



30-Second Mythology: The 50 Most Important Greek and Roman Myths, Monsters, Heroes and Gods, Each Explained in Half a Minute

Robert A. Segal (Editor)

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What did Hercules do to deserve his twelve labors? How did Narcissus find the love of his life? And why did Odysseus take ten years to travel 500 miles? You might recall such epic events, but do you know them well enough to brighten up dinner party discussions with tales of gods and monsters?

30-Second Mythology sets out the most significant details and unravels the underlying meaning of the greatest classical myths. Revealing the origins of the gods, heroes, and monsters of ancient Greece and Rome, the book outlines the key aspects of their stories for the general reader in half a minute, using nothing more than two pages, 300 words, and one picture. Featuring detailed biographies of the seven greatest poets and playwrights of the ancient world, 30-Second Mythology explains the enduring influence of ancient myth in the blink of a Cyclops' eye.

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From Reader Review 30-Second Mythology: The 50 Most Important Greek and Roman Myths, Monsters, Heroes and Gods, Each Explained in Half a Minute for online ebook

Emma-Louise Gale says

fun and interesting. absolutely loved it!

Casey Cassidy says

Very basic, but very informative. Also had the various myths of how something could of happened and not just the most common or popular. If you're looking for something more in depth, I'd go straight to the original sources. But this is helpful for fact checking, if you'd need to do so.

Alex says

Yay mythology!

Morganas BookBox says

Not a bad book when you want a super quick introduction in Greek Mythology. I bought this book for my daughter because she had to do research for a specific Greek God and this book actually helped her alot with her assignment.

My daughter had fun.. I liked the book. But would I say it's worth the purchase?

I would definitely recommend this book for people who aren't interested in diving too deep into Greek Mythology. If you want to skim the surface then this book is definitely worth it.

For anyone else: I would suggest reading other books that are more informative.

Madison (life uh finds a way) says

This book is a great way to get information on Greek/Roman myths without the loads of books you need to read through. This is a quick and easy yet informative and educational read. I really enjoyed it.

Donna says

Great reference book to have on hand!

Turtle says

This is a great book to pick up if you need a refresher on your greek mythology. The artwork is a little lacking when it comes to other books but it's tolerable. And the little blurbs about each person/place/complex are concise and informative. I enjoyed reading this book and am sure to keep it around if ever I need to look up some mythology in the future. But if you want something more than just the basics then you might want to look for a more in depth book.

Jb says

The moment I picked up 30-second Mythology, edited by Robert A. Segal I knew I had to read it. It was the perfect opportunity to read about Greek heroes, gods, myths and monsters in under a minute! Rather than being an endless encyclopedia, this book provides a quick fun and entertaining summary of everything you need to know when one has a free minute. The tone of this book is light and casual as the author briefly describes the subject of the page. For all those who have busy schedules but like to learn a new thing every day or are young readers, Thirty Second Mythology provides a nonfiction, informative yet entertaining way to learn Greek mythology.

This book is written by multiple contributors being Viv Croot, Susan Deacy, Emma Griffiths, William Hansen, Geoffrey Miles. Barry B. Powell and editor Robert A.Segal. All of them are well-trusted authors and professors- making this book very credible with well-trusted facts. For example, one of the contributors, Viv Croot is also known as the author of Vampire Diaries as well as eight other books (Goodreads). Susan Deacy is a principal lecturer at the University of Roehampton as well as an author of three other books (Higher Education Academy). Emma Griffiths is a lecturer in Greek classics at the University of Manchester (University of Manchester). William Hansen as Oxford University Reports "William Hansen is the professor of Classical Studies and Folklore as well as co-director in Mythology Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington"(Oxford University Press). All these minds coming together make an excellent educational guide to Greek mythology that pops out on every page.

As said. Thirty Second Mythology is a book with the goal to educate their audience in an engaging way. The way the authors achieve this is through a color scheme, the layout (structure) of their information and imagery. To keep the reader be engaged for thirty seconds reading the page, the author employs color scheme and layout of his information. The book is divided into several parts: Creation, Olympians, Monsters, Geography, Heroes, Tragic figures, and Legacy. Each section is color coded for example Creation is yellow ochre, Olympians is an olive green, monsters are a Naples yellow, monsters is a dusty rose pink etc. By doing so, the colors contrast with the white and black writing which serves to make the information pop out. Though it is used to make the information pop out, the author is careful to not make them too bright but rather dull muted colors so as not to distract the reader. The information is also chopped up. The summary is placed in the middle as the focus of the page detailing the story of the subject. Then after one reads the summary, other snit-bits of information are available for the reader such as a 30-second muse, 3-minute

odyssey, related myth, 30-second biographies and thirty-second text. All information presents itself as 'did you know facts'. This serves the purpose to be a short reading to educate in an interesting way. Lastly, the author covers the entire right side of the book with imagery of the subject being detailed which is perfect for any young audience for them to glance at the information and the pictures.

