English Lessons for this week

For this unit of work, the distinction between the two types of story is not explored. **Can You Catch A Mermaid?** probably fits closer into the myth category, teaching that you cannot hold on to what does not belong to you, while **Beowulf** fit more closely into the legend model, with historical roots. This information is mainly to inform us as adults and although the term myth and legend cannot be used interchangeably, we are safe to call them all stories!

English Lessons for this week

Lesson 1

Pictures of merpeople - Mermaids and Mermen!

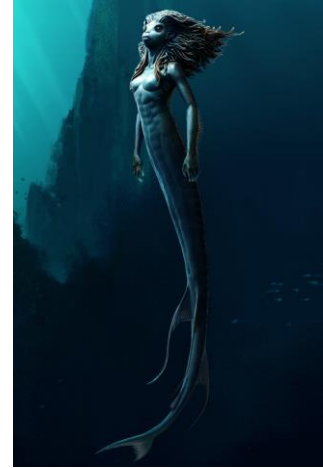Choose 3 of the merpeople above and write a description of each of them.

Lesson 2

Website Extracts for Research

Merpeople fact file

Appearance: Half fish, half human, grey skin, dark green hair, yellow eyes and teeth

Dangers: Warlike tendencies, can drag people to their deaths underwater

Typical Habitats: An underwater colony in the Great Lake at Hogwarts

Create a fact file of your own merperson.

Lesson 3 and 4

Read through the next 2 pages then answer the comprehension questions.

Mermaid Mythology

The roots of mermaid mythology are more varied than one would expect. In modern myth, we tend to see mermaids in a singular way - kind and benevolent to humans who keep to their own kind in the deep waters of the ocean. Not all stories go this way, though, and in most cases the most ancient tales of mermaid mythology follow quite a different view.

The earliest known mermaid legends come from Syria around 1000 B.C. where the Syrian goddess Atargatis dived into a lake to take the form of a fish, but the powers there would not allow her give up her great beauty, so only her bottom half became a fish and she kept her top half in human form.

As myths tend to do, the story changed over time and Atargatis became mixed with Syrian goddess Ashtarte, who is generally considered the counterpart to Greek mythology's Aphrodite. Though Aphrodite is rarely portrayed in mermaid form, this evolution of mermaid mythology is what led to Aphrodite's role in the mythology of Pisces, which clearly has roots in Syrian mythology.

Later tales in the mythology of mermaids stem from Homer's epic "The Odyssey", where some mythologists believe the Sirens to have been in mermaid form. This was an extremely popular version of the mermaid throughout history. Many popular tales including legends from the British Isles and the famous Arabian Nights tales identify mermaids in exactly this fashion. In these myths, mermaids would sing to men on ships or shores nearby, practically hypnotising them with their beauty and song. Those affected would rush out to sea only to be either drowned, eaten, or otherwise sent to their doom.

The evil-intentioned mermaid is not the only way these creatures were seen as dangerous. Some believed that even well-intentioned mermaids would cause great danger to men who believed they saw a woman drowning and would dive into the waters to save them. Other tales suggest that mermaids either forgot or didn't understand that humans could not breathe underwater, and they would pull them down into the depths of the sea, accidentally drowning them in the process.

In the modern mythology of mermaids, however, this is rarely the case. Today these beings are more likely to be seen as innocent and sweet, if not helpful in many cases to human kind. Much of the modern interpretation of mermaids can be credited to the most famous tale in all of mermaid mythology - Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" and the subsequent Disney movie of the same name.

This famous tale was likely the introduction of the mermaid to many children and adults alike, which makes it no surprise that people tend to stick with that version of this widely recognized creature. Not that Mr. Andersen was alone in this interpretation. Many cultures

believed that these beings were immortal and had powers ranging from the ability to cure disease to granting wishes to being able to share their immortality.

Mermaids & Mermen: Facts & Legends

By Benjamin Radford, Live Science Contributor

With nearly three-quarters of the Earth covered by water, it's little wonder that, centuries ago, the oceans were believed to contain many mysterious creatures, including sea serpents and mermaids.

