

EPIC OF GILGAMESH

- How are the gods portrayed by the Epic? What is their function, and what is their relationship to humans?
- How is nature depicted?
- The poem presents Enkidu as Gilgamesh's "equal" or "second self." What does this represent about Gilgamesh?
- How is death regarded in the epic? How do humans come to terms with mortality and suppositions of the afterlife?
- What is the purpose of the story?



GREEK MYTHOLOGY

- Discuss the ways in which Greek creation myths functioned as *didactic* works (teaches a lesson).
- How do Greek creation myths relate to the individual? To larger communities? To the world overall? Can myths have meaning at more than one level?
- Can you relate mythology to everyday life?



BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

- How do we see the motif of *imposing order to chaos* in the *Genesis* account?
- Is there more than one creation story within the *Genesis* account?
- What similarities and differences do you find in the *Genesis* account versus other creation stories?



INDIGENOUS ORIGINS

1. According to the New Netherlands story, what existed before the earth was created? What were the first three creatures created? How are the personalities of these three creatures reflected by people in society? Explain the significance of the main figure in this American Indian creation story and what it tells us about their culture.
2. According to the Ottawa, how was humankind created? Give an example of how the Ottawa learned to survive by adapting to their environment. Explain how the Ottawa viewed the role of women in their society.
3. Compare and contrast the Ottawa creation story with that of the biblical creation beliefs of the Europeans they encountered.
4. Briefly summarize the Sioux creation story. Why does the Sioux creation story include the crow, loon, otter, beaver, and turtle? Compare the Sioux story with the other creation stories.
5. What evidence do you find in the oral tradition that European culture influenced Native American beliefs about creation?
6. From your analysis of the documents, what would say are the strengths and weaknesses of the oral tradition as historical source material? What can be learned about pre-Columbian life and thought among indigenous peoples from a close reading of the materials?
