

## What is a Cyclops?

A Cyclops was a mythological creature from Ancient Greek stories. Throughout Ancient Greek mythology, there were Cyclopes. The Cyclopes (which is how you make the word plural) were giants with one large round eye in the middle of their faces. In fact, the word 'cyclops' means 'round eye'.



## What were the Cyclopes Like?

In some stories, the Cyclopes are sort of a wild force, but not necessarily bad or good. In very old myths, the Cyclopes are the sons of the sky god and earth goddess. Cyclopes were known for being very strong, too. When Zeus became the leader of the gods, the three Cyclopes brothers gave Zeus thunder and lightning bolts. There are also stories that the Cyclopes worked with the god of blacksmithing, and lived underground hammering hot metal to make things for the other gods to use.

## The Most Famous Cyclops

However, usually meeting a Cyclops was bad news for a hero in a story. Cyclopes were known to be violent, and not very smart. In many stories, they liked to eat humans, too!

The story of how the Cyclops Polyphemus was outsmarted by Odysseus is probably the most famous Cyclops story. Odysseus and the crew from his ship ended up stranded on Polyphemus's island. They quickly realized they were in trouble. The Cyclops kept kidnapping men, and holding them in his cave. Polyphemus even ate six of Odysseus's crew!

Odysseus has to use his clever thinking to outsmart the Cyclops. Odysseus and the rest of the crew sharpened a large pole, and then stabbed the giant in the eye to blind him. When the Cyclops was blinded, he could not see that his dinner was getting away! Finally, Odysseus and his men snuck away from the angry Cyclops, and fled the island.