

**Q:** Did Greek mythology start with Homer?

**A:** The constitution of Greek mythology and its pantheon of gods did not start with Homer; however, his epic poems greatly influenced and shaped Greek mythological narratives for subsequent generations. Before Homer, myths of gods and goddesses were transmitted through an oral tradition. During the Geometric period of Greek art, many Greeks became literate. At the same time, Homer, who probably lived around the eighth century BC (we are not completely sure), was creating his epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. His poems were thereafter written down and were very influential in helping to form the body of what we know today as Greek mythology.

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**Q:** What is the relationship between Greek history and Greek mythology?

**A:** Many Greeks probably thought of what we call “mythology” as their “history,” though it is a little unclear to exactly what extent. Historians have found links between Greek history and Greek mythology that suggest that many myths are rooted in historical events. The foundational myth of the Trojan wars, for example, may parallel conflicts and events of the twelfth century BC.

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