

Ancient Romans

GODS & GODDESSES

INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTIONS

MATCH THE GOD

FACT FILE

QUESTIONS

MULTIPLE CHOICE

TRUE OR FALSE

CARD GAME



PRIMARY
TOPIC
SHOP

GODS & GODDESSES

Romans worshiped gods and goddesses as part of everyday life. The actions of gods explained things they didn't understand or couldn't control. If there was a lightning storm, it was because Jupiter was throwing lightning. If the army lost a battle, it was because they had lost favor with Mars, god of war.

SACRIFICES

Animal sacrifices were made to gain favor with the gods. Mars, god of war, decided who won in war, so Roman soldiers would pray to Mars before a battle and every so often, Roman commanders would sacrifice an animal to Mars.

TEMPLES

One of the ways Romans worshiped their gods was to build temples. Most temples were dedicated to just one god or goddess but some were built for many gods. This type of temple was called a pantheon. Romans believed the gods lived in their temples. Citizens would come to the temple to pray and make animal sacrifices.

FESTIVALS

Another way to pay tribute to the gods was by having a festival. They would have a party with games and a feast to honor a specific god or goddess.

SHRINES

Romans would make a shrine to a god in their home where they would pray or leave offerings.

GREEK INFLUENCE

Early Romans believed there were spirits in everything. Later, they adopted gods from different cultures and eventually worshiped thousands of gods and goddesses as part of their daily life. The Romans had a particular



The gilt bronze head of the goddess Sulis Minerva from the Roman Baths in Bath, England. Photo by Christa Galloway.

fondness for the Greek gods. Some Greek god names were kept the same, like Apollo, but more often they would slowly be merged with Roman gods and take on the Roman name. Roman gods even live on Mount Olympus, a mountain in Greece! Many Roman myths were similar to the Greek myths, only the gods had Roman names and there was more importance placed on Roman



JUPITER

greek name

Zeus

ROLE

King of the gods
God of sky & thunder
Patron god of Rome

symbol

Thunderbolt

special powers

Throwing lightning
Shapeshifting

Namesake

Planet Jupiter

FUN FACT

Rode a flying horse called Pegasus.

myth

The queen of a bee hive complained to Jupiter that humans were stealing her honey and asked him for a way to protect the honey. Jupiter granted her wish and gave all the bees a stinger but told the queen that if any bee used their stinger, the bee would die. To this day, many bees drop dead if they sting someone.



JUNO

greek name

Hera

ROLE

Queen of the gods
Protector of women
Goddess of marriage
Patron goddess of Rome

family

Wife (and sister) to Jupiter

sacred Animal

Peacock

Namesake

Month of June

FUN FACT

Juno was celebrated by the married women of Rome every March 1st.

myth

Unfortunately, Jupiter was not a very faithful husband, and this made Juno angry. She found out that Jupiter had a baby, named Hercules, with a mistress. In a fit of jealousy, she sent snakes to the baby's crib. Hercules was so strong, that even as a baby he strangled the snakes and survived Juno's wrath.



MERCURY

greek name

Hermes

ROLE

Messenger of the gods

family

Son of Jupiter

symbol

Winged helmet and winged sandals

special powers

Could fly fast

Namesake

Planet Mercury and the element mercury

myth

Mercury once stole a herd of cattle, but his deed was witnessed by a slave. He told the slave that if anyone asked, he was to say he saw nothing. Later, Mercury returned in disguise and asked the slave where the cattle were. The slave told him everything so Mercury went ahead and returned him to stone!



MINERVA
greek name

Athena

role

Goddess of wisdom
Patron of arts, trade and strategy

family

Daughter of Jupiter

sacred Animal

Owl

Fun Fact

Minerva was born from Jupiter's head.

myth

Minerva's dad, Jupiter, swallowed her mother, Metis, while she was pregnant. Metis went ahead and had her baby. One day Jupiter had a headache and Vulcan tried splitting his head open with an ax to relieve it. Out popped Minerva, fully grown.



