

Zoe Discovers Heredity Among the Gods

Grade 6

Science

Nonfiction

Mythology Theme

~185 words

NGSS.MS-LS3-1

Name: _____ Date: _____

 **READ — READ THIS PASSAGE CAREFULLY. YOU MAY READ IT TWICE.**

Zoe explored the grand hall of Mount Olympus on a school mythology project. She noticed a mosaic showing Zeus, Athena, and Apollo standing side by side. Each god shared physical features with a parent deity. Zoe recognized this as **heredity** — the passing of traits from parents to their children. In Greek myths, Athena was born from Zeus. She inherited his sharp eyes and powerful build. Scientists explain that traits pass through genes, which are tiny instructions inside cells. Genes determine features like eye color, height, and even some behaviors. Zoe studied Apollo next. Apollo was the son of Zeus and the goddess Leto. He inherited Leto's golden hair and Zeus's commanding presence. Zoe learned that offspring can receive traits from both parents at once. This mixing creates unique combinations in every child. Zoe also found that some traits are dominant and others are recessive. Dominant traits appear more often when passed down. Recessive traits can stay hidden for many generations before showing up again. By the end of her visit, Zoe understood one key truth. Even mythological families follow the same rules of heredity as all living things.

 *Tip: Read the passage twice before turning to the questions on the next page.*

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Questions

 **ANSWER** USE THE PASSAGE ON PAGE 1 TO HELP FIND YOUR ANSWERS.

MAIN IDEA

1. What is this passage mostly about?

TEXT EVIDENCE

2. According to the passage, what did Zoe see in the mosaic that first made her think about heredity? Use evidence from the text in your answer.

VOCABULARY

3. What does the word ****heredity**** mean as it is used in this passage?

INFERENCE

4. Why might a student like Zoe find it easier to understand heredity by looking at mythological families instead of just reading a science textbook?

CAUSE AND EFFECT

5. According to the passage, what happens because Apollo received traits from both Zeus and the goddess Leto?

TEXT EVIDENCE

6. The passage explains that some traits can be hidden for a long time before appearing. What exact words does the author use to support this idea?

✓ ANSWER KEY — Zoe Discovers Heredity Among the Gods

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TEACHER / PARENT USE ONLY — Suggested answers shown below each question

Zoe explored the grand hall of Mount Olympus on a school mythology project. She noticed a mosaic showing Zeus, Athena, and Apollo standing side by side. Each god shared physical features with a parent deity. Zoe recognized this as **heredity** — the passing of traits from parents to their children. In Greek myths, Athena was born from Zeus. She inherited his sharp eyes and powerful build. Scientists explain that traits pass through genes, which are tiny instructions inside cells. Genes determine features like eye color, height, and even some behaviors. Zoe studied Apollo next. Apollo was the son of Zeus and the goddess Leto. He inherited Leto's golden hair and Zeus's commanding presence. Zoe learned that offspring can receive traits from both parents at once. This mixing creates unique combinations in every child. Zoe also found that some traits are dominant and others are recessive. Dominant traits appear more often when passed down. Recessive traits can stay hidden for many generations before showing up again. By the end of her visit, Zoe understood one key truth. Even mythological families

MAIN IDEA

1. What is this passage mostly about?

This passage is mostly about how Zoe uses Greek mythology to explore and understand heredity, which is the way traits are passed from parents to their children through genes.

TEXT EVIDENCE

2. According to the passage, what did Zoe see in the mosaic that first made her think about heredity? Use evidence from the text in your answer.

Zoe saw that the gods looked like their parents, which made her think about heredity. The passage states, "Each god shared physical features with a parent deity."

VOCABULARY

3. What does the word **heredity** mean as it is used in this passage?

In this passage, heredity means the process by which traits, such as eye color or height, are passed down from parents to their children through genes.

INFERENCE

4. Why might a student like Zoe find it easier to understand heredity by looking at mythological families instead of just reading a science textbook?

Zoe could see the connection between parents and children in a visual, story-based way through the mosaic, which made the science concept feel real and concrete. Because the gods are familiar characters with well-known family relationships, the idea of inherited traits becomes easier to recognize and remember.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

5. According to the passage, what happens because Apollo received traits from both Zeus and the goddess Leto?

Because Apollo inherited traits from two different parents, he ended up with a unique combination of features. This shows the cause-and-effect relationship the passage describes: when offspring receive traits from both parents at once, "this mixing creates unique combinations in every child."

TEXT EVIDENCE

6. The passage explains that some traits can be hidden for a long time before appearing. What exact words does the author use to support this idea?

The author supports this idea in the fourth paragraph by stating, "Recessive traits can stay hidden for many generations before showing up again."