

Resources for “Thor’s Visit to Utgard,” a chapter in *Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales* By Elizabeth Colantoni, Anastasia Donahue-White, Austin Evans, Lex Fournier, Kiara LeBlanc, Julia Schultz  
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*Teaching the Middle Ages through Novel Studies* was created by Dr. Teresa Russo as a service project for the course *Reading the Middle Ages: The Heroic and the Chivalric* (MARS/ ENGL2P95) taught at the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (MARS) at Brock University. The service project was launched in 2021 and received the Government of Canada’s Co-operative Education and Work Integrated Learning (CEWIL) grant and Brock University’s Experiential Education Teaching & Learning Innovation Grant in its first year. The materials will be available to the public on the RMA Omeka site created in 2020 and Teaching the Middle Ages (TMA) forum which began in 2016. We would like to thank our industry partners in the education sector for supporting students in this project.

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1  
“Thor’s Visit to Utgard,”

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Resources for Teachers  
In this issue

Introduction by Kiara LeBlanc

Museum Spotlight: Sculpture of Thor with Summary for Teachers – “The Bronze Statue of Thor in Iceland”

Summary of Language Arts and Ancient Civilizations Curriculum from the Ministry of Ontario as followed by the students of Reading the Middle Ages

## INTRODUCTION

(K. LeBlanc) To teach the Old Norse story “Thor’s Visit to Utgard” from Roger Lancelyn Green’s *Myths of the Norsemen* to fourth graders, our group has decided to follow the advice from Greenlaw et al. regarding how to teach about and interest students in the Middle Ages. Greenlaw et al. recommends that when teaching the Middle Ages, teachers try to have their lessons and topics flow, such that students can maintain a pattern of continuous learning and interest in the subject matter (201). Greenlaw et al.

suggest that flow between lessons might begin with a book on the Middle Ages, followed by a discussion of the topic, and conclude by engaging students with hands-on activities (201). When discussing how to perform a creative reading, Turner and Alexander note that “a classroom environment in which reading is perceived by the teacher as a creative activity will be more likely to develop in children a view that reading is a fascinating and wonderful adventure” (786). From this perspective, our groups’ goal is to provide teachers with English lessons based on the text “Thor’s Visit to



Thor Fighting the Midgard Serpent. German Wood engraving after a drawing by Emil Doepler (1824-1905), 1887, from: Wilhelm Waegner, "Nordisch-Germanische Götter und Helden", Leipzig, 1901. Photo: Dietmar Katz. **Location:** Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Germany. **Photo Credit:** Image made available for open access by Art Resource, NY  
**Image Reference:** ART574833  
**Original Image size:** 4252 X 5685 px

Summaries include About the *Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales*; About the Author and translator; About the Medieval Author; Time and Setting; Language in ‘Thor’s Visit to Utgard’; and How this book or story relates to the Middle Ages: the book of *Myths of The Norsemen*

#### Further Reading

Includes a list of resources of articles on the topic of Thor for teachers.

#### LESSONS & ACTIVITIES –

- 1 Lessons for Language Arts
- 7 Activities for Language Arts
- 2 Lesson for Ancient Civilization
- 1 Lesson for Visual Arts
- 1 Activities for Visual Arts
- 1 Instructions for Visual Arts

Names and Places in “Thor’s Visit to Utgard” by Julia Schultz  
Lesson Intent: Elementary English/Language Arts  
Learning Goal: Understanding Pronunciation and Translation—Analyzing Texts 1.7 (PDF Images for Lesson Included)

Match characteristics in the reading to the characters by Lex Fournier  
Activity and Answer Key  
Lesson Intent: Language Arts/Elementary English  
Learning Goal: Reading for Meaning – Analyzing Texts 1.7 (how characters contribute to meaning)

Matching Events by Anastasia Donahue-White  
Lesson Intent: Languages Arts/Elementary English  
Learning goal: Reading for Meaning – Analyzing Texts 1.7 (Identifying important events in a written source)

Utgard” which will inspire a love of reading and exploration of the Middle Ages.

To teach this text, Julia is creating a language arts lesson to target the pronunciation and translation of words used in the text from Old Norse mythology. Julia’s lesson is an activity in which students must unscramble words to reveal the name of the giant’s cat. This activity incorporates comprehension and spelling while breaking down the pronunciation of Old Norse words. Julia is also creating a crossword puzzle which pairs well with the other lessons proposed by the group to test student comprehension; however, Julia’s lesson tests comprehension in a different way as she provides the Icelandic spelling for names of characters, places, and objects and her lesson asks students to find and spell the anglicized version as it appears in the text. Lex’s lesson also tests the students’ comprehension; however, rather than focusing on character names and spelling, Lex is creating a matching activity to help students better understand characters by matching characteristics to the characters in the text. Anastasia is also creating a lesson to test comprehension; however, her lesson will focus on the main events and will ask students to match the plot to the characters involved. Anastasia’s lesson will also ask students to order the events.

Furthermore, Austin’s lesson will ask students to identify and think about the main ideas and supporting details in the text. Austin is making a word search using terms relevant to the setting of “Thor’s Visit to Utgard” to help students understand the locations in the text. This word search will also use terms that can be associated with the main ideas to get the students thinking about themes. Likewise, Elizabeth is creating an activity based on locations; however, whereas Austin focuses on students’ recognition of these names, Elizabeth’s lesson asks students to actively listen to the details about location as the teacher reads. Elizabeth will also incorporate a creative aspect by asking students to draw their own versions of the realms based on the descriptions they hear. In addition to the

Time and Setting Activity in “Thor’s Visit to Utgard” by Austin Evans  
Activity and Answer Key  
Lesson Intent: Elementary English  
Learning Goal: Identifying Main Ideas and Supporting Detail

Create Your Own Norse Mythology Map by Elizabeth Colantoni  
Visual Assignment – Instructions with sample images  
Lesson Intent: English/ Language Arts  
Learning Goal: Active Listening Strategies

Understanding and Thinking Creatively About “Thor’s Visit to Utgard” by Kiara LeBlanc  
Lesson Intent: Elementary English/Language Arts  
Learning Goal: Understanding Literature - Reading Comprehension & Creative Work

Digital Artwork Instructions: Creating Storyboards with Digital Platforms and Coloring Activity Sheet: “Giants attack the people of Midgard” by Julia Schultz

Canada Games Connection: Sports in Old Norse Mythology by Teresa Russo with Emma Casburn’s “Hammer throw” academic poster; Lesson Intent: Ancient Civilization: Daily Life

“Who Are the Characters?” – Activity sheets and Answer Key  
Lesson Intent: Language Arts/Ancient Civilizations  
Lesson Goal: Reading for Meaning – 1.7 Analyzing the text for characters and Ways of Life – A.2 Types of Work

Vocabulary Sheets – Activity Sheets and Answer Key  
Lesson Intent: Language Arts  
Lesson Goal: Reading with Fluency – 3.1 Familiar Words and 3.2 Unfamiliar Words

creative aspect in Elizabeth’s lesson, my lesson asks students to read “Thor’s Visit to Utgard” and answer narrative questions. My lesson plays on critical thinking and creative reading, as one of the questions pertains to an image related to the text, asking students to describe the picture and connect it to what they have read. Furthermore, while the earlier lessons focus solely on comprehension, as students move into Elizabeth’s and my activities, they are asked to employ creative work. Similar to Elizabeth’s instruction for students to create their own versions of the realms, my lesson asks students to write their own story or draw a storyboard of what they think might happen in a sequel where giants attack Midgard.

As the group leader, I decided that the lessons should be placed in this order: Julia’s, Lex’s, Anastasia’s, Austin’s, Elizabeth’s, and mine, so that the teachers can ensure their students are meeting the learning goals before moving on to creative activities. While pronunciation, spelling, comprehension, and active reading are important learning goals for fourth graders learning about the Middle Ages, meaningful learning occurs when students apply knowledge. Through the activities of drawing a realm and creating a storyboard, students can engage in cross-disciplinary subjects and apply art to language studies. Additionally, by ending with the activity of creating a story or storyboard, students are asked to use their knowledge of plot, setting, and character/characterization, which the previous lessons focused on, to construct their own tales based on a reading from the Middle Ages. In ending with creative activities, it is hoped that students will be able to grasp a detailed understanding of the text and develop a love for exploring the Middle Ages, as teachers will construct their English/language arts classes using Turner and Alexander’s idea of engaging in creative reading.

### MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

“The Bronze Statue of Thor in Iceland”

By Teresa Russo



Bronze statuette of Thor, Viking God, c1000. From Iceland, at National Museum Reykjavik. **Photo Credit:** HIP / Art Resource, NY ([artres.com](https://www.artres.com))  
**Image Reference:** AR9447424 **Image size:** 5027 X 5088 px



The Bronze statuette of Thor now housed in the National Museum of Iceland in Reykjavík is 6.7cm tall and dated to 1000 AD/CE. The statuette is a likeness of an older Thor as a bearded man with a cap on his head. The bronze statue was found in 1815 near Akureyri, in Northern Iceland, an area called Eyrarland Farm. Therefore, the statuette is also referred to as the Eyrarland Statue.

It is the most famous object in the museum and a rare piece of Viking art, depicting Thor as he holds his hammer, Mjöllnir. Some art historians have speculated that this statuette could be a depiction of a story in the *Poetic Edda* when the Norse god attended a Giant's wedding to regain his stolen hammer. This story gave Thor one of his attributes of attending weddings in old Norse mythology to bless brides.

The curator at the museum points out that Thor's hammer in this bronze statue resembles a cross. This points to the Christian communities that were developing during the early Middle Ages while Anglo-Saxon tribes (discussed in the poem of *Beowulf*) and Vikings were still following Old Norse mythology. The curator states that the style of the statue dates it to a period in Iceland when heathenism was transitioning into Christianity. In addition, the curator speculates that the statue could be representing Christ the King sitting on a throne with a cross in his hand. This object along with "Thor's bronze hammer amulat" from the Viking period (also located at the same museum) demonstrates how Christian symbols was gradually incorporated into Viking artefacts.

After the statue was found in 1815 it was sent to Copenhagen in 1817 for preservation since there was no museum in Iceland. In 1930 the statuette along with other artifacts were returned to Iceland during the Millennium of the Althing (Alþingi), which was a festival celebrating the oldest surviving parliament (called the Alþingi) in the world and the history of Iceland. It took place in Thingvellir (Þingvellir) National Park. The park received its national status in 1930 and was added to the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2004.

