

Athena

Vocabulary Words

1. **handicraft** - a skilled activity in which something is made in a traditional way with the hands rather than being produced by machines in a factory, or an object made by such an activity.
Example: The huge market, which runs from December 1-30, is noted for superb local food specialties and handicrafts.
2. **myth** - an ancient story or set of stories, especially explaining the early history of a group of people or about natural events and facts: ancient myths
Example: The children enjoyed the stories about the gods and goddesses of Greek and Roman myth.
3. **bounteous** - large or generous in amount
Example: Piled high in a glorious display of showmanship, we like to think their bounteous beauty is a metaphor for the richness of life.
4. **patron** - a person or group that supports an activity or organization, especially by giving money
Example: The Princess Royal is a well-known patron of several charities.
5. **armor** - strong covering that protects something, especially the body
Example: Police put on body armor before confronting the rioters.



In ancient Greek mythology Athena was the goddess of war, wisdom, and **handicrafts**. She was one of the 12 gods believed to live on Mount Olympus. Athena's symbols were the olive tree (representing peace) and the owl (representing wisdom).

The olive tree was the symbol of Athens, the city for which Athena was a protector. According to **myth**, Athena achieved this status by winning a contest Zeus held between her and Poseidon. Standing on the site of the Acropolis, the two were asked to offer the people of Athens a gift.

Poseidon struck his trident on the rock and produced a salt spring. Athena, however, produced a beautiful and **bounteous** olive tree. The Athenians chose Athena's gift, and Athena was made **patron** goddess of the city.

The owl, on the other hand, is considered Athena's sacred animal, the source of her wisdom and judgment. It is telling, too, that the animal most associated with her has such exceptional night vision, symbolizing Athena's ability to "see" when others cannot.

According to legend, Athena was the favorite daughter of Zeus, the chief god. She was said to have sprung from his head fully grown and clothed in a suit of **armor**. Athena was very different from the war god Ares, who was a powerful fighter. Athena used her great wisdom to advise soldiers during wartime. She believed that war should be used only to protect people and to provide justice.

Discussion

1. Which do you think is a better representation of Athena, the olive tree or the owl?
2. Is there a similar figure in your country? Tell me about it.
3. Who can you compare to Athena today?
4. What is the importance of giving advice?
5. Do you believe that war should only be used to protect people? Why?