





The Greeks and Romans had various myths and beliefs regarding what happened to the dead once they left the world of the living. Neither civilisation believed in heaven and hell. All the dead ended up in the same place, the underworld. In this topic you will study myths that surround the underworld. For Ancient Greece, you will study the myth of Persephone and Demeter, and for Ancient Rome, the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. By exploring these two key myths, we will gain a greater understanding of the underworld and ancient beliefs around it.

Myth of Orpheus and Eurydice: Ovid's Metamorphoses				Myth of Orpheus and Eurydice: Plot		
1	Ovid	Ovid is a Roman author whose real name is Publius Ovidius Naso.		15	Falling in Love	When Orpheus returned from his adventure with Jason, leader of the Argonauts (a collection of Greek heroes), Orpheus returned to Thrace and fell in love with Eurydice, a woodland nymph (a minor female nature goddess).
2	Metamorphoses	Perhaps Ovid's most famous work is <i>Metamorphoses</i> which is a Latin poem that is nearly 12,000 lines long and describes the history of the world from creation to Julius Caesar.		16	Mount Olympus	Orpheus and Eurydice lived in Pimpleia, a small town in the valley below Mount Olympus.
3	Content	Metamorphoses covers over 250 myths, of which Orpheus and Eurydice is one. Another key one is his description of Hercules' death (see Prescribed Sources Booklet Two: Hercules).		17	Aristaeus	Unfortunately, Eurydice came to the attention of Aristaeus, a minor god of bee-keeping and agriculture, who became obsessed with her.
4	Main Theme	The main theme running through the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is the relationships between men and gods, as well as gods and men.		18	Eurydice's Death	One day, Aristaeus chased after Eurydice, who fled in fear from him. As she was running through the fields when she stepped on a viper that rose up and bit her on the ankle, killing her with his venom.
Myth of Orpheus and Eurydice: Characters				19	Orpheus' Grief	Orpheus heard her scream and raced to her side only for her to die in his arms. His grief was all-consuming and he gave up music, playing his lyre, and singing. He would not write another song.
5	Orpheus	Thracian musician and poet. Son of Apollo.		20	Apollo's Intervention	After a year of Orpheus grieving, Apollo intervened and asked him what would make him play music again. Orpheus replied that only the return of his wife could do that, so Apollo suggested he go to the Underworld to bring her back.
6	Eurydice	Wife of Orpheus.		21	Entering the Underworld	Orpheus entered the Underworld through Cape Tainaron in the Peloponnese. He would use the power of his music and song to enchant Cerberus, to persuade Charon to take him across the River Styx, and to persuade the three judges of the Underworld to summon Hades and Persephone.
7	Proserpina	Queen of the Underworld, daughter of Ceres and wife of Pluto.		22	Hades and Persephone	Through his beautiful song, Orpheus persuaded Hades and Persephone to allow Eurydice to leave the Underworld, so overwhelmed were they by his ability to play.
8	Pluto	The Roman god of the Underworld, and husband of Proserpina. He was also called the Lord of the Shadows.		23	The Condition	They placed on him one condition: she must follow him out of the Underworld, but he can never turn around to look at his wife until they were both out of the Underworld.
Orpheus				24	Orpheus' Doubt	Throughout the perilous journey back to the earth, Orpheus and Eurydice kept in contact. However, towards the end the two had become further separated by the steep climb, and no longer able to hear his wife, Orpheus became plagued with doubt.
9	Parents	Orpheus has both mortal and immortal parents. His father is said to either be the King of Thrace, Oeagrus, or the god Apollo. His mother was one of the nine muses (the goddesses of the arts) called Calliope.		25	Eurydice Dies Again	As he stepped back into the mortal world, Orpheus overcame with doubt and worry, turned to check his wife was out of the Underworld, only to see her a step away from exiting. As a result, Eurydice was swept back into Underworld to die for a second time.
10	Apollo's Gift	Apollo, the god of music, gave his son a lyre and taught him how to play it.		26	Underworld Closed	Orpheus tried in vain to return to the Underworld but this time found that he was prevented.
11	Calliope's Gift	Calliope gave him the gift of song and taught her son how to sing. This, combined with his playing of the lyre, made him the most 'powerful' musician in the known world.		27	Orpheus' Death	Entering into a second period of grief, Orpheus continued to play his lyre and make music but refused to take another wife. The Thracian women, the Ciconians, followers of Dionysus were so enraged they would eventually in a complete frenzy, tear Orpheus apart. His death would see him finally united with Eurydice.
12	Orpheus' Song	Orpheus' song was said to be able to enchant anyone who heard it, be that a god, human, or animal. Orpheus' songs were even said to move inanimate objects such as trees and stones to tears.				
13	Jason and the Argonauts	During his life, he joined Jason on his quest to retrieve the golden fleece. In fact he played a key role, with his song saving the crew from the Sirens.				
14	Falling in Love	Upon his return from his journey with Jason, he returned home and fell in love with Eurydice, a beautiful wood nymph.				