

Grade 7

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Comprehension Score: ____/12

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Comprehension: Read this passage and answer the questions below.

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Pandora's Box (a Greek Myth)

At first the life of man on earth was happier than it is now, and then miseries and discontents gradually crept in. At first, only Man was invented, but Zeus was angry at Man one day and decided to invent Woman to help in his plan to punish Man.

Hephaestus, the smith of the gods, was instructed to form her from the earth and make her irresistibly beautiful. Each of the gods gave her his own special gift of skill, and from this she was called Pandora, "all gifted."

When she was perfected with every gift and arrayed in all her loveliness, this treacherous treasure was taken down to earth by Hermes, the messenger god who wears a winged helmet and sandals to speed his flight, and given to Prometheus's foolish brother Epimetheus. Now Prometheus had warned his brother not to accept anything from Zeus, even if it looked like a gift sent in friendship, but Epimetheus always acted first and thought afterwards. He accepted the maiden from Hermes and led her into his house. She entered carrying with her a great box. The gods had sent this box with Pandora and told her to keep it safe but never to think of opening it.

This was too much for a lively girl like Pandora, who among her gifts was endowed with the first feminine curiosity. After restraining it for a little while, she at last gave in and lifted the lid from the box, and from that moment began the sorrows of mankind. For each of the gods had stored in it the worst thing he was able to give, and wonderful as the gifts they endowed her were, just as dreadful were the evils that rushed eagerly from the box in a black stinking cloud like pestilent insects - sickness and suffering, hatred, jealousy and greed, and all the other cruel things that freeze the heart and bring on old age.

Pandora tried to clap the lid on the box again, but it was too late. The happy childhood of mankind had gone forever, and with it the Golden Age when life was easy. From then man has had a hard living by his own labor from the unfriendly ground.

Only one good thing came to man from the box and remains to comfort him in his distress, and that is the spirit of Hope.

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1. What does "Pandora" mean?

- a) trouble
- b) beautiful
- c) all-gifted
- d) woman

2. Why was the woman named Pandora?

- a) the gods knew she was going to cause trouble
- b) each god gave her his very best special gift
- c) she was named after for mom
- d) it was the most beautiful name in the world

3. In the second to last paragraph, what tense is the verb **has had**?

- a) past tense
- b) present perfect
- c) future perfect
- d) past perfect

4. What is the one good thing that was released from the box?

- a) woman
- b) happiness
- c) hope
- d) greed

5. Why did Zeus make Pandora so beautiful and talented?

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6. Why do you think Prometheus warned his brother not to accept a gift from Zeus?

7. Why did Epimetheus accept the gift anyhow?

8. How did Woman act as a punishment for Man?

9. How did the world *change* because the box was opened?

10. What does this story explain?

11. What does this story say about curiosity?

12. There is a story about the war between the Greeks and Trojans in which the Greeks deliver a huge wooden horse to the Trojans. One of the Greek soldiers pretends to turn against his army and tells the Trojans that the Greeks didn't think the Trojans could get the horse into their fortress. The Trojans are determined to get the horse inside and they do, but what they didn't know was that the horse was filled with Greek soldiers who came out and attacked the city in the middle of the night. **How is this story similar to *Pandora's Box*?**