

"There are more things in heaven and in earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

—*Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*

Guidelines for your mythological creature mini-research project

You have been assigned a creature to research. Your final project will consist of three parts:

- (1) **Written.** An essay (minimum of 300 words) about your creature, typed.
- (2) **Oral.** A brief oral presentation made to the class, describing your creature and your findings.
- (3) **Creative & Practical.** A tissue box decorated with information about your creature.

The entire project will be worth 200 points, divided as follows: Essay, 100 points; Presentation, 50 points; Box, 50 points.

Below are some specifics about each part:

The Essay

This is your chance to show off your expository writing chops. Your essay should have a neutral, scholarly tone, and be written with close attention to grammatical correctness and factual precision. An excellent essay will consider many aspects of the creature in question, including (but certainly not limited to!) things like:

- » the creature's description, physical abilities, etc.
- » the creature's geographic area, originating people group, etc.
- » any significant works of literature your creature makes an appearance in, and what role it plays
- » any beliefs about the creature in folklore, so-called "old wives' tales" etc.
- » any modern re-imagining of the creature in art, literature, film, video games, etc.

Your finished essay should be typed, double-spaced, and at least 300 words long. As with all formal essays, it should only use standard typefaces: Arial, Times, Helvetica, Palatino, and Verdana are acceptable. The type size should be between 10-12 points, no larger or smaller. See the attached sheet for further details.

Your essay will also have a source list. I will give you further information in class as to how this is to be done.

A note about plagiarism: Plagiarism (the deliberate presenting of others' words and ideas as your own) is increasingly becoming a problem at all levels of academia, and in the "real" world, as well. Any essays submitted that contain portions copied from other sources will receive a failing grade.

The best way to do this assignment is to find information about your creature from several sources, and—before you even consider writing an essay—*learn about your creature*. Take notes, certainly, but *do not* write any actual sentences! Get to know your creature; let the information sink into your head a little. Once you've done that, sit down to write, and *explain what you know* (using your notes as reference). If you take this approach, plagiarism won't even be an option.

Be sure that you *understand* the information you're writing in your essay! If you don't, *more research* is required!

The Presentation

You should be prepared to give a brief (3-5 minute) oral presentation to the class, summarizing your findings about your creature. *This is not a reading of your essay!* Rather, think of it as telling a friend what you've learned, only in a more formal setting.

You will be allowed up to two 3x5 or 4x6 cards for notes, and I will have a picture of your creature that will be projected as a visual aid. Your presentation will be evaluated based on your depth of knowledge about your subject and your manner of presentation (clarity of speech, etc.).

The Box

This part is ruthlessly stolen from certain members of the Foreign Language department, but will help solve a problem I always have (no tissues for runny noses!) and will no doubt be far, far cooler than any other tissue boxes in existence.

Your job is to secure a new box of tissues (rectangular or square, it's your choice), and, having covered over the outside with construction paper or some other material, decorate it with information about your creature. Three of the panes will be decorated as follows:

- » **Pane 1:** some sort of artistic treatment of your creature's name
- » **Pane 2:** a picture of your creature
- » **Pane 3:** a brief description of your creature (similar to a blurb on a trading card, for example)

What you put on the last pane is up to you, but do not leave it blank, and make it appropriate to your creature.

These will be evaluated based on the quality and care evident in the construction and presentation, and the quality of the information presented about your creature. Look for ways to make your design coherent—for example, if your creature originates in Greek mythology, you might want to find other greek motifs (designs, borders, typefaces, etc.) to enhance the decorations.

