



CONTENT FOCUS: Reading/Language Arts
PROFICIENCY: Intermediate to Proficient

GRADES
4-5

OBJECTIVE: Students demonstrate listening and reading comprehension skills.

TOT

ACTIVITIES: Students learn about Greek gods and goddesses by viewing pictures and listening to Part 1 of “The Story of Demeter and Persephone,” and answer multiple-choice items.



PREPARATION:

- copies of “Greek Gods and Goddesses” worksheet for each student
- copies of “Listen to the Story of Demeter and Persephone” worksheets for each student
- copies of “Read the Story of Demeter and Persephone, Part 1” worksheets for each student

Note: Preteach new vocabulary, such as myths, gods, and goddesses.

Build Background: Greek Myths

Introduce

1. Distribute copies of the “Greek Gods and Goddesses” worksheet. Have students look at the pictures as you provide the following background:
Thousands of years ago, people did not understand why certain things happened in the world. To explain events, like the rising and setting of the sun, or the changes in the seasons, they made up stories called myths. Every culture created its own myths. Native North Americans used animal characters to explain why events happened. In ancient Greece, people believed that the gods and goddesses controlled the world. Let’s look at some of the Greek gods and goddesses.
 (Explain the male/female distinction in the word forms. Define a god or goddess as one who rules or controls things in the world.)
2. Select a student to read the title, “Greek Gods and Goddesses.” Select students to read the names and descriptions of each god and goddess in round-robin style. Discuss any unfamiliar words. Tell students that they will study a Greek myth that involves each of these characters. Explain that in this lesson, first they will listen to the beginning of the myth and answer questions about what they heard. Then, they will read the beginning of the myth themselves and answer additional questions. (In this lesson, students will hear and read only Part 1 of the myth.)

Learn

Listen and Comprehend

1. Distribute copies of the “Listen to the Story of Demeter and Persephone” worksheets and explain: *This myth is about a mother’s great love for her daughter. In this myth, the ancient Greeks explain one of the mysteries of the natural world. In Part 1, you will learn about this mother and the daughter and what happens to them.*
2. Say: *Now I will read the first part of “The Story of Demeter and Persephone.” Listen carefully; you will hear it only once. I will stop during the story to ask you some questions. You will read the answer choices to each question on your worksheet and then circle the correct answer.* Read Part 1, pausing to read the questions and the answer choices as indicated. Have students circle their answers for Items 1–3. When you have completed reading Part 1, have students review their answers with a partner. Then, review the correct answers as a class. Repeat the information in the story that confirms the answers.
3. Collect all “Listen to the Story of Demeter and Persephone” worksheets. Tell the students they will return to this story in the next lesson to find out what happens.

Read and Comprehend

4. Distribute copies of the “Read the Story of Demeter and Persephone, Part 1” worksheets. Explain that this is the same story that you just read to them. Have students take turns reading it aloud with a partner.

STRATEGY LINK: READING When reading or listening, many ELLs believe they should understand every word—even when many of the words are new words.

Encourage your students to focus only on a couple new words, such as those that are keeping them from understanding the gist of a story.

After students have read “The Story of Demeter and Persephone” and have identified the new words they think are important, help them work to guess the meanings by using the context of the surrounding sentences and story.

Say (for example): *I will read the last paragraph of the story one more time. Listen for new words or groups of words. (Read the last paragraph.) Which new words or groups of words did you hear? (Write students’ input on the board.) Let’s pick two of these words or groups that you think are the most important.*

(For example, students may choose “in her grief,” “rushed,” or “bearing.” Read the surrounding context again.) *She rushed to help her, but Persephone was*

gone. Demeter searched and searched for her daughter. “In her grief,” she forgot to tell the grains to grow.

(Help students formulate questions about the context to guess the meaning of the new words.) *What are your guesses about the meaning of “in her grief?” To help you guess, let’s ask ourselves some questions about the other parts of this paragraph. Why did Demeter forget to tell the grains to grow? What happened to Persephone? Did Demeter find Persephone? So, how did Demeter feel?*

(Students’ answers may get them in the ballpark, enough to get the gist of the word and paragraph. Also, let students know that “in her grief” is a collocation, a collection of words English language writers often group together.)

