

# The Lightning Thief



By

Rick Riordan

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

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## Table of Contents

Suggestions and Expectations .....	3
List of Skills .....	4
Synopsis / Author Biography .....	5
Student Checklist .....	6
Reproducible Student Booklet .....	7
Answer Key .....	67

**About the author:** Nat Reed has been a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, please visit the websites [www.reedpublications.org](http://www.reedpublications.org) and [www.novelstudies.org](http://www.novelstudies.org).

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## Suggestions and Expectations

This 72 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *The Lightning Thief* and is comprised of five activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking.

### Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this unit are linked to the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters . . . respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included as well as a **Student Checklist**.

**Themes** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include: adjusting to new and difficult circumstances, the loss of a parent, parental abuse, dyslexia and attention deficit disorder, Greek mythology, heroism and courage.

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## List of Skills

### Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms & antonyms
3. Identifying / creating *personification*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Listing compound words
7. Identifying / creating a *simile*
8. Use of singular / plural noun
9. Using content clues: analogies
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
14. Identifying examples of *sarcasm*

### Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

### Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time lines and climax*
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify *foreshadowing*
4. Identify *cliffhangers*

### Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Compare characters
3. Relating personal experiences

### Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Compare the novel with the film
2. Write a newspaper article
3. Write a letter to a friend
4. Research assignments
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write a description of your feelings
7. Write a review of the novel

### Art Activities

1. Design a cover for the novel
2. Create a Storyboard
3. Sketch a picture.

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## Synopsis

**The Lightning Thief** is the exciting fantasy/adventure novel featuring the adventures of Percy Jackson, a twelve-year-old boy with dyslexia and Attention-Deficit Disorder (ADD), who has been expelled from a string of boarding schools and is having a difficult time adjusting to his circumstances. Percy's life changes forever when he inadvertently discovers that he is a demigod, the son of a mortal woman and the Greek god Poseidon. Percy and his friends, Annabeth and Grover (a satyr assigned to protect him) embark on a quest to prevent an apocalyptic war between the Greek gods Zeus, Poseidon and Hades.

Percy's adventures really begin when he is sent to Camp Half-Blood for the summer. Here he meets other children similar to himself and is given the quest of finding and returning the master bolt, stolen from Zeus.

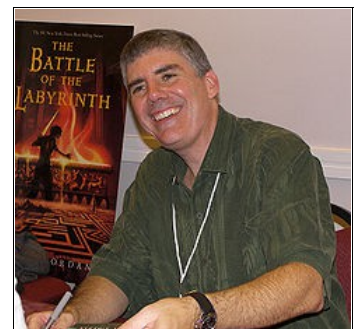
On this perilous journey to Hades and back, Percy and his two friends encounter many of the famed characters from Greek mythology, and in the process Percy learns much of himself, his capabilities, limitations and his own place in this most unusual world.

## Author Biography

Rick Riordan

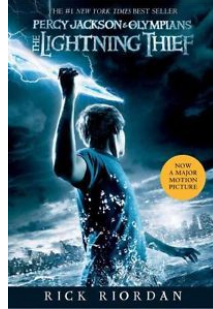
Rick Riordan was born in 1964 in San Antonio Texas. He is the author of the *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series as well as a number of other books for adults and young readers. His book, *The Maze of Bones*, reached number one on the New York Times Best Seller list in 2008.

After graduating from the University of Texas Rick was a teacher for 15 years. Rick presently lives in San Antonio with his wife and two sons. Rick recently began working on a new series based upon the Egyptian pantheon, *The Kane Chronicles*. The first book in this series, *The Red Pyramid*, was released in 2010.



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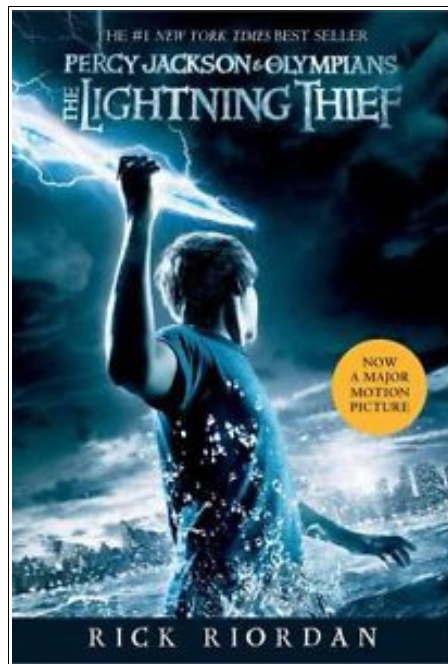


## Student Checklist

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Chapters 1 - 2



### Before you read the chapters:

In the first two chapters, the main character, Percy, feels that he has failed and let his family and friends down. Describe a time in your own life when you (or a friend) endured a similar experience.




### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

materialize	disgorge	misinterpret	probation	philosophical
chaperone	kleptomaniac	vitality	pulverize	obnoxious

1. The change missing from my mother's purse, told us that Jenna must be a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Jon's older brother was given six months \_\_\_\_\_ for his role in the vandalism.
3. I think we are too old to have a \_\_\_\_\_ at the Mini Putt Tournament!
4. The sick puppy \_\_\_\_\_ its breakfast while the horrified children watched.
5. Aunt Janie just doesn't have the same \_\_\_\_\_ that she did as a young woman.
6. I think the principal of your school is the most \_\_\_\_\_ man I've ever met.
7. When Sarah doesn't get her own way she tends to become very \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Somehow he just seems to \_\_\_\_\_ in the most unexpected places.
9. Muhammad Ali began to \_\_\_\_\_ his opponent into submission.
10. The fact that you agreed to go out on a date with him might make him \_\_\_\_\_ your true feelings toward him.



# Questions

1. Describe the setting of Chapter One. Keep in mind that setting includes place and time.


2. What impression have you formed of **Nancy Bobofit** thus far in the novel? Why?


3. Percy mentions that he has *dyslexia* and *attention deficit disorder*. Choose one of these terms and define it.


4. Describe how the following teachers treated Percy:

Mr. Brunner	
Mrs. Dodds	

5. Why do you think Grover tried to take the blame for pushing Nancy into the fountain? Why did Percy find this unusual?


b. In Chapter Two Percy suspects Grover of lying about something. What?


6. Describe Percy's altercation with Mrs. Dodds.


7. A *cliffhanger* is a device used by the author to keep the reader in suspense. How is this true of Chapter Two's conclusion?


8. Summarize the important facts of the conversation which Percy overheard between Grover and Mr. Brunner.


9. What incident was the final straw in the headmaster's decision to expel Percy from Yancy?


10. What was unusual about the three women that Percy saw by the fruit stand?




## Language Activities

**A.** **Sarcasm**, or **satire**, is a device mentioned by the author in this chapter: "Nancy Bobofit smirked at me and made sarcastic little kissing motions with her lips". Look up the meaning of *sarcasm* and then using your imagination create an example of *sarcasm*.


**B.** **Personification** is a literary device in which an inanimate object (a baseball bat) is given personal qualities. An example from Chapter Two is: *The driver cursed and limped the Greyhound over to the side of the highway.*

What inanimate object is being personified in this example? \_\_\_\_\_

What verb accomplishes this? \_\_\_\_\_

**C.** Place the following words from these chapters in **alphabetical order**.

convince	1.
Chiron	2.
Charon	3.
closer	4.
coals	5.
come	6.
café	7.
can	8.
Christmas	9.
control	10.

**D.** Many English words can be used as both a **noun** and a **verb**, depending on their context in the sentence. Use your imagination and write sentences to illustrate how the following words from these chapters can be used as both a noun and a verb.

**PLAY**

Noun	
Verb	

**TRIP**

Noun	
Verb	

**Language & Extension Activities**



**A.** Greek mythology plays an important part of this novel. The first two chapters alone reveal a number of famous characters from Greek mythology. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, match each of the names below with the correct descriptor:

Tartarus
Chiron
Charon
Polydictes (Polydectes)
Polydeuces
Kronos

King of Seriphos
King Titan
A Boxer – son of Zeus
Intellegent, kind centaur
The darkest part of the underworld
Ferryman of Hades

## B. A Comic Strip

This activity is especially for students with an artistic flair or who love comic books! It can be done for any event up to this point in the story. The first step is to decide on the length of your comic strip (6 to 9 frames is suggested); next consider what events you will include. You may wish to highlight a brief incident or include the highlights of the novel to this point. A quick sketch of the comic strip can first be accomplished in a **storyboard format** before a final copy is attempted. The strip should include a title and dialogue. It should be neat and imaginative.
