



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1983 Volume II: Greek and Roman Mythology

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## Prometheus, the Firebringer

Guide for Curriculum Unit 83.02.03  
by Kelley O'rourke

Prometheus, the Firebringer is a unit developed for the Conte School theatre curriculum but it could be easily adapted and used in an English or Language Arts class. The Titan, Prometheus, was chosen to be the center of this unit as he is one of the few figures to appear in both the ancient narrative and dramatic forms of Greek mythology.

This unit uses the stories of Prometheus to teach basic theatre skills using a Creative Dramatics approach. Ancient literature sources such as Hesiod and Aeschylus are utilized as well as modern retellings. These stories will be explored in a variety of ways. Students will be led through an organic and graduating theatre process as they enter the world of Greek Mythology.

Prometheus and his myths are the core of this curriculum unit, but students in reading about Prometheus will also study the Greek myth of Creation and will be exposed to the other Greek Gods. Prometheus is a major character in the tale of Zeus' rise to power and his stories are entwined through many of the Greek myths such as the stories of Heracles and Io. In studying the myths of Prometheus students will see how the Greek myths were presented as one long narrative with characters weaving in and out of the ancient sources. Students will also be able to compare the myths as they appear in ancient and modern versions after reading the materials selected for this unit.

Students will explore the myths of Prometheus not only as literature but as material for the basis of drama and theatre. Western theatre began in Greece, and this unit introduces students to the history of theatre and its roots. Activities include a slide presentation and lecture on the history of Greek theatre, a tour of the Yale Art Gallery to obtain a visual sense of ancient Greece and the theatre crafts project of mask building, making paper and papier-mache masks. Acting projects include the use of creative movement, pantomime and story theatre to dramatize the narrative myths. The play, "Prometheus Bound" by Aeschylus will culminate the unit in dramatic readings and scene presentations.

"Prometheus, the Firebringer" will give the students at the Conte Arts Magnet School an exciting course of study to follow connecting the arts to the academics. Other middle school and high school classes would enjoy this artistic, "hands on," involving study of Greek Mythology, and I recommend it to my fellow teachers.

(Recommended for 7th and 8th grade classes in Language Arts and 9th through 12th grade English)

### **Key Words**

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