**What are myths?**

[](http://www.planetozkids.com/oban/oban.htm)

Myths are made up stories that try to explain **how our world works** and **how we should treat each other**. The stories are usually set in times long ago, before history as we know it was written.

People have always asked questions like “How did our world come to be?” or “Why do tornadoes happen?” Some myths **answered** **these questions**.

In other myths, gods or “super-beings” used their powers to make events happen. Or the stories were the adventures of gods, goddesses, men and women.

These myths described the big things that happened to people and the choices they made. They might be about triumph (achieving something), tragedy (losing something), honour (doing the right thing), being brave even when you are frightened, or being foolish and making mistakes. People might be heroes in these stories and gods and goddesses could use their powers to help them or make things more difficult for them.

Around the world, myths were shared by **groups of people** and became part of their culture. Storytellers have passed the stories on from generation to generation and through families. Some myths are told in many cultures, but with variations in the events or characters. For example, most cultures, tribes or groups of people have their version of how our world came to be.

For early people, myths were like science because they explained how natural events work. Today we don’t always know if myths are true or not. Some of the stories or characters may seem impossible, and science gives us different explanations for some of our questions. But people all over the world still like to read myths and we all like to think about what they might mean.

“Myth” comes from the Greek word “mythos” which means “word of mouth”.