

Viking Gods and Goddesses

The Vikings believed in the gods and goddesses from Norse mythology - folklore of the north Germanic peoples. These gods and goddesses looked like human beings. The Vikings believed that if they died in battle, they could go to Valhalla - a giant feasting hall ruled over by Odin.

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Odin

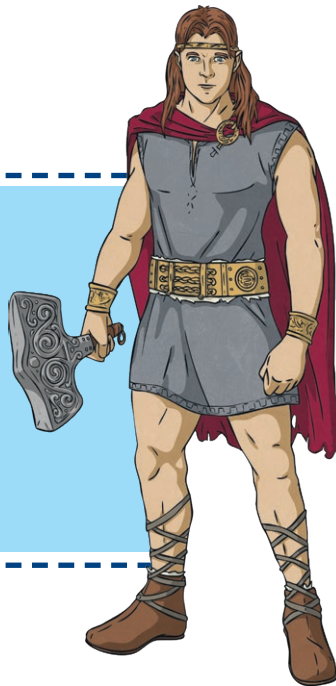
Odin was king of the gods and was god of war and the dead. He only had one eye because he had given his other eye to drink from Mimir's well (the source of wisdom). Odin rode an eight-legged horse called Sleipnir. In Old English, Odin was called Woden and the day Wednesday is named after him - 'Woden's day'.



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Thor

Thor was the god of thunder and son of Odin. Thor's magical hammer, Mjöltnir, could summon thunderbolts, knock down mountains and kill giants. Thor was the strongest of the gods. The day Thursday is named after Thor - 'Thor's day'.



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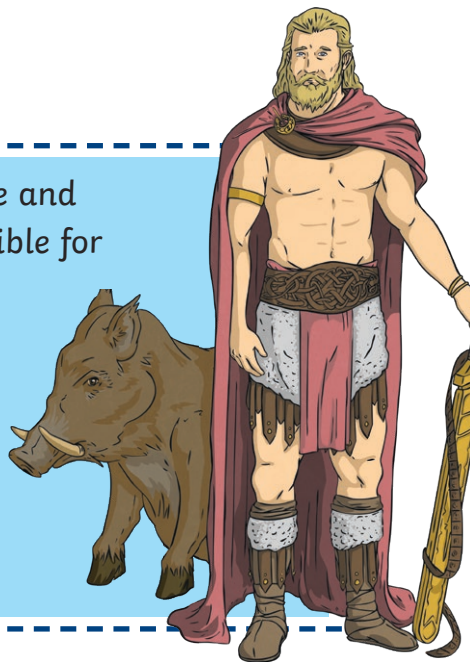
Loki

Loki was known as the trickster god - the god of mischief. He liked to play tricks on humans and other gods. Some of these tricks were amusing but others caused great harm. Unlike many of the other gods, Loki was a descendent of the giants and was born in Jotunheim - the land of the giants.



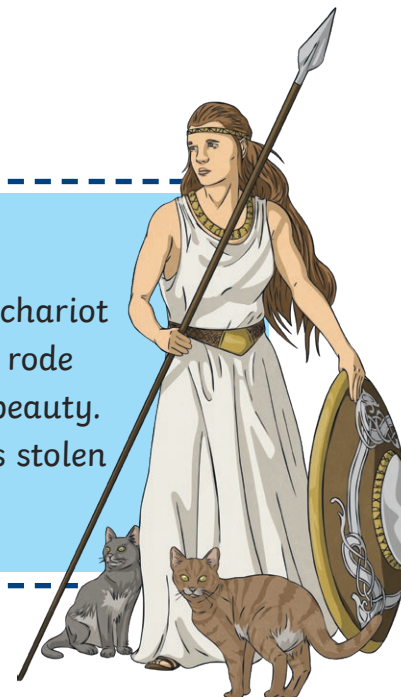
Freyr/Frey

Freyr was the god of fertility, peace and sunshine and rain. He was responsible for making crops grow. Freyr had a magical boar called Gullinborsti, which he would ride faster than a horse. Freyr was the twin of the goddess Freya. Many places in Denmark, Norway and Sweden are named after Freyr.



