

## Assignments 12-13 reading selection

### First Generation of the Deities

<u>Greek Name</u>	<u>Roman Name</u>	<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Area of Control</u>	<u>Information</u>
Zeus	Jupiter	Lightning bolt	King	According to the Greek creation myth, Cronos ate each of his children as they were born, because he'd received a prophecy that one of them would kill him. Rhea, his wife, hid his son Zeus from him, and Zeus was able to grow up, come back, and fulfill the prophecy. After killing his father, he released his siblings and they waged and won a war, becoming the new gods. Zeus became their king. Zeus (known to the Romans as Jupiter), ruled from Mt. Olympus with his wife, Hera. He was the most powerful of all the deities. Ruler of Olympus and the Earth, he controlled the movements of the sun and moon, and caused the seasons to change. He was considered to be the wisest and fairest of all the immortals. However, he did have some faults. He was notorious for chasing after women, whether they be goddess or mortal. He also had a terrible temper. When he was angry, he threw thunderbolts, and these are his symbol. His special messenger was the eagle. When science had evolved to the point where planets other than our own were found to exist, scientists named the largest one, Jupiter, after this deity.
Poseidon	Neptune	Trident (3-pronged spear)	Sea	Poseidon (known to the Romans as Neptune) was Zeus's brother, and one of the three most powerful deities. Like his siblings, he was rescued from Cronos's stomach by Zeus. He is one of the few deities who didn't live on Mt. Olympus, preferring instead his castle under the sea, where he ruled. He was married to Amphitrite, but like his brother he fell in love with lots of other women. Poseidon is given credit for creating many of the odder animals of the sea and sea monsters, as well as horses. His symbol was the trident, a three-pronged spear, and with it he could cause terrible storms when he was angry. When scientists discovered the planet Neptune, they named it after his Roman identity because of its blue-green color, just like the sea.
Hades	Pluto	Cerberus (3-headed dog)	Underworld and wealth	The third most powerful deity was Hades (known to the Romans as Pluto). His brothers, Zeus and Poseidon, got control of the heavens, earth, and sea, and so Hades was left with the Underworld. This was fine with him, however. As ruler of the Underworld, it was his responsibility to make sure shades entered the appropriate part, and to determine the punishments of those entering Tartarus. He is often compared to the Christian devil, but Hades wasn't evil. Remember, just as he ruled Tartarus, the area of punishment for evil-doers, he also ruled the Elysian Fields, where heroic shades received their wonderful rewards for the lives they had lived. Recall that shades entering the Underworld had to pay Charon, the ferryman, in order to cross the River Styx, and that Cerberus, the three-headed dog, helped Charon guard the river banks. Cerberus was Hades's special pet, and became his symbol. In addition to being the ruler of the Underworld, Hades was also the god of wealth. This makes sense if we think of where we get precious metals and gems ... from the ground! Hades was not quite the womanizer that his brothers were; in fact, he fell madly in love with his own niece, Persephone, and kidnapped her to make her his queen. Like his brother Poseidon, Hades preferred to live in his palace in the Underworld rather than on Mt. Olympus. When he did come out of the Underworld, he rode in a black chariot pulled by six black horses. Scientists named the heavenly body Pluto after his Roman identity because it was so far away and dark, rather like they must have imagined the Underworld seemed to those who were still alive.
Hera	Juno	Peacock	Marriage	Zeus's wife was Hera (known to the Romans as Juno). She was also his sister, and married him after he rescued her from their father Cronos's stomach. Hera wore golden sandals, sat on a golden throne, and rode in a golden chariot. Her beloved pet was a peacock, and it became her symbol. Because of her husband's many affairs, Hera was often jealous and spent a lot of time pursuing and punishing the women Zeus courted, as well as any children they might have had. Despite her jealousy, though, Hera always conducted herself with dignity and great pride, and from her we get the phrase "proud as a peacock." Perhaps it is because Hera sometimes saw the women her husband pursued as his victims that she became a defender of womankind. As mythology evolved, Hera became the goddess most worshiped by women. She became the ruler of marriage and childbirth, and women everywhere prayed to her. Many weddings take place in the month of June, which was named after her Roman identity, Juno.
Demeter	Ceres	Wheat	Agriculture; plants	The final sibling in the first generation of deities is Demeter (known to the Romans as Ceres). She was the sister of the other four, and she was the goddess of agriculture. She made the plants grow, the flowers bloom, and the crops ripen. She was an extremely important deity to the ancient Greeks because without her there would have been no food. Her symbol is a sheaf of wheat. Although mythology doesn't list a husband for her, she did have a very famous daughter, Persephone, who was kidnapped by Hades to be his queen. It is because of this event that we have seasons. We get our modern word "cereal" from this deity's Roman identity, because cereal is most often made from wheat, and that is her special symbol.

