac21044/epic.html)
- Sparta and Troy were phenomenal ancient civilizations. Students can research and compare these cities. What were their similarities and differences? Have students write opinion essays on which society had a greater impact on the world, with supporting evidence from print and electronic sources.
- Have students research Achilles' background. Have them find out why Achilles had a centaur as a teacher and when and why he lived as a girl. Assign groups to role-play events in Achilles life from his birth until his demise during the Trojan War.
- Many famous sayings and quotes come from the Trojan War. Discuss with students the meaning of these proverbial sayings like "the apple of discord" or "Achilles heel." Have them use [www.classicalmythology.org/glossaries/phrase\\_a.html](http://www.classicalmythology.org/glossaries/phrase_a.html) to locate some of these expressions. Students can practice using this figurative language in daily writing.

### Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our Web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/dailylife/life.htm](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/dailylife/life.htm)  
Portland State University site for middle-schoolers.
- [www.pantheon.org](http://www.pantheon.org)  
"Encyclopedia Mythica" supplies definitions, images, and pronunciation guides for gods and heroes.
- [www.eduplace.com/rdg/hml/gold/adventures/ballad.html](http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/hml/gold/adventures/ballad.html)  
Provides teacher information for writing an epic.

### Suggested Print Resources

- Coolidge, Olivia E. *The Trojan War*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, MA; 2001.  
Retelling of Homer's poem *The Iliad* for children.
- Cooney, Caroline B. *Goddess of Yesterday*. Delacorte Press, New York, NY; 2002.  
Captured servant to Menelaus, Helen, and Paris tells her story.
- Geras, Adèle. *Troy*. Harcourt, San Diego, CA 2001.  
Told from the Trojan women's point of view.
- Klingel, Cynthia Fitterer & Robert B. Noyed. *Ancient Greece*. Compass Point Books, Minneapolis, MN; 2003.  
Great introduction to history, culture, and people of ancient Greece.

#### TEACHER'S GUIDE

Kimberly Grieco, M.Ed.  
Curriculum Specialist, Schlessinger Media

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## THE TROJAN WAR

### Grades 4–8

Thousands of years ago, the ancient Greeks created a galaxy of myths to explain the mysteries and complexities of the world around them — the seasons, stars and planets, human society, war and peace, feast and famine, good luck and bad — even the creation of the world itself. They believed gods and goddesses, each with special powers, controlled and protected all humans. Many colorful stories about heroes, gods and monsters were memorized and sung by traveling poets long before they were ever written down. As they were passed down from generation to generation, aspects of the stories sometimes changed. These myths provide insight into the history, legends and religion of an ancient civilization, but also highlight fundamental similarities between modern people and those who lived long ago.

This guide provides a summary of classical retellings of Greek and Roman mythology, vocabulary, discussion questions, activities, and print and Internet resources for students and teachers to explore.



## Program Summary

Epics were long, narrative poems that recounted the heroism and adventures of legendary or historical characters. The great poet, Homer, composed *The Iliad*, a famous epic recounting some scenes of the Trojan War. This battle was fought over a period of ten years between the Greeks and the Trojans. This version shows that the gods were not only responsible for the cause of the great war, but also altered the life and death of many mortals due to their constant intervention and interference.

In *The Judgment of Paris*, the goddess of discord, Eris, was not invited to a wedding party for the sea goddess, Thetis, and her mortal husband, Peleus. In anger, Eris sends a golden apple to the party, designated to “the fairest.” The goddesses argue over who should receive the apple and Zeus chooses Paris, a young Trojan shepherd, to make the decision. Paris awards the apple to Aphrodite who promises him the love of Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world. Helen, although married to King Menelaus, runs off with Paris and they escape to Troy with many Greek treasures. The war begins when the Greeks attack Troy.

The saga continues with *The Myth of Achilles*. Great heroes fight as the gods and goddesses choose sides and alter events during the battle. After the fighting had gone on for many years, the great soldier, Achilles, vowing revenge for the death of his friend, Patroclus, kills the leader of the Trojan army, Hector. Hector’s brother, Paris, vows revenge upon Achilles. He shoots a poisoned arrow, guided by Apollo, and pierces Achilles in his heel, the only body part which was not blessed with immortality from the water of the River Styx. Achilles dies and the war continues.

The war concludes during *The Trojan Horse*. After ten long years of battle, many Greeks wanted to give up. Odysseus, clever king of Ithaca, with Athena’s help, comes up with an idea. The Greeks build a huge, hollow, wooden horse in which they hide and pretend to retreat. The unsuspecting Trojans, believing it to be an offering to Athena and a sign of surrender, wheel it into the city and begin to celebrate. At nightfall, the belly of the horse opens, the Greek warriors come out, open the city gates, and the entire Greek army enters the city to defeat the Trojans. Troy is conquered, the war is over, and Helen is returned to King Menelaus.