**Audio of the Thor statuette at the National Museum of Iceland from the "Dawn of Iceland Society (800-1000)" permanent exhibit:** [English](#) | [Þjóðminjasafn Íslands \(thjodminjasafn.is\)](#)



THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES WERE CREATED WITH THE LANGUAGE ARTS AND ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS CURRICULUMS IN MIND FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF ONTARIO. THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES WERE CONSIDERED AS THESE RESOURCES WERE CREATED FOR FOURTH GRADERS. THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM WAS LASTED REVISED IN 2006 (**LANGUAGE ARTS**) AND THE ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS CURRICULUM OTHERWISE KNOWN AS HERITAGE AND IDENTITY: EARLY SOCIETIES TO 1500 CE WAS LAST REVISED IN 20138 (**ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS**). See THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/language.html>

## LANGUAGE ARTS

### READING FOR MEANING – GRADE 4

**Comprehension Strategies 1.3** identify a variety of reading comprehension strategies and use them appropriately before, during, and after reading to understand texts (e.g., activate prior knowledge through brainstorming; ask questions to focus or clarify reading; use visualization to clarify details about such things as the sights, sounds, and smells in a medieval castle; make and confirm predictions based on evidence from the text; synthesize ideas during reading to generate a new understanding of a text); **Demonstrating Understanding 1.4** demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts by summarizing important ideas and citing supporting details. **Making Inferences/Interpreting Texts 1.5** make inferences about texts using stated and implied ideas from the texts as evidence. **Extending Understanding 1.6** extend understanding of texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge, experience, and insights, to other familiar texts, and to the world around them. **Analyzing Texts 1.7** analyze texts and explain how specific elements in them contribute to meaning (e.g., narrative: characters, setting, main idea, problem/challenge and resolution, plot development; review: statement of opinion, reasons for opinion, concluding statement. **Responding to and Evaluating Texts 1.8** express opinions about the ideas and information in texts and cite evidence from the text to support their opinions. **Point of View 1.9** identify the point of view presented in a text, citing supporting evidence from the text, and suggest some possible alternative perspectives (e.g., identify words or phrases that reveal the point of view presented; write a letter or use role play to present the perspective of a character whose voice is not heard in the text)

### UNDERSTANDING FORM AND STYLE – GRADE 4

**Text Forms 2.1** explain how the particular characteristics of various text forms help communicate meaning, with a focus on literary texts such as a diary or journal (e.g., first-person record of events, thoughts, and feelings, usually in prose, gives a personal perspective on events; dated daily or weekly entries provide context), graphic texts such as a brochure (e.g., headings, subheadings, text boxes, photographs, lists, and maps clarify and highlight important material), and informational texts such as an encyclopedia (e.g., table of contents, glossary, index, headings, and subheadings help the reader use key words to locate information); **Text Patterns 2.2** recognize a variety of organizational patterns in texts of different types and explain how the patterns help readers understand the texts (e.g., comparison in an advertisement; cause and effect in a magazine or newspaper article); **Text Features 2.3** identify a variety of text features and explain how they help readers understand texts (e.g., the back cover copy for a book helps readers decide whether the book will interest them; titles, subtitles, captions, labels, a menu allow the reader to skim a text to get a general idea of what it is about); **Elements of Style 2.4** identify various elements of style – including alliteration, descriptive adjectives and adverbs, and sentences of different types, lengths, and structures – and explain how they help communicate meaning (e.g., alliteration and rhythm can emphasize ideas or help convey a mood or sensory impression).

### READING WITH FLUENCY – GRADE 4

**VOCABULARY and WORDS: Reading Familiar Words 3.1** automatically read and understand high-frequency words, most regularly used words, and words of personal interest or significance in a variety of reading contexts (e.g., words from grade level texts; terminology used regularly in discussions and posted on anchor charts; words from shared-, guided, and independent-reading texts and some regularly used resource materials in the curriculum subject areas); **Reading Unfamiliar Words 3.2** predict the meaning of and rapidly solve unfamiliar words using different types of cues, including: semantic (meaning) cues (e.g., prefixes, suffixes, base words, phrases, sentences, and visuals that activate existing knowledge of oral and written language); syntactic (language structure) cues (e.g., word order; language patterns such as those for regular and irregular plurals, possessives, and contractions; punctuation); graphophonic (phonological and graphic) cues (e.g., familiar words within larger words: highlight, enlighten; recognizable sequences of letters within long words: spacious, conscious, delicious).

## ANCIENT CIVILIZATION

In this category consideration was placed on subcategories of **Social and Political Practices (heads of states); Agriculture Practices; Daily Life (women and children in society; leisure life; work life; sports and games); Relations between People and Land; Religious and Spiritual Practices/Beliefs; Maps (physical categories; lowland, plains, mountains; important cities)** so that teachers can then make comparisons of **Medieval Life to Canadian lifestyle and comparison to the lifestyle of First Nation, Inuit, Huron, Cree, Algonquin, Haudenosaunee**. Parts of the language in the curriculum concerning the Middle Ages are as follows:

### HERITAGE AND IDENTITY: EARLY SOCIETIES TO 1500 CE

#### A1. APPLICATION: PAST AND PRESENT SOCIETIES; FOCUS ON: Continuity and Change; Perspective

**A1.1 compare social organization** (e.g., social classes, general political structure, inherited privilege, the status of women) in a few early societies, including at least one First Nation and one Inuit society (e.g., a slave-owning and a feudal society; a matrilineal First Nation and a society in medieval Asia);

**A1.2 compare aspects of the daily lives** of different groups within a few early societies, including at least one First Nation and one Inuit society (e.g., the work, family life, education, food, dress, and/or housing of a slave and a senator in ancient Rome; women of different castes in medieval India; a serf and lord in feudal England; a man and a woman in medieval China or in early Mohawk society; a merchant and noble in Renaissance Italy), and explain how differences were related to the social organization of that society;

**A1.3 describe some of the ways in which their daily life differs** from the lives of young people from different backgrounds (e.g., wealthy, poor, slave, urban, rural) in a few early societies, including at least one First Nation and one Inuit society (e.g., with reference to family life, education, leisure time and recreation, responsibilities, work); **A1.4 compare a few early societies**, including at least one First Nation and one Inuit society, in terms of their relationship with the environment (e.g., with reference to seasonal rhythms, use of land and resources, differences between urban and rural communities, religious and spiritual practices/ beliefs with respect to the environment), and describe some key similarities and differences in environmental practices between these societies and present-day Canada.

**HERITAGE AND IDENTITY: EARLY SOCIETIES TO 1500 CE (continues with A.2 and A.3 information)**

**A2. WAYS OF LIFE AND RELATIONS WITH THE ENVIRONMENT; FOCUS ON: Interrelationships**

**A2.1 formulate questions to guide investigations into ways of life and relationships with the environment in a few early societies**, (e.g., connections between the local environment and settlement, art, medicine, religion, spirituality, types of work; the impact on the environment of agriculture or the development of towns, cities, settlements, communities, and/or villages); **A2.2 gather and organize information on ways of life and relationships with the environment in a few early societies**, using a variety of primary and secondary sources in both print and electronic formats (e.g., images depicting the daily life of different social classes; religious or spiritual stories that provide evidence of a society's view of the environment; agricultural artefacts; traditional stories, creation stories, legends, and/or oral history shared by Elders, community members, and/or knowledge keepers; virtual field trips to museums and to First Nations cultural centres to view artefacts and images); **A2.3 analyse and construct print and/or digital maps**, including thematic maps, as part of their investigations into interrelationships between the environment and life in a few early societies, (e.g., analyse thematic and/or physical maps showing rivers, vegetation, volcanoes, soil types; create a thematic map showing traditional trade routes of the Cree, Algonquin, or Haudenosaunee; analyse a climate map to determine the climatic challenges facing early settlements; construct soil and vegetation maps to determine the connection between soil type and agricultural activity; analyse maps to determine the proximity of early settlements to water; construct a map showing the location of some traditional First Nations and/or Inuit territories; use a decolonial map or atlas to determine the Indigenous names of the places they are investigating); **A2.4 interpret and analyse information relevant to their investigations, using a variety of tools** (e.g., use a graphic organizer to help them determine the relationship between soil type, availability of water, and agricultural activity; analyse the content of paintings on the Internet or at a local gallery for information on a society's religious practices; analyse artefacts found in a museum or on a website for information on a society's daily life and relationship with the environment; use a Venn diagram or a T-chart to help them compare historic hunting customs, including giving thanks to animals, between an early First Nation and an early Inuit society; analyse petroglyphs and rock formations for information on sacred sites and their location); **A2.5 evaluate evidence and draw conclusions about ways of life and relationships with the environment in a few early societies**, including at least one First Nation and one Inuit society, with an emphasis on aspects of the interrelationship between the environment and life in those societies; **A2.6 communicate the results of their inquiries, using appropriate vocabulary** (e.g., peasant, serf, merchant, noble, Elder, clan mother, faith keeper, knowledge keeper, Inuk shaman, medicine man, healer, healer's helper, feudalism, god/goddess, privilege, hierarchy, culture, civilization, rural, urban, resources/ gifts) and formats (e.g., an annotated map showing how a society situated on a flood plain was affected by and responded to its environment; an interactive map that highlights traditional territories of some early Indigenous societies in what would become North America, along with key natural features of the environment; an oral presentation on the impact of medieval cities on the environment; a stop-animation video on the lives of children in a society that followed seasonal migration routes or lived in different locations during different seasons; a chart and presentation comparing farming techniques of different societies)

**A3. UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT: CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY SOCIETIES; FOCUS ON: Significance**

**A3.1 identify the location of some early societies**, including at least one First Nation and one Inuit society, on a globe or on print, digital, and/or interactive maps, and demonstrate the ability to extract information on early societies' relationship with the environment from thematic maps (e.g., climate, physical, topographical, vegetation maps); **A3.2 demonstrate the ability to extract information on daily life in a few early societies**, from visual evidence (e.g., art works such as paintings, sculptures, carvings, masks, mosaics, hide paintings, beadwork, quillwork, soapstone carvings; clothing; ceremonial dress; regalia; petroglyphs; monuments; rock/earth mounds; artefacts such as tools, household utensils, pottery, religious articles, weapons); **A3.3 describe significant aspects of daily life in a few early societies**, (e.g., with reference to food, housing, clothing, education, recreation, spiritual/religious life, family life, transportation, ceremonies, ways of giving thanks and acknowledgement); **A3.4 describe significant physical features and natural processes and events in a few early societies**, (e.g., physical features: rivers, flood plains, mountains, volcanoes, barren lands, tundra, ocean shore, fertile soil; natural processes: seasonal changes in climate, animal migration, erosion; natural events: earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions) and how they affected these societies, with a focus on the societies' sustainability and food production (e.g., how flooding of rivers in ancient Egypt, India, and China enriched agricultural land, making it possible to sustain large populations; how the thin topsoil of Central America, Mesopotamia, and Easter Island limited population growth; how volcanoes threatened the survival of communities in ancient Greece and parts of the Roman Empire; how fluctuations in temperature led early Inuit societies to develop techniques like igunaq [meat fermentation] to prevent food spoilage, Cree societies to develop sphagnum moss bags to prolong meat freshness, or Anishinaabe societies to develop techniques to smoke fish); **A3.5 describe the importance of the environment for a few early societies**, with a particular focus on how the local environment affected the ways in which people met their physical needs (e.g., food, housing, clothing); **A3.6 identify and describe some of the major scientific and technological developments in the ancient and medieval world**, including some from at least one First Nation and one Inuit society (e.g., calendars; the printing press; developments in agriculture, architecture, medicine, transportation, weaponry, navigation); **A3.7 describe how a few early societies, including at least one First Nation and one Inuit society, were governed** (e.g., early democracy in Greece or Haudenosaunee society; city states on the Swahili Coast; emperors in China; the roles of nobles, priests, and the military in Aztec society, of kings, nobles, and knights in medieval France, or of chiefs in the Haida nation); **A3.8 describe the social organization of a few different types of early societies**, (e.g., a slave-owning society, a feudal society, an agrarian society), and the role and status of some significant social and work-related groups in these societies (e.g., women, men, children, slaves, peasants, nobles, monarchs, warriors, knights, priests/priestesses, druids, shamans, imams, monks, nuns, merchants, artisans, apprentices, scribes, midwives, healers); **A3.9 describe some key reasons why and when there were cooperation and conflicts** (e.g., to explore; to expand territory; to make decisions, govern, and administer; to promote trade; to wage war or make peace; to acquire wealth, power, and control; to rebel; to spread religious beliefs and/or enforce the power of particular religious institutions; to protect spiritual beliefs, ceremonies and other cultural practices, and traditional lands); **A3.10 describe some attempts within a few early societies to deal with conflict and to establish greater cooperation** (e.g., democratic developments in ancient Greece; establishment of religious rights in medieval Islam; matrilineal structures among some First Nations; the Magna Carta; guilds; intermarriage between royal houses; treaties and alliances; the Great Law of Peace; the resolution of conflict with drumming, dancing, poetry, and/or humour among Inuit; the role of lacrosse games; the use of marriage and the ceremonial sharing of food and skins to symbolize alliances and the building of relationships in Inuit societies)