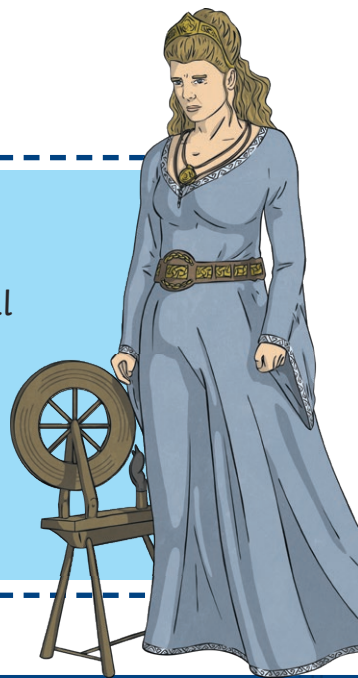
Freya

Freya was the goddess of love, having children, battles and death. She had a chariot that was pulled by cats but sometimes rode a wild boar. Freya was known for her beauty. She wore a beautiful necklace that was stolen by Loki. Her twin brother was Freyr.



Frigg

Frigg was the goddess of marriage, motherhood and family. She was married to Odin and was the most important of all the goddesses. Frigg was able to perform a special kind of magic called seidr. This meant she could see into the future and change it. The day Friday is named after her – 'Frigg's day'.



Baldr/Baldur

Baldr was the god of light and purity. He was the son of Odin and Frigg. It was said Baldr was so handsome that he made the flowers feel ashamed. He was kind and merciful. The hall that he lived in was so beautiful that only people with pure hearts could enter it. Baldr was killed after one of Loki's pranks went wrong.



Heimdall

Heimdall was the guardian of the gods. He guarded the Bifrost – the rainbow bridge that was the entrance to Asgard, home of the gods. Heimdall had a horn called Gjallarhorn, which could be heard anywhere on earth and could be used to summon help in times of danger. It was said he could see for hundreds of miles.



Tyr

Tyr was a god of war and was a brave warrior. He was known for his wisdom and also fought for justice. Tyr only had one hand, as the other one was bitten off by Fenrir, Loki's giant wolf. Tuesday comes from Tyr – 'Tyr's day'.



Skadi

Skadi was the goddess of winter, hunting and skiing. She was a giant, which meant she was separate from the gods who lived in Asgard. Skadi was associated with knowledge, revenge, independence and justice.



Njord

Njord was the god of wealth, sailors and the sea. When he was sad, storms would appear at sea. Vikings would pray to Njord before fishing or going on a sea journey. Njord was married to Skadi and was the father of Freyr and Freya.



Sif

Sif was the goddess of the earth, wheat, family and having children. She was married to Thor. The Vikings believed Sif visited their farms, protecting their crops from bad weather. Sif's long golden hair was a symbol of the wheat she helped to grow.



Idun

Idun was the goddess of spring, new life and youth. She was the keeper of magic apples, which would give immortality to anyone who ate them. She was once kidnapped by Loki, who wanted the magic apples. Idun was married to the god Bragi.



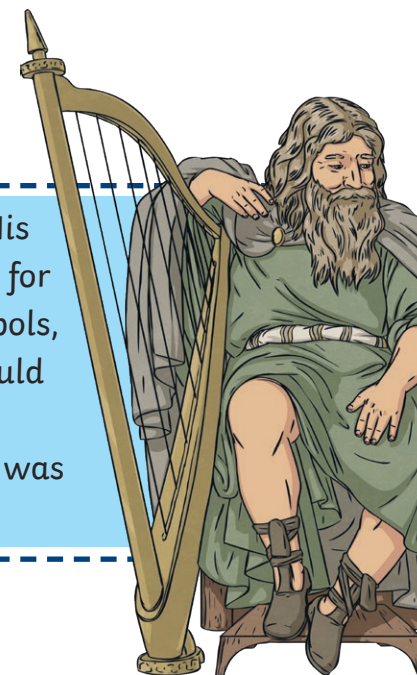
Vidar

Vidar was god of vengeance and justice. He was the second-strongest god behind his brother, Thor. Vidar was known for being quiet and for enjoying nature. He wore magical shoes that helped him win battles.



Bragi

Bragi was god of music and poetry. His name came from the the Viking word for poetry. Bragi had special Viking symbols, called runes, on his tongue. Bragi would travel between the worlds of the gods and humans singing about peace. He was married to Idun.



Hel

Hel was the goddess of the dead and the underworld. Her name meant 'one who hides'. She was often accompanied by a giant dog called Garmr and was also associated with crows. Hel was the daughter of Loki. She was cruel and greedy.

