

# Ancient Greek Myths

## What Is a Greek Myth?

Greek myths and legends are a collection of traditional stories that were told by the ancient Greeks to help explain the existence of the world.



They are captivating tales of fantasy, often featuring adventure and danger.



Which Greek myths do you know?

# Ancient Greek Myths

## What Are Greek Mythical Creatures?

In Greek mythology, the storyline often involves the hero having to fight or overcome some sort of creature.

Sometimes, the creatures assist the hero in their quest.

Unlike the people or animals you might meet in real life, these mystical creatures are imaginative, supernatural and sometimes frightening.



# Ancient Greek Mythical Creatures



Centaur



Medusa



Pegasus



Chimera



Minotaur

Here are some famous mythical creatures. There are terrifying monsters, one-eyed giants, sea creatures, cave dwellers, peace lovers and flying beasts.

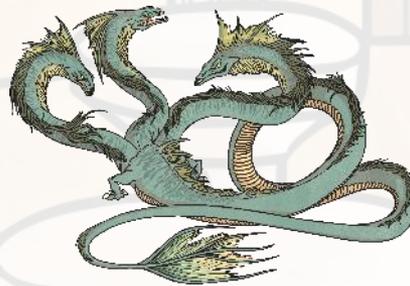
Click on a picture to discover more.



Griffins



Cyclopes



Hydra

**Thinking Time**

Click here for a challenge when you've explored all of the creatures.

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# Medusa

## Appearance

Medusa was a gorgon. She had woman's body and face but her head was full of snakes, instead of hair.

## Special Abilities

Medusa was a dreadful and fearsome creature with a piercing gaze. One look into her eyes would turn you to stone!



## Medusa in Greek Mythology

- Medusa had once been a very beautiful woman. She angered the goddess Athena with her boastfulness so Athena transformed her into a vicious monster.
- Medusa was killed by Perseus while she was asleep. He approached her using the reflection in Athena's bronze shield to guide him so he didn't risk being turned to stone by looking into her eyes.
- He cut off Medusa's head with his sword and then used it as a weapon to help him escape.

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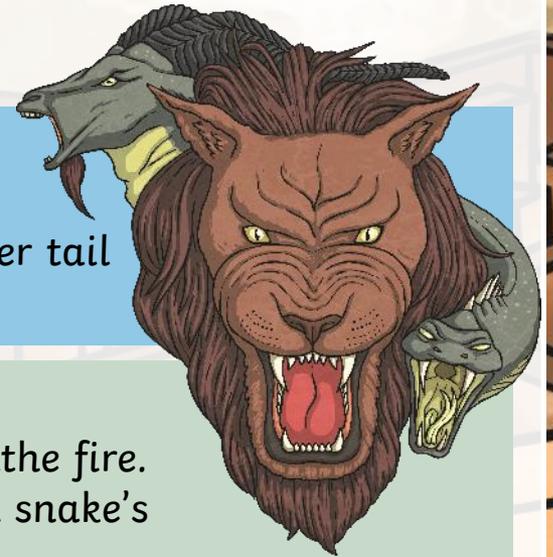
# Chimera

## Appearance

The chimera had the complete body of a female lion. From between her shoulder blades grew the head of a goat and her tail morphed into a snake.

## Special Abilities

The chimera had a fearsome weapon - she was able to breathe fire. This, combined with her lion's strength, goat's cunning and snake's venom, made her nearly invincible.



## Chimera in Greek Mythology

- The chimera lived in Lycia, where she terrorised the people and ravaged the land with her fire breath. For a long time, she was considered unbeatable.
- Bellerophon was challenged to kill the chimera by King Iobates. He succeeded in his quest with the help of Pegasus - the winged horse. Bellerophon rode on Pegasus' back and fired arrows at the chimera from above.

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# Pegasus



## Appearance

Pegasus was a beautiful, pure-white horse, with feathered wings on his back. He sometimes wore a magical, golden bridle.

## Special Abilities

Pegasus could fly and also had an array of supernatural powers. He could pass between the mortal and immortal realms and create springs of water with his hooves. His wings clapped like thunder if he was angry.

## Pegasus in Greek Mythology

- Pegasus was Medusa's son and lived by a spring he created beside Mount Helicon.
- Pegasus wore Athena's enchanted golden bridle while Bellerophon rode him into battle with the chimera.
- Zeus gave Pegasus the responsibility of carrying his lightning bolts.