The second way that the authors achieve their goal of making an informative yet entertaining guide to Greek mythology is by their writer's tone. Rather than simply report the facts, the authors tell a story, and the way they do that is through a humorous and casual tone. For example, the author says, "Cerberus had an impressive pedigree. He as the offspring of two of the most feared monsters in myth"(Segal). As Cerberus-the monstrous dog that guarded the dead is described, the author starts out with a hook that draws the audience in. It is almost humorous that the author would describe such a dog as 'having an impressive pedigree'. This casual calm tone keeps the reader flowing by each sentence- acquiring the main message or idea of the subject without having to stop and reread all the details like a textbook would. Another example can be seen in their description of Icarus in the three-second muse. It says, "The Icarian Sea probably got its name from the nearby island of Icaria, but how Icaria acquired its name is anybody's guess"(Segal). Rather than say, something uninteresting like 'how Icaria got its name has no documentation to lead to a clear answer', the author's tone is humorous and casual which is applied for the intended audience which is the young or those who want a quick and easy guide to mythology. Lastly, the authors' tone captivated the reader in the summary on the Harpies as the authors say, "For Hesiod, they are goddesses of the scudding storm clouds, "lovely-haired, "keeping pace" on their swift wings with the blasts of the winds and the birds." Later the nastier implications of the name "Snatchers" take over" (Segal). Just one word, nasty, a word almost on the verge of being slang for its informal connotation. The author's diction is hardly upkeeping with any traditional, factual book but yet it is those words that keep the reader engaged and laughing. The contrast between the beauty and the 'nastiness' certainly emphasizes the authors' humorous tone. The last way the author makes their book intriguing and still yet educational is through its glossary, introduction, and appendix. At the beginning of the book; specifically on page 12 the book provides a glossary which the reader can refer back to when encountering specific references in the text such as the adamantine sickle or woods like cosmogony. Each of the references listed includes where to find more information such as when the author says, "The most commonly referred to adamantine sickle in classical mythology is that made by Gaia and given to Cronus..."(Segal 12). By mentioning Gaia and Cronus, the reader can easily infer where the terminology will be found in the text which provides more clarity for the reader to learn with ease. For when the reader wants more detailed information, the author provides background information in the introduction. The introduction goes into detail about the meaning of the word myth, key questions, theoretical shifts and enduring appeals which all detail the influences that surround the creation of myth. This helps the reader keep in mind how every story relates back to some meaning, moral or explanation of creation. Lastly, the appendices add to the overall credibility of the book. The author's section out what books, websites, and library collections they have and every citation involve trusty sources like The Cambridge Companion to Greek Mythology by Roger D. Woodward. The authors also include a page detailing their credentials which shows the reader that the information provided is trustworthy. All this contributes to the overall clarity and credibility of the book which is necessary for any reader wanting to learn quickly.

This book is a perfect opportunity to learn Greek mythology on the fly while still being educational and entertaining. The way the author achieves this goal is through how he structures the book by managing color, layout, and placing of information. The contributors also use a humorous and calm tone to engage their reader and lastly, the glossary, introduction, and appendix provide exceptional clarity, background, and credibility to the novel. For audiences who are either young or those who really don't have a lot of time, 30 Second Mythology allows all to learn mythology with plenty of time to spare while also being so entertaining and educational that you might want to spend a little more than 30 seconds reading it.

Works Cited:

Segal, Robert Alan, et al. 30-Second Mythology: the 50 Most Important Classical Myths, Monsters, Heroes & Gods, Each Explained in Half a Minute. Ivy Press, 2017.

“Books by Viv Croot (Author of The Original Vampire Diaries).” Goodreads, Goodreads, www.goodreads.com/author/list/249954.....

“Dr Susan Deacy.” Higher Education Academy, www.heacademy.ac.uk/person/dr-susan-d....

“Dr Emma Griffiths.” Standing out as One of the Crowd - Citation Formats | Research Explorer | The University of Manchester, V&A Publishing, www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/....

Etienne says

Sans doute le livre de cette collection qui m'en a le moins appris. Je croyais, puisque le titre indique seulement la mythologie, qu'on toucherait à toutes les mythologies, alors qu'en fait on n'y parle que de la mythologie grecque, la plus connue, et de ses parallèles avec la mythologie romaine. On y mentionne quelques petites allusions à des dieux d'autres cultures et d'autres mythologies, mais quelques lignes seulement dans tout le livre. Une des rares fois où cette collection m'a déçu. Le livre demeure bien fait et bien structuré et il pourrait être bien pour ceux qui ne connaissent absolument rien à la mythologie grecque.

Daniel says

This is a challenging book to rate, thus, I will leave it unrated. It is, on the whole, a good broad introduction to Graeco-Roman myth, filled with nuggets of wisdom and occasions for insight. But, it has a good number of typos, including one contending that the Thebes for which the Seven strove was in Egypt.

I likely would not have bought the book had my eyes not lingered on it as I waited in line at a Barnes & Noble in Manhattan Beach; this guide sat on a discount table. Sometimes, it seems more like a series of web-pages printed out and bound together in a book, with the "3-second biographies" on the page of a particular topic like the links we see on the margins of a web-page.

