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# THE LIGHTNING THIEF

## Study guide

Based on the book by Rick Riordan



**Dear Teacher,**

**We have created the following study guide to help make your students theatre experience with the musical, THE LIGHTNING THIEF as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long lasting. Our study guide provides pre and post-production discussion topics, as well as related activities. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion.**

**We hope you enjoy the show!**

## **Background**

**The show is based on the book, The Lightning Thief by author Rick Riordan.**

Author: Rick Riordan

Born: June 5, 1964

Place of Birth: San Antonio, TX

Rick was influenced early on by J.R.R. Tolkien when he read 'The Lord of the Rings', noting he probably read it ten times. He also admits to liking Greek and Norse mythology since he was in middle school. He taught mythology almost every year that he was a teacher, admitting "It was always my favorite thing, and the students liked it, too!"

For more facts about Greek mythology or for a teacher's guide for THE LIGHTNING THIEF, check out his Rick's website at

[www.rickriordan.com](http://www.rickriordan.com).

## List of Greek Gods & Mythical Creatures



In the book *The Lightning Thief*, main character, Percy Jackson discovers he's not completely human. He's part God, or a Demigod. Throughout the book, author Rick Riordan references Greek Mythology. Below is a list of Gods and mythical creatures that are mentioned in Theatreworks USA's new musical based on the book.

<b>Greek God/ Mythical Creature Names</b>	<b>WHAT THEY REPRESENT:</b>
<b>APOLLO</b>	The youthful God of the sun and music.
<b>ARES</b>	The fierce God of war.
<b>ATHENA</b>	The Goddess of wisdom and arts.
<b>CENTAUR</b>	Mythical creature with head and torso of a man and body of a horse.
<b>CHIRON</b>	Eldest and wisest of the centaurs.
<b>CYCLOPS</b>	One-eyed giant.

<b>FURIES</b>	Avenging spirits controlled by Hades.
<b>HADES</b>	God of the underworld and brother to Poseidon and Zeus.
<b>HARPIES</b>	Female monsters in the form of birds with human faces.
<b>HERCULES</b>	Son of Zeus. Mortal hero.
<b>HERMES</b>	God of the trade.
<b>KRONOS</b>	Titian God of time and the ages. Sired the Gods and Goddesses of Mt. Olympus.
<b>MEDUSA</b>	Gorgon sister who bragged about her beauty and was turned into a monster by Athena.
<b>MINOTAUR</b>	Monster with body of a man and head and tail of a bull.
<b>ODYSSEUS</b>	Leader in the Trojan War.
<b>PAN</b>	God of the wild, shepherds and flocks.
<b>POSEIDON</b>	God of the sea, brother of Zeus and Hades and Father of Percy Jackson.

<b>PROMETHEUS</b>	Titan God of Forethought. Entrusted with task of molding mankind out of clay.
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<b>SATYRS</b>	Poets and companions to Pan.
<b>TITANS</b>	The Elder Gods who ruled the earth before the Olympians overthrew them.
<b>ZEUS</b>	King of the Gods, ruler of mankind.

For more information on Greek mythology, check out these websites:

[www.greekmythology.com](http://www.greekmythology.com)

[www.theoi.com/](http://www.theoi.com/)

## Activity: Using the Power of the Gods



Percy Jackson is pretty shocked when he finds out that he's a Demigod and the son of Poseidon, the God of the sea. The Greeks believed the Gods had the power to change the fate of mortals, which is what makes Greek mythology so intriguing. The tales are also great examples of stories with messages. For example, perhaps Medusa would still be beautiful had she not bragged about her looks in a public place, challenging her appearance against that of Athena. To prove that beauty is only skin deep, Athena turned Medusa into a hideous monster who couldn't view her reflection without turning herself to stone. No wonder her snake hair was so out of control. It was never wise to anger a God, with all those powers they had, why risk it?

### What powers would you choose?

- Read a few of the Greek myths found on Rick Riordan's website.
- Think about what powers you would want if you were a God or a Goddess. What would you look like as a God/Goddess and what would your powers be?
- Name your God/Goddess.

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Draw a picture of yourself in action. For example, so many pictures of Zeus include him with his lightning bolt, or Poseidon is often seen rising out of the sea.

- For older students, write a short story as the God/Goddess you create for yourself using the Greek myths as a guide.