NEPTUNE
greek name

Poseidon

role

God of sea and fresh water

family

Brother of Jupiter

symbol

Trident

namesake

Planet Neptune

Fun Fact

Neptune was moody and unpredictable, much like the sea.

myth

Neptune fancied a sea goddess named Salacia but she ran away and hid from him. Neptune was determined, so he asked the dolphin king to find her. It took a long time, but eventually the dolphin king found Salacia and persuaded her to marry Neptune. The sea god was so pleased, he made a constellation in the shape of the dolphin king.



VENUS
greek name

Aphrodite

role

Goddess of love
Patron of women

family

Wife of Vulcan

symbol

Roses, myrtle, pearls

namesake

Planet Venus

Fun Fact

Venus had a golden carriage pulled by doves. Also, she was born from sea foam.

myth

A shepherd named Paris was tasked with deciding which goddess would get a golden apple inscribed with the words 'For the Fairest.' Juno bribed him with wealth and power. Minerva bribed him with wisdom. Venus bribed him with marriage to the most beautiful woman, Helen. Paris chose to marry Helen, and took her to Troy where she became known as Helen of Troy.



MARS
greek name

Ares

role

God of war
Founder of Rome
Patron of soldiers

family

Son of Jupiter and Juno

symbol

The Ancile (a sacred shield)

namesake

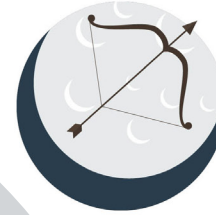
Planet Mars and month of March

Fun Fact

Mars was tall and handsome, but he was vain and the other gods didn't like him much.

myth

Mars had a crush on Minerva but she rejected him, so he asked Anna Perenna, an old goddess, to help him. Anna thought Mars was handsome. She agreed to help, but instead of getting Mars and Minerva together, she put on a veil and pretended to be Minerva. Mars was fooled and married Anna.



DIANA
greek name

Artemis

role

Goddess of the hunt

family

Jupiter's daughter and Apollo's twin

symbol

Bow and Arrow

Fun Fact

Diana brought out the moon each night.

myth

Diana loved the huntsman named Orion, but her twin brother, Apollo, did not approve. Apollo thought up a plan. He challenged his sister to an archery contest, to see who could hit a black dot floating in the water. Diana fired an arrow and to her glee she hit the target, but Apollo had tricked her. The black dot was Orion's head. Diana was crushed and asked Jupiter to put a constellation in the sky to honor Orion.



PLUTO
greek name

Hades

role

God of the underworld

family

Jupiter's brother

symbol

Helmet of invisibility

special Powers

Invisibility

namesake

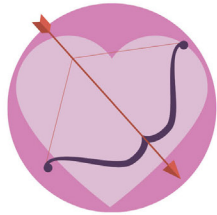
Planet Pluto

Fun Fact

Romans were afraid to say Pluto's name in case it attracted his attention.

myth

A soldier died and went to the underworld, but he missed his wife terribly. He went to Pluto and asked to be returned to the land of the living. Pluto denied his request but Pluto's wife Proserpina was moved by the soldier's story, so Pluto granted him one last day with his wife.



CUPID

greek name

Eros

role

God of love

family

Son of Venus and Mars

symbol

Bow and arrow, torch

special powers

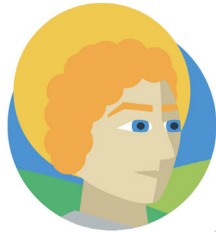
Making people fall in love by shooting them with his bow and arrow, has wings and can fly

fun fact

Cupid could give love to others, but not himself.

myth

Cupid once complained to his mother of a bee sting, but Venus was unsympathetic, telling him he was also small, but delivered the sting of love.



APOLLO

greek name

Apollo

role

God of music and medicine

family

Son of Jupiter

symbol

Bow and Arrow

special powers

Could cure disease and see the future

fun fact

Apollo brought up the sun and chased it across the sky.

myth

Apollo's father was Jupiter but he had a mortal mother. Juno was jealous of his mother so she sent a snake, Python, to kill her. When Apollo was just four days old (but fully grown - gods grow up so fast!) he shot Python with a bow and arrow and killed it.



