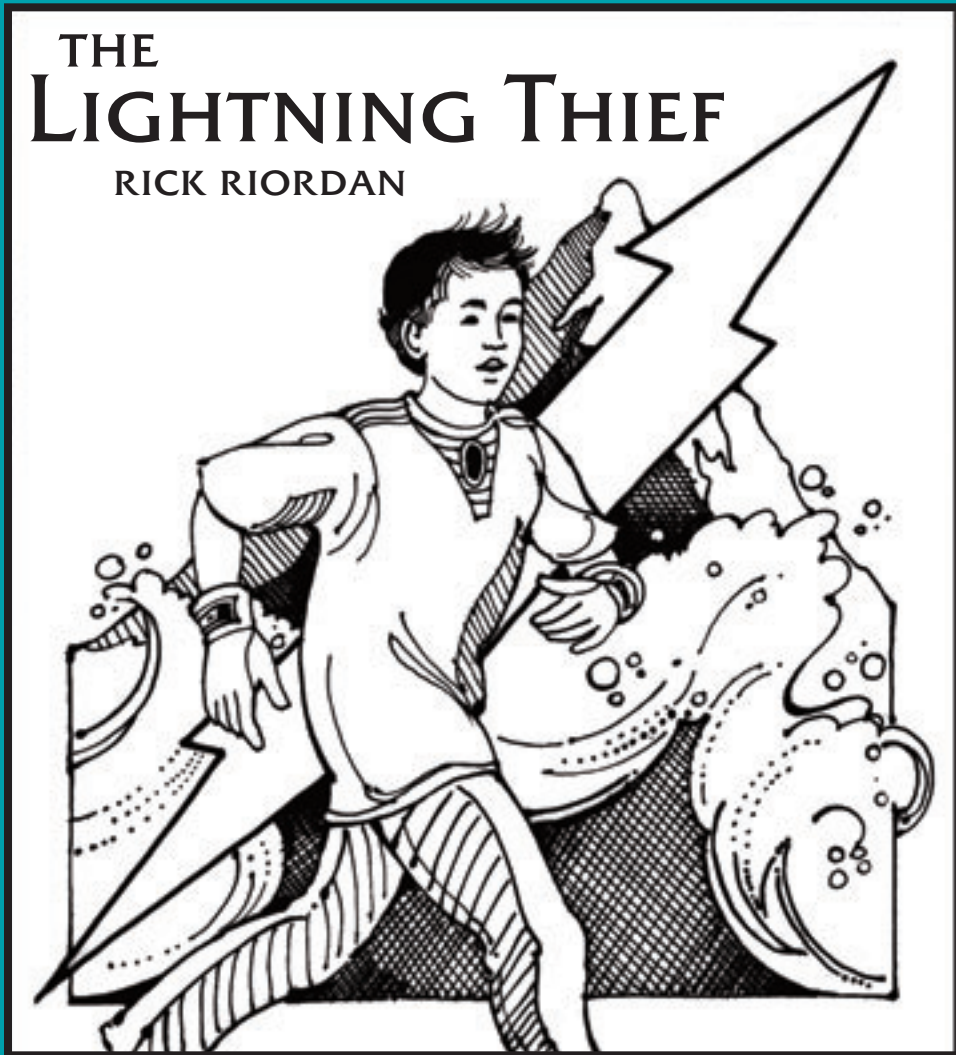


# Novel·Ties

## THE LIGHTNING THIEF

RICK RIORDAN



## A Study Guide

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**LEARNING LINKS**

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## For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of instructional material to use in conjunction with the novel *The Lightning Thief*. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

NOVEL-TIES are either for whole class instruction using a single title or for group instruction where each group uses a different novel appropriate to its reading level. Depending upon the amount of time allotted to it in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in two to four weeks.

