



WORLD MYTHOLOGY

Afterlife and Underworld Unit Study Questions

Aeneid – Roman (handout)

1. What steps do Aeneas and the Sibyl (his guide) take before they enter the Underworld?

2. Near and inside the Underworld, who and what is located ...

- before the entrance, at the jaws of Orcus
- in the giant elm
- on the riverbank near Cerberus
- in the Fields of Mourning
- on the borderlands of the Fields of Mourning
- at the fork in the road

3. Describe the various rivers of the Underworld.

- Acheron
- Cocytus
- Eridanus
- Phlegethon
- Styx



4. Describe Charon's physical appearance. Who is he and what does he do? What rules are there for who he accepts?
5. Why does Charon hesitate to transport Aeneas, but why does he eventually agree to do so?
6. Describe Cerberus and how he is placated.
7. Describe Tartarus and some of its inhabitants.
8. Describe the Groves of Blessedness (Elysium) and some of its inhabitants.
9. Describe the two exits from the Underworld. From which exit does Aeneas' father Anchises send him? Why do you think this is so?

Descent of Inanna – Sumerian (handout)

1. What does Inanna instruct Ninshubur to do if she does not return from the Underworld?
2. Why did Inanna decide to go to the Underworld?
3. How is Inanna described?
4. Before entering the Underworld, what must Inanna do?
5. When Inanna questions this, what is the reply?
6. Why do you think Ereshkigal wanted Inanna to enter the Underworld in this way?
7. What does Ereshkigal do to Inanna?
8. How do the gods react to this situation? Who helps and how?



9. In order for Inanna to be permanently released from the Underworld? What must happen? Who is chosen for this?

10. In order to help Dumuzi, what does Inanna ultimately agree to do?

11. Compare the Mesopotamian Underworld to the Greek/Roman Underworld?

Book of the Dead – Egyptian (handout)

1. What does the narrator (Ani) hope his heart will do and not do?

2. What do the following characters claim about the narrator and his heart?

- Thoth

- the Great Ennead

- Horus

- Ani himself

3. What are some reasons that the narrator offers to the Lord of Justice to prove that he is pure and should pass?

4. What specifically does the narrator say that he knows about the Lord of Justice and his 42 assistants? Why might this be important?

5. Based on all of the things that the narrator proclaims that he has and has not done, what are some of the qualities and values that the ancient Egyptians probably embrace?

6. On page 6, what has the narrator come to Thoth to do? How did he get to that point?

7. What is a shabti?



Kachinas – Native American (handout)

1. According to the Native Americans, what is the difference between someone with one heart and someone with two hearts?
2. What are Kachinas? What is their country like?
3. How do you know if someone is a Two Heart?
4. What is the country of the Two Hearts like?
5. What begins to happen to the wife's family?
6. Why does the wife send her husband out after dinner? What happens to him when he goes out? Who helps the husband?
7. What eventually happens to the old woman, and why?

Sedna – Inuit (R520-525)

1. Describe Sedna and her quest for a husband.
2. What does the seabird decide to do? Why? How does he accomplish this?
3. What does Sedna discover when she reaches the land of the seabirds? What plea does she make to her father?
4. What does Sedna's father do when he arrives, and how do the birds react?
5. Why does Sedna's father throw her overboard? What else does he do to her?
6. How does Sedna become ruler of Adlivun?



7. What must the Inuit people do, and not do, in order to keep Sedna happy?

8. Compare Sedna to Ereshkigal.