

Grade 4 Playlist: Word Meanings and Mythology

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.4*:

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

Welcome

The *Titanic* is one of the most famous ships in history. Movies, books, and poems have been written about how it hit the iceberg and sank. However, some people might not know why the *Titanic* was given that name. At the time, the ship was one of the biggest in the world, so it was named after the Titans in Greek mythology. These Titans were giants with incredible powers who lived forever. The word “titanic” is an allusion to Greek mythology. This means it refers to a specific character in Greek mythology. To make a “titanic” mistake means that a person has made a very big mistake. There are many words in the English language that refer to mythology.



Photograph of the Titanic setting sail on April 2, 1913.
Image pulled from the National Archives
and Records Administration.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn to:

- determine the meaning of a word based on how it is used in the text.
- determine the meaning of a word based on how it refers to mythology.



Review

Key Terms

- **Allusions** are words or phrases that refer to a well-known character or event, such as one found in literature or history.
- **Context clues** are words or phrases near an unknown word that hint at its meaning.

Exploring the Standard

Readers do not always have access to dictionaries as they read, and sometimes pausing to look up a word can be time consuming. Figuring out a word's meaning by using context clues in the text can be a good solution to these problems.

This playlist will focus mainly on determining a word's meaning based on how it alludes to Greek mythology. Knowing the reference that the word is making can help a reader better understand a sentence in a text.

A Closer Look: Context Clues

Context clues are words or phrases that provide hints to the meaning of an unknown word. When a reader comes across a word that he or she does not know, it is a good practice to look at the surrounding words in the sentence and in the paragraph to find context clues.

Example 1

Read this paragraph from *The Lost Prince* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. The bolded words are unknown words. The underlined words and phrases are context clues.

¹The day was **brilliant** and sunny, the people passing through the streets looked comfortable and **homely**, the mixture of old streets and modern ones, of ancient corners and shops and houses of the day was picturesque and cheerful. The Rat swinging through the crowd on his crutches was full of interest and exhilaration. He had begun to grow, and the change in his face and expression which had begun in London had become more noticeable. He had been given his "place," and a work to do which **entitled** him to hold it.

1. **Brilliant** in this paragraph means "very bright and radiant." Brilliant also can mean "intelligent," but in this case it describes the day. The sentence also provides sunny as a synonym for the word.
2. **Homely** in this paragraph means "simple but comfortable." The sentence provides comfortable as a synonym.
3. **Entitled** in this paragraph means "to give a right or a privilege to someone." The work that Rat has to do gives him the right to his place in society.

It is possible to figure out all three of those words without having to look them up in a dictionary.

