

A **myth** is a story containing within and having about it certain identifiable characteristics. These are, specifically, that:

- It is a religious story — no matter from which culture — and will therefore involve the existence and activities of a supernatural being, such as a god, a demigod, a goddess, or several such entities;
- It will seek to explain at least some aspect of the origin or manner of things (where people came from, how rainbows first came to be, why whales have blow spouts, why people and animals feel hunger) if not of the very universe itself;
- It is not an isolated tale but connects up in some significant way with other similar stories within a culture, involving other deities who collectively form a pantheon;
- Its authorship is communally shared, that is, attributable to no single person, and it came into existence through oral tradition, and therefore usually has more than one version;
- It is believed to be essentially true by those in the society for whom it is one part of a cultural mythology.