### **Activity: Create your own Camp Half Blood**



Percy goes to Camp Half Blood and learns more about the Greek God's and Goddesses then he ever thought possible. After creating your God or Goddess, think about what events would take place if you and your friends were attending Camp Half Blood. Think about what powers you created for your God or Goddess and what activities would be useful for teaching people to use those powers?

- Design a poster for your own Camp Half Blood
- Make a schedule of events for one day at the camp
- If you could have one of the God's or Goddesses in Greek

Mythology visit your camp, who would it be?

### **Activity: Studying Ancient Greece**



There is a line in the musical where they sing, "We were geeking out on ancient Greek at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. We stopped by all the statues and learned about the Gods."



No need to 'geek out' if you can't get to New York to see the exhibit. The New York Metropolitan Museum of Art has a fascinating website which allows students to browse some of the exhibits. Check out [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org) to learn more.

**More activities:**

- The Greek language is over 2500 years old and has influenced many other languages including English. Can you list ten words with Greek origin?
- Besides the alphabet and mythology, what other things are the Greeks known for? See how many you can list. Here's a clue for your first one: The symbol for this has five rings adjoining each other.
- Check out a map of ancient Greece by looking online. How does it compare to Greece today?
- Make a Greek mythology timeline
- Hold a mock version of the Olympics using your imaginary powers you selected from an earlier activity in the study guide. What kinds of activities are in your Olympics?

## Activities for Teachers: Songwriting tells a story



THE LIGHTNING THIEF (the musical) is based on the book of the same name. When you see the performance you'll notice that much of the story is summed up succinctly in the lyrics. Here is a sample of the lyrics from the opening number, 'The Day I Got Expelled (Part 1).'

(PERCY)

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED

WAS THAT ALL A CREEPY, CRAZY DREAM  
MY TEACHER WAS A CREATURE,  
THEN SHE VANISHED IN THE ETHER  
WITH A SCARY SCREAM  
THE NEXT THING THAT I KNEW

I WAS WHERE DETENTION WAS HELD  
THE DAY IT ALL GOT REAL  
THE DAY I GOT (Expelled) -

While the songs fly by effortlessly, writing lyrics isn't as easy as it seems. Have your students try their hand at writing a verse by using this basic rhyme scheme.

- A – sentence stands on its own and introduces subject matter
- B – sentence has a different ending sound than the first line
- A – end of this sentence rhymes with the first line
- B – end of this sentence rhymes with the second line

Here is an example:

PERCY JACKSON IS A DEMIGOD  
WHO GOT EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL  
HIS STORY IS A BIT FLAWED  
BUT THE RESULTS ARE REALLY COOL!

Once students have mastered this style of writing, have them try adding “a hook” which is a repetitive line at the beginning or end of each verse. In the above example from the show, the hook would be the line “The Day I Got Expelled” which is also the title of the song (as hooks usually are).

### **Reading Activities:**

- Have students read the book before seeing the musical and then discuss the differences. Was the musical how you imagined it from the book? Then compare it to the film. How are the three mediums different? Discuss what versions they liked best and why.
- Make a family tree for Percy Jackson using the references in the book to Greek mythology.
- Have students each draw a name of one of the Greek Gods/Goddesses out of a hat. Then have them research the name they picked and give a short presentation on their God/Goddess.

- Percy Jackson often feels like an outsider, or like he's not "normal" until he finds out the reason why and discovers he's a demigod. Have students write about a time when they felt different. Did it make them feel special? Did they feel alone? How did they deal with their feelings?
- Percy has special powers along with the Gods on his side but often when students see trouble at school like bullying they don't know who to turn to

Have students write down one or two incidents when this happened to them at school or with friends.

Then, have them put their answers in a hat so it's anonymous. Draw from the hat and talk about each scenario. Then, if students are comfortable, role-play solutions.

### **Theatre Etiquette:**

We want your students to have the best experience when they see a performance live so below is a list of reminders of how to behave when they see the show.

- Keep in mind that the actors on stage can hear you if you talk, so always be courteous to the actors and other audience members around you by paying attention during the performance and not talking or texting.
- Remember not to bring any food, beverages or gum into the theatre or where you're seeing the show unless you're told its okay.
- No taking pictures or recording during the performance.
- Be sure to laugh and applaud when appropriate and remember to have fun!

## **See you at the show!**

