**Fantastic Adventures with Dragons, Gods, and Giants**

**In this sixth six-week unit of third grade, students read fantasies, adventure poetry, mythology, and informational texts about Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome.**

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**Overview**

* + Beginning with fantasy stories and poems about dragons, students learn to summarize and illustrate chapters, seeing how they are building blocks to the ending. They record themselves fluently reading an assigned chapter (i.e., with a video camera or tape recorder), and combine it with their illustrated chapter summaries to create a multimedia presentation. They will also hear a variety of myths, Greek and Roman, and read a book based on Homer’s *The Odyssey*. Finally students will research an Olympic sport and compare it to an Olympic sport in the days of Ancient Greece.
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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
    - **RI.3.10:**By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 2-3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
    - **RL.3.10:**By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 2-3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
    - **RF.3.4:** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension
    - **RF.3.4(c):**Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
    - **RL.3.6:**Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.
    - **RL.3.2:**Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.
    - **SL.3.5:**Create engaging audio recordings of stories or poems that demonstrate fluid reading at an understandable pace; add visual displays when appropriate to emphasize or enhance certain facts or details.

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/CCSSI_ELA_Standards.pdf) (1.5 MB)

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Independently read books in the 2-3 stretch text range with fluency and comprehension.
    - Summarize and illustrate the chapters of a book such as *My Father’s Dragon* (Ruth Stiles Gannett and Ruth Chrisman Gannett)*.*
    - Create an audio recording of a dramatic reading of a chapter in a challenging chapter book.
    - Create a multimedia presentation (e.g., a set of Power Point slides) of the recording and the illustrations for the book summaries.
    - Write an opinion piece describing the “most interesting” mythical character.
    - Retell myths with key details, noting the message of each.
    - Quote from the text to support the main idea of a non-fiction book.
    - Read a variety of informational books on Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome.
    - Research a current Olympic sport, comparing and contrasting it to a sport in the days of Ancient Greece.
    - Write a short fantasy narrative in response to a prompt based on the style of the book *Could Be Worse!* (James Stevenson)*.*
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**Suggested Works**

* + (E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

**Literary Texts**

**Stories**

* + - *The One-Eyed Giant* (Tales from the Odyssey Book 1) (Mary Pope Osborne and Troy Howell) (EA)
    - *My Father’s Dragon* (Ruth Stiles Gannett and Ruth Chrisman Gannett) (E)
    - *Could Be Worse!*(James Stevenson)
    - *The Miraculous Journey Of Edward Tulane*(Kate DiCamillo and Bagram Ibatoulline)
    - *Vacation Under the Volcano*(Magic Tree House Book 13) (Mary Pope Osborne and Sal Murdocca) (EA)
    - *Hour of the Olympics* (Magic Tree House Book 16) (Mary Pope Osborne and Sal Murdocca) (EA)

**Poems**

* + - “Adventures of Isabel” (Ogden Nash)
    - “A Dragon’s Lament” (Jack Prelutsky)
    - “The Dragons are Singing Tonight” (Jack Prelutsky)
    - “Life Doesn’t Frighten Me At All” (Maya Angelou)

**Stories (Read Aloud)**

* + - *Greek Myths for Young Children*(Heather Amery and Linda Edwards)
    - *D’Aulaires’ Book of Greek Myths*(Ingri and Edgar Parin d’Aulaire)
    - *The Gods and Goddesses of Olympus*(Aliki)
    - *Favorite Greek Myths*(Mary Pope Osborne and Troy Howell)
    - *Classic Myths to Read Aloud: The Great Stories of Greek and Roman Mythology*(William F. Russell)
    - *The Orchard Book of Roman Myths*(Geraldine McCaughrean and Emma Chichester)

**Poems (Read Aloud)**

* + - “The Tale of Custard the Dragon” (Ogden Nash)

**Informational Texts**

**Informational Text**

* + - *Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs!* (Kathleen V. Kudlinski and S.D. Schindler) (E)
    - *If I Were a Kid in Ancient Greece* (Ken Sheldon, ed.)
    - *Ancient Greece and the Olympics: A Nonfiction Companion to Hour of the Olympics* (Magic Tree House Research Guide 10) (Mary Pope Osborne, Natalie Pope Boyce, and Sal Murdocca) (EA)
    - *Ancient Rome and Pompeii: A Nonfiction Companion to Vacation Under the Volcano*(Magic Tree House Research Guide 14) (Mary Pope Osborne, Natalie Pope Boyce, and Sal Murdocca) (EA)
    - *Rome: In Spectaclar Cross Section*(Andrew Solway and Stephen Biesty)

**Informational Text (Read Aloud)**

Greece

* + - *Ancient Greece*(DK Eyewitness Books) (Anne Pearson)
    - *I Wonder Why Greeks Built Temples and Other Questions About Ancient Greece*(Fiona MacDonald)
    - *If I Were a Kid in Ancient Greece: Children of the Ancient World*(Ken Sheldon, ed.)

