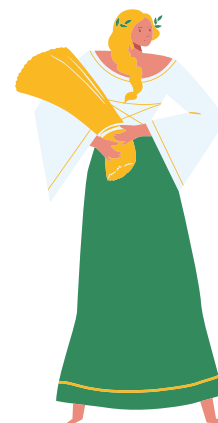


Comprehension: Demeter and Persephone

Demeter was the Goddess of the harvest, sacred law and the cycle of life and death. Demeter's daughter was called Persephone; Persephone's father was the great god Zeus. Persephone was very beautiful, and Demeter worked hard to keep all suitors away from her. The suitor who was most persistent above all the others was Hades, the god of the Underworld. One day, he asked Demeter if he could marry Persephone. Demeter rebuffed him, furious that he'd had the gall to request such a thing!



But Hades was not one to take no for an answer, and he was no less persistent now. One day, while Persephone was frolicking with her friends, picking flowers to thread through her hair, she caught sight of the most beautiful Narcissus to have ever graced the land. All was not as it seemed. Just as she bent to pick the flower, Hades summoned all of his power and opened up the earth beneath her feet. With a blood-curdling scream, Persephone tumbled down into the Underworld, where Hades planned to keep her forever. No mortal saw what happened to Persephone, but Zeus had eyes everywhere. He knew where Hades had taken her. Meanwhile, distraught Demeter was looking for her daughter high and low. Such was her fury that her precious daughter had been stolen from her, she decided to punish the entire world by taking leave of her duties as the goddess of harvest and fertility. The consequences were dire: the land dried up, the harvests failed, fruit rotted where it fell, animals began to die, and famine spread throughout the earth.

Zeus knew that he had to do something, so he came up with an idea. He promised Demeter that he would restore Persephone to her if it could be proven that the young girl was with Hades against her will. But Hades came up with a trick; anyone who ate the seeds of a pomegranate while in the underworld would grow to love that dire place, so he gave a few seeds to Persephone, who ate them unknowingly. Thus, when she was asked where she would like to stay, she gave the answer: the underworld. Demeter knew that her daughter had been tricked and was furious. She threatened to withhold her powers forever, allowing the Earth to grow utterly infertile and all who lived there to die.

To end the fight once and for all, Zeus made a final suggestion; Persephone would spend six months of the year with her husband in the Underworld, and the remaining six months of the year with Demeter on Earth. Both Demeter and Hades agreed, but for the six months that Persephone lived in the Underworld, Demeter refused to tend to the Earth. And so, for six months of each year, the weather became cold, and the crops dried up, only to return when Persephone came back up to meet her mother once more.

Comprehension Questions: What do the constellations mean?

1) According to the passage, who were Persephone's mother and father? What was special about them?

.....

.....

.....

2) What kinds of things does Demeter have power over?

.....

.....

.....

3) What is a Narcissus?

.....

4) How did Demeter feel once she realised her daughter had been taken?

.....

.....

.....

5) How do you imagine Hades might have felt, once he had Persephone with him in the Underworld?

.....

.....

6) What was the trick that Hades devised to keep Persephone with him?

.....

.....

.....

7) Sometimes, myths are used to explain certain parts life on earth. What do you think this myth could be used to explain? The clues are in the final paragraph.

.....

.....

Comic strip: Demeter and Persephone

1. Demeter was the goddess of harvest and crops. She had a daughter called Persephone who she loved very much.

2. One day, Persephone was kidnapped by Hades, the King of the Underworld. He wanted her or his wife, but he knew her mother would say no if he asked to marry her.

3. Persephone was kept in a nice room and was offered lots of food. She heard if she ate anything in the Underworld she would have to stay forever, so she refused to eat.

4. But soon enough, Persephone became so hungry that she ate six pomegranate seeds. She cried when she realised what she had done.

5. Demeter found out what had happened. She was both devastated and furious. She no longer cared about the earth and let the crops die.
Nothing grew.

6. Demeter spoke with Zeus, and he declared that Persephone would spend half of the year with her mother and half in the Underworld with Hades!

Fill in the blanks: Demeter Rap

Task: Using the words in the box below, fill in the gaps for this rap about Demeter! Use the fact sheet to help you!

I took an oath to do the most,
I put the seeds in the _____ for the growth,
Put every tree up in the forest count the rows ,
just call me top of the crops I feed the world.

I'm a goddess I'm a dea I'm Demeter,
I'm a goddess I'm a dea I'm _____,
I got a daughter I can't find her I can't see her,
just bring her back cos I ain't lyin I won't feed ya.

Her name's _____ - usually next to me,
but she's been taken by the King and it's stressing me,
His name is _____ so the underworld's her destiny,
but I ain't playin Ima get her back eventually.