**About the Book** (A. Donahue-White)

Thor was the god of thunder, son of Odin and known for his remarkable strength and great size. He was generally good-tempered, but Thor was quick to anger and could become very dangerous. Thor is often seen with his magical hammer Mjolnir (or Mjölnir) in many of the Old Norse sagas. Most of the tales that are recounted in this book come from Snorri's medieval text, the *Poetic Edda*; Snorri paints Thor as a red-bearded and short-tempered god who battles the giants. In this chapter of *The Myths of the Norsemen*, Thor and Loki visit Utgard after Thor slays the giant Thrym and his entire household after he had taken Mjolnir. This made the giants even more terrified of the Aesir (Æsir); they became desperate for peace and promised the two gods, Thor and Loki, safe passage to their revered city of Utgard, located at the heart of Jotunheim. Thor could not use the Bifrost (a rainbow bridge) and is the only god that does not ride horses, so he drove his chariot pulled by his two goats, Gaptooth and Cracktooth. Throughout the journey Thor's temper can be noticed when he strikes Skrymir in the head multiple times, leaving behind three craters in a mountain. It was a long way to Utgard; the gods stopped at a farmhouse where Thor was forced to leave his goats behind and took the farmer's son, Thialfi, as compensation for his goat's injury. At Utgard the giants tricked the gods in order to test their strengths and see how they would be able to best defend themselves. Loki challenged Hugi in an eating contest; Thialfi raced Logi; Thor wrestled Elli and picked up the Midgard serpent. When Thor had learned that he was tricked, his temper had almost gotten the best of him. He vowed to destroy the giants and the Midgard serpent one day when Odin would allow him to do so.

**About the Medieval Author** (E. Colantoni)

Many of the beliefs, myths, and stories of Norse and Viking culture were recorded in poetry. They were anonymously written but were believed to be collected and put together by Saemund the Wise, or the Learned (1056-1133). He then took these poems and collected them to create the *Poetic Edda*. This collection is also known as the Saemundar Edda or the *Elder Edda* (Russo). These Old Norse poems and myths were the

source that inspired the *Prose Edda*. Snorri Sturluson (1179-1241) was the author of the *Prose Edda*, often referred to as the Snorra Edda or Younger Edda (Groeneveld). He re-wrote the poems of the *Poetic Edda* in a different style and made them more structured.

Snorri was born into an important family in west Iceland in 1179 (Ólason). When he was two years old, his father (who was a chieftain) died, and so Snorri was sent to Oddi in south Iceland. He was fostered by Jón Loptsson who was the most powerful Icelandic leader at the time and closely related to the Norwegian family (Ólason). In Oddi there was a school where Saemund the Wise, or the Learned, studied and wrote about the Norwegian kings as well as the ancient Danish kings a few years before Snorri arrived in Oddi. It was his writings and his work collecting the old Norse poems into the *Poetic Edda* which inspired Snorri to create the *Prose Edda* (Ólason). He took the stories and myths which were in one type of poetry, verse, and re-created them in prose. Green translates from the *Elder Edda* and the *Prose Edda* to create the *Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales* for younger readers.

**About the Modern Author and Translator** (T. Russo)

Roger Lancelyn Green (1918-1987) was born in Poulton, Cheshire. He had residences in two cities, living in Oxford and in his family home, which was owned by the Green family ancestors for nine hundred years, in Cheshire. He was a professional actor, librarian, and teacher. He is famously known for his membership in the Inklings Club in Oxford with members J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, both scholars of Medieval Studies and authors of fantasy literature. It was Roger Green who convinced C.S. Lewis to publish the children stories later composed into a collection called *Narnia*, a name given to the set of stories by Green. While Tolkien was writing the *Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* (and even translating three Middle English poems into Modern English for the first time) and Lewis was writing *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Green was adapting Old Norse, Old English, and Middle English texts into children stories, such as the Old Norse myths in this book and the legendary tales of King Arthur in *King Arthur and His Knights of The Round Table*. He also was interested in ancient Greek and Egyptian myths, writing *Tales of Ancient Greece*, *The Tale of Troy*, and *Tales from ancient Egypt*. All his books have been reprinted as Puffin Classics for children with Penguin publisher.

**Time and Setting** (A. Evans) – There are three settings for the story “Thor’s Visit to Utgard”, starting with a farmhouse on the edge of a river. This farmhouse is where Thialfi breaks the thigh bone of one of Thor’s goats, causing it to poorly heal the following morning and Thor to claim the boy as his squire. This farmhouse is not particularly important to the rest of Norse mythology, but the river beside it is the river Ifing, which is said to be what separates Asgard (the land of the gods) from the land of the giants. This river Ifing never freezes over, making it difficult for the gods to make their way over it to the land of the giants since there is no bridge. There is a real-world river Ifing as well: there is a 15 km long river in Poland now known as Elblag, however the first records of this river show that it was referred to as Ifing or “Ifing” in the 9th century. It is likely this river got its name from the Old Norse myths. The next setting is a mighty oak tree, where Thor and his party meet Skrymir. This tree is not important, but it does allow Skrymir to pretend that he thinks Thor’s attacks are just giant acorns dropping on his head. The last and most important location in the story is Utgardhaloki’s castle. This location is where Thor and his company challenge the Giants, only to be tricked into competing against unbeatable beings like Fire (embodied by Logi), Old Age (embodied by Elli), and Thought (embodied by Hugi). This castle does not reappear in any other Norse myths, but it does make an appearance in the Marvel comics, specifically in the comic “Thor Volume 1 #272” (also known as “The Day The Thunder Failed!”). This comic follows the same story as the “Visit to Utgard” myth, though Thor and Loki are led to Utgardhaloki’s castle by Skrymir and do not try to kill him like the mythical Thor does, and there is no encounter with the yeoman in the farmhouse. There is one more setting, the land containing these other smaller settings. This is Utgard, land of the giants. The name Utgard translates to “Outyards”. This land is also referred to as “Jotunheim” - translating to land of the giants. Jotunheim is a common location for Norse myths: this is where Odin lost his eye, where Thor slew the giant Geirrod, and where Thor pretended to be a bride to the giant Thrymyr in order to reclaim his hammer. The land of the giants also makes an appearance in the Marvel movies under its secondary

name Jotunheim. In the Marvel Cinematic Universe, Jotunheim is the land of the Frost Giants. After a group of frost giants attack Asgard, Thor takes a party of warriors to Jotunheim to retaliate; this is the action which causes Odin to strip Thor of his powers and send him to Earth to redeem himself. In these movies, Utgardhaloki is not the ruler of the land of the giants. Instead, the frost giants are ruled by Laufey, who in the movies is the father of Loki. Funnily enough, Laufey is a real character from Norse mythology, however he is Loki’s mother, not his father.



Image from Marvel Heroes Library

**Language in ‘Thor’s Visit to Utgard’ (J. Schultz) –**

The translated stories in *Myths of the Norsemen* are not so hard to read and comprehend as the names are to pronounce. This is evident in the presence of many unfamiliar, although anglicized, proper nouns throughout the story of “Thor’s Visit to Utgard.” The original language of Thor’s adventures was written in Old Norse and the proper names are used by the author in its original form; thus, the names in the *Myths of the Norsemen* appear foreign in pronunciation to native English speakers. Below there is a lesson aimed to help students recognize and understand the words they may find unfamiliar. In addition, the lesson provides the information of the words’ translation.

The main component of the lesson is a word scramble. Students are encouraged to solve the puzzle of “the name of the giant king’s cat” by unscrambling names that were gathered from within the story and using specified letters to spell out the name of the cat. Once the activity is completed, students can check their answers with the answer key. Further, the answer key provides an explanation from the text of the trick that the giant king played on Thor surrounding the cat (that is, it was not a cat at all but is instead Jormungand the world serpent).

The pronunciations provided can be found in *A New Introduction to Old Norse* (2008) by Michael Barnes, which is available via google scholar and is free to access (further information about the access of this text is provided in the bibliography). Within it, there is a comprehensive breakdown of both old and modern Norse and Icelandic letter pronunciations, and later explanations of grammar and syntax, but I focused on mostly pure vowels and any additional letters needed to provide the guide along with the answer key. As well, general information about the gods can be found in Jack Crawford’s “Introduction” in *The Poetic Edda: Stories of the Norse Gods and Heroes*. I additionally created a crossword puzzle for students to complete with prompts to encourage students to search through the text and find the answers. Within the prompts, I included the traditional Old Norse spellings of each word to allow students to see the Icelandic variation of the anglicized name appearing in their texts; these spelling variations give hints to the answer since often the Old Norse spelling can look quite similar to anglicized words.

**How this book or story relates to the Middle Ages: the book of *Myths of The Norsemen* (L. Fournier) –**

The book of *Myths of The Norsemen* by Roger Green and the tale in the book of “Thor’s Visit to Utgard” is associated with the Middle Ages because a majority of the written manuscripts and poems that contained these myths were written in the early period of the Middle Ages. The writings from this period are a major reason that the stories of the gods and mythology still exist today. These gods and myths were formed alongside the religion of the Scandinavian people, which refers to the lands of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland. Their poems and stories contained mythological tales of the gods. The chapter of “Thor’s Visit to Utgard” showcase the gods of Odin, Loki and Thor and draws on a mythological tale of Loki and Thor’s encounter with the king of the giants. During the Viking Age of the Middle Ages, oral traditions were the main form of sharing these myths with these tales repeated and shared from generation to generation. By... these oral traditions of the gods, throughout Scandinavia, especially in Iceland, were written down in manuscripts.