Rome

* + - *If I Were a Kid in Ancient Rome: Children of the Ancient World*(Ken Sheldon, ed.)
    - *Tools of the Ancient Romans: A Kid’s Guide to the History & Science of Life in Ancient Rome*(Rachel Dickinson)
    - *Science in Ancient Rome*(Jacqueline L. Harris)
    - *Ancient Rome*(DK Eyewitness Books) (Simon James)
    - *Ancient Rome and Pompeii: A Non-fiction Companion to Vacation Under the Volcano*(Magic Tree House Research Guide 14) (Mary Pope Osborne, Natalie Pope Boyce, and Sal Murdocca) (E)

**Art, Music, and Media**

**Art**

* + - [Greek and Roman Art Collection](http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/collection_database/listview.aspx?page=1&sort=5&sortdir=&keyword=&fp=1&dd1=13&dd2=34&vw=1) (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + **Note:** *If you choose to begin with* My Father’s Dragon *(Ruth Stiles Gannett and Ruth Chrisman Gannett), it will create a transition to the adventures in* TheOne-Eyed Giant (Mary Pope Osborne and Troy Howell)*. Because there is so much literature in the mythology of Ancient Greece, you may want to spend a week or two on the Gannetts’ book and then move into the mythology for the remainder of the unit.*

*Since this may be the first time students are introduced to myths, it is helpful to keep a list of the mythological gods, creatures, and characters as you read. By focusing on the outstanding characteristic (e.g., Heracles—Greek, Hercules—Roman—strength) or domain (Poseidon—the sea) of each, students will begin to see the foundational role played by these names and places in word derivations.*

**Class Discussion / Literary**

As students read the book *My Father’s Dragon* (Ruth Stiles Gannett and Ruth Chrisman Gannett)*,* continue the focus from unit 5 on how each chapter builds on the last to tell the story. As students finish each chapter, have them write down a short summary of what happened and illustrate it with a drawing. Have the students turn this into a mini-book of the larger book. As students write their summaries in this activity, you could teach a strategy for writing succinct summaries such as “Somebody-Wanted-But-So” (see here for more information)*.*(RL.3.10, RF.3.4c, L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3)

**Fluency / Audio Recording**

As a class, create a set of audio recordings of the book *My Father’s Dragon* (Ruth Stiles Gannett and Ruth Chrisman Gannett)*.* Using the illustrations from the chapter summaries (see Class Discussion / Literary above), assign to each student a chapter to rehearse reading aloud. With a video camera or tape recorder, have students record themselves reading a chapter in their best reading voice, interpreting the parts of each character. (SL.3.5, RL.3.10, RF.3.4c)

**Literary / Writing / Opinion Piece**

Give the students this prompt: “Choose the most interesting mythical character in your opinion. Be sure to support your opinion with strong reasons and to connect your writing to specific parts of the myth.Be sure also to use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, and for example) to connect your opinion and reasons. Provide a concluding statement.” (RL.3.2, W.3.1, W.3.1c, L.3.1)

**Class Discussion / Literary**

After reading each of the myths, have students retell the story with as many key details as they can. Have them partner to retell, helping the partner when he/she forgets what came next. Discuss the following prompts/questions as a class, or have them write down their thoughts for more independent thinking and accountability before discussing as a group.

* + - As we read the myth and as we retell the stories, let’s think about the message in the myth.
    - Why was the myth told during the time of the Ancient Greeks?
    - Why is it still told today? (RL.3.2, SL.3.2,L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3)

**Class Discussion / Informational Text**

Introduce the book *Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs!* (Kathleen V. Kudlinski and S.D. Schindler) by explaining that this book will teach them about how scientists can change their thinking after new evidence is collected. Tell students that in the discussion after reading, they should be prepared to share two different specific places in the book where this happened. Have them use a white board or Post-It to write down their thinking. (RI.3.10, RF.3.4c,RI.3.2,SL.3.1a,L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3)

**Research / Informational Text / Informational Writing**

Read a variety of nonfiction readings on the first Olympic games in Ancient Greece. Then give the students this prompt: “Using online resources, research one sport from the most recent summer Olympics and tell how it is similar and how it is different from the first games. Create a teaching poster or multimedia slide and report orally on your learning.” (RI.3.5, W.3.6, SL.3.4, W.3.7, L.3.2, L.3.3)

**Class Discussion / Literary / Writing**

Lead a class discussion based on *Could Be Worse!* (James Stevenson) using the following prompts/questions:

* + - How do you think the children felt when they tried to tell the grandfather of an adventure and he always topped it with a fantastic tale?
    - If you were the grandfather, what story would you have told?
    - Write a “fantastic” grandfather response to this: I fell off the monkey bars on the playground and scraped my knee. (RL.3.6, W.3.10, W.3.3, L.3.1, L.3.3, L.3.2)

**Class Discussion / Art Connection**

Introduce some of the art held in the Greek and Roman collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (see Art, Music, and Media). Then lead a discussion about how the students see the mythology influencing Ancient Greek and Roman art. In particular, discuss the relationship between the stories of the people (myths) and the inspiration for artistic pieces. (RL.3.2)

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**Additional Resources**

* + - [Powerful Writing: Description in Creating Monster Trading Cards](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/powerful-writing-description-creating-134.html#overview) (ReadWriteThink) (L.3.1a, RL.3.2)  
      Note: This lesson could be used for collecting cards of mythical characters or creative dragons.
    - [It Came from Greek Mythology](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=234) (National Endowment for the Humanities) (RL.3.2)
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**Terminology**

* + - fantasy
    - mythology
    - narrative poem
    - summary
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**Making Interdisciplinary Connections**

* + **This unit teaches:**
    - **Art:** Greek and Roman Art
    - **History:** Ancient Greece (e.g., the Olympics and life in Ancient Greece) and Ancient Rome (e.g., Roman mythology, government, and life)

**This unit could be extended to teach:**

* + - **History:** Vikings (e.g., Norse mythology, Norsemen, and Leif Ericson)

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