

The Greek gods

The ancient Greeks used the gods as ways to understand nature and reality. Each god had a distinct personality and unique abilities. By assigning unique characteristics to the gods, it was easier for the Greeks to create connections and understandings between events in nature and reality. For example, every god is represented by certain colors, animals, weather conditions, fruits, vegetables, herbs, fragrances, etc. The Greeks believed that everything in the world could be understood through these relationships—that everything had a pattern.

The Titans

The Titans, also known as the elder gods, ruled the earth before the Olympians overthrew them. The ruler of the Titans was Cronus who was de-throned by his son Zeus. Most of the Titans fought with Cronus against Zeus and were punished by being banished to Tartarus, an inaccessible prison deeper than the underworld of Hades.

Gaea: Gaea is the Earth goddess. She mated with her son Uranus to produce the remaining Titans.

Rhea: Rhea was the wife of Cronus. Cronus made it a practice to swallow their children.

Cronus: Cronus was the ruling Titan who came to power by castrating his Father Uranus. His wife was Rhea. Their offspring were the first of the Olympians. To insure his safety Cronus ate each of the children as they were born.

Uranus: Uranus is the sky god and first ruler. He is the son of Gaea, who created him without help. He then became the husband of Gaea and together they had many offspring, including twelve of the Titans.

Prometheus: Prometheus was the wisest Titan. His name means "forethought" and he was able to foretell the future. When Zeus became the ruler of the world, he ordered Prometheus to create humans. He gave humans the gift of fire.

Oceanus: Oceanus is the unending stream of water encircling the world. Together with his wife Tethys produced the rivers and the three thousand ocean nymphs.

Atlas: after he fought against Zeus, he was forced to hold the earth on his shoulders for eternity.

The Olympians

The Olympians are a group of 12 gods who ruled after the overthrow of the Titans. All of the Olympians were related in some way. They are named after their dwelling place Mount Olympus.

1. **Zeus:** Zeus was the god of the sky and ruler of the Olympian gods. Zeus overthrew his Father Cronus. He then drew lots with his brothers Poseidon and Hades. Zeus won and became the supreme ruler of the world and the Olympians.
2. **Hera:** the wife of Zeus and goddess of marriage and childbirth.
3. **Poseidon:** God of the sea, protector of all waters. Poseidon is the brother of Zeus.
4. **Hades:** the brother of Zeus and ruler of the underworld.
5. **Ares:** the god of war and destruction.

6. **Athena:** the goddess of reason, intelligence, wisdom, arts and literature.
7. **Apollo:** the god of music, archery, healing, light, and the sun
8. **Aphrodite:** the goddess of love, desire and beauty.
9. **Hephaestus:** Crippled god of fire, metalworking, and crafts.
10. **Artemis:** goddess of the hunt, wilderness, animals, young girls, childbirth and plague.
11. **Hermes:** god of travel, communication, trade, thievery, trickery, language, writing, diplomacy,
12. **Dionysus:** god of wine, parties and festivals, madness, chaos, drunkenness, drugs, and ecstasy.