This book focuses on the myths and gods of Old Norse mythology that were prominent in the Middle Ages for the Vikings of Scandinavia as it was the religion of these peoples. These myths center around the meaning and reasoning of the Vikings’ lives. This is shown through how in the tale ideas of trickery, anger, strength, and wit are shown by the gods; these ideas show how the world of the gods contains many of the same traits and ideas that humans also face. The gods from these mythologies, which are outlined in the book, were shaped to represent the Vikings themselves. The god Thor shows this through the pride he wishes to show and the hammer that he wields for the purpose of slaying his enemies, while his journey to visit the king of the giants represents the exploration of the gods as well as that of the Vikings. The Vikings were explorers and raiders; they traveled seeking out riches and the combats that accompanied it. Overall, these myths and gods represented the culture of the Viking tribes, and the stories survived in the early Middle Ages even as Christianity was spreading throughout the lands of the Vikings.

## FURTHER READING

The authors used the following resources to create educational materials for *Teaching the Middle Ages* (TMA), a service project for elementary and high school teachers. Educators may also find these resources helpful for teaching the Middle Ages.

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# LESSON ONE

## Discussions & Activities

### Names and Places in “Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

By Julia Schultz

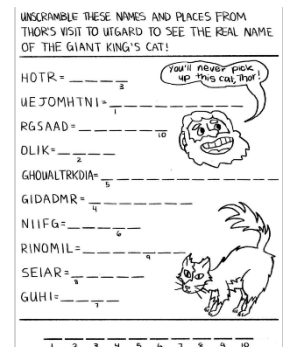
Lesson Intent: Elementary English/Language Arts

Learning Goal: Understanding Pronunciation and Translation: Analyzing Texts

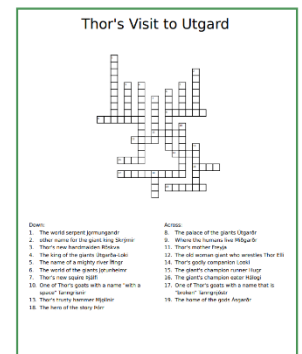
PDF Images for Lesson Included

Reading the names and places in old Norse stories can be tough! A lot of the letters, which are pronounced one way in English, are pronounced completely different in the old Norse language. Think about how hard it is for people to say the name of Thor’s hammer from the Marvel comics! But it’s important to know what these Norse names and places mean and how you say them so you can understand how people way back when the stories were written would have spoken to each other.

There are two activities here for you to do to help get to know the characters from Thor’s story! The first is a word scramble. Look through the story to find names of characters and places and see if you can figure out what the scrambled names on the worksheet are. Once you have all of them, use the numbers under certain letters to spell out the name of the cat that Thor had to try and pick up when he was proving his strength to the giant king! When you have figured it out, check your answers and see fun facts about all of the names you have discovered and see how each of them are pronounced out loud!



The second activity for you to do is the crossword puzzle. This activity lets you see the way that names from the story would have been spelled with the Norse alphabet! Each clue is a description of a character or place and the original spelling of the name. Use the story and the descriptions that it gives for characters and places to fill in the words and complete the puzzle. The Norse spelling might even give you some hints!



UNSCRAMBLE THESE NAMES AND PLACES FROM  
THOR'S VISIT TO UTGARD TO SEE THE REAL NAME  
OF THE GIANT KING'S CAT!

HOTR = \_\_\_\_\_  
3

UEJOMHTNI = \_\_\_\_\_  
1

RGSAAD = \_\_\_\_\_  
10

OLIK = \_\_\_\_\_  
2

GHOUALTRKDIA = \_\_\_\_\_  
5

GIDADMR = \_\_\_\_\_  
4

NIIFG = \_\_\_\_\_  
6

RINOMIL = \_\_\_\_\_  
9

SEIAR = \_\_\_\_\_  
8

GUHI = \_\_\_\_\_  
7



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

UNSCRAMBLE THESE NAMES AND PLACES FROM THOR'S VISIT TO UTGARD TO SEE THE REAL NAME OF THE GIANT KING'S CAT!

HOTR = THOR  
3

UEJOMHTNI = JOTUNHEIM  
1

RGSAAD = ASGARD  
10

OLIK = LOKI  
2

GHOUALTRKDIA = UTGARDHALOKI  
5

GIDADMR = MIDGARD  
4

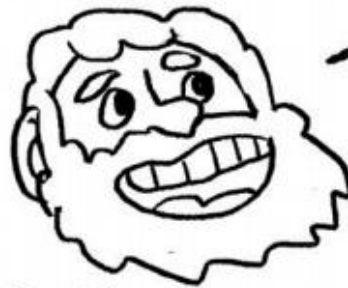
NIIFG = IFING  
6

RINOMIL = MIOLNIR  
9

SEIAR = AESIR  
8

GUHI = HUGI  
7

You'll never pick up this cat, Thor!



JORMUNGAND  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J O R M U N G A N D  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

One of the tricks that the giant king Utgardhaloki pulled on Thor in his palace at Utgard was telling him to pick up his cat that was actually Jormungand the world serpent! There was no way Thor could pick it up, because the world serpent is a snake that wraps itself around the whole world!

HOTR = T H O R

The Norse God of Thunder

How to pronounce: THAW-r

UEJOMHTNI = J O T U N H E I M

The world of the giants

How to pronounce: YO-tun-hame

RGSAAD = A S G A R D

The world of the gods

How to pronounce: AS-gard

OLIK = L O K I

The Norse god of trickery

How to pronounce: LOW-key

GHOUALTRKDIA = U T G A R D H A L O K I

The giant king in Utgard, also known as Skrymir

How to pronounce: OOT-gahrd-LOW-key

GIDADMR = M I D G A R D

The world of the humans

How to pronounce: MID-guard

NIIFG = I F I N G

A great river that separates Jotunheim and Asgard

How to pronounce: E-fing

RINOMIL = M I O L N I R

Thor's hammer

How to pronounce: me-YOL-neer

SEIAR = A E S I R

The title for important Norse gods like Thor

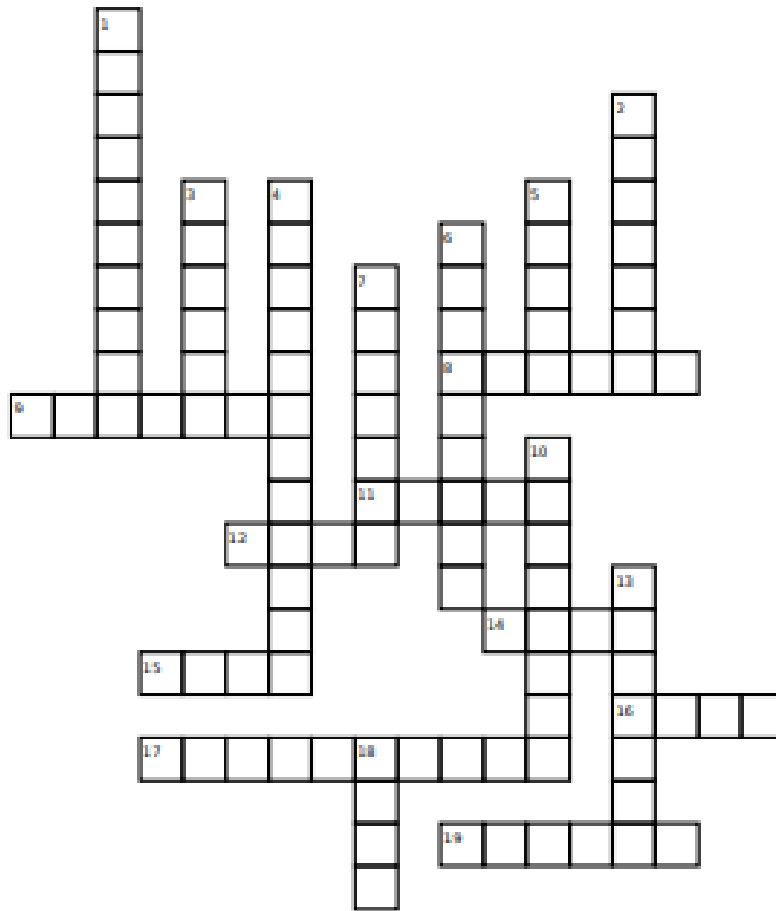
How to pronounce: AY-sear

GUHI = H U G I

The giant champion runner

How to pronounce: HOO-yee

# Thor's Visit to Utgard



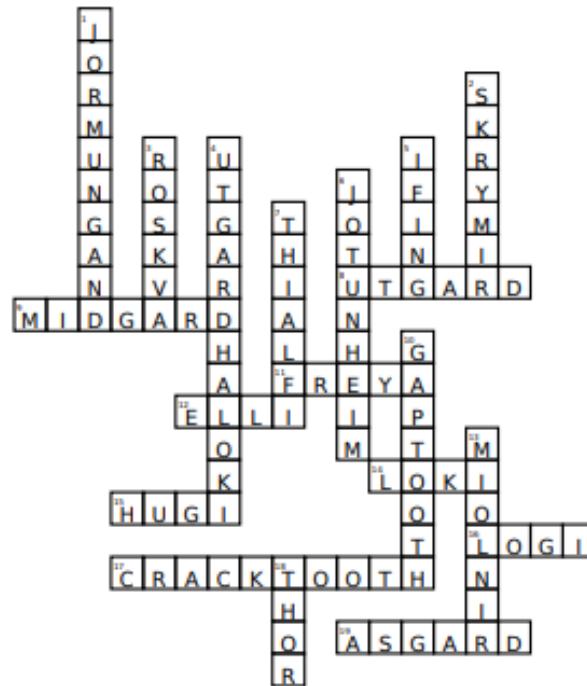
Down:

1. The world serpent Jormungandr
2. other name for the giant king Skrymir
3. Thor's new handmaiden Roskva
4. The king of the giants Utgarda-Loki
5. The name of a mighty river Ifingr
6. The world of the giants Jotunheimr
7. Thor's new squire Bjalfi
10. One of Thor's goats with a name "with a space" Tanngrisnir
13. Thor's trusty hammer Mjollnir
18. The hero of the story Porrr

Across:

8. The palace of the giants Utgardr
9. Where the humans live Midgardr
11. Thor's mother Freyja
12. The old woman giant who wrestles Thor Elli
14. Thor's godly companion Louki
15. The giant's champion runner Hugi
16. The giant's champion eater Halogi
17. One of Thor's goats with a name that is "broken" Tanngrjotr
19. The home of the gods Asgarðo

# Thor's Visit to Utgard



## Down:

1. The world serpent Jormungandr
2. other name for the giant king Skrymir
3. Thor's new handmaiden Roskva
4. The king of the giants Utgarda-Loki
5. The name of a mighty river Ifingr
6. The world of the giants Jotunheimr
7. Thor's new squire Þjalfi
10. One of Thor's goats with a name "with a space" Tanngrisnir
13. Thor's trusty hammer Mjollnir
18. The hero of the story Þórr

## Across:

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9. Where the humans live Midgardr
11. Thor's mother Freyja
12. The old woman giant who wrestles Thor Elli
14. Thor's godly companion Loki
15. The giant's champion runner Hugri
16. The giant's champion eater Halogi
17. One of Thor's goats with a name that is "broken" Tanngjostri
19. The home of the gods Asgardr

# LESSON TWO

## Discussions & Activities

Match characteristics in the reading to the characters

By Lex Fournier

Lesson Intent: Language Arts/Elementary English

Learning Goal: Reading for Meaning – Analyzing Texts 1.7 (how characters contribute to meaning)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Have the students write the characteristics in the second column below associated with the character in the story. A word list is provided. Answers are at the bottom of the page (teachers can cut off the answer key if using this as a hand out for students) or the characteristics can be written on the board and the class works together on the activity after reading the chapter. This Activity can be integrated with “Who are the Characters?” (Activity Sheets located below).

