

# The gods

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*greek gods*

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# 1 - the gods

## Zeus

Zeus (Jupiter) overthrew his Father [Cronus](#) to become the supreme ruler of the gods. He was lord of the sky, the rain god and the cloud gatherer. His weapon was a thunderbolt which he hurls at those who displease him. He was married to [Hera](#) but, was famous for his many affairs. An eagle attended him as a minister of his will and for page and cup-bearer he had Ganymede, a boy so beautiful that Zeus had him stolen from Mount Ida to make him immortal in heaven. He was also known to punish those that lie or break oaths. His tree was the oak and his oracle was at Dodona, the land of the oak trees.

## Poseidon

Poseidon (Neptune) was the brother of [Zeus](#). He was the lord of the sea. He was widely worshiped by seamen. He married [Amphitrite](#), a granddaughter of the Titan [Oceanus](#).

His weapon was a trident, which could shake the earth, and shatter any object. He was second only to Zeus in power amongst the gods. Under the ocean, he had a marvelous golden palace, its grottos adorned with corals and the sea-flowers, and lit with a phosphorescent glow. He rose forth in a chariot drawn by dolphins, sea-horses other marine creatures.

## Hades

Hades (Pluto) was the brother of [Zeus](#). He was made lord of the [underworld](#), ruling over the dead. He was a greedy god who was greatly concerned with increasing his subjects. Those whose calling increase the number of dead were seen favorably by him. The [Erinyes](#) were welcomed guests. He was exceedingly disinclined to allow any of his subjects leave.

He was also the god of wealth, due to the precious metals mined from the earth. He had a helmet that made him invisible. He rarely left the underworld. He was unpitiful and terrible, but not capricious. His wife was [Persephone](#) whom Hades abducted. He was the King of the dead but, death itself is another god, [Thanatos](#).

## Hestia

Hestia (Vesta) was [Zeus'](#) sister. She was a virgin goddess. She was the Goddess of the Hearth, the symbol of the house around which a new born child was carried before it was received into the family. Each city had a public hearth sacred to Hestia, where the fire was never allowed to go out.

## Hera

Hera (Juno) was [Zeus'](#) wife and sister. She was raised by the Titans [Oceanus](#) and [Tethys](#). She was the protector of marriage and takes special care of married women.

Most stories concerning Hera have to do with her jealous revenge for Zeus' infidelities. Her sacred animals were the cow and the peacock. Her favorite city was Argos.

## Ares

Ares (Mars) was the son of [Zeus](#) and [Hera](#). He was disliked by both parents. He was the god of war. He is considered murderous and bloodstained but, also a coward. When caught in an act of adultery with [Aphrodite](#), her husband [Hephaestus](#) was able publicly ridicule him. His bird was the vulture. His animal was the dog.

## Athena

Athena (Minerva) was the daughter of [Zeus](#). She sprang full grown in armor from his forehead, thus has no mother. She was fierce and brave in battle but, only fights to protect the state and home from outside enemies. She was the goddess of the city, handicrafts, and agriculture. She invented the bridle, which permitted man to tame horses, the trumpet, the flute, the pot, the rake, the plow, the yoke, the ship, and

the chariot. She was the embodiment of wisdom, reason, and purity. She was Zeus's favorite child and was allowed to use his weapons including his thunderbolt. Her favorite city was Athens. Her tree was the olive. The owl was her bird. She was a virgin goddess.

## **Apollo**

Apollo was the son of [Zeus](#) and [Leto](#). His twin sister was [Artemis](#). He was the god of music, playing a golden lyre. He was the god of the archer, far shooting with a silver bow. The god of healing who taught man medicine. The god of light. The god of truth, who can not speak a lie.

One of Apollo's more important daily tasks was to harness his chariot with four horses and drive the Sun across the sky.

He was famous for his oracle at Delphi. People traveled to it from all over the Greek world to divine the future.

His tree was the laurel. The crow was his bird. The dolphin was his animal.

## **Aphrodite**

Aphrodite (Venus) was the goddess of love, desire and beauty. In addition to her natural gifts, she had a magical girdle that compelled anyone she wished to desire her. There were two accounts of her birth.

One says she was the daughter of [Zeus](#) and [Dione](#).

The other went back to the time when [Cronus](#) castrated [Uranus](#) and tossed his severed genitals into the sea. Aphrodite then arose from the sea foam on a giant scallop and walked to shore in Cyprus.

She was the wife of [Hephaestus](#). The myrtle was her tree. The dove, the swan, and the sparrow were her birds.

## **Hermes**

Hermes (Mercury) was the son of [Zeus](#) and [Maia](#). He was Zeus' messenger. He was the fastest of the gods. He wore winged sandals, a winged hat, and carried a magic wand. He was the god of thieves and god of commerce. He was the guide for the dead to go to the underworld. He invented the lyre, the pipes, the musical scale, astronomy, weights and measures, boxing, gymnastics, and the care of olive trees.

## **Artemis**

Artemis (Diana) was the daughter of [Zeus](#) and [Leto](#). Her twin brother was [Apollo](#). She was the lady of the wild things. She was the huntsman of the gods. She was the protector of the young. Like Apollo, she hunted with silver arrows. She became associated with the moon. She was a virgin goddess, and the goddess of chastity. She also presided over childbirth, which may seem odd for a virgin, but goes back to causing [Leto](#) no pain when she was born. The cypress was her tree. All wild animals were scared to her, especially the deer.

## **Hephaestus**

Hephaestus (Vulcan or Mulciber) was the son of [Zeus](#) and [Hera](#). Sometimes, it was said that Hera alone produced him and that he had no father. He was the only god to be physically ugly. He was also lame. He was the god of fire and the forge. He was the smith and armorer of the gods. He used a volcano as his forge. He was the patron god of both smiths and weavers. He was kind and peace loving. His wife was [Aphrodite](#). Sometimes, his wife was identified as Aglaia