It’s okay if you don’t know all the words. Asking yourself questions and guessing the meaning of the important new words in a story can help you understand English stories!

Think Aloud and Comprehend

5. Now model test strategies for answering reading comprehension questions.

Say: *Sometimes after reading a passage, there are questions to see if you understand what you read. Let’s look at the questions that follow this story.*

Select a student to read aloud the first question. After the student reads, pause to conduct the corresponding Think Alouds for Items 1 and 2.

THINK ALOUD—Item 1: *Let me think carefully about the question: I need to find the answer that tells why Demeter is really important to the people on earth. That means I need to decide which answer tells the reason she is important to them. Let me look at the answer choices.*

- *Answer A says that “She is Persephone’s mother.” I remember that the passage tells that Demeter is Persephone’s mother. But, when I look back in the passage, I don’t see anything to guess that being Persephone’s mother would make Demeter important to the people of the world.*
- *Answer B says that “She loves her daughter very much.” When I look back in the passage, I see that this is true, but how would loving her daughter very much be the reason Demeter is important to the people? That doesn’t make sense.*
- *So, now I look at answer C. It says that “She makes the crops grow.” I know that making crops grow is something important to people because crops provide people food to eat. When I look back in the passage, it does say that “The people of the world had plenty to eat, thanks to Demeter.” This is the best answer so far.*

- Answer D says “She is kind and beautiful.” I remember that according to the passage, this is true about Demeter. But, this isn’t the best reason Demeter is considered important to the people.

So, now I know that answer C is the correct answer; I circle it on my paper. Demeter is important to the people of the world because she makes the crops grow.

(R3.3: Read critically and apply learning strategies to interpretation)

THINK ALOUD—Item 2: “What happens” refers to an important event in the story. The first choice is something Persephone does, not something that happens to her. That one is wrong. The second choice is true. According to the passage, Hades pulls Persephone underground and takes her to the land of the dead. I think that’s the answer, but I’ll read the other choices just to be sure. The third choice isn’t true—that doesn’t happen in the story. And, the fourth choice is backwards—Persephone doesn’t search for her mother; Demeter searches for Persephone. I guess I was right. The second choice is the answer. I’ll read it one more time before I circle it.

Complete

Complete the Test Items for Part 1

1. Ask students to complete Items 3 and 4 independently. Tell them to ask themselves similar strategy questions and be prepared to tell you what questions they were thinking. (R3.1: Demonstrate reading comprehension; R3.2: Identify important literary features of text)
2. Discuss the correct answer choices. Refer to the remaining Think Aloud items for this discussion.

THINK ALOUD—Item 3: I know the answer can’t be B because that is not correct information about Hades. The other three answer choices (A, C, and D) tell true things about Hades, but I need to decide which one of those answers tells something Hades does that makes him important to the story. He takes Persephone away from her mother and that makes Demeter sad. Because she is sad, things stop growing and people are hungry. That is the most important event in this story, and it is caused by what Hades does, so I choose that answer.

THINK ALOUD—Item 4: The first one looks like the right answer to me, but I’ll check the others—just in case! The second choice is wrong: According to the passage, Hades takes Persephone and not Demeter to the underworld. The third choice is also wrong: Even if the ground opens up and makes a hole, it closes again. There’s still plenty of space for wheat and corn to grow. The fourth choice is also wrong. The passage doesn’t say that there is no sunlight on the meadow. Persephone just can’t see the sunlight once the ground closes above her. The first choice is the correct answer.

ASSESSMENT: Use “Listen to the Story of Demeter and Persephone” worksheets to assess listening comprehension.

RELATED LINKS:

Standard: R3

Multilevel Links:

- Beginning students can listen to the story on tape as they follow along with the printed version on the worksheet.
- Intermediate students can read parts of the story to each other.
- Above Proficient students can make up additional comprehension questions about the story and ask a partner.

Home Link:

Students can take the story worksheet and read it with a family member.