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# Cyclopes

## Appearance

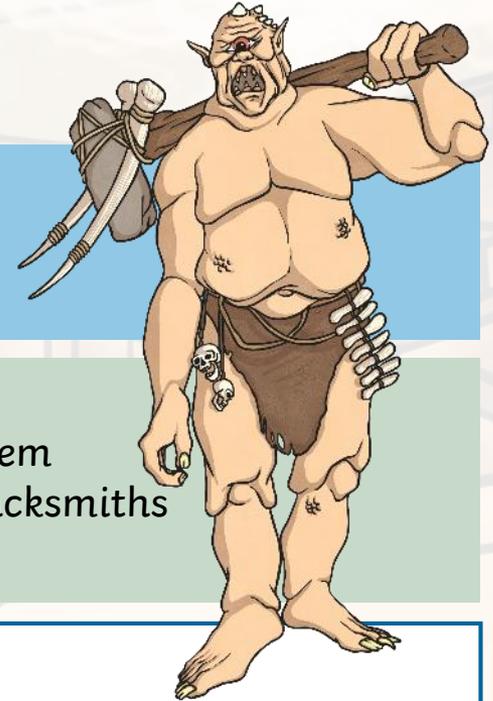
Cyclopes were enormous, lumbering giants. They had a single, round eye in the centre of their forehead.

## Special Abilities

Cyclopes' main ability was a powerful strength that made them impressive warriors. They were also known to be talented blacksmiths and stonemasons.

## Cyclopes in Greek Mythology

- The word 'cyclops' meant 'round eye'.
- Cyclopes are included in a variety of Greek myths. In early mythology, they were said to have created Zeus' thunderbolt, Hades' helmet of invisibility and Poseidon's trident. Later mythology often describes them as being cannibals.
- The most famous Cyclops was Polyphemus, who featured in 'The Odyssey' and other stories. He was stabbed in the eye by Odysseus, which blinded him.



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# Griffins



## Appearance

Griffins had the body of a lion and the head of an eagle. Sometimes, they were shown to have wings.

## Special Abilities

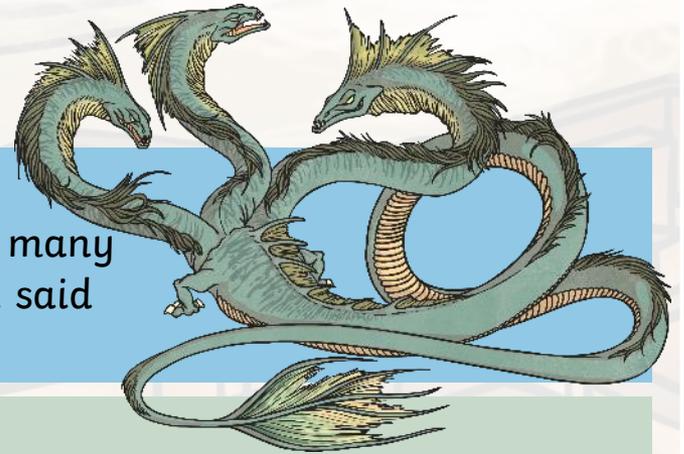
They combined the strength and power of a lion and the keen eyesight of an eagle. Winged griffins could fly.

## Griffins in Greek Mythology

- Griffins were majestic creatures that represented wisdom, strength and cunning.
- They were believed to hoard gold and riches, which they fiercely protected.
- A tribe of the griffins guarded gold in the mountains of northern Skythia. They warred constantly with the Arimaspians (a group of one-eyed men), battling them for this treasure.

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# Hydra



## Appearance

The Hydra was a fearsome, snake-like monster with many heads. The exact number of heads varies but is often said to be nine.

## Special Abilities

One of Hydra's heads was immortal and if any of its other heads were cut off, two more would grow in its place. It was also highly venomous.

## The Hydra in Greek Mythology

- Hydra is a girls name, meaning 'water serpent'.
- It lurked in the swamps around Lake Lerna, claiming many lives.
- Hercules defeated Hydra as the second of his impossible tasks, during the 'Twelve Labours of Hercules.' He cut off the Hydra's immortal head with a golden sword, given to him by Athena.

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# Centaurs



## Appearance

Centaurs had the body of a horse and the torso, arms and head of a human. In Cyprus, centaurs had horns. They possessed human intelligence and had the ability to speak.

## Special Abilities

Centaurs would live for 300-500 years. They were considered to have extraordinary strength and stamina and could use their hooves as weapons.

## Centaurs in Greek Mythology

- The most well-known centaur in Greek mythology was Chiron.
- He was said to be more modest and civilised than other centaurs and was known for his teaching abilities and medicinal skills.
- Chiron served as a tutor to some notable mythical characters, including Achilles and Asclepius.

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# Minotaur



## Appearance

The Minotaur was a terrifying creature, with the head of a bull and the body of a man. He walked upright on the legs of a bull.

## Special Abilities

The Minotaur was extremely strong, powerful and fierce. He had a keen sense of smell and could understand human speech.

## The Minotaur in Greek Mythology

- The Minotaur lived on the island of Crete, in a vast underground maze - known as the labyrinth.
- He is one of the most famous and gruesome of Greek mythological creatures. Every few years, he was fed 14 young men and women.
- The Minotaur was eventually killed by the Athenian hero, Theseus, who was helped by Princess Ariadne. Theseus laid a trail of thread to help him escape the labyrinth after killing the Minotaur.