CERES

greek name

Demeter

role

Goddess of agriculture

family

Sister of Jupiter

symbol

Sheath of grain

special powers

Controls fertility

fun fact

Cereal is named after Ceres.

myth

Demeter's daughter Proserpina spent six months a year with her mother and six months in the underworld with Hades. Ancient Greeks believed that while Proserpina was with her mother, Demeter was happy, and crops thrived. But when her daughter was away, Demeter was unhappy, and that is why the crops wilt for half the year.



VULCAN

greek name

Hephaestus

role

God of fire
Blacksmith of the gods

family

Son of Juno
Husband of Venus

symbol

Blacksmith's hammer

fun fact

Created Pandora, the first mortal woman from clay.
Volcanoes would erupt when he was angry.

myth

Vulcan was such an ugly baby that his mother, Juno, threw him off Mount Olympus. Vulcan broke his legs but sea nymphs rescued him and raised him.



SATURN

greek name

Chronos

role

God of time, agriculture, wealth and war.

family

Father of Jupiter

symbol

Scythe

namesake

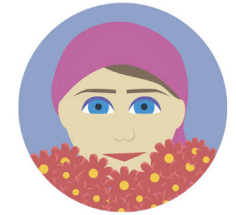
Planet Saturn and Saturday

fun fact

Saturn taught Romans agriculture

myth

Saturn fled his father and moved to Rome where he was welcomed by the Roman god Janus. They ruled together during a golden age. Saturn taught the Romans how to be civilized and grow crops.



VESTA

greek name

Hestia

role

Goddess of the hearth, the home, and domestic life

family

Brother of Jupiter

symbol

Eternal flame, kettle

sacred animal

Donkey

fun fact

Romans always kept a fire burning in Vesta's shrine in Rome.

myth

Vesta was beautiful and both Apollo and Neptune asked for her hand in marriage. However, she did not want to marry. Vesta asked her brother Jupiter if she could stay unmarried and he granted her request.

MATCH THE GOD

Match the Roman gods and goddesses to their Greek equivalent.



MARS



JUNO



MINERVA



JUPITER



VENUS



PLUTO

zeus

Ares

Hades

Aphrodite

Hera

Athena

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Name three ways the Romans worshiped their gods.
- 2 Which gods most influenced the Roman gods?
- 3 What did Romans think was the cause of lightning?
- 4 Which god would Roman soldiers pray to before battle?
- 5 Which goddess is cereal named after?
- 6 Which god is the Greek version of Mercury?
- 7 What is unusual about the birth of Minerva?
- 8 Name three roles of the goddess Juno.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- 1 How did the Romans worship their gods?

(A) Building temples	(B) Making sacrifices
(C) Festivals	(D) All of the above
- 2 Which gods most influenced the Roman gods?

(A) Hindu	(B) Egyptian
(C) Mayan	(D) Greek
- 3 What did Romans think was the cause of lightning?

(A) Electricity	(B) Jupiter throwing lightning bolts
(C) The anger of Hera	(D) Thor's hammer
- 4 Which god would Roman soldiers pray to before battle?

(A) Ares	(B) Vesta
(C) Anubis	(D) Mars
- 5 Which goddess is cereal named after?

(A) Diana	(B) Cheerio
(C) Cerberus	(D) Ceres
- 6 Which god is the Greek version of Mercury?

(A) Demeter	(B) Hermes
(C) Hephaestus	(D) Hades
- 7 Which god had the same name for both the Greeks and the Romans?

(A) Apollo	(B) Artemis
(C) Zeus	(D) Vulcan

TRUE OR FALSE

Circle T (True) or F (False) for each of the following statements.

- 1 Romans built shrines to worship their gods. T F
- 2 Egyptian gods most influenced the Roman gods. T F
- 3 Romans thought Thor's hammer caused lightning. T F
- 4 Soldiers prayed to Mars before battle. T F
- 5 Cereal is named after the goddess Diana. T F
- 6 The Greek version of Mercury is Hades. T F
- 7 Artemis had the same name for both the Greeks and the Romans. T F

MEMORY CARD GAME

This game works the same as the traditional memory game except you can match the god/goddess card with the description. Alternatively, you could print out two copies of each card and match either the description or the identical card.

These cards can also be combined with the cards in [Ancient Roman Mythical Beasts](#) lesson.

