

MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES

Activity Pack: General Tour



WORKSHEETS

The following pages are worksheets to print off before beginning the module. These are to be passed out to students, and include questions and activities to help facilitate their learning of the content covered within this module and the tour. There are specific questions and activities to do before, during, and after your tour at the Museum of Antiquities.

You can use these worksheets as-is, or else develop your own questions to better fit your classroom activities. The questions could also be used to guide discussion as a class or in small groups rather than individually.

Please note that this packet and the worksheets within it can be used in all educational modules and tours.

MYTHOLOGY

Mythology is a great way to learn about and connect with ancient cultures. We can find information about social values and ancient cultures' understanding of the world that they were living in. Myth, at its core, generally presents stories about deities and other supernatural phenomena in order to explain the unexplainable, such as the creation of the world, the cycle of the seasons, and birth and death. However, in looking at a myth beyond face value we can interpret sociocultural beliefs relating to gender, class hierarchy, and religion as they existed in the ancient past. Many of the artefacts in the Museum of Antiquities can be examined or interpreted through myth.

Greek mythology is likely what students are the most familiar with it, as stories of Zeus, Hercules, Aphrodite, and other characters from the Greek canon can be found in a variety of popular media today. In this section of worksheets you will find an adapted version of the myth of Apollo and Python with some accompanying response questions. This myth was originally written by Homer, one of the most important sources that we have for Ancient Greek Mythology. Other myths that are relevant to the Museum's collection are the Trojan War, Persephone's journey to the Underworld, and the story of Hermes stealing Apollo's divine cattle.

Mythology of the Ancient Near East and Egypt is perhaps less well-known in popular culture than that of the Greco-Roman world, but no less rich and informative. The origin of the Egyptian practice of mummification can be found in the myth of Osiris, the Egyptian god of the dead. The Near Eastern demon Pazuzu is the primary antagonist in the 1973 film *The Exorcist*, which unfortunately is not an accurate portrayal of Pazuzu's role as the king of the demons of the winds in several Ancient Near Eastern cultures. Although technically fictional narratives, myths such as these can tell modern historians much about ancient perceptions of topics such as illness, death, and the afterlife.

HOMER'S HYMN TO APOLLO

In ancient times, when the world was new, Mother Gaia lived in Delphi. Delphi was the centre of the earth—the perfect place for Gaia to work magic. There, she took some mud and created Python, a fearsome snake to protect her as she lay in the sacred caves, divining the future. Even when Gaia left Delphi, Python stayed where he was, guarding the holy site.

That is, until one day when Hera came to visit Python. He awoke from his deep slumber, opened his eyes and looked at the goddess before him. She had been crying because her eyes were red, but all other traces of sorrow were now gone. Every line of her body was tense and the air around her seemed to grow dark and heavy. Hera was furious.

“What troubles you, O queen of the heavens?” Python asked.

And so Hera told him of her husband, Zeus, and his wandering eye. Even though Hera was his queen and wife, Zeus often cheated on her with other women. A few days ago, she had learned that Zeus cheated on her with shy Leto, the daughter of the titans Coeus and Phoebe. Leto was carrying Zeus’ twins: Apollo and Artemis.

Hera’s despair and anger moved Python, so he agreed to take part in her vengeance.

For the first time since Gaia created him, Python left the sacred site of Delphi to hunt down Leto. The goddess was elusive but Python was able to track her by her scent. He chased her all over the earth, through mountains and oceans, forests and fields. Leto was exhausted but did not dare to stop running from the mighty serpent.

Without a place to settle, Leto could not give birth to her twins. She searched, desperately, for a safe haven until some other goddesses took pity on her plight and led her to the island of Ortygia. Safe from Python, Leto gave birth to Artemis quickly and without difficulty. But after Artemis’ birth, Python caught up to Leto and she had to flee with Apollo still in her womb.

Leto ran until she came to Delos, a barren, rocky island. She hid in a cave and laboured for nine days and nights until, with her daughter Artemis’ help, Apollo came into the world. It was then that Python caught up to Leto and attacked her. Apollo, newly born, fought off the great serpent, causing Python to flee back to Delphi.