Student:

Date:

Greek Gods and Goddesses



Demeter: goddess of the harvest



Hades: god of the underworld; ruler of the dead



Zeus: ruler of the gods



Hermes: messenger of the gods



Persephone: daughter of Demeter;
maiden of Springtime

Listen to the Story of Demeter and Persephone (Page 1)

Part I

A long time ago, it was always springtime. Trees were always green, flowers always bloomed, and fields were high with golden grains. The people of the world had plenty to eat, thanks to Demeter, goddess of the harvest. Demeter watched over green and growing things. She was kind and beautiful, and she had a young daughter named Persephone. Demeter loved Persephone more than anything in the world.

Pause: Ask the following question—

- 1** At first, what was the world like?
- A** Everyone was kind and beautiful.
 - (B)** It was always springtime.
 - C** People everywhere were hungry.

One day, Persephone was picking flowers in a meadow, singing along the way. From deep below the earth, Hades, god of the underworld, heard Persephone's sweet sounds. He fell in love with her laughter and her joy, for there was little of that in the underworld. Hades decided to steal the young maiden away to the land of the dead.

Pause: Ask the following question—

- 2** Why did Hades fall in love with Persephone?
- (A)** He loved her laughter and joy.
 - B** He loved her kindness and beauty.
 - C** He loved flowers from the meadow.

As Persephone bent down to pick a flower, the ground cracked open. Hades reached up and pulled Persephone underground.

"Mother! Mother!" Persephone cried out, but it was too late. The ground quickly closed above her. She could no longer see the sunlight or the meadow. She had wandered too far from her mother.

Listen to the Story of Demeter and Persephone (Page 2)

Demeter had heard her daughter's cry. She rushed to help her, but Persephone was gone. Demeter searched and searched for her daughter. In her grief, she forgot to tell the grains to grow. Wheat and corn stopped growing. Trees stopped bearing fruit. And all over the world, the people were hungry.

Ask the following question—

3 What happened in the world after Demeter became sad?

- A** There was no more sunlight.
- B** People stopped planting wheat and corn.
- C** People had no food.

Student:

Date:

DIRECTIONS: Listen carefully to the story. Your teacher will stop to ask questions. Listen to each question. Circle the correct letter choice.

Listen to the Story of Demeter and Persephone (Page 1)

Part 1

- 1**
- A** Everyone was kind and beautiful.
 - B** It was always springtime.
 - C** People everywhere were hungry.
- 2**
- A** He loved her laughter and joy.
 - B** He loved her kindness and beauty.
 - C** He loved flowers from the meadow.
- 3**
- A** There was no more sunlight.
 - B** People stopped planting wheat and corn.
 - C** People had no food.

Listen to the Story of Demeter and Persephone (Page 2)

Part 2

4

- A** Hades
- B** Demeter
- C** Zeus

5

- A** to the underworld
- B** to Mount Olympus
- C** to visit Zeus

6

- A** The people are happy.
- B** The earth turns cold.
- C** Green things grow again.

Read the Story of Demeter and Persephone (Page 1)

Part 1

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One day, Persephone was picking flowers in a meadow, singing along the way. From deep below the earth, Hades, god of the underworld, heard Persephone's sweet sounds. He fell in love with her laughter and her joy, for there was little of that in the underworld. Hades decided to steal the young maiden away to the land of the dead.

As Persephone bent down to pick a flower, the ground cracked open. Hades reached up and pulled Persephone underground.

"Mother! Mother!" Persephone cried out, but it was too late. The ground quickly closed above her. She could no longer see the sunlight or the meadow. She had wandered too far from her mother.

Demeter had heard her daughter's cry. She rushed to help her, but Persephone was gone. Demeter searched and searched for her daughter. In her grief, she forgot to tell the grains to grow. Wheat and corn stopped growing. Trees stopped bearing fruit. And all over the world, the people were hungry.



Student:

Date:

Read the Story of Demeter and Persephone (Page 2)

Part 1

1 Which statement best describes why Demeter is important to the people on earth?

- A** She is Persephone's mother.
- B** She loves her daughter very much.
- C** She makes the crops grow.
- D** She is kind and beautiful.

2 What happens to Persephone?

- A** She picks flowers in a meadow.
- B** She is taken to the underworld.
- C** She cries and the plants stop growing.
- D** She searches for her mother.

3 Why is the character of Hades important to the story?

- A** He takes care of the dead.
- B** He is Persephone's husband.
- C** He takes Persephone away from Demeter.
- D** He makes the ground crack open.

