

http://www.ancientgreece.com/html/mythology_frame.htm

Little Hermes

Hermes was the son of Zeus and Maia, a nymph. He was born already walking and talking. The day he was born, Hermes constructed the lyre, a kind of harp. Then he stole fifty of Apollo's sheep, sacrificing two of them to the gods. Being the god of thieves, Hermes cleverly concealed all of his tracks. However, Apollo was the god of prophecy, so he found out that Hermes had stolen his sheep. Hermes then had to exchange his lyre for the sheep. Then the two gods became friends.

The Kidnapping of Persephone

Persephone was a young maiden, the daughter of Demeter, the earth mother. It came to pass that Hades fell in love with her. He kidnapped her one day, taking her to his underworld kingdom. Demeter was very grievous when she found out about her daughter's disappearance. She left Olympus and wandered in the form of an old woman. Because of her absence, there was a great famine. Finally Zeus sent Hermes to Hades to bring Persephone back. Before letting her go, Hades gave her seven pomegranate seeds to eat. Later it turned out that because of this she had to go back to him. So now Persephone spends seven months in the underworld, which are the cold, lifeless months. The remaining warm, sunny months she spends with her mother back on Earth.

Don't look back!!

Orpheus could make such beautiful music that even trees and animals would crowd around him to listen. Orpheus was in love with the lovely Eurydice. But she got bitten by a snake and died. Orpheus was inconsolable. He went down to the underworld, playing his music as skillfully as he could, mesmerising the guards. Moved by his music, Hades told him to go back, promising to send Eurydice after him. The only condition was that Orpheus not look back on his way up. Orpheus started on his way back. But when he had almost reached the light, he could not resist and turned around. He saw his beloved Eurydice's shadow dissolve behind him. Orpheus tried to go back, but he could no longer get into the underworld. Then Orpheus started wandering around the world, playing his harmonious music, until some maddened women murdered him, and he went to the underworld to be with his Eurydice.

Athena's Gift

Long ago in Greece, King Cecrops established a city. It was predicted that the city would become very famous and prosperous. Many gods wanted to become the special patrons of the city. In the end there were two contestants left-- Athena and Poseidon. To resolve the conflict each one was supposed to give some kind of a gift to the city, and whoever presented the greater gift would win the contest. Poseidon made a (water)spring appear in the city and promised a strong navy to the city. Athena made the olive tree. She told everyone how olives could be used for food, for cleansing, offerings, to light fires, and many other uses. Athena won the contest and the city was called Athens in her honor.

The Artist Lover

Pygmalion was a handsome young sculptor. He was devoted to his art and his one goal was to make a statue of perfect beauty. For a long time he worked and worked. Finally he made a perfect ivory statue of a girl. Pygmalion named her Galatea. He would dream of it coming alive day and night. One day, on the festival of Aphrodite, he gave the goddess many gifts. When he got home, he looked at Galatea and it seemed to him that she stirred. He came up to her and kissed her. Suddenly she came alive. The ivory grew soft and she opened her eyes. Then she stepped down from her pedestal. The next day the couple went to Aphrodite's shrine to thank the goddess.

Vanity Flower

Narcissus was a beautiful boy with whom many nymphs and maidens fell in love. One of them was a nymph, Echo. Echo could not talk, only repeat the last words of others. But Narcissus did not love her back. In fact, he was downright cruel to her. The unhappy Echo hid away and wasted away until all that was left of her was her voice. The gods decided to punish Narcissus for this. He was brought to a pool, where he fell in love with his own reflection. From that time on, he could not tear himself away from the pool, hopeless and desperate. Finally the gods took pity on him and turned him into a flower that grew near the pool.