**Zeus**

Zeus was the king of the Greek gods who lived on Mount Olympus. He was the god of the sky and thunder.

Appearance and Personality

Zeus was strong and imposing, with long, oftentimes curly hair.

He is often described as a strong, imposing man with a regal body and long, often curly, hair. He usually had a short beard or scruff and carried his trusty thunderbolt at all times. Most of the time, Zeus is depicted as a grown man with beard and longer curly hair, holding a sceptre or thunderbolt and is sometimes accompanied with eagle, his sacred animal

Zeus was carefree and loved to laugh out loud[[1]](http://www.greek-gods.info/greek-gods/zeus/). He possessed the perfect knowledge and was just, merciful and prudent. However, he was rather unpredictable, since no one could guess the decisions he would make.

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| **Powers (and Symbols)**  Zeus - most powerful of the Greek gods and had a number of powers.  Most famous power - ability to throw lighting bolts - hurls at those who displease him.  His winged horse Pegasus carried his lighting bolts  trained an eagle to retrieve them.  Could also control the [weather](http://www.ducksters.com/science/dangerous_weather.php) causing rain and huge storms.  Other powers.  Could mimic people's voices to sound like anyone.  Could also shape shift so that he looked like an animal or a person.  If people made him angry, would turn them into animals as punishment.  His symbols include the lightning bolt, the eagle, the bull, and the oak tree. He was married to the goddess Hera.  Roles and Responsibilities  Zeus had his golden throne on the highest summit of [Mount Olympus](http://www.greek-gods.info/ancient-greece/mount-olympus/) and was respected and awed by all Gods and mortals. All the kings boasted that they descended from Zeus.  Zeus was the "Lord of Justice", punishing anyone who lied or broke an oath, but was fair and always striving to keep a balance of all things. Furthermore, Zeus was responsible for the weather and was shaping it according to his temper. When in high spirits, Zeus was blessing the world with fine weather; in case of bad mood, however, he would throw rain, winds, lightning and thunderbolts to cause disaster to the mortals.  But even Zeus' powers had their limits, for, however powerful as he was, he had neither the right nor the ability to intervene in the decisions of the [Fates](http://www.greek-gods.info/ancient-greek-gods/fates/).  Symbols  The symbols of Zeus were the **scepter**, the **throne** and the **thunderbolt**, which was as a gift from the [Cyclopes](http://www.greek-gods.info/monsters/cyclopes/) because he liberated them. Zeus' tree was the **oak tree** and his sacred animal was the **eagle**. |  |

**Brothers and Sisters**   
  
Had several bothers and sisters who were also powerful gods and goddesses.

was the youngest, but the most powerful of three brothers.

oldest brother was Hades who ruled the Underworld.

other brother was Poseidon, god of the sea.

three sisters including Hestia, Demeter, and Hera (who he married).   
  
**Children**   
  
Zeus had a number of children.

Some children were Olympic gods such as Ares, Apollo, Artemis, Athena, Aphrodite, Hermes and Dionysus.

also had some children who were half human and were heroes such as [Hercules](http://www.ducksters.com/history/ancient_greece/hercules.php) and Perseus.

Other famous children include the Muses, the Graces, and Helen of Troy.   
  
**How did Zeus become king of the gods?**   
  
Zeus was the sixth child of the Titan gods Cronus and Rhea. Zeus' father Cronus was worried that his children would become too powerful so he ate his first five children. They didn't die, but they couldn't get out of his stomach either!

Rhea had Zeus, hid him from Cronus and Zeus was raised in the forest by Nymphs.   
  
Zeus grew older - he wanted to rescue his brothers and sisters.

He got a special potion, disguised himself so Cronus would not recognize him.

Cronus drank the potion, he coughed up his five children - Hades, Poseidon, Demeter, Hera, and Hestia.   
  
Cronus and the Titans were angry. They battled Zeus and his brothers and sisters for years. Zeus set the giants and Cyclopes of Earth free to help him fight. They gave the Olympians weapons to fight the Titans. Zeus got thunder and lighting, Poseidon got a powerful trident, and Hades a helm that made him invisible. The Titans surrendered and Zeus had them locked deep underground.   
  
Now Zeus was the most powerful of all the gods.

He and his fellow gods went to live on Mount Olympus.

Zeus married Hera and ruled over the gods and humans.   
  
**Interesting Facts about Zeus**

* The Olympics were held each year by the Greeks in honor of Zeus.
* Zeus originally married the Titan Metis, but grew worried that she would have a son that was stronger than him. So he swallowed her and married Hera.
* Zeus sided with the Trojans in the Trojan War, however, his wife Hera sided with the Greeks.
* He had a powerful shield called the Aegis.

Zeus was also the keeper of oaths. He punished those who lied or made dishonest business deals.

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| |  | | --- | | Zeus was the king of the gods. He and his brothers Hades and Poseidon were in charge of the whole universe. Hades ruled the Underworld, the world of the dead. Poseidon ruled the seas. Zeus, the greatest of the three, ruled the earth and the sky. He controlled the weather, causing wind and rain. He also caused thunder and lightning. He threw his thunderbolt like a spear.  Zeus was a good reminder that the gods were not perfect. For one thing, he was not all-powerful. His daughters, the three Fates, decided the futures of both gods and mortals. Zeus couldn’t overrule their decisions.  And although Zeus was often wise, he could also be foolish. He could be selfish and even cruel. He was not a good husband to Hera, the queen of the gods. And he was not a good father to many of his children. Not surprisingly, the other gods sometimes rebelled against his rule.  Still, most gods and mortals respected Zeus. He gave laws and justice to mortals. He taught them kindness and good manners. One story shows how much Zeus prized hospitality and kindness toward strangers.  Zeus liked to travel, sometimes in disguise. Once he was traveling with his son Hermes, the messenger god, in a land called Phrygia. They were both disguised as ordinary mortal men. They stopped at all the houses in Phrygia, asking for food and a place to stay the night. Time and time again, they were rudely turned away. Even rich people turned them away.  At last they arrived at the home of an elderly couple, a woman named Baucis and a man named Philemon. Baucis and Philemon were extremely poor. Even so, they treated the travellers kindly, inviting them into their home for food and drink. They allowed the disguised gods to spend the night.  The next day, Hermes and Zeus took off their disguises. Everyone could see that they were gods. Zeus punished the couple’s Phrygian neighbours with a terrible flood. All houses were destroyed, except the little hut of Baucis and Philemon. Zeus turned it into a beautiful temple.   As a reward for their kindness, Zeus offered the couple anything that they wanted. Because they had lived happily together all their lives, they asked never to be parted. Even in death they wanted to remain together. Baucis and Philemon spent the rest of their lives serving as the temple’s priestess and priest. When they died they turned into two trees growing out of the same trunk.  **Here are some interesting facts about Zeus’s story:**  •Weather seemed even more mysterious in ancient times than it does today. It’s no surprise that the god who controlled the weather was the most powerful god of all.  •Lightning and thunder were especially puzzling to ancient people. Many cultures have had gods of thunder and lightning. In Norse mythology, it was Thor. To the Finns, it was Ukko. To the Aztecs, it was Tlaloc.  •In ancient times, travel was difficult and dangerous. Travellers depended on the kindness of people they met along the way. The Greeks even had a word for kindness toward strangers and travellers. They called it xenios. | |