

Objective sight words (traditional, parables, allegories, sacred, spirituality, philosophical, personification, inanimate, theories, rationales, possessed, incredible); concepts (myths, parables, allegories, personification, unicorns)



Vocabulary	
traditional	personification
parables	inanimate
allegories	theories
sacred	rationales
spirituality	possessed
philosophical	incredible

Understanding the Mystery of Myths

Unicorn, a Mythical Creature

By: Sue Peterson

Susan knew that her language arts teacher encouraged the students to become better writers by keeping a journal of stories. Mr. Christiansen would assign topics every night, but once in awhile there would be a *free choice* writing and the students could write about any topic of their choice. When Mr. Christiansen announced that Wednesday's topic would be *free choice*, Susan was delighted. She knew just what to write about. She wanted to write about unicorns.

Susan knew unicorns were just make-believe, but she wanted to understand more about how the unicorn creature came about. Susan decided that she needed to do more research first before writing her journal entry.

There was study time at the end of the day and Susan asked if she could go to the computer lab, since all of her other assignments were completed. Mr. Christiansen smiled. He always liked to see students with their work completed and he always liked to see students like Susan excited about a new topic to write about.

Susan walked to the computer lab and found a computer that was not being used. It was in the far corner of the lab, so this spot would be a little quieter for her. First, she decided to read about myths. She googled the word *myth*, and began reading:

A myth is a traditional story of historical events that serve to tell the world about a practice, belief or a happening. Myths can be called parables or allegories.

The main characters in myths are usually gods, supernatural heroes, and humans. Some myths were seen as sacred and linked to religion or spirituality by rulers or priests.

When a myth is told, it is usually seen as true for that society. However, some societies classify their myths as those that are “true stories” and those that are “false stories or fables”.

There are also creation myths which took place in an age when the world did not have human beings, and these myths then talk about how the world and its inhabitants were first formed.

Some myths are allegories, which mean they stand for something else. For example, in some of the Greek myths, you have creatures like Apollo who represents fire, and Poseidon who represents water, and so on.

In other myths, the allegories represent philosophical or spiritual concepts. For example, you have Athena who represents wise judgment.

Some people think that myths resulted from the personification of inanimate objects and forces. That would mean that the things that are not real take on real-life characteristics. For example, fire and air would be real, etc. Some people think that myths were created to explain rituals, which are repeated acts like baptism or marriage.

“Wow, that’s interesting,” Susan said to herself. “I think I will read a little bit about unicorns now and the different theories or rationales behind this creature. Then, I should be ready to write my journal entry.”

Susan googled the word *unicorn*. She read about unicorns, of which mostly she knew already. *Unicorns are mythical creatures that look like horses with a horn coming out of their foreheads. Unicorns are a beautiful animal, usually described as having great intelligence and a gentle wisdom that humans may not understand. Often the unicorn is a creature of divinity, pure of heart and spirit that may be possessed of incredible powers of both creation and healing.*

Susan looked at the clock. There was time for her to start writing her mythical story for the journal assignment before the dismissal bell. This is what Susan wrote:

The Unicorn, a Mythical Creature

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away there lived a unicorn which was often seen galloping atop a tall cliff overlooking the sparkling creek below. Everyone knew that when the moon was full, the unicorn would grace the mountain with its beauty.

The bell rang. Susan grabbed her journal and walked back to class to tell Mr. Christiansen that she made lots of progress. She couldn't wait to finish writing the story and to read it to the class tomorrow.

“Good night, Susan!” Mr. Christiansen shouted above the noise in the hallway.

“Good night, Mr. Christiansen, see you tomorrow!” Susan smiled and waved.

