Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

extracts from

Greek Myths Picture Book

Written by

Rosie Dickins

Illustrated by

Galia Bernstein

Published by

Usborne Publishing Ltd

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

The Titans

According to the Greek myths, the gods were descended from a race of giants known as the Titans.

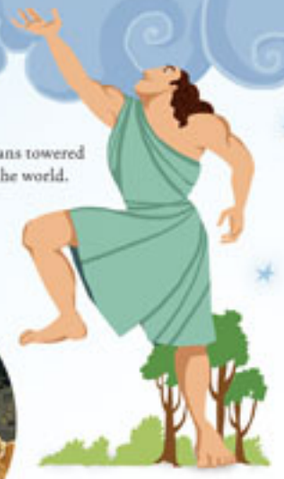


The Titans were the children of the Earth and the Sky. Huge, handsome and powerful, they ruled the world during a long-ago golden age.

The time of the Titans was a time of peace and plenty.



Fountain of Cronus
Detail from 17th-century French sculpture. This gold-covered Cronus was made for a royal palace.



The Titans towered over the world.

The chief Titan, Cronus, knew he would be overthrown by one of his children. So he swallowed them as soon as they were born. Eventually his wife Rhea tricked him into sparing one, by giving him a stone wrapped in a blanket to swallow instead.

The child Cronus didn't swallow was named Zeus. When Zeus grew up, he forced Cronus to spit out his other children. These children became the first Greek gods. They wrested control of the world from the Titans in a battle that lasted ten years.



The Fall of the Titans
17th-century Flemish painting by Peter Paul Rubens

This painting shows the end of the battle, with the Titans falling or fleeing before the gods.



The brothers drew lots to decide who got what.

After defeating the Titans, Zeus and his brothers divided the world between them. Zeus took the Sky, Poseidon the Seas, and Hades the underground realm known as the Underworld. The Earth they agreed to share.



The Cyclops
19th-century French painting by Odilon Redon

Not all of Earth's children were as handsome as the Titans. There was also a race of one-eyed giants known as Cyclopes – and others so ugly, they hid away underground.

This is how one 19th-century artist imagined a Cyclops. (The plural of Cyclops is Cyclopes.)



This statue – a Roman copy of a Greek original – shows Atlas with the heavens weighing on his shoulders.

Atlas
Roman statue, 3rd century

Atlas

Atlas was an incredibly strong Titan. He led the Titans in their battle with the gods. When Zeus won, he punished Atlas by making him hold up the heavens. Eventually, Atlas turned to stone and became the Atlas Mountains.



The High Atlas Mountains as they look today

Prometheus

Prometheus was a clever Titan who stole fire from the gods and gave it to people. Zeus punished him by chaining him up with an eagle pecking at his liver – until Zeus's son, Heracles, rescued him.

Although their punishments were harsh, Prometheus and Atlas couldn't die because Titans were immortal and lived forever.



Prometheus (second from left) hid the fire inside a hollow stalk, which he is holding here.

Prometheus and Satyrs
Detail from Greek vase, 5th century BC



Atlas and Prometheus
Greek cup, 6th century BC

The First Gods

The first gods were the children of the Titans. There were three brothers: Zeus, Poseidon and Hades, and three sisters: Hera, Hestia and Demeter. These six were soon joined by more.



Zeus and the Eagle
Greek cup, 6th century BC

Zeus

Mighty Zeus was the King of the Gods. He was the god of the sky and hurled magical thunderbolts when angry. He was often pictured with certain symbols: thunderbolts, an eagle and an oak tree, to help people to recognize him.



Zeus could change shape and become anything from a bedraggled cuckoo to a powerful swan – especially if it helped to impress a woman (he was always falling in love).

Poseidon could use his trident to stir up storms.

Hades

Hades was the god of the Underworld, the kingdom of the dead. His symbols were a helmet that made the wearer invisible, and his three-headed dog, Cerberus.



Hades
Detail from 16th-century Flemish painting by Peter Paul Rubens



Poseidon

Poseidon was the god of the sea and lived in a palace below the waves. He carried a three-pronged trident that was one of his symbols. He was often shown with dolphins and horses, and created the first horse as a gift to the Greeks.

Poseidon Calming the Waves
18th-century French statue by Lambert-Sigisbert Adam

Hestia

Kind and peace-loving, Hestia was goddess of home and hearth. She had few adventures, and was usually shown wrapped in a veil.





