



Sun Mythology

Estimated Time

30 – 45 minutes

Supplies

Sun myth texts listed below or others you discover on your own.

Krupp, Dr. E.C. *Beyond the Blue Horizon: Myths and Legends of the Sun, Moon, Stars, and Planets*. 1992.

McDermott, Gerald. *Arrow to the Sun: A Pueblo Indian Tale*. 1974.

O'Hara, Gwydion. *Sun Lore*. 1997.

St Rain, Tedd. Ed. *Sun Lore of All Ages: A Survey of Solar Mythology, Folklore, Customs, Worship, Festivals, and Superstition*. 1999.

Luomals, Katharine. *Oceanic, American Indian and African Myths of the Snaring Sun*. 1988.

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Learning Objective

The students will learn that people from all over the world have different stories about the Sun. Before reading the story, ask students what they know about the Sun; for example, its location in our galaxy; its life as a star; and its importance to the ecosystem of our planet. Write their ideas on the board.

After reading the story, assess what students have learned by comparing their own knowledge about the Sun with that of other ancient cultures (the Norse, for example).

Directions

Use the example myth on the Student Page or other Sun myth texts as a catalyst for a classroom discussion about the many cultures that have myths and folklore associated with the Sun. Read one or two Sun myths aloud or make photocopies of additional texts for silent reading.

Instruct your students to write their own Sun myth. To get them started, have them answer the questions listed after the reading. Encourage students to use descriptive and colorful language. Their myths should focus either on a fictitious or actual cultural group or figure.

Once your students complete their assignment, have volunteers read their myths aloud to their classmates. After sharing a number of original Sun myths, engage students in a discussion about the importance of the Sun as a powerful energy supply and a source of life on Earth.

Discussion

Why do so many cultures, past and present, revere the Sun? Possible answers include: In ancient times, people were afraid of the Sun because they did not understand its motion across the sky; The Sun is a producer of crops, and as such they consider the Sun a generous god; Scientists study the Sun as an example of a medium-sized Class III star that is merely one of 200-300 billion in this galaxy alone, but sustains all life on earth.



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Directions

Read the Sun myth “Odhinn, One-Eyed Warrior” for inspiration, and then write your own original Sun myth. Be creative. Your Sun myth may focus on a fictitious or actual cultural group or figure.

“Odhinn, One-Eyed Warrior”¹

Odhinn is a Norse Sun God. Odhinn is also known as Woden. The Germanic word *wuten* means to rage.

Befitting a lord of the Sun, Odhinn is often depicted dressed as a warrior. His armor is forged in the sacred metal of solar deities. He wears a chest-plate of pure gold. On his head is a golden-horned helmet. His weapon is the golden spear forged magically by dwarfs and he rides an eight-legged horse across the sky.

As a *warrior lord*, Odhinn is served by the Valkyries, warrior maids who participate in every Earthly battle and determine its outcome. Odhinn is also the inspiration behind the famed berserkers, warriors crazed with the fury of the battle.

The Sun God has one eye. It is said that he gave the other eye for the gift of magic mead, a drink of poetic inspiration and knowledge. Odhinn plucked his eye from its socket and dropped it into the well of Mimir so he could drink from the magic waters and gain infinite wisdom.

The great inspiration of the enchanted well had a powerful effect on the warrior. He became known as a great healer and as the God of Poetry. Still, he retained his position as the Sun God, and in his battle fury, he was known as the One-eyed Warrior.

To start writing your own Sun myth, answer the following questions:

1. During what period of time does your Sun myth take place?
2. Where does your Sun myth take place?
3. In your Sun myth, who are the main characters(s)?
4. What powers does your main character(s) have?
5. What effect or change has your character made?

¹ Adapted from the book *Sun Lore-Folktales and Sagas from Around the World*, by Gwydion O’Hara