4 Why does the wheat and corn stop growing?

- A** Demeter forgets to tell the crops to grow.
- B** Hades takes Demeter to the underworld.
- C** The ground opens up and makes a hole.
- D** There is no longer sunlight on the meadow.



CONTENT FOCUS: Reading/Language Arts
PROFICIENCY: Intermediate to Proficient

GRADES
4-5

OBJECTIVE: Students retell a story and use test-taking strategies to answer questions.

TOT

ACTIVITIES: Students listen to and read Part 1 of “The Story of Demeter and Persephone,” retell the story, make predictions about, listen to, and read Part 2, answer multiple-choice items, and discuss main ideas and details.



PREPARATION:

- copies of “Listen to the Story of Demeter and Persephone” worksheets from Lesson A for each student
- copies of “Read the Story of Demeter and Persephone, Part 2” worksheets for each student

Review and Retell the Story

Review

1. Ask students to listen again to Part 1 of the story of Demeter and Persephone and follow along on their copy. Then, have students practice retelling each other the story in their own words from memory. Impress upon students the key, summary events: *Demeter, who rules over growing things, is so sad when her daughter is taken away that she forgets to tell the crops to grow. Now, the whole world is hungry.* (S5.1: Interpret, narrate, and paraphrase events, using visual information) **OBSERVATIONAL OPPORTUNITY #1**

Make Predictions

2. Ask students to identify the problem that this first part of the story ended with. Conduct a discussion about what they think will happen in Part 2 of the story. Ask: *Will the problem be solved? If so, how? If not, what will happen to the people on the earth?* Tell students that now you will read the rest of the myth so that they can find out if their predictions are correct.

Listen and Comprehend

Learn

1. Redistribute the students’ copy of “Listen to the Story of Demeter and Persephone.” Tell students: *I will read the second part of “The Story of Demeter and Persephone.” You will answer three questions. Listen carefully; you will hear it only once.*

2. Read Part 2, pausing to read the questions and the answer choices as indicated on the teacher worksheet. Have students circle their answers for Items 4–6. Review the correct answers as a class. Repeat the information in the story that confirms the answers.

Read and Comprehend

3. Distribute copies of the “Read the Story of Demeter and Persephone, Part 2” worksheets. Have students read the passage. Then review test strategies for answering the reading comprehension items. *When you see a test question, what should you do?* (Find important words in the question so you understand what information the question is asking for.) *Do not choose an answer just because it states information from the passage. Go back to the passage and check to be sure your choice answers the question.* (See Think Alouds from Lesson A.) Have students circle their answers for Items 1–4.

Review

Review and Reinforce Comprehension

As a summary of the lesson, discuss the following questions with students:

- *What was the purpose of myths to ancient peoples?* (Myths helped explain things they did not understand, such as natural events.) (L3.1: Identify purpose)
- *What is this myth mostly about? What does it try to explain?* (This myth explains why we have the seasons.) (L3.2: Identify main ideas)
- *According to this myth, why do we have the seasons?* (The goddess of the harvest, Demeter, loses her beloved daughter for part of the year. While her daughter is on Earth, Demeter is happy. Earth is warm and beautiful, and it is spring. While her daughter is away, Demeter is sad. Earth is cold and bare, and it is winter.)

ASSESSMENT: Use “The Story of Demeter and Persephone” worksheets to assess understanding of the reading passages. To evaluate students’ speaking production, use the Observational Assessment Rubric.

RELATED LINKS:

Standards: S5, L3

Multilevel Links:

- Beginning students can listen to this part of the story on tape as they follow along with the printed version on the worksheet.
- Intermediate students can read the part of the story that they like best to a partner.
- Above Proficient students can work in small groups to make an illustrated book that includes both words and pictures describing the key events from the story.

Drama Link:

Invite students to present a dramatization of "The Story of Demeter and Persephone."

Science Link:

Ask students to research the scientific explanation for the change in seasons. Students may wish to focus on one aspect of the seasons, such as freezing in winter, changing leaves in autumn, heat and humidity in summer, or "rebirth" of plants and/or animals in spring.

Home Culture Link:

Students can ask their family members to tell them a myth from their native country. They can then share this myth with the class.

