

KRATER CREATIONS

WRITE YOUR OWN MYTH AND ILLUSTRATE IT ON A GREEK VESSEL

ART AND LANGUAGE ARTS

GRADES: K - 4

BASED ON



Greece (Attica), the Niobid Painter
Volute Krater: Battle Scene from the Trojan War, 460-450 B.C.
Earthenware decorated in the red-figure technique
John J. Emery Endowment, 1987.4

OBJECTIVES

- Students will participate in a discussion about Greek myths, and then learn about the Trojan War characters featured on the Art Museum's *Volute Krater*.
- Students will discover that a volute krater had a specific shape, function and finish and reflected ancient Greek life and beliefs.
- Students will write their own myth and then illustrate a portion of their story.
- Students will transfer their design to a symmetrical vase made of construction paper, scratch art or clay.

CONCEPT

In this lesson, students will learn about Greek myths and pottery by examining the Art Museum's *Volute Krater*. Students will learn that the story on this red-figured vase most likely features characters from the Trojan War- Athena, Achilles and Hector. Students will write their own original myth, and then illustrate their story with pencil and paper. They will transfer their design to a symmetrical vase made of construction paper, scratch art or clay.

MATERIALS

Image of the Art Museum's *Volute Krater*
 Internet Access
 Orange or Black Construction Paper
 Black marker
 Scissors
 Construction Paper Crayons

Acrylic paint
 Black/gold Scratch art
 Scratching tool
 Self-Drying red clay
 Basic clay tools
 Brushes

VOCABULARY

Myth
 Volute
 Krater
 Red-figured Pottery

Homer's Iliad
 Trojan War
 Brainstorm
 Symmetry

PROCEDURE

1. Show the students an image of the Art Museum's *Volute Krater* (available on the Cincinnati Art Museum's website). If you are using an interactive whiteboard, you or your students can trace the symmetrical shape, the volutes, the horizontal designs banding the vase and the three figures in the center.
2. Discuss the shape, function, and finish found on the Art Museum's *Volute Krater*. A krater was a large Greek vase used to mix water and wine, usually in the ratio of 1:3 (wine to water) or 1:2. In Homer's *Odyssey*, wine was drawn from a krater and then poured for guests from a smaller serving vessel, probably an oinochoe. The Art Museum's vessel is a volute krater, volute or scrolled handle originating from the ionic capital.¹ Most large clay pots were formed in sections on a wheel and then joined together. The images painted on Greek pottery often detailed scenes from everyday life or mythological stories. Red-figured vessels such as this volute krater allowed the red clay to show as figures and the rest of the pot was painting with slip, which turned black after firing in a kiln.
3. Tell students that the Art Museum's krater features three characters which are thought to be Hector (the Trojan warrior), Achilles (the Archaean or Greek warrior) and Athena (goddess of war and wisdom and daughter of Zeus) The battle between these two warriors occurred during the Trojan War, one of the most important events in Greek mythology and chronicled in literature such as Homer's *Iliad*. As in many Greek myths, the gods or goddesses helped the mortals. On this krater, Athena distracts Hector so Achilles can use his sword to end Hector's heroic life.
4. Explain to your students that a myth is a make believe story which attempts to explain a natural phenomenon, and often includes powerful gods and goddesses or super powers. Ask students to discuss their favorite myths.
5. Younger students can read more about myths in *Greeks Myths for Young Children*, which includes The Story of Arachne, Jason and the Golden Fleece, The Adventures of Odysseus or The Many Tales of Heracles. Intermediate students can read a child's version of Homer's *Iliad*, retold by Ian Strachans.

Older students can read an excerpt from Homer's *Iliad*- Book 22, which tells of Hector's approaching death at the hands of Achilles...

The gods are summoning me to my death.

¹ see illustration at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jonisk1.png>

I thought warrior Deiphobus was close by.
 But he's inside the walls, and Athena
 has deceived me. Now evil death is here,
 right beside me, not somewhere far away.
 There's no escape. For a long time now,
 this must have been what Zeus desired,
 and Zeus' son, the god who shoots from far,
 and all those who willingly gave me help
 in earlier days. So now I meet my fate.
 Even so, let me not die ingloriously
 without a fight, but in some great action
 which those men yet to come will hear about." (22.3730) [22.297]²

