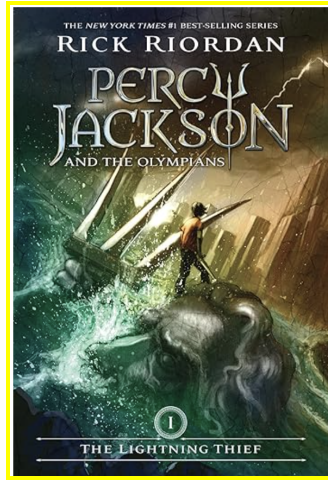


Weatherford Christian School
Grade 8 Summer Reading 2026
Teacher: Penny Fell (penny.fell@wcslions.org)



Just as physical exercise keeps our bodies healthy and in shape, reading and responding to literature will keep our reading skills sharp! The research is clear: kids who continue to read and think about books experience a gain in reading skills instead of a loss over the summer months. To encourage continued growth, you will earn your first test grade by reading a novel and completing an in-depth assignment over the summer.

Step 1: [ORDER A HARD COPY AND READ *THE LIGHTNING THIEF* BY RICK RIORDAN](#)

The Lightning Thief is the first book in Rick Riordan's thrilling middle grade series, filled with magic, Greek mythology, and plenty of monsters. Percy Jackson is about to be kicked out of boarding school . . . again. And that's the least of his troubles. Lately, mythological monsters and the gods of Mount Olympus seem to be walking straight out of the pages of Percy's Greek mythology textbook and into his life. And worse, he's angered a few of them: Zeus's master lightning bolt has been stolen, and Percy is the prime suspect.

Now Percy and his friends have just ten days to find and return Zeus's stolen property and bring peace to a warring Mount Olympus. But to succeed in his quest, Percy will have to do more than catch the true thief: he must come to terms with the father who abandoned him; solve the riddle of the Oracle, which warns him of betrayal by a friend; and unravel a treachery more powerful than the gods themselves.

With millions of copies and over 10 years spent on the *New York Times* bestseller list, Percy has also become a movie, a Broadway musical, and now a Disney+ series. He continues to find fans in classrooms and libraries across the world. **Though you may have already read this novel, you will want to be reading and analyzing it this summer for specific purposes outlined in step 2 of your summer reading assignment.**

Step 2: COMPLETE THE ASSIGNMENT BELOW- Character Analysis, Journal Entries, and Reflection

As you read, it is your job to choose **ONE character** and write **5 journal entries** from that character's perspective across the novel.

Character Choices (choose one): Percy, Annabeth, Grover

This assignment is designed to: develop sustained critical thinking through a single narrative voice; build understanding of Greek mythology; track character development over time; and encourage thoughtful comparison between mythological and biblical worldviews.

Journal Requirements

Each entry should:

- Be **1–2 paragraphs (10-20 sentences total per entry)**
- Be written in **first person (“I”)**
- Focus on a **different key moment in the story**
- Show how the character's thoughts or understanding change over time

Timeline for Entries

- **Entry #1 Beginning** – A moment of confusion, fear, or discovery
- **Entry #2 Early Conflict** – A challenge or decision
- **Entry #3 Midpoint** – A turning point in the journey
- **Entry #4 Climax** – A major moment of tension or realization
- **Entry #5 Resolution** – Reflection after the main conflict is resolved

What to Include in Each Entry

1. **Accurate Story Details-** Clearly connect to a real event in the book
2. **Consistent Character Voice-** Reflect the personality, strengths, and weaknesses of the character
3. **Emotional and Moral Reflection-** What is the character struggling with? What choice must they make?
4. **Growth Over Time-** Show how the character changes from Entry 1 to Entry 5
5. **Textual Evidence (Required)-** Include **at least one direct quotation from the novel** in each entry. The quote must be **blended naturally into the writing**, not dropped in randomly.

Example of Proper Integration:

I couldn't believe what was happening at Camp Half-Blood. As I tried to make sense of everything, I kept thinking about how “*the real world is*

where the monsters are,” and for the first time, I realized I might actually belong here (Riordan 105).

Essential Questions- Students should keep these in mind as they read and write:

Understanding Greek Mythology

- What gods, goddesses, and mythological figures are introduced, and what are their powers, roles, and personalities?
- How does the novel portray the behavior and character of the Greek gods?

Theme & Literary Analysis

- What themes (such as courage, loyalty, identity, or sacrifice) are developed throughout the novel?
- How do the character’s choices shape the outcome of the story?

Worldview Comparison

- What does the novel suggest about the nature of the gods and their relationship with humans?
- In what ways does Greek mythology in the story conflict with biblical truth about God’s nature (e.g., His character, authority, and relationship with humanity)?
- Are there any values in the story that align with biblical teaching?

Final Reflection (1 page, typed)

Students will respond to:

- How did your chosen character grow throughout the story?
- What did you learn about Greek mythology?
- What are the most important differences between the gods in the novel and the God of the Bible?
- Why is it important to understand belief systems that differ from your own?