Character(s)	Characteristics Fitting them/ How they are characterized
Thor	
Loki	
Freya	
Thialfi	
Skrymir/Utgardhaloki	

### WORD BANK

Anger, Beautiful, Swift, Largest, Fearful, Cheater, Thirsty, Weak and Puny, Disturber, Fearful, Strength, Ill content, Firm, Wit, Cautious, Careful, Ashamed, Excels at eating, Determined, Mighty, Tempter

(Words listed more than once are associated with more than one character.)

### ANSWER KEY FOR TEACHERS:

Thor: Anger, Strength, Thirsty, Weak and Puny, Mighty, Ashamed, Ill content, Firm, Determined,

Loki: Cautious, Tempter, Careful, Excels at eating, Fearful

Freya: Beautiful (Freya appears in chapter 6 before this chapter; she is a Vanir child of Niord, and the Goddess of Love and Beauty.)

Thialfi: Swift, Fearful

Skrymir/Utgardhaloki: Largest, Cheater, Disturber, Wit

# LESSON THREE

## Discussions & Activities

### Matching Events

by Anastasia Donahue-White

Lesson Intent: Languages Arts/Elementary English

Learning goal: Reading for Meaning – Analyzing Texts 1.7 (Identifying important events in a written source)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Have students match items in the first column to items in the second column. This lesson will allow students to practice their comprehension skills, challenging them to remember some of the key events in the story.

1	Heart of Jotunheim	Who did Loki Challenge
2	Logi	What did Thors drinking cause
3	Hogi	What was Thors cup connected to
4	Elli	Where is Utgard
5	Midgard Serpent	Who did Thor wrestle
6	Three gorges	What was disguised as the cat
7	Ocean	What did Thor create when he struck Skrymir
8	first ebb-tide	Who did Thialfi challenge

# LESSON FOUR

## Discussions & Activities

### Time and Setting Activity in “Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

By Austin Evans

Lesson Intent: Elementary English

Learning Goal: Identifying Main Ideas and Supporting Details

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

F	O	L	A	U	F	E	Y	X	R	P	E	N	A	T
J	R	E	C	H	I	V	O	E	S	R	I	I	R	U
O	O	T	H	O	R	I	L	P	O	T	T	F	S	R
I	B	T	D	E	O	B	U	S	B	M	U	G	I	E
D	G	B	M	B	H	H	I	Y	S	V	A	H	T	N
Q	A	O	K	H	W	P	K	R	A	T	A	N	Y	M
A	N	C	L	Z	E	A	O	A	K	O	K	G	O	H
L	I	E	H	H	U	I	L	I	S	S	O	N	K	E
W	D	D	I	J	K	L	N	Z	T	D	O	G	A	Y
J	O	T	U	N	H	E	I	M	H	O	M	L	U	E
O	I	H	T	W	O	Y	A	J	A	D	S	M	C	R
R	A	R	G	V	N	B	L	O	T	L	R	T	O	C
M	X	I	A	B	K	S	B	L	I	N	P	A	Y	O
U	S	E	R	E	E	R	Y	N	E	U	M	J	G	M
N	L	A	D	O	P	T	H	I	A	L	F	I	B	T
G	T	O	H	A	M	I	U	R	A	A	L	H	R	X
A	S	G	A	R	D	N	A	N	Y	U	H	I	E	S
N	A	I	L	M	N	E	S	N	T	S	A	K	L	I

Find these hidden words:

- Thor
- Asgard
- Jotunheim
- Hugi
- Jormungand
- Ifing
- Goat
- Utgardhaloki
- Loki
- Yeoman
- Utgard
- Elli
- Laufey
- Elblag
- Thiafi
- Logi
- Mjolnir

Answer Key: Time and Setting Activity in “Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

F	O	L	A	U	F	E	Y	X	R	P	E	N	A	T	N
J	R	E	C	H	I	V	O	E	S	R	I	I	R	U	E
O	O	T	H	O	R	I	L	P	O	T	T	F	S	R	V
I	B	T	D	E	O	B	U	S	B	M	U	G	I	E	D
D	G	B	M	B	H	H	I	Y	S	V	A	H	T	N	A
Q	A	O	K	H	W	P	K	R	A	T	A	N	Y	M	G
A	N	C	L	Z	E	A	O	A	K	O	K	G	O	H	A
L	I	E	H	H	U	I	L	I	S	S	O	N	K	E	L
W	D	D	I	J	K	L	N	Z	T	D	O	G	A	Y	B
J	O	T	U	N	H	E	I	M	H	O	M	L	U	E	L
O	I	H	T	W	O	Y	A	J	A	D	S	M	C	R	E
R	A	R	G	V	N	B	L	O	T	L	R	T	O	C	H
M	X	I	A	B	K	S	B	L	I	N	P	A	Y	O	E
U	S	E	R	E	E	R	Y	N	E	U	M	J	G	M	E
N	L	A	D	O	P	T	H	I	A	L	F	I	B	T	T
G	T	O	H	A	M	I	U	R	A	A	L	H	R	X	U
A	S	G	A	R	D	N	A	N	Y	U	H	I	E	S	T
N	A	I	L	M	N	E	S	N	T	S	A	K	L	I	O
D	U	R	O	O	O	K	G	O	A	T	S	L	O	P	M
C	A	L	K	N	D	O	J	C	Y	I	A	H	U	G	I
T	S	L	I	G	L	Y	D	I	K	N	C	S	M	E	G

# LESSON FIVE

## Discussions & Activities

### Create Your Own Norse Mythology Map

By Elizabeth Colantoni

Lesson Intent: Elementary English / Language Arts

Learning Goal: Active Listening Strategies

**Aim of Lesson:** Students will be asked to create their own version of the Norse Mythological Cosmos based on listening to a description of it and simultaneously drawing their rendition of it. The descriptions of these different realms are taken from the chapter “Yggdrasil the World Tree”, found in Myths of the Norsemen by Roger Lancelyn Green. These descriptions will be used to guide students through creating their personal Norse map.

\*See reference images for various creations of Norse Cosmos Sections / regions of the map that students will be learning about and creating are:

- Yggdrasill

- The tree at the centre of the universe

- It grows in the middle plane (Midgard), above it is Asgard, and below its roots is Hel

- Midgard

- The world of humans and animals

- Asgard

- The home of the gods

- Hel

- The world of the dead

- The Ocean

- Surrounds Midgard

See instructions on page 25: Tell students to imagine the drawing paper divided in three sections

branches of Yggdrasill/Asgard

MIDGARD

Roots of tree will follow into this area

**Materials for Students Needed:** One piece of blank paper — placed vertically / portrait style in front of them — per student and drawing / colouring materials.

**Format:** Instructions will be written regularly, and teacher talk / script / suggestions / prompts will be written in italics.

**Lesson:** Ensure that students have their supplies prepared before reading the descriptions to them. For each of the sections, allow enough time for students to finish their drawings before moving on. Repeat key words or phrases when / if necessary.

*Today we will be learning about what the mythological world of the Norsemen and how their tribes looked. From these descriptions you will be creating your own map with the places that are important.*

*“In the very beginning of time, so the Norsemen believed, there was no Earth as we know it now: there was only Ginnungagap, the Yawning Void” (Green, 2).*

*This is what your page looks like now, it is empty and there is no world yet. Then, the giants plant the World Tree, Yggdrasill, and made the Earth (Green, 3).*

Instruct the students to divide or imagine dividing their paper into thirds horizontally, so that there are three sections stacked on top of each other. In the middle section, they are to draw what their World Tree looks like. It can be any kind of tree. And it should be in the centre of the middle section. The top should not exceed it, but its roots can extend into the bottom section.

*It was Odin who formed the various levels. He began with Midgard,  
where the humans and animals live.*

Tell students that Midgard fills up the middle section of their paper. Remind them to leave room on the edges for a border. This is where the Ocean will be.

*It was full of seas and rivers, land, and mountains. The land had trees, grass and flowers. In the sky he placed the stars with the moon and the sun. And he created clouds to float and sprinkle the Earth with rain showers. Humans and animals were also created to roam and take care of this place. And on either side of this world was the Ocean which surrounded it. Next, he created Asgard, the home of the gods.*

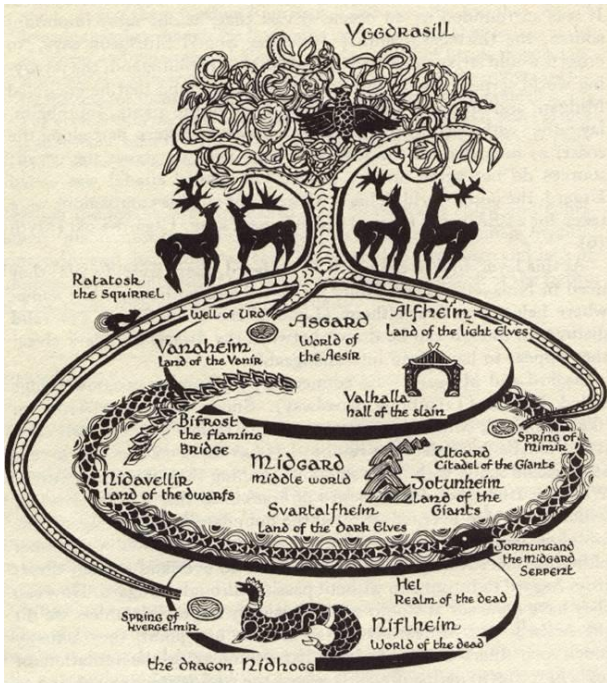
Tell students this is the top section, the one above the tree.

