

To introduce the entire mythology unit, I would have discussed with students what a myth is. Our list might have included things like “it tells about how something came to be,” “it entertains,” “it includes gods and goddesses,” “it has magic,” “it is based on someone’s beliefs,” “it’s a story,” “it could be based on truth,” “it might be fiction,” and others. To illustrate, I would have students orally explain, from a child’s point of view, why we hear thunder and see lightning when it storms. We would have discussed the different stories their own parents told them as children to explain this natural phenomenon. I would expect to hear about God bowling, or the angels getting a strike or taking flash photography. I would have emphasized that this kind of a story is a myth—it attempts to explain a natural event using the beliefs of a culture.

Prior to idea generation, we would have read several myths together as a class as a part of the mythology unit (Arachne, Demeter and Persephone, King Midas, Heracles, Echo and Narcissus, and Ulysses to name a few). This idea generation would come toward the end of the mythology unit and probably after some prewriting skill development and practice. Throughout the course of the unit, we would have discussed and recorded the features of the myths we were reading together. On the chart for recording (see appendix A), I would include a column for the traits of myths that we had discussed earlier in the unit. For each story, students would have discussed and recorded this information to serve as a reminder and a model for when they had to write their own.

Idea generation for this assignment would focus on students making lists of “why” questions they might have asked as children. To get them started, I would write, “Why is the sky blue?” on the white board. In pairs, students would brainstorm lists of similar questions a young child asks to understand the world. We would reference the “why”

questions some of our class-read myths addressed, like *why are there echoes?*, *why are there spiders?* and *why do the seasons change?* After they had time with partners to think and discuss, as a class we would compile their lists of “why” questions on the white board and students would also add all of the ideas they hear in large group discussion to their own personal lists. I would expect to have at least 40-50 possibilities when we are done brainstorming and sharing. This would serve as a rich list for all students to consider.

Then, I would have the students individually star three possibilities they would consider writing about. For homework, their job would be to come up with at least one myth-based explanation for each why question and consider the recording chart items we used while reading the myths in class. So, each student would brainstorm the chart items for their starred “why” questions. We would have discussed the problem-solution nature of the myths we read in class and the inclusion of an implied moral or lesson. Just discussing this would not be enough, though. To help them through an example, together we would brainstorm possible reasons for the initial question: *Why is the sky blue?* Instead of fully developing one idea, I would have the students share many ideas to explain this question to show that lots of possibilities exist for each question, there isn't a right answer, and their choices are as limited as their creative thinking.

When they come to class the next day, I would have them pair-share their ideas, asking for feedback from their partner as to the most interesting story possibility. I would allow them to get feedback from at least three peers in class. Then they would commit to one idea, using both their own preferences and the feedback and suggestions they received from their peers. It would not be tremendously important to limit the topics to

one person per idea. Generally students come up with unique ideas for explaining their “why” questions, so even if two or more students chose the same topic, their stories could be drastically different. In my informal recording of their topic ideas, however, I would mention to individual students if their topics are being done by others to give them the option of not repeating an idea.