Students planning to enroll in English I Pre-IB for their freshman year are required to read Edith Hamilton’s *Mythology* during the summer. This text is available at Village Bookstore in San Clemente, and Mathom House Books, Inc. in the Pico Plaza, both of which offer students with ID’s a 1% discount. It is not available as an audio book, but some optional, related texts are available through sites such as audible.com and theaudiobookstore.com. Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Davis’ *Don’t Know Much about Mythology*, Bullfinch’s *Mythology*, and Green’s *Tales of the Greek Heroes* can provide additional support during students’ reading of *Mythology*. Study the following visual and background notes as an introduction to your study of Greek mythology.
Key Values—Watch for the following lessons in the stories and note examples in the margins.

1. Freedom to Think:
The Greeks favored philosophical discourse over doctrine. They created no sacred texts or codes and instead valued dynamic religion and laws.

2. The Concrete:
Ancient Greeks valued the realistic and tangible above the spiritual. They lived in a rational, matter-of-fact world.

3. Fulfillment of Potential—Physically, Intellectually, Morally, Artistically:
The Greeks believed in the motto “be all that you can be.” “Know thyself” is inscribed on the temple of Apollo at Delphi (a major oracle center). “Experience the world in order to know yourself” was a major tenet of the Greek culture.

4. Self-Restraint—the “Golden Mean”:
The Greeks also believed that excessive pride (hubris) incurs the gods’ jealousy and wrath. As a warning, “nothing to excess” is inscribed at Delphi. (Watch for this lesson in the myth of Daedalus and Icarus.)

5. Humanism:
In the ancient Greek culture, art, philosophy, and religion value the splendor of the human spirit. Gods are humanized, anthropomorphic, and superior to man—not morally, ethically, or spiritually, but in the concrete qualities of power, beauty, and immortality.

6. Ethnic pride in Cultural Accomplishments:
Think of My Big, Fat, Greek Wedding if you’ve seen it. 😊

7. Hospitality:
The Greeks believed that Zeus protected strangers and “suppliants,” those dependent on the protection of another or those who addressed heart-felt requests to another. They sought to please the god by offering “extreme hospitality” to anyone in need.

Reasons for Studying Mythology:
Ancient Greek stories and images are a major source of literature and art in the western world. During the European Renaissance (beginning around 1450 A.D.), philosophers looked back to Greece and Rome for inspiration.

*Start watching for and gathering allusions/references to Greek stories and characters in everything from literature and art to ads and video games.

Our culture inherited foundational principles from the Greeks in the following areas:
- Government—Democracy as a basic principle
- Drama—form and inspiration
- Science
- Medicine
- Olympic Games
- Classical style architecture and sculpture (temples, column styles). Have you seen the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C.?

*Plan a family trip to the Getty Villa. You may earn extra credit for going during 1st semester! See http://www.getty.edu/visit/ (right-hand side) Free admission!

Ancient Greek Religion and Beliefs (Note these in the stories.)
- Ancient Greece was a pagan, polytheistic society.
- Categories of Divine Beings—(Note the characteristics of each “type” of creature in the stories.)
- 12 most important gods/goddesses—the Olympians
- Disruptive deities:
  - satyrs: ½ goat, ½ man, characterized by wine and lust
  - nymphs: spirits of nature, depicted as beautiful maidens
  - centaurs: ½ horse, ½ man, savage, threatening, wild, representing uncontrolled aggression
- People were expected to honor the gods in order to thank them for blessings received, to receive blessings in return, and to avoid punishment.
- The gods did not love men, but they protected men; they also protected the states that honored them.
- The Greek myths—tales of monsters, family tragedy, and divine love affairs—were not a written code like the Bible, but all myths were respected as lessons about the gods’ awesome might, their inscrutability, and the precariousness of human life.
- Worshippers went to oracles for more direct information from the gods. Priests relayed a god’s message, and seers told prophecies. People, even from beyond Greek city-states, flocked to major oracles like Delphi. Their questions were answered in riddles because the gods were too complex to offer a clear reply to mere mortals.
Assigned Reading & Study Questions

***Important Directions. Read Carefully and Follow Exactly.***

Below are study questions to focus your reading of the tales. Please type your responses in complete sentences. (Do not type the question). When school starts, your responses will be submitted to an anti-plagiarism website, so do your own thinking! You may not share answers with other students. These answers are due the first day of school. They should be neatly typed, double spaced, and should include your name (typed!) and the name of your middle school.

Before reading, please print out the “pronunciation guide” from the following site to help with the names: http://www.pantheon.org/miscellaneous/pronunciations.html Please place this guide in your pre-IB English notebook.

Read the following chapters from Mythology by Edith Hamilton:
Part I, chapters 1-4 (skip Polyphemus section)
Part II, chapters 5, 6 & 8
Part III, chapter 12
Part IV, chapter 16
Part V, chapter 17
Part VI, chapters 20 & 21.

Be prepared for a test on all of the above chapters the first week of school.

Part I: Chapter 1: The Gods, the Underworld
1. How do the twelve Olympians gain control of the universe?
2. With which Greek god do you most identify/relate? Why?
3. The myths are full of instances of the gods’ cruelty. Giving multiple examples, discuss the reasons for this. Is it always justified? What does the gods’ cruelty say about the Greeks’ view of the universe?
4. What did you find most intriguing about the Greek Underworld? Explain.
5. What is the explanation for the design in the tail of a peacock?

