

Text Structure and Language Features: Example 2

Text Structure - Narrative/Legend

Many cultures have myths that explain how humans obtained fire. This is from ancient Greece. It can be compared to the Maui story in Level 2.

PROMETHEUS

Long ago and far away in the mists of time above Mt Olympus in Greece, there lived a god who loved fire. He was a trickster, who played games on the other gods. His name was Prometheus.

Orientation - includes setting and introduces main characters

Complication

One fateful day, Prometheus decided to play a trick on the chief of the gods, Zeus. "What can I do to make Zeus angry?" he wondered. Suddenly an idea came to him. He would trick Zeus into eating not the delicious meat, but the bones and fat of the offerings that the humans down on the Earth made to Zeus each day in the temple. Prometheus hid in the temple and changed the plates of the offering around.

Further complication

As Zeus took a large mouthful from his plate and tasted not meat but bones and gristle, he sprang up in a rage. "Who can have done this?" he roared. He spied Prometheus laughing in a corner and his rage grew stronger. "You!" he thundered. "You, one day, I will punish for insulting me, Zeus!"

Not only did Prometheus trick Zeus, but he also interfered with his plans for the humans on the Earth. Zeus could not be bothered with the humans, and wanted to leave them to die out. Prometheus, however, quite liked them and decided to give them gifts from the land of the gods. He gave them the gift of the arts and crafts, of working with fabrics, metals and woodwork. He gave them the gift of knowledge of the stars, of healing and understanding numbers and of navigation and of music and painting. He also gave them the gift of fire to light up their dark caves and cook their food.

When Zeus realised that Prometheus had disobeyed him, his fury was terrifying to see. 'Now!' he shouted, "I will punish you." The punishment was cruel and terrible. Zeus had Prometheus chained to a rock and every day Zeus's eagle flew to Prometheus and pecked out his liver. Every night the liver grew again, so Prometheus knew he would have to bear this pain again the next day.

Resolution

For many centuries, Prometheus was doomed to suffer in this way each day. One day, Heracles, a descendant of Io, who was a woman Prometheus had one day been kind to, climbed bravely up the rock to which Prometheus was chained, and freed him. His sufferings were over at last.

Language Features

Use of various tenses

Use of word chains to build topic information, e.g. Olympus, gods, humans gift, stole, fire

Use of action verbs, e.g. hid, chained, pecked

Use of saying verbs, e.g. thundered, roared, shouted

Use of thinking verbs, e.g. wondered, decided

Use of complex verbal groups, e.g. would have to bear, decided to play

Use of detailed noun groups, e.g. a woman Prometheus had one day been kind to,

Use of conjunctions, e.g. so, when, and, not... but...

Use of pronouns to track subject i.e. referencing, e.g. he, she

Use of adjectives, e.g. terrible, delicious

Use of adverbs and adverbial phrases, e.g. to a rock

Use of direct speech, e.g. "You, one day, I will punish for insulting me, Zeus!"

Use of complex sentences, e.g. As Zeus took a large mouthful from his plate and tasted not meat but bones and gristle, he sprang up in a rage.