Susan Deacy, "Entry on: Mythical Top Trumps by The British Museum ", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1083. Entry version as of November 21, 2026.

The British Museum

Mythical Top Trumps

United Kingdom

TAGS: Cyclops / Cyclopes Monsters





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Mythical Top Trumps
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom, Worldwide
Original Language	English
Available Onllne	britishmuseum.org (accessed: August 2, 2020).
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk
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Creators

The British Museum (Author)

The logo of the British Museum. Retrieved from Wikipedia, public domain (accessed: January 25, 2022).

The British Museum, established 1753, is among the oldest and largest of the world's major museums. The Museum, located in Bloomsbury in central London, houses artefacts from numerous places and periods many of which originate from territories once ruled or administered by Britain as a colonial power. Its classical collections, overseen chiefly by the Department of Greece and Rome, encompass over 100,000 objects, most famously and controversially, the "Parthenon [or "Elgin"] Marbles." The Museum organises wide-ranging learning programmes for children, young adults and adults and provides on-site activities for visitors of all ages such as activity trails, gallery talks and handling sessions.

Sources:

Caygill, Marjorie, *The British Museum A-Z Companion to the Collections*, London: British Museum Press, 1999;

Kennedy, Maev, "Mutual attacks mar Elgin Marbles debate," *Guardian, 1 December* 1999 theguardian.com (accessed: August 3, 2020);

en.wikipedia.org (accessed: August 3, 2020);

britishmuseum.org (accessed: August 2, 2020).

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Additional information

Summary

This webpage, available via the British Museum's online "Young Explorers" resources, shows how to create a "top-trumps" game involving fantastic creatures from several cultures using easy to obtain materials: ruler, blank paper, pencil and colouring pencils/crayons. Users are told how to get started by drawing out a template left blank at the top and with several ruled lines beneath. Those creating the game are free to select any mythological figure for each card though suggestions are offered from mythologies of ancient Greece, Mexico, Gambia, Australia, China and India. Links can be followed to further information about some of the creatures, including "Cyclops" from ancient Greek myth. To create each card, users are told to draw and colour a picture of a given creature beneath which they decide on rankings for specific set categories: the webpage suggests "strength," "intelligence," "bravery," "kindness," "magic" and "fear factor." Players are told how to play their game via a rehearsal of the rules for top-trumps.

Analysis

This webpage enables children to engage with the educational potential of objects at the British Museum using easily-obtainable things like paper and colouring pencils. While the suggested topics are all creatures, the set categories could just as easily apply to other types of characters, e.g. "deities" or "heroines".

By following links to specific mythological creatures, children are able to engage in a hands-on comparative study of myth by researching and assessing details about specific creatures from different cultures, ancient Greece included. In order to draw and categorise some of the creatures, children are given links to objects in the Museum's online collection which include the creature in question. By following these links, children will be able to experience, and take inspiration from, artefacts created by artists from the particular culture. Some of the information here, however, is pitched at those with an understanding of terms which might go over the head of children – e.g. "acquisitional details" – and some users might prefer to research their creatures from other sources such as websites and books for children.

Cyclops / Cyclopes Monsters

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Character traits Knowledge Learning
Further Reading	Rice, Helen, Rachel Blades and Jennifer Gibb, “Evaluation of the National 2011 Schools Top Trumps Tournament: Final report – executive summary”, London: National Children’s Bureau 2011, toptrumps.com (accessed: August 3, 2020).
Addenda	Genre: Creative activity and games website promoting classical mythology

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