Hera with a peacock
Detail from 16th-century Italian fresco by Baldassarre Peruzzi

Hera

Hera was the wife of Zeus, and the goddess of women and marriage. Her symbols were a sceptre (a staff representing power) and peacocks. She was said to have put the eyes in the peacock's tail.

Aphrodite

Beautiful Aphrodite was born out of the sea, like a pearl, and became the goddess of love. Her symbols included roses and doves. Flowers sprang up where she walked.



This statue once had arms, and was painted and decked in jewels.

Aphrodite
Greek marble statue, 2nd century BC

Aphrodite's son, Eros, shot magic arrows that made people fall in love.



Demeter

Demeter was the goddess of nature and harvests, and was said to have taught people how to grow crops. Her symbol was a wheatsheaf.



Demeter with Triptolemus
Detail from Greek vase, 5th century BC

Demeter gives a young prince seeds and a winged chariot.

The gods often argued. In one dispute, Hera, Aphrodite and Zeus' daughter, Athena, all claimed to be the best-looking. They asked a prince named Paris to decide – and offered him bribes to win.

Paris awarded a golden apple to the fairest goddess.





The Judgement of Paris
15th-century Italian painting by an unknown artist



Paris chose Aphrodite, who had promised him the love of the world's most beautiful woman, Helen of Troy (see page 28).

Children of Zeus

Zeus had many children with many different mothers. All of his children had special powers and several became gods themselves.



Pallas Athena
19th-century Austrian painting by Gustav Klimt
(Athena was sometimes given the extra name Pallas.)

Athena

Athena sprang fully-grown from Zeus's head. Powerful and wise, she became the goddess of wisdom, war and weaving. She was rarely seen without her helmet, and her symbols were an owl and an olive tree.



Athena
Greek coin,
5th century BC

Athena was patron of the city of Athens, and her picture appeared on the city's coins.



Apollo's golden good looks were supposed to represent perfect beauty.

Apollo
15th-century Italian ceiling painting
by Pietro Perugino

Apollo

Golden-haired Apollo was a brilliant musician, the god of the Sun, light and truth. His symbol was a laurel tree.



Artemis the Huntress
Roman wall painting,
1st century BC

Artemis

Dark-haired Artemis was the goddess of hunting and the Moon, and she also protected young girls. She is often shown carrying a bow and arrows, and accompanied by a deer.

Apollo and Artemis were twins and are often pictured together.



Apollo and Artemis with a Deer
Greek vase, 5th century BC

Hephaestus

Hard-working Hephaestus was the gods' blacksmith. A powerful man who walked with a limp, he could make amazing weapons and other magical objects.

Some said Hephaestus worked at the heart of a volcano.

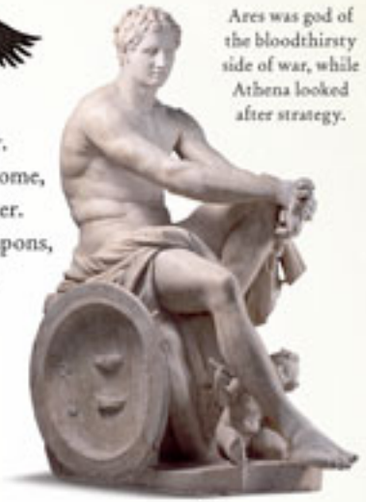




Ares

Ares was a god of war. He was strong and handsome, but had a terrible temper. His symbols included weapons, dogs and vultures.

Ares was god of the bloodthirsty side of war, while Athena looked after strategy.



Ares
Roman copy of a Greek original,
4th century BC

Hermes

Quick and clever, Hermes grew up to become the gods' messenger. You can recognize him by his winged sandals.

The sandals – made by Hephaestus – allowed Hermes to fly through the air.



Hermes
Detail from Greek vase,
5th century BC

Hermes was a precocious baby. The day he was born, he stole a herd of sacred cattle and invented the lyre – a musical instrument a bit like a harp – which he then gave to Apollo.

Dionysus

Dionysus was born from Zeus's thigh, and became the god of wine and merry-making. He usually wore a crown of vine leaves.

After Dionysus discovered the secret of wine-making, he wandered the world, teaching it to people.

Dionysus was said to travel in a chariot pulled by wild beasts.