## Vocabulary

**epic** — A long, narrative poem recounting the heroism and adventures of legendary and historical characters.

**Fates** — The goddesses who controlled the destiny of mortals.

**legend** — A story transmitted from the distant past, especially one based at least in part on some historical event.

**Mount Olympus** — A mythological mountain in Greece that was believed to be the home of the gods and goddesses.

**mortal** — A human being.

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**Olympian gods** — A group of immortal supreme beings who, according to ancient mythology, dwelt on Mount Olympus and ruled the world during ancient times.

## Cast of Characters

*Includes phonetic spelling in parentheses.*

**Achilles (a-KIL-leez)** — The youngest and strongest of the Greek soldiers; son of the sea nymph, Thetis, and Peleus; known for having a hot temper and is well respected for his bravery.

**Agamemnon (ag-a-MEM-non)** — Brother to Menelaus and known as the greatest of all Greek kings; he governs Mycenae.

**Aphrodite (a-froh-DI-tee)** — Goddess of love and beauty; known as Venus in Roman mythology.

**Apollo (uh-POL-loh)** — God of truth, music, light, and medicine; son of Zeus and twin brother to Artemis; he uses arrows to punish mortals who anger him.

**Ares (AYR-eez)** — God of war and son of Zeus and Hera; known as Mars in Roman mythology.

**Artemis (AR-te-mis)** — Goddess of animals and hunters; she is also the goddess of childbirth and the moon; known as Diana in Roman mythology.

**Athena (a-THEE-na)** — Goddess of wisdom, justice, battle, and crafts; known as Minerva in Roman mythology.

**Eris (AYR-is)** — Goddess of strife, discord, and hatred.

**Hector (HEK-ter)** — Leader of the Trojan army and brother to Paris; he is both a fierce warrior and gentle family man.

**Helen (HEL-en)** — Said to be the most beautiful woman in the ancient world; she is the daughter of Zeus and was hatched from a swan’s egg; she is wife to King Menelaus of Sparta.

**Hephaestus (heh-FES-tus)** — God of the forge who creates beautiful ornaments, weapons, furniture and jewelry for the Olympian; known as Vulcan in Roman mythology.

**Hera (HAYR-ah)** — Wife and sister of Zeus and the most powerful goddess on Olympus; known as Juno in Roman mythology.

**Homer (HO-mer)** — A blind poet who lived thousands of years ago and was thought by the Greeks to be the author of two epic poems about the Trojan War, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

**Menelaus (men-e-LAY-us)** — King of Sparta and husband to Helen.

**Odysseus (oh-DIS-see-us)** — The brave and clever king of Ithaca; he is married to faithful Penelope; he is one of the greatest of the Greek heroes; known as Ulysses in Roman mythology.

**Paris (PAYR-is)** — Handsome, young shepherd from Troy; son of King Priam; his brother is Hector, leader of the Trojan army.

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**Patroclus (pa-TRO-klus)** — Best friend to Achilles.

**Peleus (PEE-le-us)** — A mortal married to the sea nymph, Thetis; father to Achilles.

**Poseidon (puh-SY-dun)** — God of the sea; brother to Zeus and Hades; known as Neptune in Roman mythology.

**Thetis (THEE-tis)** — Sea nymph and daughter of the sea god, Nereus; wife of Peleus and mother of Achilles.

**Zeus (ZOOS)** — God of the sky and ruler of Olympus; also known as Jupiter in Roman mythology.

## Pre-viewing Discussion

- Why would someone choose a short life of great deeds over a long and peaceful life?
- What is the worst disagreement you have ever been in? Did you compromise? What was the solution?
- What do you know about the Trojan Horse, Achilles heel, *The Iliad*, Trojan War, the apple of discord, or the “face that launched a thousand ships”?

## Focus Questions

1. Why wasn’t Eris invited to the wedding banquet?
2. What did Eris do to upset the party?
3. What gifts were promised to the shepherd, Paris?
4. What was Paris’ reward for choosing the winner of the golden apple?
5. Whose was “the face that launched a thousand ships”?
6. What did Thetis do to try to make her son, Achilles, immortal?
7. What happened to Achilles’ armor?
8. How was Achilles killed?
9. Who came up with the plan to win the Trojan War?
10. What was the Trojan horse? Why did the people of Troy allow the horse inside their walls?
11. Was it strength or trickery that ended the Trojan War? Explain your answer.

## Discussion Questions

- The Fates, oracles, and seers were commonly used in ancient Greece by both mortals and the gods. Zeus, himself, used the Fates to discover which hero would die during battle. Why were these fortune-tellers so important? Why did the gods have to refer to them when they had so much power themselves?

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