

Word she had seven
daughters and seven



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Word Count: 1271 Artemis was born of Leto and Zeus, on the island of Delos, later helping with the delivery of her twin brother, Apollo. Some sources state that her actual birthplace is not Delos, but an island called Ortygia. Although the two islands could be one and the same, it is not clear. In helping with the birth of her brother Artemis fulfilled her role as a goddess of childbirth (which she shares with Eileithyia and Hera). She is the goddess of chastity, the hunt and the moon, too. But I'll get more into those later.

Artemis was closely linked with her brother. For example, sudden death, particularly of the young, was often attributed to them (Artemis killing the girls and Apollo the boys). In fact, a rather famous legend involves both Artemis and Apollo. The story is told at length by the poet Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*. The women of Thebes gave Leto great honor, often offering generous gifts and hymns to her which upset Niobe.

After all, She had seven daughters and seven sons, whereas Leto merely had the twins. Besides, she was rich and beautiful, and the queen of Thebes. So Niobe claimed that she deserved the attention and honor more than Leto. Upon hearing this Leto was infuriated. She couldn't believe such blatant hubris, and complained to her two children. To avenge their insulted mother, Apollo and Artemis went to the palace of Thebes and with their unerring shafts, they shot down all 14 of Niobe's children (Artemis the girls and Apollo the boys).

Niobe was turned to stone and placed atop a mountain. It is said that tears continue to trickle down her marble face, with the grief of her dead children. As the goddess of chastity, Artemis is modest, pure, and virginal.

One famous story depicting her chaste nature is the story of Actaeon, also told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Actaeon was a passionate hunter. Out on his hunt, one day, he found himself lost, and stumbled upon Artemis bathing with her nymphs in a stream in the forest.

Without her arrows at hand, she flung water over the surprised Actaeon. To ensure that he could never tell of seeing the modest goddess nude, she turned him into a stag. He fled but was hunted and killed by his own hunting hounds. Though severe, Artemis protected her virginal nature (even if it may have been an accident to begin with). Another story in which her purity is protected by her ardent actions was that of Callisto, a follower of Artemis. Callisto, a sworn maid and fervent follower of the goddess, was raped and impregnated by Zeus.

Ashamed of what had happened, she withdrew and hid her body. At a time when she had begun to show, the goddess requested that Callisto and the nymphs bathe with her in the cool stream. Artemis immediately perceived the girl's naked and pregnant figure, and expelled her from her group of followers; she could not be defiled by the company of Callisto. Hera, the wife of Zeus, became angry when she learned of Callisto and her son Arcas, and turned her into a bear. Callisto, later nearly hunted by her own son, – ignorant of his parentage – was saved, and Zeus whisked both into the heavens. They are now the constellations, Callisto, the great bear, and Arcas, the little bear.

Constellations also figure into another such story about Artemis. In the story of Orion, he is out hunting when he encounters Artemis. He tries to rape her, and in her fury she makes a scorpion out of the earth to sting him to death. It

is said that both can be seen in the night sky now– Scorpio the scorpion and Orion the hunter. Orion's hunting dog was also turned into the constellation Canis Major, with Sirius as the dog star. The story of Hippolytus, written by the poet Euripides, shows a softer side of the young goddess' nature.

Hippolytus, an ardent and devoted follower of Artemis, refused to honor the sensual Aphrodite, goddess of lust and physical love.

Hippolytus was pure and chaste, and wanted nothing to do with the voluptuous and sex-driven Aphrodite; he honored Artemis foremost. Enraged by the