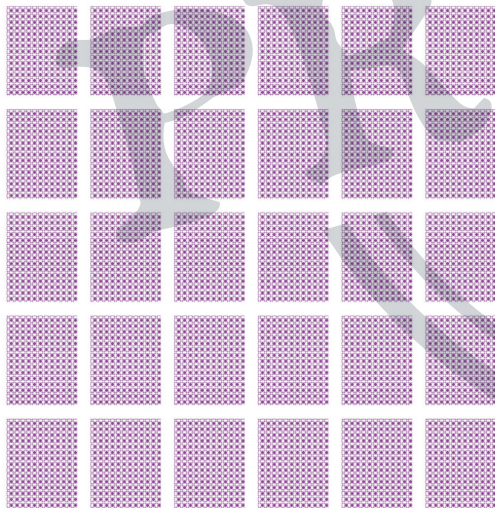
PRINTING

Card Paper: We recommend 220gsm card paper for ink-jet printers. Optionally you can use the pattern page provided to print on the back of the cards.

Plain Paper: You can print on plain paper as well. If so, the optional back pattern will show through to the front of the cards.

ARRANGEMENT

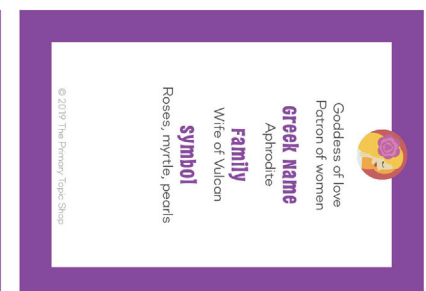
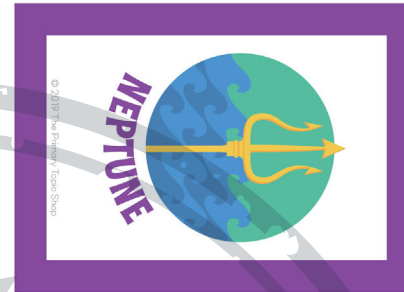
Using one copy of all 30 cards you can have six columns and five rows.



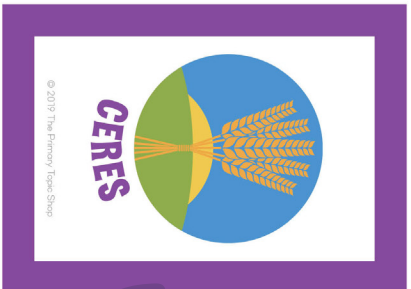
GAME PLAY

If a player does not make a match it is the next player's turn. If they do make a match they put the matched cards in their pile face-up and play again. Try getting the players to call out the name of the god or goddess on the card they flip. Make sure they let their opponents see the cards. Each player counts the number of cards in their pile at the end to determine the winner.

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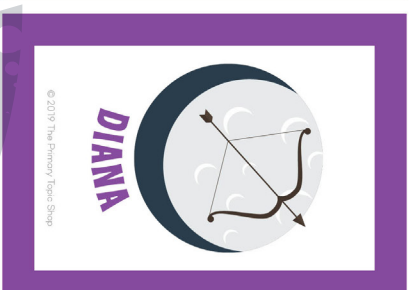


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CERES

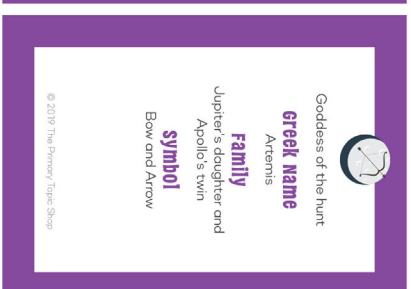


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DIANA



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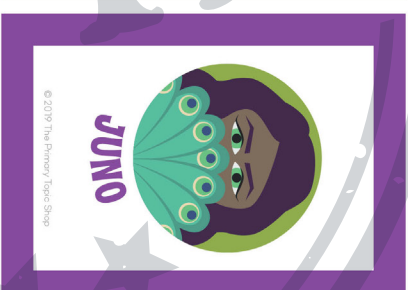


