

Ancient Voices

Worksheet for German Classes



Germanic/Norse Gods and Goddesses

Select one of the characters below and on the back of this handout draw your design for a mask, incorporating into the mask design a few of the symbols and emblems relating to your chosen character.

Name	Symbols and Emblems, Identifying Characteristics
WODEN/ODIN	One-eyed, wandering god of war and bringer of victory, ruler of Asgard, the Germanic gods' divine realm. Known also as the god of poets, seers, magicians and healers, his name means "poetic fury." He wore a two-horned helmet with a bird's head at each tip, symbolizing his ravens, Hugen and Munen. Symbols include the wolf, the two ravens, the sword and spear. A passionate seeker of knowledge, he sacrificed one of his eyes in exchange for a drink from the waters of wisdom.
DONAR/THOR	Hammer-wielding god associated with thunder, lightning, storms, oak trees, protection, strength, healing and fertility. He was said to have "fierce eyes" and was generally depicted with red hair and a red beard. He always travelled in a wagon drawn by two he-goats. His main symbol is his powerful hammer, which had a distinctive shape and decorative motif: a stylized bird's head topped the handle; the stone, anvil-like hammer pointed downward at its center, forming a V-shaped wedge.
LOKI	Shape-shifting trickster god of fire, he was responsible for much mischief and grief in the world of the Germanic gods, from the theft of Freya's necklace to death of Baldur, Frigg and Woden's son, which resulted in the fall of Asgard. Loki's changing forms included the salmon, mare, seal and fly.
FRIJA/FREYA	Goddess of love, beauty, fertility and the domestic arts, particularly weaving. Friday was named in her honor. The drop spindle was her main symbol; in parts of Germany the constellation Orion's Belt was thought to be Frija's distaff or spindle. She is a sorceress goddess associated with gold and jewels, and was the owner of a special necklace called Brisingamen. Wife of Odr, who frequently left her alone, she cried tears of red gold for her absent husband. She possessed a cloak of falcon feathers and rode in a chariot driven by two cats.
NERTHUS	Mother Earth goddess, similar to Rhea in ancient Greece; all earth symbols apply, including trees, grain, plowed fields and fruits of the harvest. On her festival day, worshippers followed as she rode in a cloth-draped, heifer-drawn chariot through her sacred grove.
FRIGG	Wife of Woden, queen of Asgard. As the goddess of marriage and childbirth, she assisted women in all areas of family life. Symbols of royalty, such as crown and scepter, apply. Frigg's grass, a yellow-flowered herb with sedative properties, was sacred to her.