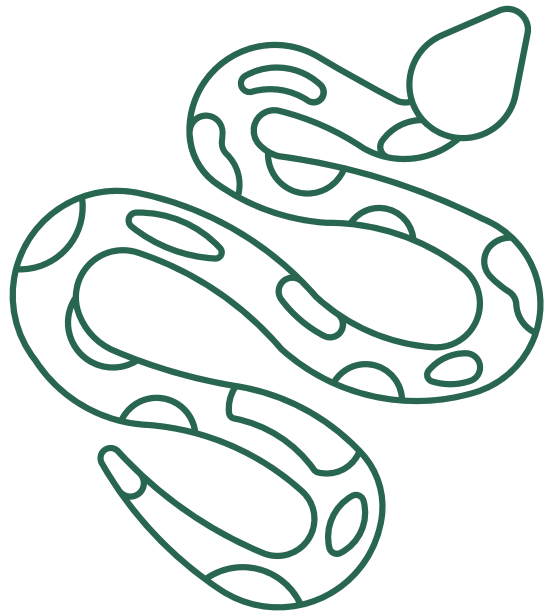
With Python gone, Leto could finally focus on raising her children and teaching them skills they would need for life. But ever-inquisitive Apollo, curious about the world outside Delos, would sneak away to the forge of Hephaestus to watch the god create weapons and armour for the other gods. Hephaestus became fond of Apollo and after a few days he forged the young god a golden bow and silver arrows. Apollo immediately took to the bow and became an excellent archer and hunter. Artemis too, learned archery and the art of the hunt and the two would often hunt together.

One day, after Apollo and Artemis returned from the hunt they asked Leto about their birth. Leto told them of Python's pursuit of her and how she had to flee across the world to escape him. Outraged by this mistreatment of his mother, Apollo vowed to find Python and make him pay for hurting Leto. No matter how much Leto begged him to stay, Apollo would not change his mind.

He left with nothing but his bow and arrows. Since he was a skilled tracker, he followed Python's trail until he reached the sanctuary of Delphi. Python was waiting inside the sacred caves. He knew it was Apollo who approached because he recognized the scent, but he was biding his time, waiting for the right moment to strike. He began to slowly slither out of the cave while Apollo's back was turned.

But Apollo was crafty. He knew Python would be waiting for him, so he pretended not to notice the serpent slithering silently toward him. As Python raised his head to strike, Apollo turned around and fired arrow after arrow into the great snake, faster than the eye could see. It was only after Apollo fired one hundred arrows that Python finally died.

Now the shrine of Delphi belonged to Apollo. But even though his cause was just and his victory was fair, Apollo had polluted the sacred site by killing Python. In order to cleanse himself, Apollo had to spend nine years in slavery to the King Admetus as a cowherder. After his penance, Apollo returned to Delphi and learned how to look into the future. Apollo also created the Pythian Games, held every four years at Delphi, to celebrate and commemorate his triumph over Python.



NAME:

DATE:

BEFORE

What role does art play in how we understand history? What could a piece of art showing an historical event tell us that would be different from a written account?

The Museum of Antiquities has artefacts representing the Ancient Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. What facts or mythology do you already know about these civilizations? Where did that information come from (i.e., TV, documentaries, books)?

What can we learn from mythology? How does learning about a culture's mythology help us understand their thoughts and beliefs in a way that other historical records can't? For example, Athena was the goddess of both war and strategy in Greek mythology. This tells us that the Greeks believed that it was important for heroes and soldiers to not only be strong, but also clever and thoughtful in their actions.

What types of artefacts do you expect to see in the Museum? Is there anything specific that you think you will learn or that you would like to learn about?

Apollo is the Greek god of music, poetry, and the sun. Do you know anything else about Apollo or his mythology?

Read *Homer's Hymn to Apollo*.

What is the 'point' of this myth? (i.e., 5 W's)

If you had no prior knowledge of Apollo before reading this myth and were told that he was one of the twelve Olympian gods in ancient Greece, what would you think his role or domain would have been?

Do you think that it's still reasonable to refer to Apollo as simply being the god of music, poetry, and the sun after reading this short story?

Did your interpretation of Apollo change after reading this myth? If so, how?

NAME:

DATE:

DURING

Do you recognize any of the objects at the Museum from media or art classes that you have taken previously?

What are some similarities and differences in the artistic styles of the various historical periods represented in the Museum?

What can the style of the objects tell us about the thoughts or values of the artists and cultures who made them?

What is your favourite piece in the Museum? Why?

Comment on the difference between visiting the Museum and learning about art and history in class. Do you think there is a benefit to being able to see artefacts in person?

NAME:

DATE:

AFTER

Were you surprised by anything that you saw or heard at the Museum?

Consider the fact that many of the objects in the Museum are replicas. Did this impact your thoughts on the object? Did you feel any differently towards the original objects vs. replicas? Why do you think this was the case?

Look at the locations of each of the civilizations represented by the Museum's collection on a map. Consider your response to the second question of the "during" worksheet, and how artistic development over time would have been influenced by their location.

Several of the statues in the gallery are identifiable by their attributes, or objects that relate to a specific person or deity. If someone were to make a statue of you, what defining attributes might be included that would help archaeologists in the future put a name to the statue?