Death ain't my rival, life and _____ are a cycle,
if you don't bring me back my filia I will take what is vital,
Bring the frigus and the ice, take the solis - I might
just let the planet have a famine and I'll watch it all die.

Oh, you're listening now; here comes the King in his crown.
The underworld understands I ain't gonna back down,
He said he's spoken to _____ and here is what he'll allow:
Persephone will split her time above and under the ground.

Well she's released, I'm kinda pleased,
I let em know that they can't mess with me at least,
So, the time I have Persephone you'll _____ ,
But when she's underground the weather's cold and bleak.

Hades
Zeus
Persephone
soil
reap
death
Demeter

Language Match-Up

Can you have a go at guessing the meaning of these Latin words by joining a line to match the to the English words?

filia

sun

Dea

cold

Solis

daughter

frigus

goddess



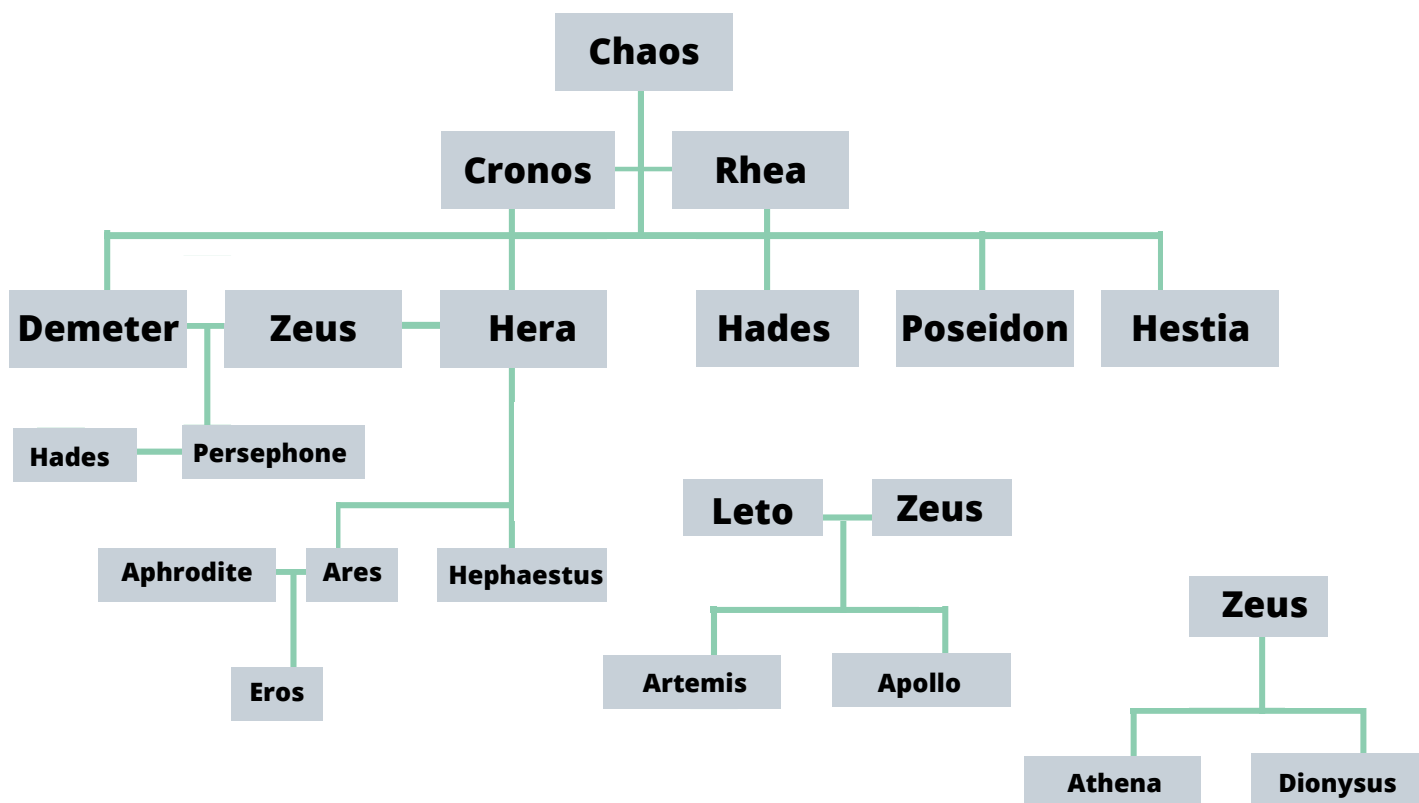
Factsheet: Demeter



- Demeter was the Goddess of the harvest, sacred law and the cycle of life and death.
- Her daughter Persephone was abducted by Hades, the King of the Underworld.
- Demeter grieved when her daughter was taken and the earth became barren due to her neglect.
- In her anger, Demeter threatened to subject the world to famine.
- Zeus ruled that Persephone would stay part of the year with her mother and the rest in the underworld with Hades.
- During Persephone's time in the underworld, Demeter does not let crops grow. It is winter.
- Persephone's return to her mother every year marks spring, when mankind is able to reap his crops.