C.J.S. Thompson, a former curator at the Royal College of Surgeons of England, noted in his book "The Mystery and Lore of Monsters" (Kessinger, 2010), "Traditions concerning creatures half-human and half-fish in form have existed for thousands of years, and the Babylonian deity Era or Oannes, the Fish-god, is represented on seals and in sculpture, as being in this shape over 2,000 years B.C. He is usually depicted as having a bearded head with a crown and a body like a man, but from the waist downwards, he has the shape of a fish covered with scales and a tail."

In folklore, mermaids were often associated with bad luck and misfortune. They lured errant sailors off course and even onto rocky shoals, much like their cousins, the sirens — beautiful, alluring half-bird, half-women who dwelled near rocky cliffs and sung to passing sailors. The sirens would enchant men to steer their ships toward the singing — and the dangerous rocks that were sure to sink them. Homer's "Odyssey", written around 800 B.C., tells tales of the brave Ulysses, whose ears were tortured by the sweet sounds of the sirens. In other legends — from Scotland and Wales, for example — mermaids befriended, and even married, humans.

<div align="center">

'Real' mermaids?

</div>

There are many legends about mermaids and even a few dozen historical claims of supposedly "real" mermaid sightings. Hundreds of years ago, sailors and residents in coastal towns around the world told of encounters with sea-maidens. One story, dating back to the 1600s, claimed that a mermaid had entered Holland through a dike, and was injured in the process. She was taken to a nearby lake and was soon nursed back to health.

Another supposed mermaid encounter is described in Edward Snow's 'Incredible Mysteries and Legends of the Sea' (Dodd Mead, 1967). A sea captain off the coast of Newfoundland described his 1614 encounter: *Captain John Smith saw a mermaid 'swimming about with all possible grace'. He pictured her as having large eyes, a finely shaped nose that was 'somewhat short,' and well-formed ears that were rather too long. Smith goes on to say that 'her long green hair imparted to her an original character that was by no means unattractive'. In fact, Smith was so taken with this lovely woman that he began 'to experience the first effects of love' as he gazed at her.*
Another story, from 1830 in Scotland, claimed that a young boy killed a mermaid by throwing rocks at it; the creature looked like a child of about 3 or 4, but had a salmon's tail instead of legs. The villagers are said to have buried it in a coffin, though there seems to be no historical evidence of this fishy tale.

Think about the story 'Can you Catch A Mermaid?' by Jane Ray.

First, talk through your ideas and then answer these questions.

1) Name and describe the main characters in the story.

_____
_____
_____
_____

2) What do you most like (or dislike!) about the story, and why? Give reasons with as much detail as you can.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3) Why do you think Eliza decided to return the mirror to Freya? What were her feelings at this point in the story?

_____
_____
_____

4) How did Eliza change as the story progressed? Why did she change, do you think?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Lesson 5 - Read the following story

Can you catch a Mermaid? By Jane Ray

But that day, Tom came back with nets full of fish.

And from that day on, the village fishing nets were always full, and Tom's was the fullest of all.

And that day, Eliza made new friends. Now she loves playing with the other children. They collect shells and Eliza shows them how to build mermaids out of sand.

When she puts the beautiful pink and gold shell to her ear she still hears Freya's sweet voice singing to her, and the songs she sings are of her ocean home and the silver fishes that play there.

And sometimes, in still rock pools or in the deep green ocean, when Eliza is out in Tom's boat, she thinks she sees Freya smiling up at her through the water.

Or maybe it's her own reflection.

English Lessons for this week

Work through this page

<u>The present perfect: how to form it, and how it is used!</u> – A Guide for Adults

The structure of the present perfect form of the verb is:

subject	+	auxiliary verb	+	main verb
		have		*past participle*

Here are some examples of the present perfect:

	subject	auxiliary verb		main verb	
+	I	have		seen	the Ice Age.
+	You	have		eaten	my apple.
-	She	has	not	been	to France.
-	We	have	not	taken	your ball.
?	Have	you		finished?	
?	Have	they		done	it?

Contractions with the present perfect

When we use the present perfect in speaking, we usually contract the subject and auxiliary verb. We also sometimes do this when we write.

I have	I've
You have	You've
He has She has It has Alison has The dog has	He's She's It's Alison's The dog's
We have	We've
They have	They've

Examples: when hot-seating Eliza, you could ask questions such as:

Have you seen Freya recently?

Have you ever been out fishing with your Dad?

Have you ever found any other interesting things on the beach?

Since you met Freya, how many other friends have you made?

Do you think Freya has gone back to her mother?