All that said, it is easily accessible. Perhaps others will see this discounted volume on discount tables at bookstores across the country and find that it spurs them to read more about these great and enduring characters, stories and themes. And that would be a good thing. A very good thing.

Norman S says

Good quick overview of a selection of key deities and places, nice coffee table book to have lying around. The last section on psychological concepts seemed pretty weak, but it just made me want to read more in the field of psychology.

Twii says

A fun, and fairly easy to understand book that gives a quick glimpse into Greek mythos. Worth a read!

Alina says

Dieses Buch will dem Leser einen kurzen Überblick über die wichtigsten Götter und Geschichten geben. Das Buch ist in verschiedene Bereiche aufgeteilt (z.B. die Schöpfung, Geografie, Helden, Olympier usw.) und zwischendurch gibt es immer mal wieder kurze Biografien über wichtige Personen der Antike (Homer, Ovid, Sophokles usw.) aus verschiedenen Bereichen.

Es gibt sehr viele bunte Bilder und Zeichnungen die alles auflockern.

Ich fand die Struktur super. Es gibt die 30 Sekunden Mythologie, wo ein Überblick der Mythe gegeben wird, dann ein 3 Sekunden Überblick wo in zwei, drei Sätzen alles zusammengefasst wird sowie eine 3 Minuten Perspektive die dann noch weiterführend auf andere Themenbereiche zu geht (Kunst oder Politik z.B).

Was ich richtig toll fand, war die Auflistung der Verwandten Mythen aus anderen Ländern oder Kulturen sowie eine Auflistung der Verwandten mythologischen Figuren wie Vater oder Mutter.

Insgesamt ist dies ein gutes Nachschlagewerk um sich in Erinnerung zu rufen welche Person welche Rolle in der antiken Mythologie spielt. Negativ ist aber die Tatsache, das man auf jeden Fall Hintergrundwissen benötigt. Glücklicherweise kannte ich die Mythen fast alle und hatte keine Probleme die ganzen Namen und Geschichten auseinander zu halten. Für Neulinge in dem Thema ist dieses Sachbuch allerdings nicht gut geeignet. Da es kaum Hintergrundwissen sowie die Geschichte der Mythologie gibt. Auch die Reihenfolge der auftretenden Mythen ist nicht chronologisch.

Alles in allem ist dies nur als Nachschlagewerk der wichtigsten Mythen zu beachten und sollte keineswegs als Einführung und das Thema "Mythologie" angesehen werden. Hat man das nötige Hintergrundwissen, so erwartet einen ein sehr schön und strukturiert aufgemachtes Buch.

Nessa [October Tune] says

Read this review, and many more on my blog October Tune!

30 Second Mythology is exactly what it says, a book where you can learn about Greek and Roman mythology in under thirty seconds (per page/paragraph of course, you won't get through the entire book in thirty seconds). I got a similar book last year for Christmas, 30 Second J.R.R. Tolkien, and though I liked it, I wouldn't say it was the best biography I read about the author. Same with 30 Second Mythology.

What I liked:

Everything was divided neatly. There was a section where they talked about how the whole mythology thing happened in the first place, the 'Creation'. Then there was a section about the Olympians; Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, etc. A section about their enemies, the monsters, like Medusa, the Minotaur and Polyphemus. There was also a part about how the world looked like, with Olympus, the Underworld, Tartarus, and so forth. A part about the heroes; Hercules, Odysseus; and a part about the 'tragic figures', like Oedipus, Jason, Icarus.

I liked reading about everything, but I did find the little pieces – one page per subject – a bit too short. Of course, a book like this is not the best way of learning more about mythology, but hey, I couldn't help it. I love mythology and I would love to read every book about it (it would probably take me years and years though). My favourite parts was reading about how everyone cheated on everyone. I think almost every God and Goddess had children with either mortals, other Gods (than the ones they were married to) and even other creatures.

What I didn't like:

Like I said before, the passages per subject were in my opinion too short. They could have easily explained it a bit more, like in the Tolkien book, and added only small pictures. Now, there was one page where you could read about the subject, and one page filled with a large picture (of a painting, a statue, etc). That was a bit of a shame.

And also my biggest dislike about this book, is that it's only about Greek and Roman mythology. Since I've watched Thor, I have been a huge fan of the Norse Mythology, and I would just love to read a book like this completely about that. Unfortunately, Norse Mythology is not as popular as Greek or Roman is, but I just hope that some day people will realise that it is awesome!

Conclusion:

I liked 30 Second Mythology. It's a good way of learning about the most important parts of Greek and Roman mythology. Of course, it's not the best book to be learning about the Mythologies, but it gives you a good insight of what it's like. If you want to learn more about mythologies, and you don't know where to start (or you don't feel like reading a big book about it), I'd suggest you pick up 30 Second Mythology!

Jovy says

Handy book to have for immediate myth reference. It's like the Game of Thrones Companion app on your iPhone just in case you forgot something. Very easy to read. The title of the book is also justified.

This book contains information about the 12 Olympians, the gods and goddesses before the Olympians, mythological monsters and places, and how the gods and goddesses are related to each other.
