**The Truth about Ancient Greek Myths**

From: http://greece.mrdonn.org/greekgods/truthaboutmyths.html

The ancient Greeks were great storytellers. They were also deeply religious. They believed their gods and goddesses and other magical beings really existed. They believed these magical beings could interfere in their lives, to help them or to hurt them.

The ancient Greeks built temples to honor their gods. Each temple honored only one god. So there were many, many temples in ancient Greece.

The ancient Greeks told stories about their gods. These stories are called myths (short for mythology, or stories about gods.) Some myths were so good that they have been told over and over, and are still told today. Some are new myths about the ancient Greek mystical world.

The thing about myths is that the gods' adventures might change, but the characters remained consistent. Zeus was always the king of all the gods. His wife, Hera, was always jealous. Poseidon, his brother, always ruled the sea. His other brother, Hades, always ruled the Underworld. His sisters ruled the harvest and the home. Their kids ran everything else.

All the gods had magical powers, although not all the gods had the same powers. Whatever powers they had were consistent from story to story. For example, Zeus and only Zeus could throw lightning bolts. But many gods had the ability to shape shift - to change their shape or the shape of others. Some gods could turn into animals, and when they did, you could not tell the difference between a real animal and a god who had shape-shifted.

This magical world was a real world, at least it was to the ancient Greek people, a world full of bickering and fights and wars and compromise and fear and fun and punishment and love. Many myths were based on the fact that gods, like mortal men, could be punished or rewarded for their actions