7. Now, students will write their own myths. The original myth will have two or more characters, a setting, and a plot and will explain a natural phenomenon. It will be a minimum of three paragraphs, containing correct punctuation and sentence structure.
8. For online help, students can go to the Scholastic site³ - *Writing with Writers*. Jane Yolen will walk your students through the brainstorming and writing process, including these essential steps:
 - Selecting a natural phenomenon to write about
 - Observing nature (and researching the event at the library)
 - Writing down the phenomenon
 - Writing down the words from your research (and then find them in a dictionary or thesarus) and finally
 - Asking "what if?" Using your imagination to brainstorm ideas to create a story that explains the phenomenon.
8. After the myth has been edited and proofed, students will illustrate a portion of the story on a volute krater or other Greek vessel. Students will first draw a pencil sketch and then transfer their idea to a symmetrical vessel, either made of orange or black construction paper, scratch art or self-drying clay. A decorative pattern above and below the illustrated myth can be Greek inspired, or relate more directly to the story. For example, a story about the origin of the planets could illustrate a god or goddess in the center of the vessel, and repeating planets or stars in rows as a border.
9. Drawings on cut-out orange or black construction paper can be emphasized with marker or construction crayons. Vessels can be mounted on 1/4 inch black foam core to make them dimensional.
10. Sketches can be made with pencil on black scratch art and then scratched with a sharp tool to reveal gold or silver below. The shape of the vessel can be cut and mounted on another background.
11. Finally, self-drying clay can be used to make 2-D or 3-D vases. After the clay has dried (per box directions) the vase can be painted with acrylic paint and sprayed with a gloss finish to mimic a black or re-figured vase.

ASSESSMENT

Students will participate in a discussion about the shape, function and finish of the Art Museum's *Volute Krater*. After learning about the Trojan War and central characters depicted on the krater, students will write their own myth. They will begin with brainstorming ideas, then list natural phenomenon, characters, setting and plot. Students will write a minimum of three complete paragraphs, with proper punctuation and sentence structure.

² from <http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/homer/iliadessay6.htm>

³ www.scholastic.com

Finally, they will illustrate a portion of their story onto a symmetrical Greek vase made of construction paper, scratch art or clay.

NATIONAL STANDARDS—VISUAL ART

Standard 1 Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes related to the visual arts.

Level II (Grade K-4)

Benchmark 1 Understands what makes different art media, techniques and processes effective (or ineffective) in communicating various ideas

Standard 3 Knows a range of subject matter, symbols and potential ideas in the visual arts.

Level II (Grade K-4)

Benchmark 2 Knows different subjects, themes, and symbols (through context, value, and aesthetics) which convey intended meaning in artworks.

NATIONAL STANDARDS—LANGUAGE ARTS

Standard 1 Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Level I [Grade K-2]

Benchmark 7. Writes in a variety of forms or genres (e.g., picture books, friendly letters, stories, poems, information pieces, invitations, personal experience narratives, messages, responses to literature, opinion pieces)

Level II [Grade 3-5]

Writes narrative accounts, such as poems and stories (e.g., establishes a context that enables the reader to imagine the event or experience; develops characters, setting, and plot; creates an organizing structure; uses transitions to sequence events; uses concrete sensory details; uses strategies such as dialogue, tension, and suspense; uses an identifiable voice)

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

TECHNOLOGY

Students can visit Birmingham Museum's interactive site where they can design their own on-line volute krater-go to <http://www.schoolsliaison.org.uk/kids/greecepot.htm>

Achilles was the son of Thetis, a sea nymph and a mortal, Peleus, a Greek king. Have students use the Internet to research the term "Achilles heel" as it relates to the Trojan War.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Ask students to compare and contrast the Cincinnati Art Museum's *Volute Krater* to the British Museum's krater about the same mythological battle.⁴

MATHEMATICS

Draw a mathematical timeline which explains how to figure the age of the Museum's volute krater.

RESOURCES

Online

Athenian Black and Red-Figured Pottery

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/vase/hd_vase.htm

⁴http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/online_tours/greece/the_myth_of_the_trojan_war/achilles_fights_hector.aspx

British Museum: Achilles Fights Hector

http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/online_tours/greece/the_myth_of_the_trojan_war/achilles_fights_hector.aspx

Cincinnati Art Museum

<http://www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org/explore/collection/collections/?c=6040367>

Design a Greek Vase- Interactive Site

<http://www.schoolsliaison.org.uk/kids/greecepot.htm>

Greek Myths for Kids

<http://greece.mrdonn.org/myths.html>

Gods and Goddesses

http://www.ancientgreece.co.uk/gods/explore/exp_set.html

Homer's Iliad- Essay Six

<http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/homer/iliadessay6.htm>

Homer's Iliad for Kids

<http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/literature/iliad.htm>

Iliad Characters

<http://ancienthistory.about.com/od/troyilium/a/021711-Iliad-Characters.htm>

Image of an ionic capital (volute)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ionic_order

Kidipede- Greek Myths

<http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks/religion/greekrelig.htm>

Krater

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krater>

Trojan War

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trojan_War

Trojan War Resources

<http://www.historyguide.org/ancient/troy.html>

Write a Myth

http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/mythswshop_index.htm

Books

D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths. Ingri d' Aulaire, New York: Random House Children's Books, 1992.

Greek Myths for Young Children, Retold by Heather Amery, New York: Scholastic Inc., 1999.

The Iliad. Homer, Re-told by Ian Strachans, London: Kingfisher Books; 1st edition, 1997.

Spend the Day in Ancient Greece. Linda Honon, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998.



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