*This place is strong and beautiful and sits high up in the branches of Yggdrasill, the World Tree. The Palace of Joy or Galdsheim, is golden and shining. Odin creates this palace for himself and his wife. He also creates palaces for his children, the gods. There are great walls and towers, as well as halls and palaces. There are beautiful gardens up here. The Bridge of Bifrast, which looks like a rainbow, begins up here, passes through Midgard and connects all the way down below to the roots of the World Tree. Underneath the tree is Hel, or Nifelheim.*

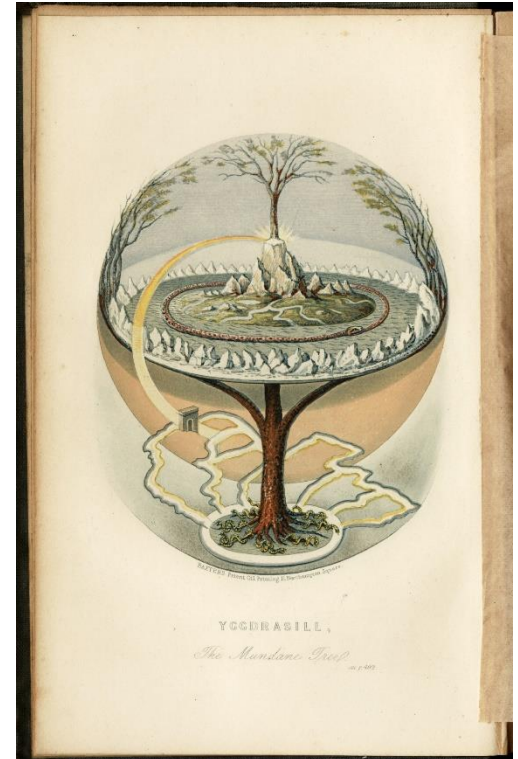
This is the bottom and remaining section.

*This is the world of the dead, and evil things like snakes and frost giants. There is a castle here that is filled with snakes and a dragon that punishes people who have been bad. It is cold, dark, and misty. This is the last realm in the Norse cosmos. Now your Norse map is complete.*

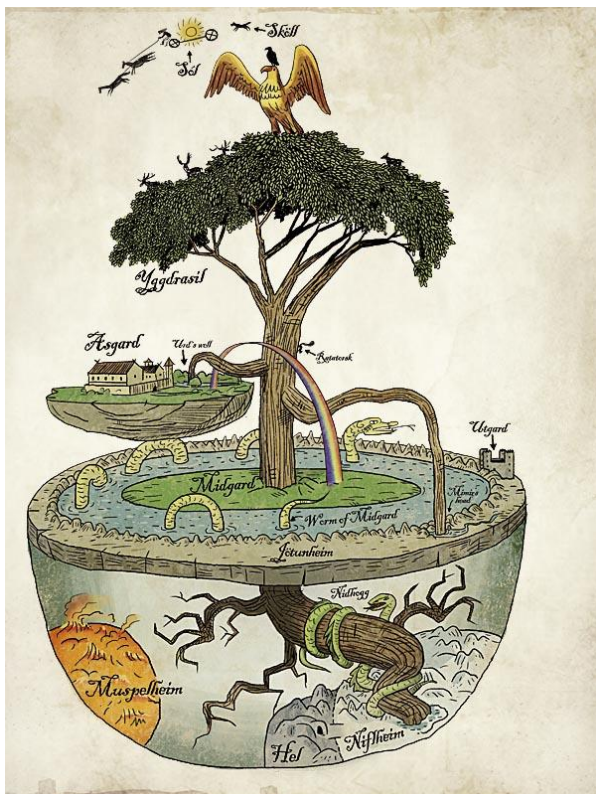
Now they have created their own version of the mythological Norse Cosmos map. Below are example images.



The Yggdrasil above is from Kevin Crossley-Holland's publication of *The Norse Myths* (1988), following Snorri's description of the world tree in the *Prose Edda*. Since Green's translation for younger readers is taken from the *Poetic Edda* and *Prose Edda*, students may have a tree covering their drawing paper with roots at the bottom. Below is Eric Leraillez's drawing of the Norse tree, which appears as an illustration in Helga Hilmisdóttir's book *Ragnarök: the Downfall of the Norse Gods*.



Above: BAXTER – Patent Oil Painting; 19th century drawing of the Yggdrasil following the *Prose Edda*. Below: An image of the Yggdrasil Tree from Andrea Maraschi's article, "[Yggdrasil and the divine 'food chain'](#)" (2014; see [medievalists.com](#)).



## LESSON SIX

### *Discussions & Activities*

#### Understanding and Thinking Creatively About “Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

By Kiara LeBlanc

Lesson Intent: Elementary English/Language Arts

Learning Goal: Understanding Literature - Reading Comprehension & Creative Work



Thor drinking from the horn; an illustration from German mythology

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Read “Thor’s Visit to Utgard” and answer the questions.

1. Who is the main character, and what is Miolnir?

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2. Why does Thialfi end up joining Thor and Loki on their journey to Utgard?

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3. What advice does Skrymir give to Thor?

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4. What reason does Utgardhaloki give to explain why there are three (3) gorges in the mountain?

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5. What does the picture show, and what is significant about the horn?

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6. At the end of the story Odin says: “Though we are at peace with Utgardhaloki, there are Giants who will still try to harm us or to bring ruin to men in Midgard” (128). **Creative task:** Based on this quote, write your own story **OR** draw a storyboard on the back of this page of what might happen if the Giants attack the people of Midgard. Remember to pay attention and give details of the setting and characters. Students will have an opportunity to present their work to the class if they feel comfortable.

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**Answer Key and Additional Resources for Teachers**

Read “Thor’s Visit to Utgard” and answer the questions.



**1. Who is the main character, and what is Mjolnir?**

Thor is the main character, and page 111 states, “Thor had recovered his hammer Mjolnir” (111). The name of the hammer appears throughout the text, for example, Thor “whirled Mjolnir round his head and struck [Skrymir] on the crown with all his strength so that the hammer-head sank almost out of sight” (117).

**Additional Resource:** Teachers can look at Jeremy Harte’s work “How Thor Lost His Thunder: The Changing Face of an Old Norse God,” which highlights Thor’s strength and the hammer he uses as a “convention that the god’s power will be accompanied by some fatal flaw – hence the otherwise inexplicable short handle to his hammer” (212). This source might be used as an introduction to “Thor’s Visit to Utgard” or as a way to give students more detail about Thor and his hammer to spark ideas for their creative writing or drawing.

**2. Why does Thialfi end up joining Thor and Loki on their journey to Utgard?**

Thialfi goes with Thor and Loki to Utgard because while Thor and Loki are staying with yeoman and his family, Thor says, “let none of the bones of my goats be broken” (112), and Thialfi disobeys. When Thor brings the goats back to life, he realizes that one of them has a limp and tells the yeoman, “your two children Thialfi and Roskva shall come with me” (113).

**3. What advice does Skrymir give to Thor?**

Skrymir says, when Thor and the others arrive at the castle they should, “be careful not to utter boastful words” (118). Skrymir further says, “my advice would be to turn back” (118).

4. What reason does Utgardhaloki give to explain why there are three (3) gorges in the mountain?

Utgardhaloki says that the three gorges in the mountain were made by Thor when he hit Utgardhaloki, who was disguised as Skrymir with his hammer (126).

**Additional Resource:** Teachers might wish to look at Jeremy Harte’s work, “How Thor Lost His Thunder: The Changing Face of an Old Norse God,” which notes that Thor’s strength makes him stand out against other Norse Gods. Teachers may also want to draw connections to the Marvel hero Thor (211) or to the Poetic Edda, which highlights Thor’s strength as a god and explains that “Thor throws things because he’s a mighty god and throwing things causes mighty damage” (213).







5. What does the picture show, and what is significant about the horn?

This picture shows Thor drinking from the horn, as described on pages 121-122. Utgardhaloki says that the horn is significant because “the other end of the horn was joined to the sea, and it sank visibly throughout all the world when you drank” (126).

**Additional Resource:** This picture was located on google images using the search term “Thor’s Visit to Utgard” and is from the website <https://nerdandlibrarian.wordpress.com/2015/02/11/thor-and-lokis-contest-with-giants/> (“Thor Drinking from the horn in Utgard”). Teachers can look at Declan Taggart’s work, “Do Thor and Odin Have Bodies? Superperception and Divine Intervention among the Old Norse Gods,” if they want to discuss with their class how stories in Old Norse mythology often provide explanations for things that happen in nature. Taggart notes that “aetiology, for example, directly relates a supernatural agent’s action to a physical reaction, such as when Thor creates the tides by drinking too much water from the sea” (8).

6. **Creative task:** Based on this quote, write your own story **OR** draw a storyboard on the back of this page of what might happen if the Giants attack the people of Midgard. Below is an example by Julia Schultz, entitled *The Giants Attack Midgard*. On page 36, Julia offers the same storyboard for students to color during recess on a rainy day.

Title: The Giants Attack Midgard Page: 1

Scene No.	1	Shot No.	1
 <p>Since the giants are so fast, there's no way the people of Midgard would be able to outrun them.</p>			
Scene No.	1	Shot No.	2
 <p>The giants are really strong, so they could destroy all the houses of the people.</p>			
Scene No.	1	Shot No.	3
 <p>Giants can eat a lot so they might eat up every bit of Midgard food they find</p>			
Scene No.	1	Shot No.	4
 <p>They might even eat things on Midgard that aren't food!</p>			
Scene No.	1	Shot No.	5
 <p>But worst of all, the giants could trick the people of Midgard with their illusions and games.</p>			
Scene No.	1	Shot No.	6
 <p>Hopefully Midgard has Thor to help save them - he's fast, strong, has a big appetite, and won't be fooled twice!</p>			

Boords

Get your free storyboard templates at [boords.com](https://boords.com)

The creative task activity is inspired by Turner and Alexander's work "Fostering Early Creative Reading" and Greenlaw et al.'s "A Literature Approach to Teaching About the Middle Ages." Turner and Alexander note that "teachers need to give challenging choices among tasks so that the child has 'room' to create" (788). Greenlaw et al.'s assert that while students need to demonstrate comprehension skills, the goal of education is to get "students to be involved in their learning process" (203). By offering the choice of writing a story or creating a storyboard, as well as making a presentation optional, teachers can play to the comfort levels and interests of their students, which will increase their engagement when studying the Middle Ages.

**Additional Resource:** Teachers may want to consult Greenlaw et al.'s "A Literature Approach to Teaching About the Middle Ages" for a list of possible texts, including picture and novel study books, which can be used in different grades to help teach about the Middle Ages (201). This list can be found in the annotated bibliography pages 203 and 204 of Greenlaw et al.

## “Digital Artwork Instructions: Creating Storyboards with Digital Platforms”

By Julia Schultz

### Where I Accessed My Storyboards and Templates

I sourced the template for the storyboard I used in the Thor packet from boords.com. This website has free templates for storyboards compatible with almost any program as well as printable PDF versions. They are laid out in a professional format similar to an actual storyboard, and the website is very easy to use. Visit the website at (<https://boords.com/storyboard-template>)



### Different Programs Available for Artwork

As for the students completing storyboards or other artworks for creative projects, there is always the option to draw them by hand and color the images with crayons, colored pencils, markers, pastels or paint them and work with water colors or acrylics. But if there is an inclination to have students complete the project digitally, here is a small list of some free software that I have used or others I have worked with used for creative projects. Included in this list below is also the program that I use most often today to complete many of my projects, which does come with a fee to use.

