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# To the Teacher

The activities in this book have been selected especially for gifted students in years 4 to 8 and are designed to challenge them and to help them develop and apply higher-level thinking skills. These activities have been grouped by subject matter into the following three sections: mythology, archeology, and architecture.

## Mythology

Meditative people have long sought to explain the forces they felt and saw but could not understand. When knowledge and reason have failed them, they have relied on their imagination to both enlighten and amuse. From this rich source have come myths to explain the rationally inexplicable, and observers of people down through the ages have said that it is this ability to make myths which ultimately sets humans apart from the other creatures with which they share this globe.

Myths tell us a great deal about what qualities we have admired, what forces we have worshiped, and what unknowns we have feared. Thus, the study of myths—mythology—is a way of learning about the people of long ago and about ourselves.

The mythology section in this book includes Chinese, Eskimo, Hispanic, Irish, Iroquois, Japanese, Norse, and Polynesian myths. They tell how the world began and explain such natural phenomena as the phases of the moon, weather, and fire. They also speak of selfishness, anger, jealousy, courage, strength, and love. From them one can generalize that different kinds of people have explained the world in different ways at different times. The activities within this section will help members of your class to understand and appreciate these differences and the reasons for them. They will also give class members an opportunity to make and examine some myths of their own.

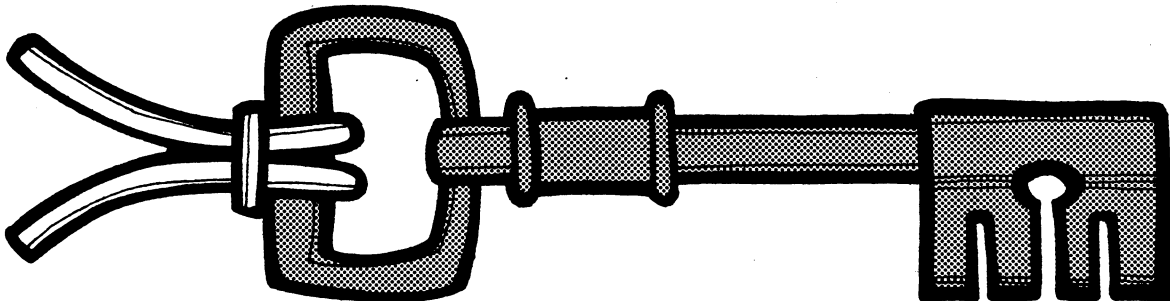
## Archeology

Archeology is the discovery and study of ancient objects and the people who made and used them. Like history, its primary purpose in the classroom is to help students understand the present by studying the past and, thus, to make them better prepared for the future. It is a means of helping children to develop a perspective on the nature of their society and to understand what experiences and values they share with peoples of other times and places.

The activities in this section are designed to (1) acquaint children with some of the exciting archeological discoveries that have been made in all parts of the world, (2) make them aware of some of the scientific theories and procedures on which this field of study is based, and (3) develop in them some of the observational and problem-solving skills all archeologists need.

## Architecture

While people's ability to make myths is unique, they share with other creatures a need for shelter. The activities in this section give children an opportunity to examine some of the ways in which animals and humans have met this fundamental need. These activities also acquaint children with the basic elements and principles of architecture and enable them to see how these elements and principles have been used and applied in webs, burrows, caves, castles, pyramids, and temples. Children are encouraged to identify types of structures, to manipulate shapes, to apply basic principles in creating structural designs, to test the strength and assess the practicality of their designs, to be aware of environmental considerations, to build with natural materials, and to compare architectural styles.



## Pretest

Circle the correct letter.

1. When the Chinese monster Phan-Ku was hatched,
  - a. the sky and earth were created.
  - b. the gods made him ruler.
  - c. the birds ate his shell.
  - d. he frightened the children.
  
2. The dragon Kung Kung wanted to destroy the world because he
  - a. did not become God.
  - b. knew it was evil.
  - c. lost a war.
  - d. had a better place to live.
  
3. Susanoo saved a girl from
  - a. the roaring sea.
  - b. a boiling pit.
  - c. a snake monster.
  - d. the fury of the gods.
  
4. Frigga wanted to protect the Norse god Balder from
  - a. the devils.
  - b. fire.
  - c. animals.
  - d. death.
  
5. The Norse god Balder was eventually destroyed by
  - a. an evil god named Loki.
  - b. his own father.
  - c. a jealous wife.
  - d. a fierce lion.
  
6. Cú Chulainn was an Irish hero who
  - a. brought fire to his people.
  - b. changed form to fight battles.
  - c. killed many snakes.
  - d. made day and night.
  
7. A Mexican myth states that the gods' final creation was the men of
  - a. fire.
  - b. clay.
  - c. wood.
  - d. maize.
  
8. The Eskimo sea mother Sedna was once
  - a. a young demon girl.
  - b. the queen of her people.
  - c. a large seal.
  - d. a beautiful princess.
  
9. An Iroquois myth says that the moon gets full when
  - a. the earth comes close to it.
  - b. Moon Child is born.
  - c. Moon Woman hopes Sun Man will come back to her.
  - d. Sun Man gets angry.
  
10. Maui was a Polynesian hero who brought his people the gift of
  - a. love.
  - b. fire.
  - c. wisdom.
  - d. creation.

