

Early Fiction

Fiction has existed for thousands of years. Long ago, each generation passed on stories by word of mouth. Some of the earliest stories ever told were myths. Myths were created to explain natural occurrences that were puzzling to people long ago, such as why the sun rises and sets or how the earth came to be. Myths involved the gods, goddesses, and heroes of early civilizations. Many also involved fierce creatures.

Test your knowledge of some well-known myths by matching each character with his or her description.

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| 1. ____ Hercules | A. a one-eyed giant |
| 2. ____ Arachne | B. This creature had snakes for hair and was so hideous that anyone who looked at her turned to stone. |
| 3. ____ Icarus | C. This boy fell to his death after flying too close to the sun while wearing wings made from wax and feathers. |
| 4. ____ Medusa | D. This curious woman opened a jar that contained all the evils of the world. |
| 5. ____ Cyclops | E. After challenging the goddess Minerva to a weaving contest, this boastful girl was turned into a spider. |
| 6. ____ Pandora | F. This character was one of the greatest heroes in Roman mythology. He performed twelve very difficult labors. |

Fables were a popular form of fiction in ancient times. Fables are short stories that teach a moral, or lesson. A Greek slave named Aesop, who lived around 600 B.C., is said to have created some of the most well-known fables.

In Aesop's "The Tortoise and the Hare," a tortoise and a hare decide to race. The overconfident hare takes a nap while the tortoise walks slowly and steadily toward the finish line. When the hare awakens, the tortoise is crossing the finish line. The moral of the story is that slow, steady work rather than speed can lead to success. Write a modern-day fable that teaches the same lesson. Begin your story on the lines below and continue on the back of this paper.