Greek God Family Tree

A family tree shows the relationship of people within a family. Here is a family tree of the Greek Gods of Mount Olympus. Using the tree, answer the questions below!

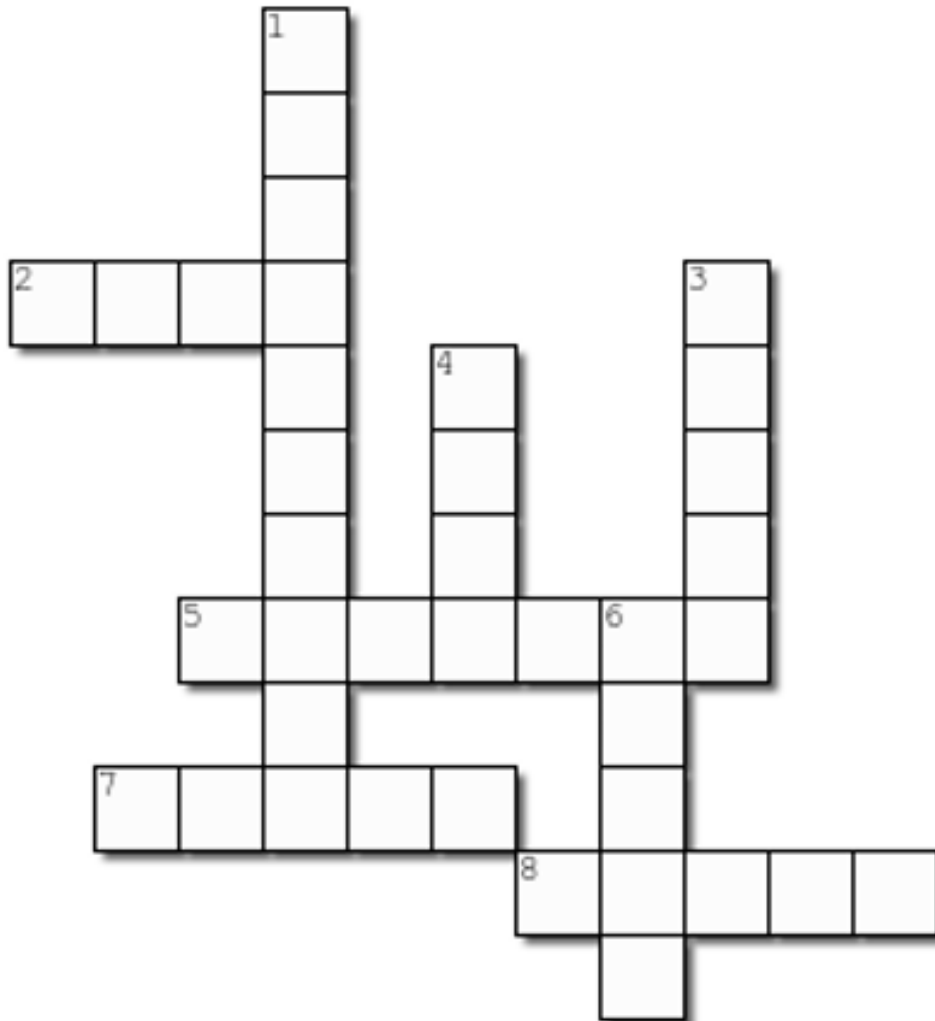


Have a go at answering the questions below. You have been provided with two possible answers - circle the one you think is correct, using the family tree to help you!

1. Hades is Poseidon's **father / brother**.
2. Ares is the son of **Demeter / Ares**.
3. Before the Gods were created there was **Chaos / Zeus**.
4. Demeter and Hera are both children of **Rhea / Chaos**.
5. How many children did Cronos have? **8 / 6**
6. Athena is the sister of **Hera / Zeus**.
7. How is Aphrodite's husband? **Ares / Hephaestus**
8. Who is the father of Cronos and Rhea? **Chaos / Zeus**
9. As well as being married, were Chaos and Rhea also married? **No / Yes**
10. To how many people is Hades married? **1 / 2**

Extension: Either: have a go at drawing your own family tree OR; draw a picture of you and one member of your family.

Crossword: Demeter and Persephone



Across

- 2. Father of Persephone (on the family tree)
- 5. English word for Dead
- 7. put them in the soil to grow plants
- 8. Latin for daughter

Down

- 1. Demeter's daughter
- 3. King of the Underworld
- 4. Often the temperature in winter
- 6. Latin for sun