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MERCURY



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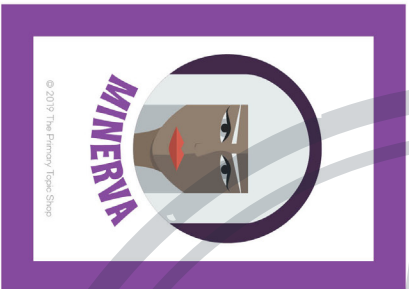


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JUNO



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MINERVA



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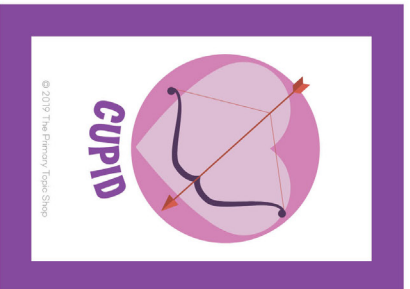


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APOLLO

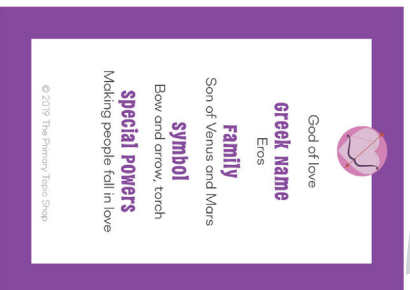


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CUPID

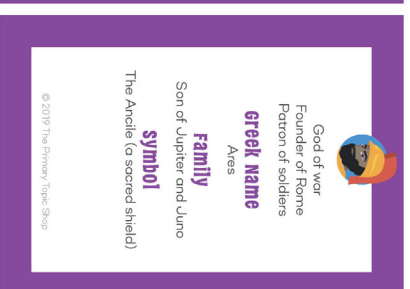


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MARS



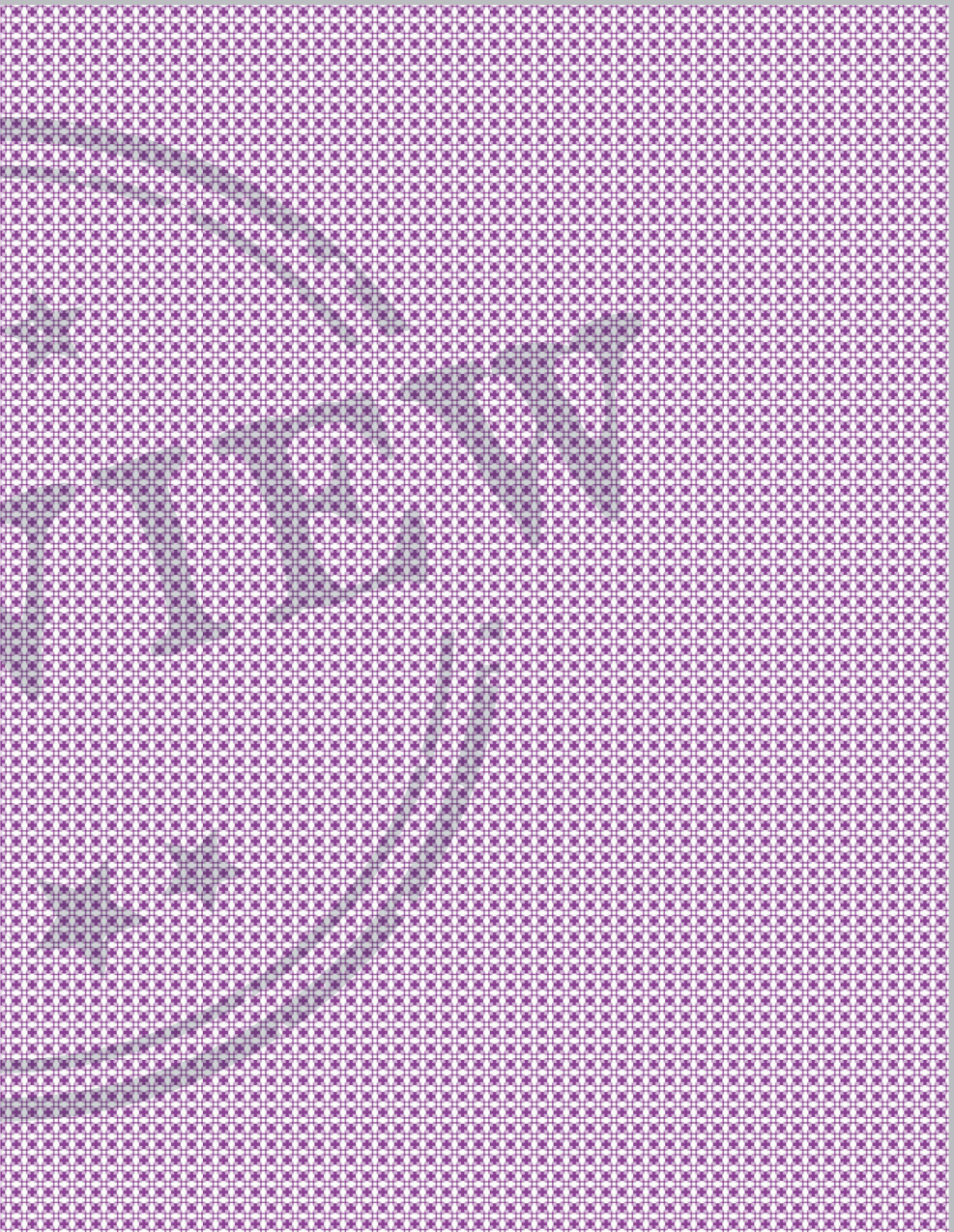
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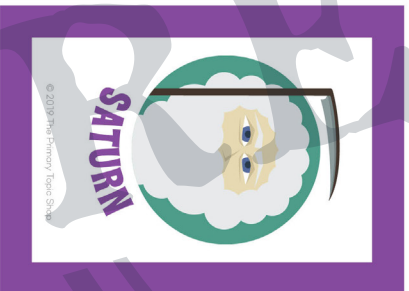


