World Mythology

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. In the Norse tales preserved in the Eddas, what kind of object is Thor’s Mjölnir?
   - A. A hammer
   - B. A ring
   - C. A spear
   - D. A ship

   Correct answer: A. A hammer
   Mjölnir is Thor’s hammer. The Swedish History Museum describes it as his characteristic weapon and a symbol worn as a pendant.

2. A museum label describes Horus in a common ancient Egyptian form. Which bird is associated with him in that form?
   - A. Owl
   - B. Heron
   - C. Falcon
   - D. Vulture

   Correct answer: C. Falcon
   The Met describes Horus in falcon form and shows objects in which he has a falcon’s head. The form helps viewers identify him.

3. In the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh, who becomes Gilgamesh’s friend and travels with him to the Cedar Forest?
   - A. Uta-napishtim
   - B. Enkidu
   - C. Humbaba
   - D. Ishtar

   Correct answer: B. Enkidu
   Enkidu and Gilgamesh first confront one another, then become companions. Humbaba guards the Cedar Forest they visit.

4. In Book 10 of Homer’s Odyssey, what do Odysseus’s crew members release when they open the bag he received from Aeolus?
   - A. River water
   - B. Fireflies
   - C. Ashes
   - D. Winds

   Correct answer: D. Winds
   Aeolus confines winds in the bag. The crew expects treasure, but opening it releases a storm that blows their ship away from home.

5. The Met’s scarab of Wah is shaped like a beetle. What daily event did ancient Egyptians associate with the beetle pushing its ball?

A. The moon setting in the west
B. The sun rising at dawn
C. The evening appearance of Venus
D. The yearly flooding of the Nile

Correct answer: B. The sun rising at dawn
As the beetle rolled its ball, ancient Egyptians imagined a similar motion lifting the sun at dawn. Their name Kheperi was associated with the rising sun.

6. In Gylfaginning, which creature bites off Týr’s hand when the gods refuse to release it from the binding called Gleipnir?

A. Fenrir the wolf
B. Jörmungandr the serpent
C. Sleipnir the horse
D. Níðhöggr the dragon

Correct answer: A. Fenrir the wolf
In Snorri’s account, Týr offers his hand as a pledge while the gods bind Fenrir. The wolf bites it off when the gods keep him bound.

7. In the Babylonian epic, whose death makes Gilgamesh face his own mortality and set out to find everlasting life?

A. The king of Kish
B. Humbaba
C. Uta-napishtim
D. Enkidu

Correct answer: D. Enkidu
Losing his companion Enkidu makes Gilgamesh fear death for himself. The quest for immortality follows that loss.

8. In Book 9 of Homer’s Odyssey, the blinded Cyclops tells his neighbors that ‘Nobody’ is harming him. Why does this disguise Odysseus’s role?

A. Odysseus told the Cyclops his name was Aeolus.
B. The Cyclops never heard Odysseus speak.
C. Odysseus previously gave Nobody as his name.
D. The Cyclops was asleep when the attack began and never woke.

Correct answer: C. Odysseus previously gave Nobody as his name.
The Cyclops repeats the false name he was given. The neighbors hear it as an ordinary statement that no one is attacking him.

9. The Met’s Book of the Dead for Imhotep presents a judgment scene. Which deity does the museum identify as presiding over the deceased’s judgment?

A. Osiris
B. Hathor
C. Khnum
D. Bes

Correct answer: A. Osiris
The museum’s presentation places Imhotep before Osiris. The weighing scene concerns the deceased’s fitness for the afterlife.

10. In Gylfaginning, Thor uses an ox’s head as bait on a fishing trip with the giant Hymir. What does Thor hook?

A. A giant flatfish
B. A sea eagle
C. Fenrir the wolf
D. The Midgard Serpent

Correct answer: D. The Midgard Serpent
Thor hooks the Midgard Serpent, also called Jörmungandr. The giant Hymir has been fishing in the same boat.

11. In the Babylonian epic, King Gilgamesh seeks out Uta-napishtim. Which detail explains why this meeting matters to his quest?

A. Uta-napishtim is the monster Ishtar sends against Uruk.
B. Uta-napishtim guards the entrance to the Cedar Forest.
C. Uta-napishtim survived a flood and was granted immortality.
D. Uta-napishtim is the double the gods created to challenge Gilgamesh.

Correct answer: C. Uta-napishtim survived a flood and was granted immortality.
The flood survivor is already immortal. Gilgamesh seeks him because he hopes to learn how a human can escape death.

12. In Book 10 of Homer’s Odyssey, why does Hermes give Odysseus the plant called moly before he visits Circe?

A. To make him fall asleep before reaching her house
B. To protect him from falling under Circe’s spell
C. To bind the winds for his homeward voyage
D. To help him remember the names of his companions

Correct answer: B. To protect him from falling under Circe’s spell
Hermes tells Odysseus how to face Circe and supplies moly to counter her magic. The plant lets Odysseus resist the treatment that turned members of his crew into pigs.

13. A visitor labels a funerary papyrus from ancient Egypt ‘a story of how its owner gained the throne.’ The papyrus instead shows the deceased owner appearing before Osiris. What revision fits the object’s purpose?

A. The scene describes making a statue for a living ruler.
B. The scene documents a real election of the owner.
C. The scene names the owner as the first emperor of Egypt.
D. The scene concerns the owner’s passage into the afterlife.

Correct answer: D. The scene concerns the owner’s passage into the afterlife.
The Book of the Dead supplied texts and images connected with the afterlife. This judgment scene shows the deceased undergoing a test, rather than acquiring political office.

14. Two medieval sources give different details about a Norse episode. Which label would best describe the version in Snorri Sturluson’s Gylfaginning?

A. Name Snorri’s work and attribute the details to that account.
B. Treat the printed date of a modern edition as the date the story began.
C. State that the same details appear in every Norse account.
D. Attribute the account to a named Viking eyewitness without evidence.

Correct answer: A. Name Snorri’s work and attribute the details to that account.
Surviving Norse myths are preserved in multiple sources, including medieval Icelandic texts. Naming the source lets readers see where the particular details come from.

15. Imhotep’s papyrus depicts judgment after death. The Met’s account of Gilgamesh ends with the king returning to Uruk and considering its wall after seeking immortality. How do the works address mortality differently?

A. The papyrus concerns a city wall, while the epic weighs the king’s heart before Osiris.
B. Both works end by identifying the spell that makes the main character immortal.
C. The papyrus concerns the deceased’s judgment, while the epic directs attention to the living ruler’s accomplishments.
D. Both works chiefly describe how to reach the Cedar Forest.

Correct answer: C. The papyrus concerns the deceased’s judgment, while the epic directs attention to the living ruler’s accomplishments.
Imhotep’s papyrus presents a ritual connected with the afterlife. The epic moves from the failed search for eternal life toward what Gilgamesh has built and done in Uruk.