

# Athena research paper 1



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ATHENA RESEARCH PAPER Athena is the goddess of wisdom and warfare. She is the favorite daughter of Zeus. There are many different versions of how Athena came to be.

The most accepted version is that Athena was born a child of Zeus by his first wife, Metis, a goddess of wisdom. Zeus feared that Metis might bear him a son who was mightier than himself, so he swallowed her. According to some stories, Zeus had every right to fear this because Mother Earth had prophesied that Metis' first child would be a girl, but her second child would be a boy that would overthrow Zeus as had happened to his father and his grandfather.

Zeus took this warning to heart. This is why he swallowed Metis. It is believed that this is where Zeus gained his wisdom. Before swallowing his wife he was said to have had no brains. Little did Zeus know that Metis was already with child. While trapped inside Zeus, Metis began to make a helmet and robe for her unborn daughter. All that clanging and pounding caused Zeus to suffer terrible headaches, so he called for his son Hephaestus. Hephaestus split his father's skull open to relieve the pain, and out popped Athena, fully grown and dressed in her new robe and helmet.

The great Athena was the first to teach the science of numbers and all ancient women's arts, such as cooking, weaving and spinning. She was the goddess of wisdom and war, but, unlike the god of war Ares, she took no pleasure from battle, preferring instead to settle conflict through mediation. When Athena was moved to engage in battle she never lost, even against Ares himself, for she was a far superior negotiator than he was. She bears no

arms in times of peace and will usually borrow weapons from Zeus when needed.

Since she was his favorite daughter and such a mighty warrior, he allowed her to borrow his fearsome Aegis, and his devastating thunderbolts. Indeed Athena was a brave warrior and she was the lone deity to stand her ground when Typhon attacked Olympus. Typhon was the largest, most dangerous, and most grotesque of all creatures. He was so frightening and that when he attacked Mount Olympus all of the gods ran off to Egypt and hid themselves by taking the forms of various animals. Only Athena stood firm, and she shamed and motivated Zeus into action.

Zeus struck Typhon with a thunderbolt and used Uranus' castrating sickle to wound the enormous creature. Typhon retreated to Mount Casius, where he and Zeus resumed their struggle, hurling mountains at one another, which resulted in Typhon being crushed beneath what is now known as Mount Aetna. Mount Olympus and the reign of Zeus were saved thanks to Athena. Even though she was as modest as Artemis and Hestia, the other virgin goddesses, Athena was far more generous. A man called Tiresias chanced upon Athena while she was taking a bath and she was startled to realize that he had entered the room and seen her.

Not wanting to kill Tiresias for his foolishness, she laid her hands over his eyes and blinded him, but gave him inward sight so that Tiresias became one of the most well-known oracles in Greece. One of the few times that Athena showed irritability was in her weaving contest against the mortal named Arachne. Arachne thought she was the best weaver there ever was

and said she could even weave better than Athena. After hearing this, Athena felt very disrespected and took on the appearance of an old woman and showed up at Arachne's house to give her some friendly advice to respect the gods.

Arachne was too vain to listen and told the old woman to be gone. "Let the great Athena try her skill against mine, and if I lose she can do whatever she pleases with me," she boasted. That's when Athena dropped her disguise and revealed her true identity. All the bystanders fell to their knees in reverence except for Arachne, who was unmoved. The two began their weaving contest, and for a while Arachne held her own against Athena, even poking fun at the gods through the tapestry she crafted, but finally Athena had enough and touched the presumptuous mortal on the forehead, making her feel her shame.

Horrified at the realization of her vanity, Arachne ran off and hung herself from a tree. Feeling sorry for the hanging of Arachne, Athena brought her back to life, but so that mortals learn that it doesn't pay to compare themselves to the gods, she changed Arachne into a spider. There she sits, her and her descendents, forever weaving their web, testament to the folly of vanity. Athens was named after Athena and she became its protector after a dispute with her uncle, Poseidon, the god of the sea. Both Athena and Poseidon really liked a certain city on the coast of Greece, and both of them claimed ownership.

Finally, to solve the dispute, it was agreed that whoever could present the city with the best gift would forever be patron. Athena and Poseidon went to

the Acropolis, where Poseidon struck the cliff side with his mighty trident. A spring welled up, which amazed and impressed the citizens. However, the spring was salt water, so it wasn't really of much use to anyone. Athena then presented the people with a simple olive tree. Although it wasn't as impressive as a spring, it was far more useful, because it presented the people with oil, food, and even wood.

In thanks, they named the city Athens. Some people in Greece still worship Athena and pay homage to her at the Acropolis. Athena was the virgin goddess. She was also called Athena Parthenos. Parthenos meant virgin. This is where the Parthenon came from. The Parthenon temple was built to honor the virgin goddess. Although she was a virgin there are stories about her son, Erichthonius. Erichthonius was born of the sperm of Hephaestus, Athena's brother. Hephaestus attempted to rape Athena, but failed and the legend is that when his sperm hit the floor it created Erichthonius.

Athena then raised Erichthonius as her own. Although technically, Athena is a warrior goddess, she is not the same sort of war god that Ares is. While Ares goes to war with frenzy and chaos, Athena is the goddess who helps warriors make wise choices that will eventually lead to victory. Bibliography

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