Practice

Language Work

A. Write the words.

allegory _____

sacred _____

spirituality _____

philosophical _____

possessed _____

B. Use each word in a sentence. Underline the word used.

traditional _____

parables _____

personification _____

inanimate _____

theories _____

rationales _____

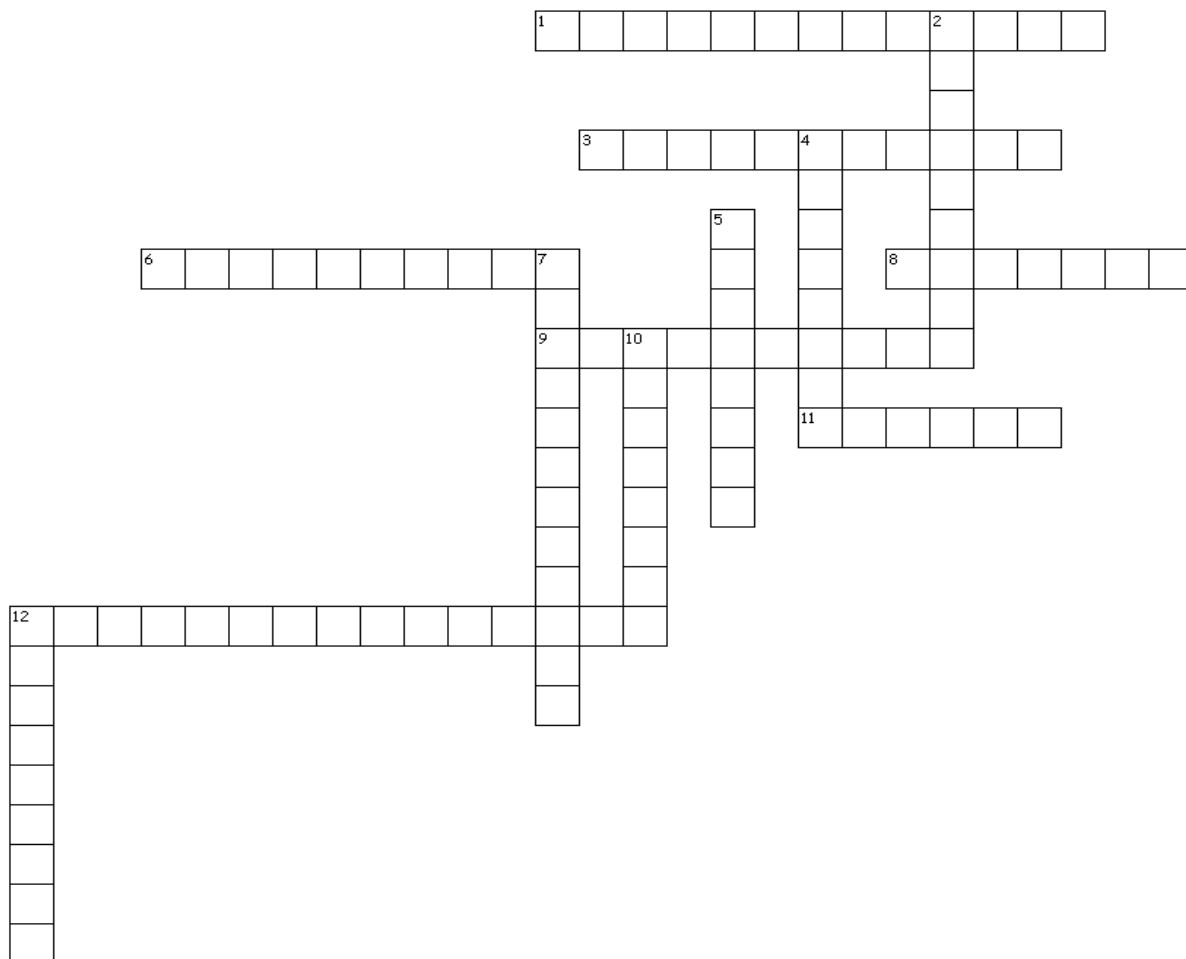
Incredible _____

C. Phonics work. The words “traditional” and “philosophical” end with the suffix “al” that means “of”, “like”, “having the nature of”. The word “tradition” and “philosophy” are nouns, and when the suffix “al” is added to the noun, the word becomes an adjective. The suffix can also be added to a verb, and in this case the new word becomes a noun to mean “the act of” like in the word “refusal”, meaning “the act of refusing”. Write down **two** words that end in the suffix “al”: one that is an adjective and one that is a noun. Circle the suffix and write what the new word means.

1. “al” added to a noun to make an adjective:

2. “al” added to a verb to make a noun:

D. Crossword Puzzle. Solve the word clues that use the vocabulary in the text to talk about the mystery of myths. **(Hint: You will use all of the words in the vocabulary box plus the word “creation”. 2 plural words from the vocabulary box will be used in the singular form.)**



Across

1. wise; calm; reasonable
 6. the fundamental reason
 9. hard to believe; unbelievable
 12. giving inanimate objects life

3. handed down by generations
 8. story with a meaning
 11. holy

Down

2. not living
 5. a parable
 10. making something that is new
4. explanations based on reasoning
 7. devotion to spiritual things
 12. owned

Multiple-Choice Questions (Put an X in front of the correct answer.)

1. What is the **main** reason Susan was so happy about the writing assignment?
 a. She could go to the computer lab.
 b. It was a free choice assignment.
 c. She would have homework.
 d. She wanted to please her teacher.

2. Name **two** reasons why Mr. Christiansen smiled.
 a. Susan had her work completed.
 b. Susan helped other students finish their work.
 c. Susan was excited about the writing topic “free choice”.
 d. It was the end of the day!

3. According to the story, myths can be called _____ and _____.
 a. parables
 b. allegories
 c. creation
 d. theories

Definitions (Write the meaning of each word as it is used in the text.)

1. traditional

2. possessed

3. incredible

Extended Response (Answer in complete sentences.)

1. According to Susan’s research, who or what are most often the main characters in myths?

2. Why are myths, a traditional story-type, passed on from generation to generation? How are myths **usually** passed on?

Answer Sheet

Answers for Matching, Phonics, Multiple-Choice Questions, and Extended Response

Understanding the Mystery of Myths (A Unicorn, a Mythical Creature)

Crossword Puzzle

Across 1. philosophical; 3. traditional; 6. rationales; 8. parable; 9. incredible;
11. sacred; 12. personification

Down 2. inanimate; 4. theories; 5. allegory; 7. spirituality; 10. creation; 12.
possessed

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. b
2. a,c
3. a,b

Extended Response (Accept reasonable answers.)

1. The main characters in myths are usually gods, supernatural heroes, and humans.
2. Myths are usually passed on verbally from generation to generation as an oral history. They tell about historical events.