Expectations

- Writing should be thoughtful, clear, and text-based
- Maintain a respectful and academic tone when discussing worldview differences
- Demonstrate effort in both creativity and analysis

Learning Greek Mythology Through *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan

Here is a checklist of the different gods, goddesses, mythical figures, and mythological ideas you are exposed to when reading *The Lightning Thief*. **You may find it helpful to mark the page numbers on this sheet as you encounter them in the text. It will help you in your one-page reflection.**

Major Olympian Gods (the “Big Twelve” focus)

These are the central gods students learn about, especially because Percy is directly tied to one of them:

- Zeus — King of the gods; controls the sky and thunder. His stolen lightning bolt drives the main conflict.
- Poseidon — God of the sea; Percy’s father.
- Hades — God of the Underworld; initially suspected of stealing the lightning bolt.
- Athena — Goddess of wisdom; Annabeth’s mother.
- Ares — God of war; plays a role in challenging Percy during his quest.
- Hermes — Messenger god; associated with travelers and thieves.
- Dionysus — God of wine; runs Camp Half-Blood (as “Mr. D”).
- Hestia — Goddess of hearth and home; briefly referenced in the mythological structure of the world.

Key Mythological Figures & Monsters

These come directly from classical myths but are modernized in the story:

- Medusa — A gorgon whose gaze turns people to stone; Percy encounters her in disguise.
- Minotaur — Half-man, half-bull monster Percy fights early in the story.
- Chiron — A wise centaur who trains demigods at Camp Half-Blood.
- Furies — Underworld spirits who punish the wicked; appear as pursuers of Percy.
- Chimera — A fire-breathing hybrid monster Percy battles during his quest.
- Echidna — The “Mother of Monsters,” who sends creatures like the Chimera against Percy.
- Oracle of Delphi — The prophetic voice at Camp Half-Blood that gives quests.

Big Mythological Ideas Students Learn

Beyond specific characters, students also learn core Greek mythology concepts:

- The existence of demigods (half-god, half-human children of gods)

- The power struggles among the Olympians
- The Underworld and its rules (especially tied to Hades)
- The idea of quests driven by fate and prophecy
- How ancient myths explain natural forces and human behavior

Rubric 1: Character Journal Entries (5 Entries Total)

Criteria	Full Credit Expectations	Points
Accurate Story Details & Comprehension	Each entry clearly reflects an accurate event from the novel. Events are specific, correctly sequenced, and demonstrate strong understanding of plot developments across all five stages (Beginning, Early Conflict, Midpoint, Climax, Resolution).	15 pts
Character Voice Consistency (First Person Perspective)	Writing consistently sounds like the chosen character (Percy, Annabeth, or Grover). Voice reflects personality traits, worldview, and emotional tendencies throughout all entries. No shift into author voice or out-of-character thinking.	15 pts
Textual Evidence Integration (Required Quotes)	Each journal entry includes at least one correctly integrated direct quotation from the novel (total of 5 quotes). Quotes are smoothly embedded into sentences and properly connected to the character's thoughts (not dropped in or isolated).	15 pts
Emotional & Moral Reflection	Entries show thoughtful insight into what the character is feeling, questioning, or struggling with. Includes moral decision-making, internal conflict, or personal reactions to events in a meaningful way (not just summary).	10 pts
Growth Over Time (Character Development)	Clear progression is shown from Entry 1 to Entry 5. The character's beliefs, confidence, understanding, or relationships meaningfully change over time and are explicitly reflected in writing.	10 pts
Writing Quality & Conventions	Writing is clear, organized, and easy to follow. Minimal grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. Each entry meets length requirement (1–2 paragraphs, 10–20 sentences).	5 pts

Notes:	____ /70 pts
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Rubric 2: ONE-PAGE REFLECTION (30 Points)

Criteria	Full Credit Expectations	Points
Character Development Analysis	Clearly explains how the chosen character changed throughout the novel. Uses specific examples from the story and journal entries to support claims about growth, decisions, and transformation.	10 pts
Greek Mythology Understanding	Demonstrates accurate understanding of key mythological figures, gods, and concepts from <i>The Lightning Thief</i> . References ideas such as demigods, prophecy, quests, and Olympian roles with accuracy.	6 pts
Worldview Comparison (Greek Mythology vs. Biblical Truth)	Thoughtfully compares the portrayal of Greek gods with the biblical view of God. Identifies meaningful differences in character, authority, morality, and human relationship, while maintaining a respectful academic tone.	8 pts
Depth of Thought & Critical Thinking	Reflection goes beyond surface-level responses. Shows insight, thoughtful reasoning, and personal engagement with themes such as identity, belief systems, and worldview differences. Avoids vague or overly general statements.	4 pts
Writing Quality & Organization	Writing is clear, well-organized, and follows standard conventions. Ideas flow logically. One-page length requirement is met. Minimal grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors.	2 pts

Notes:

____/ 30 pts