## Second Generation of the Deities

Athena	Minerva	Owl	Wisdom	Athena (known to the Romans as Minerva) was Zeus's favorite daughter. He sometimes let her control the lightning and storms. She sprang fully formed from her father's head, holding a spear and dressed in armor. Athena was warrior goddess, but she hated war. She would only fight to defend the forces of good. She created the olive tree, which is today a symbol of peace. Perhaps because she came from her father's head, Athena is best known for intellectual and mental abilities. She invented math, inspired inventors, and was the goddess of wisdom. Her special animal companion was the owl, which became her symbol. It is from her that we get the phrase "wise as an owl." Athena was an important goddess to the ancient Greeks, and they named their capital city, Athens, after her.
Apollo	Apollo	Lyre (small hand held harp)	Music and Light	Apollo is one of the rare deities whose name is the same for both Greeks and Romans. He was Zeus's son, but not Hera's, born of an affair Zeus had with Leto. Like his sister Athena, Apollo was a warrior god who fought only when necessary and on the side of good. Apollo was the god of light and music, and was the deity all the Greek women were in love with. He was the Greek ideal of a good-hearted handsome young man. It was said that he would drive his golden chariot across the sky, but mortals could only see one huge golden wheel. He spread happiness with poetry and music, and was an expert at playing the lyre, which was his symbol. He is associated with the skies because of his affinity with the sun and light, and because of that, many space travel vehicles have been named after him.
Ares	Mars	Blood	War and cruelty	Ares (known to the Romans as Mars) was one of Zeus's few children with his wife Hera. Like his brother Apollo and his sister Athena, Ares was a warrior god. However, that was as far as the similarities went. If any of the Greek gods could have been considered to be evil, it was Ares. He was the ruler of war and cruelty, and not only joined in wars whenever he could, he would actually start them just so that he could delight in the effects. The other deities hated his violence, and some sources say that only Hades, Aphrodite, and Eros would even so much as speak to him. His sons were named Terror, Dread, Panic, and Fear. His symbol was blood, and scientists named the red planet in our solar system after his Roman identity.
Dionysus	Bacchus	Grapes	Revelry	Dionysus (known to the Romans as Bacchus) was another of Zeus's illegitimate sons. He was the god of wine and revelry (partying). He was a very popular deity to the Greeks, and featured importantly in all of their celebrations. Because wine is made from grapes, his symbol is a bunch of grapes. We get the word "debauchery" from his Roman identity. Debauchery is the excessive pursuit of things that seem fun but can get out of hand (drinking too much alcohol, for example). Interestingly, Dionysus also ruled over the law, civilization, and peace. Perhaps the ancient Greeks felt that their party god needed to be balanced by attention to the law. Dionysus is often pictured wearing grape leaves and riding a tiger. He was usually considered to be a chubby, cheerful, friendly deity.
Hermes	Mercury	Caduceus (staff with snakes)	Messenger	Hermes (known to the Romans as Mercury) was also an illegitimate son of Zeus. Although he was considered to be a lesser god, he was extremely important. His main area of control was that he was the messenger of the deities, able to fly swiftly due to the winged helmet and sandals he wore. People about to set out on a trip prayed to him to keep them safe, as he was the patron of travelers. It was also his responsibility to escort the dead to the Underworld. He had a sweet strong voice, and it was he who invented the lyre for his brother Apollo. His symbol, the caduceus (a wand decorated with two intertwined snakes) he carried, has become adopted by the medical profession as their symbol. Scientists named the planet closest to the sun with the quickest orbit after his Roman identity. They also named the element quicksilver (scientifically known as Mercury) after him because of its unique properties when in liquid form.

## Deities not connected to the Family Tree

Aphrodite	Venus	Dove	Love and beauty	Aphrodite (known to the Romans as Venus) was a unique deity because she had no parents. According to myth, when Zeus fought his father Cronos and mortally wounded him, three drops of Cronos's blood fell into the sea. The sea began to boil and foam, and from that foam arose Aphrodite. She is often pictured standing on a giant seashell. She was the goddess of love and beauty, and was said to wear a magic belt that made men fall in love with her. She loved spending time in gardens, surrounded by flowers and birds. Her special symbol was the dove. Myths argue about who her husband was; some say she married Hermes, while most report her to have married Hephaestus, the ugly little god of the forge. All accounts agree, however, that her son was Eros. When scientists discovered the planet Venus, it was so beautiful that they named it after Aphrodite's Roman identity. We also get the word "aphrodisiac" from her, which is a food or drink that supposedly makes one more likely to fall in love.
Eros	Cupid	Bow and arrows	Love	Eros (known to the Romans as Cupid) was Aphrodite's son. Many myths suggest that Hermes was his father. Just as his mother was the goddess of love, so was he the god of love. He is usually pictured as a fat little baby with wings holding his symbol, the bow and arrows. Sometimes he is shown with his eyes closed or blindfolded, and from that image we get the saying "Love is blind." Eros shot love arrows at others, causing them to fall in love with the next being they saw. We get our whole concept of Valentine's Day and Cupid from this deity. However, what many do not realize is that Eros was a huge prankster. Another little-known fact is that as many love arrows as he shot, he also shot that many hate arrows. One of his favorite practical jokes was to spot two people, shoot one with a love arrow, and the other with a hate arrow, and then watch the chaos that resulted.