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God of the underworld
Greek Name
Hades
Family
Jupiter's brother
symbol
Helmets of invisibility
special powers
Invisibility



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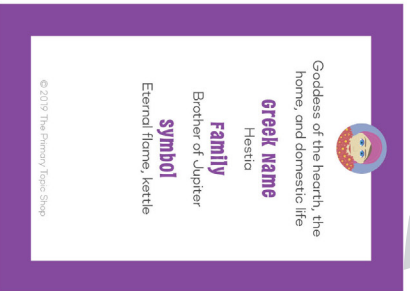


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God of time, agriculture,
wealth and war
Greek Name
Chronos
Family
Father of Jupiter
Son of Uranus and Terra
symbol
Scythe



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Goddess of the hearth, the
home, and domestic life
Greek Name
Hestia
Family
Brother of Jupiter
symbol
Eternal flame, kettle

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- How did the Romans worship their gods?
 - A Building temples
 - B Temples
 - C Festivals
- Which gods most influenced the Roman gods?
 - A Hindu
 - B Greek
 - C Mayan
- What did Romans think was the cause of lightning?
 - A Electricity
 - B Thunder
 - C The anger of Hera

4. The Roman word for 'marriage' is matrimonium.

- Which god is the Greek version of Mercury?
 - A Demeter
 - B Hermes
 - C Hephaestus
- Which god had the same name for both the Greeks and the Romans?
 - A Apollo
 - B Athena
 - C Zeus

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- Name three ways the Romans worshipped their gods.
Sacrifices, temples, shrines and festivals
- Which gods most influenced the Roman gods?
The Greek gods
- What did Romans think was the cause of lightning?
The anger of the gods

- Which god is the Greek version of Mercury?
Hermes
- What is unusual about the birth of Minerva?
She was born from Jupiter's head
- Name three roles of the goddess Juno.
Queen of the gods, Protector of women, Goddess of marriage

TRUE OR FALSE

Circle T (True) or F (False) for each of the following statements.

- Romans built shrines to worship their gods. T F
- Egyptian gods most influenced Roman gods. T F
- Cereal is made from wheat. T F
- The Greek version of Mercury is Hades. T F
- Artemis had the same name for both the Greeks and the Romans. T F

3 Answer sheets



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More Romans



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