The first step in using NOVEL-TIES is to distribute to each student a copy of the novel and a folder containing all of the duplicated worksheets. Begin instruction by selecting several pre-reading activities in order to set the stage for the reading ahead. Vocabulary exercises for each chapter always precede the reading so that new words will be reinforced in the context of the book. Use the questions on the chapter worksheets for class discussion or as written exercises.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Greek Mythology

A great civilization flourished in Greece thousands of years ago, and its accomplishments remain with us today. The Greeks told stories, or myths, to explain the actions of gods and the causes of natural phenomena.

According to Greek mythology, the world began in darkness and chaos. Nyx, a bird, laid an egg that hatched Eros, or love. The top of the shell became the sky, which was Uranus; the bottom half became the earth, which was Gaia. Uranus and Gaia had many children, including twelve Titans.

Kronos, the youngest Titan, defeated his father to become king of the Titans. Afraid that his children might overthrow him, Kronos swallowed them. A son, Zeus, escaped this fate and tricked his father into regurgitating the swallowed brothers and sisters. Together they fought against Kronos and won. Their victory ended the Golden Age of the Titans and ushered in the Age of Olympian Gods.

Greek myths provided colorful explanations for natural events in the world. For example, they explained thunderstorms as the god Zeus hurling lightning from the heavens. Other myths were stories of heroes or kings that gave lessons about the proper way to live.

The myths featured twelve major gods and many minor ones, immortals who ruled the world from their home on Mount Olympus. Zeus was their ruler, and each god controlled a single part of the world. For example, Poseidon was god of the sea, while Hermes was the god of travelers and thieves. These gods exhibited many mortal traits, such as jealousy, ambition, and anger.

Besides the gods, the myths told of mortal heroes who fought to rid the world of monsters and other afflictions. Although these heroes were not gods, many of them had parents who were. They were often aided by the gods, who gave them gifts such as magical swords. In the end, however, the heroes had to stand on their own and succeed in their quests without outside help.

There were two types of monsters in Greek mythology. One group stood as obstacles to the heroes and thus needed to be destroyed. The bull-headed Minotaur and the snake-haired Medusa were in this category. Other monsters were not killed by heroes, but existed forever as part of a constant threat.

According to Greek mythology, humans who died went to the Underworld, the kingdom of the dead ruled by Hades. Charon ferried souls across the River Styx, and each body had coins placed on its lips to pay for the trip. Without money for the fare, souls stayed trapped between life and afterlife. Once in the Underworld, each person was judged by his or her works in life. Sinners were tormented in Tartarus, the average person went to the Asphodel Fields, and only the most virtuous souls got to spend eternity in Elysium.

**Mythological Names, Places, and Creatures (cont.)**

Furies	three female spirits of justice and vengeance having a monstrous appearance
Garden of Hesperides	Hera's sacred garden from which the gods get their immortality
Hades	god of the dead and ruler of the Underworld; son of Kronos; one of the twelve Olympians
Hephaestus	god of fire and son of Zeus; one of the twelve Olympians
Hera	goddess of marriage and queen of heaven; married to Zeus; one of the twelve Olympians
Hercules	half-mortal son of Zeus, famous for his strength
Hermes	god of travelers, merchants, and thieves; messenger of the gods and son of Zeus; one of the twelve Olympians
Hestia	goddess of hearth and home; daughter of Kronos; one of the twelve Olympians
Iris	goddess of the rainbow and a messenger of the gods
Kronos	Titan god of time and the ages; father of Zeus
Medusa	ugly creature with writhing snakes for hair; gazing on her would turn onlookers to stone
Minotaur	monster that was half man and half bull
Mount Olympus	home of the Olympian gods
naiads	water nymphs
Nereids	goddesses of the sea who often accompanied Poseidon
Oracle of Delphi	priestess known for her amazing prophecies
Pan	goat-footed god of the wild, shepherds, and flocks
Persephone	daughter of Zeus and Demeter abducted by Hades to be his queen; tricked by Hades into eating pomegranate seeds, which forced her to return to the Underworld for six months of the year, thus creating the seasons
Poseidon	god of the sea; son of Kronos; one of the twelve Olympians
Procrustes	villainous son of Poseidon who attacked people by stretching them or cutting off their legs to fit the size of a bed