



# Understanding the story

Use **complete sentences** to answer these questions about the **facts** on *Norse gods*.

How did the Norse people explain the sound of thunder?

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What did the people say had happened when lightning struck Earth?

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What happened on Earth when Thor blew through his beard?

Why did the Norse sailors pray to Thor?

What was magical about Thor's belt and gloves?

Why were copies of Mjollnir worn as jewellery?

Why was Sif famous?

What did Sif's unhappiness at the loss of her hair represent?

# A traditional story

Many **myths**, **legends**, and **traditional stories** from around the world are about such things as fire, water, rain, wind, or thunder and lightning. Sometimes these things take the form of giants, gods, or spirits that can harm or help humans. Carefully read the following **facts** about Norse gods.

## Thor and Sif

### What Thor was like

Thor was an exaggerated, colorful character. He was huge, even for a god, and incredibly strong. He had wild hair and beard and a temper to match. He was never angry for long, though, and easily forgave people. Thor raced across the sky in his chariot drawn by two giant goats, **Toothgnasher** and **Toothgrinder**. It was their hooves that people heard when it thundered on Earth. He controlled the thunder and lightning and brewed up storms by blowing through his beard. Sailors prayed to him for protection from bad weather.

### Thor's magic weapons

Thor had a belt which doubled his strength when he buckled it on and iron gauntlets which allowed him to grasp any weapon. The most famous of Thor's weapons was his hammer, **Mjollnir**. It always hit its target and returned to Thor's hands after use. When a thunderbolt struck Earth, people said that Thor had flung down his hammer.

Mjollnir did not only do harm, though. It also had protective powers and people wore small copies of it as jewellery to keep them safe and bring good luck.

### Sif

Thor was married to **Sif**, who was famous for her pure gold, flowing hair. She was a goddess of fruitfulness and plenty. Her hair reminded people of a field of ripe corn and the harvest.

In one of the myths her hair was cut and stolen. Her misery, which lasted until the hair was repalced, represented the darkness of the winter season, when the corn did not grow.

Sif and Thor lived in a great hall in Asgard, called **Bilskirnir**, which means Lightning.

*From The Usborne Book of Greek and Norse Legends*

Underline any words in the **extract** above that you do not understand, then look up their meanings in a dictionary.

On this page, your child reads facts about thunder and lightning myths from another culture. Suggest that your child reads the passage aloud or, if your child needs more help, you could read it together.

Your child may need to reread the facts about *Norse gods* before answering these questions. Ensure that he or she writes answers in complete sentences. Accept any answers that are appropriate to the text.