

# WORDS FROM CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY #1

## ATLAS

Atlas was a Titan, a deity of great strength and power. According to the stories, the Titans, led by Cronus, ruled the universe. The son of Cronus, Zeus, overthrew his father in a terrible battle and condemned all the Titans to bitter punishments. The punishment for Atlas was one of the worst. He had to hold the world on his shoulders. The earth was very heavy, and he had to carry the burden alone. Atlas only had one visitor: Hercules. Hercules had to find the Golden Apples of the Hesperides. Since Atlas was the father of the Hesperides, Hercules asked him for help. Atlas said he would get the apples if Hercules would hold the earth while he was gone. Hercules agreed. When Atlas returned with the apples, he said Hercules could just keep on holding the earth and that Atlas would deliver the apples. Hercules had to think fast, because he knew Atlas wasn't coming back. He asked Atlas to hold up the earth again for just a moment while Hercules put a pad on his shoulders. Atlas did, and Hercules took the apples and left. Today we call a collection of maps an atlas and remember the name of the character who held the earth.



1. How did Atlas try to trick Hercules? (Use your own words.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. Which of the following might cause you to use an atlas?

- A. buying apples
- B. weightlifting
- C. planning a vacation trip
- D. playing a practical joke



## CALYPSO

The great Greek hero Odysseus spent many years wandering the Mediterranean Sea after helping win the Trojan War. Eventually he lost all his ships and all his crew. He was trapped on an island with the nymph, Calypso, who loved him and wanted him to stay with her. She did everything she could to make his stay on her island a happy one. Odysseus, however, still wanted to return to his wife, Penelope; his son, Telemachus; and his kingdom, Ithaca. Finally Athena persuaded most of the Olympian gods that he should be allowed to return home. Zeus sent Hermes, his messenger, to tell Calypso that she had to let Odysseus leave her island. Calypso was angry and hurt. She had to obey, Zeus, though, and five days later Odysseus set sail on a strong raft. Today we call music from the Caribbean islands calypso music to remember the beautiful nymph and her island.

3. According to the ancient Greeks, where did Calypso live? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Modern Calypso music comes originally from where? (Be specific.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Flora was the Roman goddess of Spring and Spring flowers. During her festival, the Floralia, people brought offerings of honey, fruit and flowers to her temple. The festival lasted five days in late April and early May. The celebration of May Day (May 1) can be compared to the Floralia.

5. The Roman goddess Flora was in charge of what? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Why do you suppose the Floralia was held in the spring instead of in autumn?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## MENTOR



Mentor was the man the Greek hero Odysseus trusted more than anyone else in his kingdom of Ithaca. In *The Odyssey*, Athena disguises herself as Mentor and advises Telemachus, Odysseus' son, to try to find information about his father. Mentor guides the young man to the people who will help him. Today when we call someone a mentor, we remember a trustworthy, wise counselor who gave good advice and set a good example for someone younger.

**7. Which of the following phrases best describes the Greek character Mentor?**

- A. a good role model
- B. a sneaky spy
- C. a funny comedian
- D. a great warrior

**8. Author Stephen King says that he considers Edgar Allen Poe to be a kind of mentor. When Stephen King calls someone "a mentor," do you think he means he trusts the person or that he followed his example? Why do you think that?**

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## VULCAN



Vulcan was the Roman god of fire and the forge. As the Olympian blacksmith, he made furnishings, dwellings, and armor for the gods and goddesses. Some poets said Vulcan's forge was under volcanoes and caused smoke and fire to come from them during an eruption. Vulcan was liked and respected both by the gods and by people. He supported those who worked with their hands in trades and manufacturing.

**9. If people still believed in the Roman gods today, which of these workers would most likely worship Vulcan?**

- A. a lawyer
- B. a welder
- C. a truck driver
- D. a soccer coach

**10. What happens during a volcano's eruption that might remind people of Vulcan and his forge?** \_\_\_\_\_

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