**Character Analysis Expository Essay**

We have been reading about Greek mythology for some time now and it is time to start comparing some of the characters of the myths in a well-developed essay with an introduction, body and conclusion. **Choose two gods and compare and contrast their character traits.**  Tip: The most effective analysis will notes similarities **and** differences that are **not obvious** at first glance.

**Gods**

Zeus

Poseidon

Hades

Demeter

Hera

Ares

Hephaestus

Aphrodite

Athena

Dionysus

Artemis

Apollo

Hermes

**Introduction:**

* **Provide context/background information.** What book are you writing about and what is that book about? Most of our stories came from *Heroes, Gods and Monsters* by Bernard Evslin and *D’aulaires’ Book of Greek Myths* by Ingri and Edgar Parin D’aulaires. Both of these books are about Greek mythology, so what will your reader need to know about Greek mythology before reading the rest of your essay? For example, who and what are the gods? What does the reader need to know about the gods you have chosen?
* **State your thesis**. What point are you making about these two gods? How are they different and/or similar. Here’s are some great way to start your thesis:
  + **While \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are both \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, they \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**.
  + **Even though \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ appear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Body Paragraphs:** You need to have **at least two body paragraphs** but you could do four if necessary. You could organize by god—one body paragraph for each god—or you could organize by similarity and difference—each paragraph focuses on one similarity or difference. Here are some ideas for starting topic sentences:

Even though \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

On the other hand \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

However\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In the story about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Although\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Just like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion:** Have a “So What.” Why would the Greeks give their gods these traits? What conclusions can you draw about the gods? Are the gods heroic or admirable? Why would the Greek worship these characters? Would the gods still be worshipped today?

**First draft of example essay:**

*(As a first draft, this is not perfect. It still needs revision and editing. However, it is a good example of how to start. I will show you my plan too. )*

Long ago the world must have seemed a strange and mysterious place with no science to explain anything. In an attempt to make sense of their world, the ancient Greeks began telling many stories about powerful gods who both created and controlled the universe. Although the stories feature fantastic and magical adventures, the gods have very realistic character traits and behave much like real people. One of these stories is about a god named Cronos who becomes king of the gods when he overthrows his father Uranus. However, his son Zeus soon overthrows him and becomes king of a new generation of gods called the Olympians. While Zeus appears more heroic than his father Cronos, in reality they are both equally cruel and untrustworthy.

In the myths about how the Olympian gods come to power, Cronos’s actions reveal that he is heartless and treacherous. When Uranus and Gaea, Cronos’s parents, give birth to ugly children—the Cyclopes and The Hundred Handed Ones—Uranus imprisons them. Gaea is furious and says to Cronos, “Take this weapon, make an end to your father’s cruelty and set your brothers free.” (D’Aulries 12) Cronos then attacks his father and takes his throne. While it may seem that Cronos is being kind and freeing his brothers, Gaea only asks Cronos to stop Uranus’s cruelty, which could have been accomplished without stealing Uranus’s power. Uranus is still Cronos’s father and sons should love their fathers, but Cronos’s actions suggest that he values power more than his own father. To make matters even worse, Cronos never keeps his word to Gaea. He never frees his brothers. Cronos lies to his own mother and betrays her trust. He also proves that he doesn’t care about his own brothers’ freedom and wellbeing. Even when Cronos becomes a father, he continues to be heartless and treacherous. Fearing that his children would betray him as he betrayed Uranus and Gaea, Cronos swallows most of his children. Fathers should love and protect their children, but instead all Cronos cares about is maintaining his own power. Everyone should care for his/her family, but at every turn Cronos heartlessly betrays them.

In contrast the, Zeus looks brave and kind because at first he takes better care of his family.

When Cronos is swallowing all of Zeus’s siblings, Zeus manages to escape with this mother’s help. After Zeus grows up, he returns to Olympus and helps trick Cronos into eating an herb that causes him to throw up Zeus’s brothers and sisters. Before returning to Olympus, Zeus had been safe. He could have lived peacefully, but instead he risks himself to help his brothers and sisters. In fact, he even shares power with all his siblings. Hades becomes lord of the Underworld, Poseidon becomes lord of the sea and the goddesses are put in charge of the Earth. Zeus may have attacked his father just like Cronos attacked his, but unlike Cronos, he does it to save his siblings, not to get more power. Likewise, Zeus keeps the promise that Cronos had once broken: he releases the Cyclopes and the 100 Handed Ones from their prison. Thanks to Zeus, they could finally enjoy freedom. Consequently, it appears that Zeus values and cares for his family.

However, after looking more closely, it becomes clear that Zeus really isn’t any better than his father. In the end Zeus turns out to be just as treacherous and greedy. After Zeus defeats Cronos, he imprisons the Titans who had fought alongside Cronos. The Titans, though, were Zeus’s aunts and uncles. Zeus attacks his father for hurting and imprisoning family, yet Zeus does the same thing, suggesting that he is just as heartless! He could have forgiven the Titans and given them a second chance. Additionally, even though Zeus starts out valuing family more than power, he soon changes and becomes just like Cronos. When Zeus’s first wife, Metis, becomes pregnant, Zeus hears a prophecy that if Metis gives birth to a son, that son will overthrow Zeus just as Zeus had overthrown Cronos. Because Zeus wants to keep his throne, he heartlessly swallows Metis! Just like when Cronos swallows his children, Zeus cares more for power than for his child and wife. Furthermore, Metis is not the only wife Zeus lets down. He constantly betrays Hera’s trust when he has affairs with other women. After one fight with Hera over Zeus’s affairs, *Heroes, Gods and Monsters* states that “Zeus promised to mend his ways too” (Evslin 7). However, just as Cronos breaks his promise to Gaea, Zeus breaks his promise to Hera. For example, when Hera is about to discover Zeus spending time with the mortal girl Io, Zeus changes Io into a cow rather than be honest with his wife. Hera cannot trust Zeus because he is constantly deceiving her in such a manner. Neither Cronos nor Zeus is truly trustworthy or compassionate!

At first glance, Zeus and Cronos appear to be opposites. After careful reading and consideration, though, it becomes clear that they share many of the same traits. Both are very cruel and untrustworthy because they are willing to put themselves before others. Even though gods like Cronos and Zeus are clearly fictional, their personalities are very realistic. Throughout history there have been many leaders who lied, cheated and stole to get what they wanted. Perhaps by portraying their gods as treacherous, the ancient Greeks were trying to warn us that it is human nature to put our own desires before others’ well being.