#### **Phone or Tablet**

Ibis Paint X - this is a free app available on ios and android. It includes several different paintbrushes and erasers, different layers, the ability to import pictures, move selected areas of a drawing, etc. This app is free, but also has a downside as a free in that there are ads. In addition, there is access to a global gallery with this app where anyone is able to post any kind of art, and there are no restrictions for a regular user.

Download Ibis Paint X for free on any mobile app store.

Procreate - this is the app that I used for my illustrations for the course materials. It is a \$15 one-time payment and is an extremely versatile app. Along with all of the regular features a drawing app has, there is the added bonus of animation assistance allowing for users to make hand-drawn animations. Further users can create their own brushes or modify pre-made ones to suit their needs. I stand by this program as very user-friendly and well made, but there is the issue of cost to think about.

Download Procreate with purchase on any mobile app store.



Autodesk Sketchbook - this is a free app available on all platforms. It was not always free and was only recently released for wide use by anyone. It works extremely well and has all the features that one could want for a drawing application, with the added bonus of being cross-platform. I have not used this software personally, so I am not too familiar with any specific features or flaws, but overall, I have heard good things and it is highly rated.

Download Autodesk for free from the software's website ([www.autodesk.com](http://www.autodesk.com)), or from any mobile app store.

## Computer

Microsoft paint - this is the simplest answer to having students make digital art projects. Microsoft paint is already downloaded onto any computer running windows, and most students will already know how to use it. It has limited features, but it is very simple to use and can produce very nice artwork with enough effort.

Paint.NET - this is free photo editing software that is easily used to create artworks. It can be thought of a bit like an extension of Microsoft paint with more features and a better interface. As a photo editing software, it has the added bonus of being able to easily integrate photos into an artwork if needed.

Download Paint.NET from the software's website ([getpaint.net](http://getpaint.net)).

FireAlpaca - this is a free drawing software for any computer. It is easy to use and has many different features such as different brushes, the ability to edit brushes, the ability to create different layers and folders, and more. It is an easy-to-use drawing software, and many beginner digital artists stand by it. When I attended Eden High School in St. Catharines, we had this software installed onto all school computers by our digital design teacher so that students could use the program to create visual and creative projects throughout the course. There are ads loaded when first starting up the software, but these ads are generally just for other design programs and it is easy to exit out of them.

Download Firealpaca from the software's website ([firealpaca.com](http://firealpaca.com))

Coloring Activity Sheet: Giants attack the people of Midgard by Julia Schultz

Title: The Giants Attack Midgard

Page: 1



Since the giants are so fast, there's no way the people of Midgard would be able to outrun them.



The giants are really strong, so they could destroy all the houses of the people.



Giants can eat a lot so they might eat up every bit of Midgard food they find



They might even eat things on Midgard that aren't food!



But worst of all, the giants could trick the people of Midgard with their illusions and games.



Hopefully Midgard has Thor to help save them - he's fast, strong, has a big appetite, and won't be fooled twice!



Get your free storyboard templates at [boards.com](https://boards.com)

# LESSON SEVEN

## CANADA GAMES CONNECTION: SPORTS IN OLD NORSE MYTHOLOGY

### SPORTS IN OLD NORSE MYTHOLOGY

By Teresa Russo


The Canada Summer Games are coming to the Niagara Region in 2022; discuss sports in the Middle Ages with students by looking at hammer throwing for Ancient Civilizations: Daily life and leisure in the Middle Ages.

### Hammer throw


EMMA CASBURN  
BROCK UNIVERSITY  
MAR52P95

#### INTRODUCTION


THE SPORT OF HAMMER THROW IS CONSIDERED A TRACK AND FIELD EVENT IN WHICH A HAMMER IS HURLED BY A THROWER FOR DISTANCE USING TWO HANDS. WHILE THE THROWER STANDS WITHIN A CIRCLE, IN THE MODERN TECHNIQUE, THE THROWER SPINS AROUND 3 TIMES BEFORE RELEASING THE HAMMER INTO MID-AIR. TO BE SUCCESSFUL AT HAMMER THROW, ONE MUST USE A MASSIVE AMOUNT OF STRENGTH COMBINED WITH A STURDY BALANCE. THIS IS WHY THROUGHOUT HISTORY, MEN IN PARTICULAR HAVE USED THIS SPORT TO SHOWCASE THEIR PHYSICALITY AND TO SHOW OFF THEIR VALIANT ATTITUDE.




SCOTTISH HAMMER THROW ILLUSTRATION FROM FRANK & STOCKTON'S BOOK 'TWOING ABOUT HAMMERED HILANDS OR FACT AND FAULT'



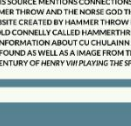
SCOTTISH HAMMER THROW ILLUSTRATION FROM FRANK & STOCKTON'S BOOK 'TWOING ABOUT HAMMERED HILANDS OR FACT AND FAULT'



HISTORIC IMAGE OF HENRY VIII WITH CONTEMPORARY HAMMER THROWERS



HISTORIC IMAGE OF HENRY VIII WITH CONTEMPORARY HAMMER THROWERS



HISTORIC IMAGE OF HENRY VIII WITH CONTEMPORARY HAMMER THROWERS

#### RESULTS

AFTER ANALYSING THE DATA AND RESEARCH OBTAINED, HAMMER THROW CAN BE TRACED BACK TO THE TAILTEANN GAMES HELD IN 1829 BC IN IRELAND. MORE IMPORTANTLY, A COMMON BELIEF IS THAT THE CELTIC HERO CU CHULAINN PRACTICED WHEN HE GRIPPED THE WHEEL OF A CHARIOT AND SPUN IT AROUND HIS HEAD BEFORE THROWING IT FARTHER THAN ANY MORTAL. THIS TEACHING INSPIRED MANY HUMANS TO PRACTICE THE SPORT, AND EVENTUALLY EVOLVE THE HAMMER INTO A MORE CONVENTIONAL OBJECT TO THROW, A BOULDER. THE ANCIENT TEUTONIC TRIBES ALSO PRACTICED THIS SPORT AS A RELIGIOUS CELEBRATION HONOURING THE GOD THOR, WHO USED HIS HAMMER TO CREATE STORMS. HOWEVER, RESEARCH SHOWS A HISTORIC PICTURE OF HENRY VIII DOING HAMMER THROW FURTHER EXEMPLIFYING THAT THIS SPORT HAD MUCH IMPORTANCE IN THE MIDDLE AGES AFTER INSPIRATION FROM MYTHOLOGICAL TEACHINGS.




DIAGRAM OF TECHNIQUE, BRIAN MAC

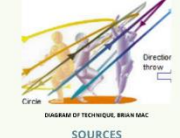


DIAGRAM OF TECHNIQUE, BRIAN MAC

#### CONCLUSION

THEREFORE, HAMMER THROW HAS A STRONG CONNECTION TO MYTHOLOGY WHICH IN TURN INSPIRED MANY TO PLAY DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

#### SOURCES

FURTHER RESEARCH ON THIS TOPIC CAN BE FOUND USING THESE SOURCES BELOW. FURTHER RESEARCH MAY POTENTIALLY LEAD TO PROOF OF CELEBRATIONS OF THOR WHICH IS NEEDED.

"World Athletics: Hammer Throw" [worldathletics.org](http://worldathletics.org). Accessed 10 February, 2021.

Connolly, Harold. "Origins" [Hammerthrow.org](http://Hammerthrow.org). 2 Dec. 2010. [Hammerthrow.org/what-is-the-hammer/origins/](http://Hammerthrow.org/what-is-the-hammer/origins/). Accessed 10 February 2021.

Robinson, Seth. "Where Did the Hammer Throw Get Its Name?" [BBC Olympics](http://BBC Olympics). 6 July 2016. [archiv.olympics.com/news/where-did-hammer-throw-get-its-name-?text=The%20origin%20of%20the%20hammer%20throw%20dates%20back%20to%202000%20B.C.%20where%20there%20is%20believed%20to%20be%20at%20the%20Olympics%20in%202000](http://archiv.olympics.com/news/where-did-hammer-throw-get-its-name-?text=The%20origin%20of%20the%20hammer%20throw%20dates%20back%20to%202000%20B.C.%20where%20there%20is%20believed%20to%20be%20at%20the%20Olympics%20in%202000). Accessed 18 February 2021.

Hammer throwing can be traced to the Tailteann Games held in 1829 BC in Ireland. A common belief is that the Celtic hero Cuchulainn gripped the wheel of a chariot and spun it around over his head before throwing it further than any mortal. Cuchulainn's feat evolved into throwing a hammer. The sport then became a religious celebration honoring Thor, who used a hammer to create storms. See Emma Casburn's academic poster project in RMA Omeka project for more information on the sport of hammer throwing. See also [Origins | Hammerthrow.org](#) and the International Olympic Committee site for the sport in the Olympics and female athletes in the sport: [International Olympic Committee \(olympics.com\)](#). Explore Canadian athletes in the sport: [Hammer Throw Archives - Team Canada - Official Olympic Team Website](#). Canadian Con Walsh won a bronze in the event in London, 1908 and Duncan Gillis a silver in Stockholm, 1912. Consider also racing and compare the race of Thialfi and Hugi with modern day racing or running events in the Canada Summer Games and in the Olympics.

# *Who Are the Characters?*

## *Activity Information*

*Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales*  
“Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

### The Characters of Old Norse Mythology and Thor’s Adventures

By Teresa Russo

Lesson Intent: Language Arts/Ancient Civilizations – 4<sup>th</sup> grade

Lesson Goal: Reading for Meaning – 1.7 Analyzing the text for characters and Ways of Life – A.2 Types of Work

“Who Are the Characters?” fulfills two area of the fourth-grade curriculum. The lesson allows students to first pay attention to the story and locate the characters in the story (both the main characters and secondary characters), while also paying attention to some topics in the ancient civilization curriculum by asking students to consider personality and occupation of each character in the community and by asking students where the characters are located in their community geographically as well as the setting of the story. Teachers can decide to provide the activity sheets below when the students initiate their reading of Thor in chapter 7 of the *Myths of the Norsemen*.

Thor is a hammer-wielding god in Old Norse mythology (as well as a god for Germanic tribes); thus, in the chapter Thor is referred to as Aesir (Æsir). The term Aesir means “sky Gods,” which includes Odin, Thor, Tyr, Baldur, Heimdall. Thor is the son of the great Allfather of the Gods, Odin (who emerges in chapter 1 as the son of Borr and the god who set the stars to bring light to Earth). Thor is associated with lightening, thunder, storms, sacred groves, strength, and the protection of mankind. Roger L. Green follows the Old Norse tradition where Thor is the Lord of Thunder, carrying a hammer, and the giants are afraid of Thor’s “Mjolnir.”

You can find Thor’s name spelled in many different languages. In Old Norse Mythology, the version of Green’s *Myths of the Norsemen*, Thor is written Þórr. In Old English, another medieval language, Thor is written Þunor. In Germany, his name is Donar during the Middle Ages and written in an Old High German language.

