

Creation Story Summaries (for Creation Card Game)

Many cultures use creation stories to explain where humans and gods came from and why the world is the way it is. These examples of ancient stories highlight common themes in creation stories. These summaries are drawn from larger stories that often exist in multiple versions within their traditions. Studying them can help us identify possible influences between traditions and can highlight common themes and differences.

See www.bigmyth.com for more information and additional stories.

Multiple modes of play are possible – solo play putting each story in the correct order, set play in which players trade cards to complete a set, and creative play in which players create their own stories based on randomly selected cards. Students can also select cards to highlight common themes or differences between stories.

Israel

- In the beginning ...The earth was formless and void
- And God said, “Let there be...” ... “And it was good” (6 times)
- Male & Female were created in God’s Image
- And it was very good ... God rested on the 7th Day
- It is not good for the man to be alone: Eve was formed from Adam’s rib
- Snake + Apple + Eve (& Adam) = Sin

Babylon

- Apsu (Sweet Water) and Tiamat (Salt Water) Mingled
- Ea and his brothers kept the other gods awake
- Ea killed Apsu so Tiamat created monsters and went to war
- Marduk cut Tiamat in half and used the two halves to make sky and dry land
- Marduk ruled the universe and created the sun, moon, and stars
- Humans were made from the bones of dead monsters so the gods wouldn’t have to work

Egypt

- Atum created himself out of Nu (chaos)
- Atum joined with his shadow to form Shu and Tefnut
- Shu and Tefnut separated Chaos into order (Maat)
- Shu and Tefnut created other gods but got lost in darkness
- Atum used his all-seeing eye to find Shu and Tefnut. He wept with joy
- Atum’s tears became humans who tend the earth, worship the gods, and uphold Maat

Sumeria

- Before time began there was darkness and Nammu, the sea
- Enlil (air) separated his parents, Heaven and Earth, and created the sun and moon
- The gods got drunk and tried to create humans who were flawed
- The gods decided to destroy these first humans in a flood
- Enki, the sea god, warned Ziusudra to build an ark to survive the flood

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- Ziusudra's wife gave birth to new people who lived by the Tigris & Euphrates rivers

Greece

- Gaia (Earth) was formed from Chaos and gave birth to her husband Uranus (Sky)
- Uranus hid his monster children deep in the earth so his son Kronos killed him
- Kronos created the people of the Golden Age who didn't have to work, suffer, or die
- Zeus killed his father Kronos and created the foolish Silver Age people
- Zeus created the warlike Bronze Age people who destroyed each other
- Zeus created legendary heroes. Now Iron Age People work and suffer but they'll outlive the gods

Haudenosaunee

- Sky Woman fell through the air. A hawk caught her and kept her from falling into the water
- A sea turtle let her live on its back and a muskrat got mud from deep under water
- The animals spread the mud. The turtle grew as Sky Woman walked counter-clockwise
- Sky Woman's daughter, Earth Mother, had 3 daughters: Corn, Beans, and Squash
- Earth Mother had two sons: Sapling, who created good things, and Flint, who harmed the good things
- Sapling created humans and gave them good thoughts, but Flint gave them evil thoughts too

China

- An enormous egg held Chaos: including Yin & Yang and other opposites
- Pan-gu the dragon hatched from the egg and lifted the sky as he grew
- After 18,000 years Pan-gu died. Parts of his body were made into earth, sky, sun, and moon
- The world was beautiful but lonely because there were no people
- Nuwa, a half-dragon goddess, made humans from clay - with legs, not tails, so they wouldn't look like her
- Nuwa flung mud with a stick to make more people - there were more of them but they weren't as smart

Norse

- There was a vast emptiness between the fires of Muspell and the ice of Niflheim
- The giant Ymir emerged from the ice along with a cow and other gods
- Odin killed Ymir and used parts of his body to make the earth and sparks to create the sun & moon
- The Sun melted the ice so plants could grow, including the great tree Yggdrasil
- Odin created humans from an ash tree and an elm tree and they looked after the world
- Ymir's sisters carved lines into Yggdrasil's trunk to measure the lives of humans



Adapted from www.thebigmyth.com with permission from Fiona Passantino

Visit blogs.canisius.edu/creationcardgame/ for additional materials