

ENGLISH · GRADES 4–5

Pandora's Box

A Greek myth — comprehension

Read the passage

Long ago, the gods of Olympus made Pandora — the first woman on Earth. They gave her many gifts: beauty from Aphrodite, wisdom from Athena, music from Apollo. Zeus, the king of the gods, also gave her a sealed jar — what people today might call a box — and warned her, 'Never open it.'

For weeks, Pandora obeyed. But the box sat in her home, gleaming. She wondered what could be inside. Was it gold? Treasure? A new gift?

One quiet afternoon, when no one was watching, Pandora lifted the lid — just a peek, she told herself.

Out flew darkness. Out flew sickness, hunger, jealousy, war, sorrow, all the troubles of the world — invisible, like wisps of black smoke. They scattered into the air and were gone before Pandora could close the lid.

She wept. The world had been peaceful, and now she had set loose every misery known to humans. But as she sat crying, a tiny voice came from the bottom of the box. 'Let me out, please. I am the last gift. I am Hope.'

Pandora opened the box one more time. Hope flew out and followed all the troubles into the world — so that wherever a sorrow went, hope would not be far behind.

Retrieval

1. Who gave Pandora wisdom?
2. What did Zeus warn Pandora not to do?



3. List four troubles that escaped from the box.
4. What was the last thing to come out?

Inference

1. Why do you think Zeus gave Pandora the box but told her not to open it?
2. What does the line 'wisps of black smoke' tell you about the troubles?
3. Why is it important that Hope was at the BOTTOM of the box?

Language

1. Find a word in the passage that means 'lit up softly'. (Hint: paragraph 2)
2. What does 'misery' mean? Use a dictionary if needed.
3. Why is the ending — that hope follows every sorrow — a comforting message?