Resource Links:

Students may learn more about Greek mythology by reading:

- *Gods and Goddesses in the Daily Life of the Ancient Greeks* by Fiona Macdonald
- *Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Greece* by Leon Ashworth
- *Traditional Tales from Ancient Greece* by Vic Parker

Listen to the Story of Demeter and Persephone (Page 1)

Part 2

From high atop Mount Olympus, Zeus, the ruler of the gods, looked on with sadness. The people of the world were dying. It was no use to ask Demeter to make the crops grow again. Until her daughter came back to her, the earth would not bloom.

So, Zeus sent Hermes, the messenger of the gods, to Hades with this order, “*Let Persephone go!*” Although Hades wanted to obey, there was a problem. He had given Persephone a seed of a pomegranate to eat. The pomegranate was the food of the dead. Anyone who tasted it had to return, sooner or later, to the underworld.

“I will let her go,” said Hades, “because Zeus commands me!”

Pause: Ask the following question—

4 Who felt sad about the world and decided to help?

- A** Hades
- B** Demeter
- ☒ **C** Zeus

Persephone and Demeter cried tears of happiness when they saw each other. Persephone told her mother what had happened. She told her how much she had missed the sun and the flowers. She told her too that she had eaten from the pomegranate.

Demeter knew at once that she would lose her daughter again. She cried out to Zeus for help. Zeus declared that Persephone would return to the underworld for only part of the year. After all, she had only eaten part of the pomegranate. For the rest of the year, Persephone would return to the earth and to her mother.

And so, to this day, when Persephone leaves the earth, the world turns cold. The wheat and barley die. The trees bear no fruit, and Demeter weeps for her child. But when she returns to the earth, it is springtime and green things grow again. The people rejoice, and the mother who loves her daughter is filled with joy!

Listen to the Story of Demeter and Persephone (Page 2)

Ask the following questions—

5 Where must Persephone go for part of every year?

- A** to the underworld
- B** to Mount Olympus
- C** to visit Zeus

6 What happens each year when Persephone leaves the earth?

- A** The people are happy.
- B** The earth turns cold.
- C** Green things grow again.

Read the Story of Demeter and Persephone (Page 1)

Part 2

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And so, to this day, when Persephone leaves the earth, the world turns cold. The wheat and barley die. The trees bear no fruit, and Demeter weeps for her child. But when she returns to the earth, it is springtime and green things grow again. The people rejoice, and the mother who loves her daughter is filled with joy!



Student:

Date:

Read the Story of Demeter and Persephone (Page 2)

Part 2

1

Why is the character of Zeus important to the story?

- A** He looks down at the world from Mount Olympus.
- B** All the gods must do what he says.
- C** All the gods are afraid of him.
- D** He makes all the green things grow.

2

What word best describes Zeus?

- A** funny
- B** happy
- C** mean
- D** fair

3

Persephone must return to the underworld because

- A** she ate from the fruit of the dead
- B** she must follow Hades' wishes
- C** she doesn't want to hurt her mother
- D** the people need green, growing things

4

According to the story, spring arrives when

- A** Persephone leaves her mother to return to the underworld
- B** Persephone leaves the underworld to return to her mother
- C** Persephone eats from the pomegranate seed
- D** Zeus says that it is time for things to grow

3.156 Why We Have Winter and Spring (Lesson B)

Student:

Date:

Observational Assessment Rubric

Observational Opportunity #1 S5.1: interprets, narrates, and paraphrases events <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	If yes, the student interprets, narrates, and paraphrases events:	
	1	<input type="checkbox"/> with gestures, or using one or two words, but is unable to express supporting evidence: <i>Demeter sad</i>
	2	<input type="checkbox"/> with short phrases which may not be fully comprehensible: <i>Demeter sad and forgets</i>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/> with longer phrases or short sentences containing some errors: <i>Demeter sad and world hungry</i>
	4	<input type="checkbox"/> with production similar to a native speaker's: <i>Demeter is sad about losing her daughter; she forgets about the crops.</i>

1—Beginning/Early Intermediate

2—Early Intermediate/Intermediate

3—Intermediate/Proficient

4—Proficient/Above Proficient

NOTES: