***Introduction***

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Long, long ago the Greeks, an ancient people of great imagination and cleverness, invented wonderful stories about gods and goddesses, monsters and heroes, and their exciting adventures. These myths so delighted the Romans, another ancient people, that they adopted the stories as their own. By changing some of the Greek names to Roman ones and by linking the Greek deities with their native gods, the Romans also left their mark on these timeless tales.

Today, in our own computer age, we still read and enjoy the Greco-Roman myths. And what's more, we have inherited intriguing vocabulary words in our own language from classical mythology.

Now read along with Orpheus *(*ôr fē as), the enchanting narrator of mini-myths. After he relates a short myth, he will teach you some myth-related vocabulary words and even give you some activities to do. Have fun!

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Orpheus — G*reek vase painting*

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***Les*s*on 1 -Beginnings***

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Hi! I'm Orpheus, your mini-myth guide. Join me as I tell you some myths and teach you vocabulary words connected to them. Let me see, I think I'd better begin with the story about the beginning of the universe. Here we go.

Once upon a time, uncounted ages ago, there was nothing in the universe but raw materials all mixed up and confused. They had no shape, no form, and no order. CHAOS (kā äs), whose black silence spread everywhere, ruled over this vast endlessness.

One day, nobody knows how, out of this dark emptiness GAEA (jēa), the earth, and URANUS (yoor'a nas), the sky, were created. GAEA and URANUS gazed upon each other with affection and from their union all living things were born,

Now let me stop here for a moment to show you how many wonderful words have also been born in English from this

story of beginning.

As we start our experience together, please note that sometimes I use Greek names and other times Roman ones. If you are interested in comparing them, please turn to the chart of Greek and Roman gods on page 126.

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**MYTH WORD**

**ENGLISH WORD** CHAOS-ruler of emptiness, CHAOS--hopeless confusion: disorder, and confusion.

CHASM-a huge, open gulf or crack in the earth's surface. CHAOTIC-completely con

fused and mixed up. GAEA-mother earth. Her GEOLOGY-study of the name comes from the Greek formation of the earth's root geo- meaning "earth." layers.

GEOGRAPHY-science of the earth's surface, its continents, climates, and natural resources.

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GEOMETRY-branch of math measuring points, lines,

planets, and solids of the earth. GEOPHYSICS-science that deals with weather, winds, tides, and their effect on the earth. GEOCENTRIC-describing the earth as the center of the universe with the sun, moon, and planets revolving around it. URANUS-planet in our solar system; 7th in distance from the sun. URANIUM-metal named after the planet URANUS; important element in the production of atomic energy, URANOLOGY-study of the sky; also known as astronomy.

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URANUS-father sky.

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Now study all this information about beginnings. When you've finished, I'll give you some brain teasers,

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*Les*so*n 2–****The Children of Gaea and Uranus.***

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Hello again! Let's return to our myth. GAEA and URA NUS had many children. Some were glorious to behold, with beautiful bodies taller than mountains and strength to match. These 12 children were called the TITANS (tit 'nz). The others, known as the GIANTS, were extremely ugly and possessed monstrous powers of destruction. One group of GIANTS had 50 heads and 100 arms, while another, called the CYCLOPES (si klo pēz), had one huge eye in the middle of their forehead. These CYCLOPES were blacksmiths who hammered away in their workshops that sparked with lightning and rumbled with thunder.

URANUS was most pleased with the TITANS and took great pride in gazing upon their beauty, but he hated the GIANTS. He was so revolted by their horrible appearance that he flung them headlong into TARTARUS (tär tər əs), the dark bowels of the earth. By trapping them in that ghastly place, he would never have to look upon their ugliness.

You can imagine how upset GAEA was to lose her chil dren for she loved them even though they were so unsightly. She mourned their loss and in revenge devised a terrible plan to punish her husband URANUS for his wicked behavior.

This is getting exciting. I wonder what GAE*A* has in mind. Before we find out, let's discover some "mighty' vocabulary words related to this myth.

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***M*YTH WORD**

TITANS--the beautiful children of GAEA and URANUS.

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**ENGLISH WORD** TITANIC--describing anything very, very big. THE TITANIC-built in 1911. A huge luxury ship, thought to be unsinkable. On its first voyage, it hit an iceberg and sank, resulting in disastrous loss of life. TITANOSAURUS prehistoric animal living in the dinosaur age; a monstrous lizard..

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TITAN MISSILE-huge missile developed by N*A*SA for the space program of the 1970s. TITANIUM-a lustrous, metallic chemical found in certain minerals. It is a powerful cleaning agent used in the process of making

steel. GIANTS—the ugly, ferocious GIGANTIC-describing children of GAE*A* and

anything extremely large. URANUS.

GIGANTISM-a disease in which a person grows to unusual size due to an excess of certain growth hormones. Circus giants are usually victims of this

medical problem. CYCLOPES-One-eyed CYCLOPEAN-describing GIANTS.

anything massive; huge.

TARTARUS—the deepest level of the underworld, a horrible place of punishment.

TARTARS--Mongolian tribes under Genghis Khan. They conquered central Asia in the 1200s in a bloody and violent invasion. Their behavior was so horrible that the earth seemed like a place of punishment.