Asgard is the land of the Aesir where the gods and goddesses live in their palaces. In the World Tree this land is located above Midgard where the branches of the tree are located and closest to the sky.

Midgard is the land of the humans and referred to as Middle Earth. Bifrost, mentioned in chapter 7, is the rainbow bridge that connects these two lands. And the city of Utgard is the giant city in the heart of Jotunheim.

The Vikings made sacrifices to the Norse Gods in time of danger as Romans and Greeks sacrificed to their Roman and Greek gods. In Old Norse Mythology, the dwarfs make the points of the compass: Nordri translates as Northern; Sudri translates as Southern; Austri as Eastern and Vestri as Western. Students will encounter the dwarfs in chapter 2 when Odin visits the caverns of the dwarfs in his search of wisdom.

## Who Are the Characters?

*Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales*  
 “Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

*Have the students list the characters of the book and discuss their traits and attributes as well as discuss **who** they are, **what** they do, **where** they are located or **where** do they live, and **why** they are an important person in the story or their role in the story and within the relations.*

Characters	Relations	Personality, Occupation, Location, Role

# Who Are the Characters?

*Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales*  
"Thor's Visit to Utgard"

Page 2

Characters	Relations	Personality, Occupation, Location, Role

# Who Are the Characters?

*Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales*  
“Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

Page 3

Characters	Relations	Personality, Occupation, Location, Role

# Who Are the Characters?

## Answer Key

### *Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales* “Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

#### Answer Key: Who are the Characters in “Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

By Lucia Gabriella Di Pietro

#### CHAPTER 7: Thor’s Visit to Utgard

Characters	Relations	Personality, Occupation, Location, Role
Thor	Son of Odin, the Allfather of the gods; he is a sky god called Æsir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loves a challenge/dangerous mission</li> <li>Has a temper: when angry his strength doubles</li> <li>Very self-confident</li> </ul>
Loki	Cousin of Thor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is somewhat cautious</li> </ul>
Jormungand	Son of Loki; a serpent whom Odin flung into the sea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In this story, he is in Utgard as a cat who Thor tried to lift as a challenge from Utgardhaloki</li> </ul>
Freya the Beautiful		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is a giant as well</li> </ul>
Thrym the Giant	Giant killed by Thor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lord of the Noise Giants</li> </ul>
Utgardhaloki	King of Utgard (Jotunheim)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is challenging Thor, Loci and Thiafil against his giants to make the men prove their worthiness.</li> <li>The Challenges were all won by the giants, but that was only because they cheated. The next day the king admitted the truth and told Thor to part.</li> </ul>
Skymir	Utgardhaloki’s messenger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is a very large giant</li> <li>(Later in the story understood that Utgardhaloki met Thor and called himself Skrymir, page 125).</li> </ul>
A yeoman who has two children.	Allowed Loki and Thor to rest at their farmhouse on the edge of the river Ifing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very poor; did not have enough food to provide for themselves.</li> <li>Nice and welcoming</li> <li>The man is cowardly</li> </ul>
Thialfi and Roskva,	The yeomen’s children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thialfi is “swift-footed of all men”; is a fast runner and was forced to travel with Thor and Loki. He is asked to race a giant at Utgard.</li> <li>Roskva was forced to be Thor’s mistress, but did not travel with them right away. On the way back to Asgard, Thor takes her with him</li> </ul>
Logi	A Giant in Utgard, Jotunheim (Fire)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was asked to challenge Loki in an eating contest</li> <li>Later it is explained that this was “Fire itself”</li> </ul>

Hugi	A Giant in Utgard, Jotunheim (Thought)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was asked to race Thialfi and won.</li> <li>Later it is explained that Thialfi raced “Thought”</li> </ul>
Elli	Utgardhaloki’s old nurse (Old Age)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was summoned to wrestle Thor</li> <li>Old women/giant</li> <li>Stronger than expected and brought Thor to his knees</li> <li>Despite her age, no man has ever survived a fight against her. (except Thor)</li> <li>Later explained the Thor wrestled “Old Age” (page 126)</li> </ul>

## Places in Old Norse Mythology and in *Myths of the Norsemen*

By Teresa Russo

*Asgard* the land of Aesir where the gods and goddesses live; they live in mansions and palaces. It is located opposite of Midgard.

*Bifrost* is the rainbow bridge that connects Asgard and Midgard.

*Jotunheim* is the land of the Giants.

*Midgard* is the land of the humans and referred to as Middle Earth.

*Muspelheim* is the realm of fire; origin of this realm is the beginning of the universe in Old Norse Mythology.

*Nifelheim* are the mist and huge caves located beneath the earth.

*Svartalfheim* is the place where the Black Dwarfs and Elves reside.

*Thrynheim* is the place of Noise, located in the land of the Giants; also called the Kingdom of the Winds.

*Utgard* is the giant city in the heart of Jotunheim.

*Valhalla* is a great hall where Odin has placed his deceased Heroes, who were killed in battle.

*Vanaheim* is the place where the Vanir (gods who can see the future) reside.

*Yggdrasill* is the renowned World Tree of Old Norse Mythology.

# Vocabulary

## Activity Information

*Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales*  
 “Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

### Terms from Old Norse Mythology and Thor’s Adventures

By Teresa Russo

Lesson Intent: Language Arts – 4<sup>th</sup> grade

Lesson Goal: Reading with Fluency – 3.1 Familiar Words and 3.2 Unfamiliar Words

Vocabulary sheets emphasizes the students process of pausing to write down a word they are not familiar in the text, while teachers can also stress in discussion of the text familiar words to students in fourth grade. Schools with French language can make comparisons to the words in English and French.

French Immersion schools in which the Ancient Civilization curriculum is taught in French, the teacher can discuss the terms in French after students read the chapter with their English teacher for Language Arts or English Narrative lesson.

These activity sheets reinforce *Reading with Fluency*, but at the same time some of the new words may point to the way of life of the warriors and tribes during the Anglo-Saxon period; thus, the students and teachers may be having conversations that fulfills topics in Ancient Civilizations.

After the Vocabulary Activity Sheets, there are a few words for teachers to stress when reading the chapter on Thor in Roger Green’s *Myths of the Norsemen*.

Reading the Middle Ages Educational Resources – Teaching the Middle Ages (TMA)

### Vocabulary

*Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales*  
 “Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

Have the students log new words, discover their meaning, and share the words in class. Make a list on the Word Board and your weekly quiz can be made up of these words.

New Words	Meaning	How is it used in the story? (include page number where the word is located in the book)

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Page 40 | 48

# Vocabulary

*Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales*  
 “Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

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# Vocabulary

*Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales*

*“Thor’s Visit to Utgard”*

Page2

New Words	Meaning	How is it used in the story? (include page number where the word is located in the book)

Vocabulary

Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales  
“Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

Page 3

New Words	Meaning	How is it used in the story? (include page number where the word is located in the book)

# Vocabulary Answer Key

## *Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales* “Thor’s Visit to Utgard”

### Answer Key: *Terms from Old Norse Mythology and Thor’s Adventures*

By Lucia Gabriella Di Pietro

#### VOCABULARY

New Words	Meaning	How is it used in the Story?
Vowed	To solemnly promise to do a specific thing	“No harm shall come to the Aesir, Thor, and Locki, or to any attendants they may bring,’ <b>vowed</b> Utgardhaloki...” (page 111)
Harnessed	Arrangement of straps to attach an animal to a cart, plow etc. that is controlled by a driver.	“...He ordered out his chariot forthwith and <b>harnessed</b> his two goats...” (page 112)
Guile	Sly, clever, cunning intelligence.	“Some guile is intended you may be certain.” (page 112)
Simmering	keep (food) just below boiling when cooking or heating it.	“Very soon they were <b>simmering</b> in the pot, and the dinner was ready.” (page 112)
Marrow	a soft fatty substance in the cavities of bones, in which blood cells are produced (often taken as typifying strength and vitality).	“What he said about the bones is only to keep the <b>marrow</b> for himself, ...”
Yeoman	A man who owns a small land estate and works the land (his farm). (During Chaucer’s time and later Middle Ages, a yeoman additionally could be someone who accompanied a Knight like a squire does. In the Early Modern period in Great Britain after the navy was established by King Henry VIII in 1556, a yeoman was a “petty officer” in the British Royal Navy, and later in any other Commonwealth navies, to control signaling in the navy.)	“The yeoman cowered on the floor, realizing who his terrible guest was, ..”
Recompense	make amends to (someone) for loss or harm suffered; compensate.	“...realizing who his terrible guest was, and promised any <b>recompense</b> he chose to ask.” (page 113)
Smite	strike with a firm blow.	“I will not <b>smite</b> ...” (page 113)

Squire	A man in a high social standing, who lives on rural property, and assists a Knight in his travels and tournaments. (In late Middle Ages during Chaucer's time, a squire usually trained to be a knight and was always from a noble family. Even Joan of Arc as a female Knight in France had two squires assisting her with her armor and weapons when fighting for France.)	"... he to be my <b>squire</b> and..." (page 113)
Handmaiden	A female servant.	"...she to be my <b>handmaiden</b> for ever more." (page 113)
Hearth	The floor of a fireplace. (In modern times, it can also refer to someone's abode/home in literature and poetry.)	"It was a Great Hall with an entrance so wide that it took up the whole Ant but there was no one in it no hearth nor fire and no furniture." (page 114)
Wayfarers	a person who travels on foot.	"...and the <b>wayfarers</b> made themselves as comfortable as possible in their strange lodging." (page 114)
Bellowing	shout something with a deep loud roar.	"He could hear a roaring and <b>bellowing</b> sound nearby..." (page 115)
girded	Encircle with a belt or band.	"Then Thor knew what the noises were that he heard in the night and in a fit of anger he <b>girded</b> himself with his bout of strength..." (page 115)
bristling	Aggressively tense or brisk	"...but Thor,, <b>bristling</b> with fury, sat with hammer in hand planning how he would strike..." (page 117)
Vain	producing no result; useless.	"Thor strained his hardest to open it, but in <b>vain</b> ..." (page 119)
dias	A raised platform at the front of a room where the King and honored guests sit. (Dias are still used today for special functions and we may see them at weddings.)	"... the Giant King, sat at high table on the <b>dias</b> at the end." (page 119)
Cunning	having or showing skill in achieving one's ends by deceit or evasion.	"We are all skilled here in feats of strength and endurance, and in craft of <b>cunning</b> as well." (page 119)
wager	Used to express certainty. A bet	"...and <b>wager</b> that no one can eat faster than I" (page 119)
warily	Cautiously; carefully	"'We came here in peace, and not to perform the deeds of war,' said Thor <b>warily</b> ." (page 121)
Bade	command or order (someone) to do something.	"...and he <b>bade</b> one of his servants bring in the sconce-horn..." (page 121)

## *Credits for this Teaching Resource*

### *Myths of the Norsemen: Retold from the Old Norse Poems and Tales* *“Thor’s Visit to Utgard”*

Elizabeth Colantoni held a major in Dramatic Arts with a minor in French Studies in 2021. She was at Brock University, completing a combined major in Italian Studies & Medieval and Renaissance Studies.

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