Chapter 2: The Two Great Gods of the Earth
6. What does the “Rape [Abduction] of Persephone” explain about nature?
7. With specific references to the myth, explain how Dionysus is a symbol of resurrection
8. Who are the Maenads and what is their significance?
9. Why does Dionysus have both a good and an evil side to his personality? What does his persona reveal about the Greek attitude toward wine?
10. What do the myths of Demeter and Dionysus reveal about the Greek attitude toward the mother/child relationship?

Chapter 3: How the World and Mankind Were Created
11. Why does Father Heaven imprison his children? Which Greek value does this connect with?
12. How were Deucalion and Pyrrha like the biblical Noah and his wife? Explain the lesson of this myth.
13. Which version of mankind’s creation do you think is most believable? Explain.
14. Referring to the myth, explain why Prometheus has always been an archetypal symbol of rebellion against injustice.
15. Who creates Pandora and for what purpose is she made?
17. Who is Prometheus’s counterpart in the Christian faith? Explain the connection between these two figures.

Chapter 4: The Earliest Heroes

18. Where did Europa end up?
19. What is the explanation behind the idea of an echo?
20. Which purpose of mythology (see page 1 of hand-out) do the flower myths serve? Explain.
21. What is the common theme of all the flower myths?

Part II: Chapter 5: Cupid and Psyche

22. Explain the significance of the following quote in the myth and explain whether or not it is significant to contemporary life: “Love cannot live where there is no trust.”
23. How are Pandora and Psyche similar? What do their stories reveal about the ancient Greek view of women? Explain.

Chapter 6: Eight Brief Tales of Lovers

24. What phenomenon of nature does the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe explain?
25. What famous Shakespearean play uses the myth of Pyramus and Thisbe as one of its influences? Explain.
26. The word Orpheum, an entertainment hall or theater, comes from the myth of Orpheus. How are the modern word and the Greek character connected?
27. What happens every year when Alcyone nests? What are these days called?
28. Read a summary of George Bernard Shaw’s play Pygmalion. In what way is this play based on the Greek myth of Pygmalion?
29. After reading the ancient Greek tales of lovers, what do you think was the Greek attitude toward romantic love? Did the Greeks believe that romantic love was a gift, a burden, a necessity? Explain and use two myths to justify your answer.
30. Examine modern culture and find an example of any of the Greek lovers or their stories in a movie, TV show, play, song, novel, advertisement, etc. The comparisons do not have to be exact, but the modern and ancient counterparts should be similar, as in Shaw’s play Pygmalion. Identify the Greek influence in the modern work and explain the similarities.

Chapter 8: Four Great Adventures

31. The end of the Bellerophon and Pegasus myth shows Pegasus being honored by the gods, while Bellerophon ends his life in disgrace. Explain the lesson that the end of this myth teaches.
32. Explain the virtue that is taught and how it reveals itself in the myth Daedalus and Icarus.
33. Considering the degree of danger involved in Phaeton’s request of his father, Apollo, why did Apollo have to allow it? What does this teach us about the Greek culture?

Chapter 12: Atalanta

34. What does the story of Atalanta tell us about the ancient Greek view of women?
35. In what way/s is Atalanta a good role model for ancient Greek girls or even modern young women?
36. What does the story of Atalanta’s “lover,” Meleager, reveal about the Greeks’ view of fate?

Part IV: Chapter 16 The Adventures of Aeneas

37. Briefly recount the “love story” of Aeneas and Dido. What does this story teach about the power of the gods in relation to the power of people to control their own lives? Explain.
38. How and why did Dido die? What would your advice have been to Dido if you had stood on the beach the night the Trojans sailed?
39. Explain the ancient Greek view of the Underworld, and then, contrast it with a contemporary view of what happens when we die. Why do you think there are similarities and differences?
40. Who dwells in the Elysian Fields, and why do you think this is?
Part V: Chapter 17: The House of Atreus
41. How did Tantalas draw down the curse on the House of Atreus? Why did he commit such a heinous act?
42. Explain how and why Niobe’s fourteen children were killed. Include the fatal error attributed to Niobe.
43. What are the two differing stories told of how Agamemnon met his death? Considering what you know about the ancient Greeks now, which story do you find more believable and why?
44. What lessons do the stories in this chapter teach? What human trait do the Greeks most fully condemn? What human trait do they seem to most admire? Briefly explain.
45. Who was Cassandra? What would it mean to call someone a “Cassandra” today?
Part VI: Chapter 20
46. What moral lesson does the myth of Midas teach?
47. Briefly describe the rise and fall of Aesculapius.
48. What does the expression “don’t kill the messenger” mean, and how does it apply to this myth?
49. How were the Danaids punished and why?
50. Who punished Scylla? How and why?
51. What is the connection between Glaucus and “glaucoma” or “glaucous gull”?
52. How was Erysichthon’s daughter like Proteus?
53. How did Vertumnus get Pomona to accept him?
Part VI: Chapter 21
54. Who were the Amazons?
55. What two purposes does the myth of Arachne serve?
56. How does the adjective “Sisyphean” relate to the myth of Sisyphus? Use the adjective “sisyphean” in an original sentence.
57. How is Amalthea connected to our symbol of the cornucopia or “horn of plenty”?
58. How was Chiron unique among centaurs?
59. Look up the character of Hero in Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing. How does this character take after the mythological Hero in the version Hamilton includes?
60. How does Zeus deceive Leto?
61. What was Orion’s offense? What is the connection between Orion and astronomy?
62. How were the Myrmidons created?
63. How did Zeus rescue the Pleiades?

64. Record an insightful question you have about a myth, or an idea that wasn’t answered in this book.
65. Based on your reading, describe the ancient Greeks’ view of fate. Give at least two specific examples from the myths. How do you think most people view the concept of fate today?