

A Teaching Guide from Ryan Bani Tahmaseb & RP Kids

Discussion Questions

1. Which story in the book did you find most surprising? What was surprising about it?
2. What patterns or themes do you notice in these stories? What about in the illustrations?
3. In the tradition of Iranian/Persian storytelling, such as *One Thousand and One Nights*, this book builds a larger narrative from many smaller stories. How are the different stories in this collection connected?
4. Which character(s) from Persian myths do you see yourself in? Explain.
5. Share an example of a time when an illustration in the book helped you understand the story better—or at least see it differently.
6. What do you know about modern-day Iran? What do you know about the American government's relationship with Iran's government? What are some possible benefits of Americans learning more about Persian/Iranian culture, including its mythology?



Research Project

For this project, students (working individually or in small groups, depending on what works best for your setting) will choose one of the following questions to answer in a research-based presentation:

1. How is Persian mythology similar to other world mythologies? How is it different?
2. Ancient Persia spanned several empires from 550 BCE to 651 CE. Which modern-day countries did it include? What might daily life have looked like during those empires?
3. How did the people of Ancient Persia incorporate their beliefs into everyday life?

Teach or review how students can find age-appropriate research sources, including books, websites, and academic databases. If available, your school librarian can be a perfect partner in helping students find reliable information.

After gathering their research, students should create a dynamic presentation to share what they've learned. The more options they have for how to present, the better! Possible formats include:

- A short video
- A travel brochure
- A poster or display board
- A physical or digital collage
- An infographic (e.g., using Canva)
- A three-dimensional model (from a makerspace or found materials)
- A skit
- An interactive quiz (e.g., Kahoot)
- A traditional slideshow (e.g., Canva or Google Slides)

Plan for a class period or two for students to present their work and learn from one another's discoveries.



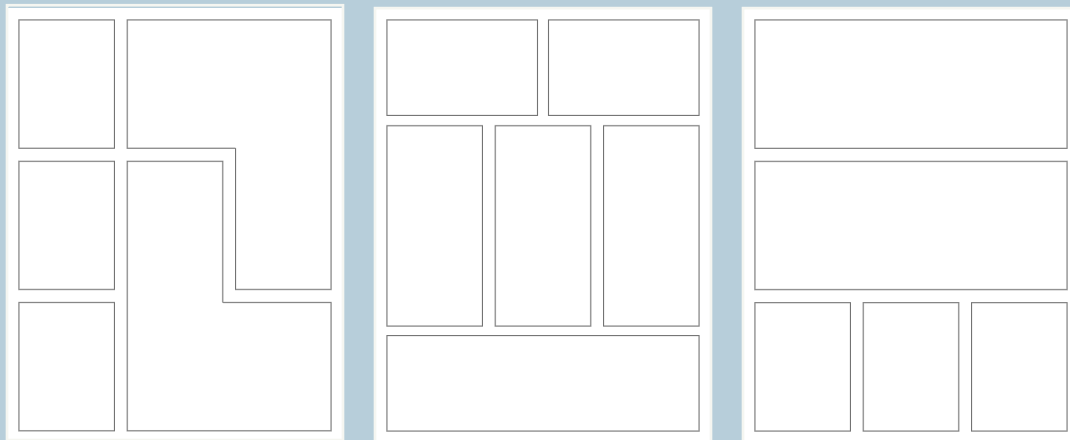
Comic Strip

Invite students to choose two characters from *Persian Mythology* who do not interact in the stories. Then, ask them to imagine a short, fictional encounter or confrontation between these two characters. They should develop a scene that reflects one of the book's central themes, such as the struggle between good and evil, order and chaos, light and darkness, or life and death.

Using the provided five-panel comic strip template, students should illustrate their imagined scene and include dialogue and/or thought bubbles to bring the moment to life.

Finally, students should add a brief reflection—just a few sentences on the back of their comic—explaining how their scene connects to the theme they chose.

Note: A 5-panel comic strip template could look like any of these examples.



After everyone has finished, consider asking students to display their comics on their desks and participate in a gallery walk so that they can see and appreciate each other's work.



Letter to a Character



Ask students to write a thoughtful letter to one character from *Persian Mythology* with whom they feel a connection. This character could be a hero, a villain, a god, or—yes—even a monster!

The letter should include three short paragraphs:

1. **Personal Connection:** Here, students should explain why they feel connected to the character. Do they see something of themselves in this character? Do they share a trait or challenge? Or are they intrigued by how different the character is from them?
2. **Admiration:** Ask students to describe something they admire about the character. Even if they've chosen a villain, challenge them to articulate a redeeming quality. Then, have them consider how they might persuade the character to use that quality for good instead.
3. **Questions or Advice:** Finally, students should either pose a few questions they would want to ask the character or offer some advice they think the character might need, particularly in light of the choices the character makes in the book. (If students have already offered advice in the previous paragraph, they should ask questions in this paragraph.)

Invite a few volunteers to share their final letters with the class, or have students take turns reading them aloud to each other in small groups.

If students would like an additional challenge, they can write a second letter: a response from their chosen character to their original message.

