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## World Myths and Folktales: *The Stories of Human Kind*

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### *Tales About Beginnings*

#### **Origin Myths**

- Definition: \_\_\_\_\_
- Most cultures have myths that explain how the universe was created, how the world might end, and a “\_\_\_\_\_ Age” – a time when the world enjoyed perfect peace, happiness, and prosperity – but the Golden Age is lost when \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ come into the world.

#### **The Roles of Gods and Goddesses**

- Gods and goddesses are nearly always associated with origin myths.
  - A god/goddess usually \_\_\_\_\_ the earth and life on it.
- Like human beings, gods and goddesses form family groups, or \_\_\_\_\_.
- Often, a culture’s pantheon is ruled by a powerful “father” god and a “mother” goddess.

#### **The Staying Power of Mythic Patterns**

- **Motif**- Themes, characters, and images that \_\_\_\_\_ throughout different myths.
- **Archetype**- A \_\_\_\_\_ or model that serves as the basis for different, but \_\_\_\_\_, versions of a character, plot, or theme.

#### **The Purpose of Origin Myths**

- Origin myths gave people who told them a sense of their \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - These myths told people who they were, where they came from, and what their destiny would be.
- The stories we tell today serve practically the same purpose.
  - All stories are outgrowths of myths; all stories ultimately deal with the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of human existence.

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### Unit 1: *Tales About Beginnings – “In the Beginning”*

#### ***The Hebrew Bible***

- The Hebrew Bible tells the history of the \_\_\_\_\_ people and presents the basic laws and teachings of their faith.
- The contents of the Hebrew Bible existed first in the \_\_\_\_\_ tradition.
- It consists of \_\_\_\_\_ separate books, beginning with the Book of Genesis.

#### ***The Torah***

- The Book of Genesis is the first of the Five Books of Moses, or the Torah.
- The Torah contains the earliest historical narratives of the Jewish people.
  - Narrative: \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Torah also contains the basic \_\_\_\_\_, or beliefs, and \_\_\_\_\_ of Jewish faith.

#### ***Themes of the Hebrew Bible***

- The Hebrew Bible is concerned, above all, with exploring the Hebrews’ developing \_\_\_\_\_ with God.

#### ***Literary Significance: Origin Myths***

- Genesis (in its entirety) explains:
  - Birth of the universe
  - Emergence of evil
  - Cause of the Great Flood
  - Origin of language
  - Development of God’s covenant with the Hebrew people

#### ***Literary Significance: Repetition***

- Characteristic of many origin myths is the use of \_\_\_\_\_ – the repeating of words, phrases, or even entire sentences or passages.
- Repetition can serve several functions in a work of literature:
  - Creates \_\_\_\_\_
  - Builds \_\_\_\_\_ & adds \_\_\_\_\_
  - Serves to emphasize important \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***Literary Significance: Scholarship***

- Most scholars today believe that Genesis is a composite of separate narratives by different writers collected over several hundred years.
- This may explain why Genesis contains \_\_\_\_\_ accounts of the creation of human beings.