

Viking Gods and Goddesses



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Norse Mythology

Vikings believed that there were Nine Worlds connected together by an enormous mythical tree called Yggdrasil. Each world was home to different living creatures or mythical beings.

- **Asgard** – home to the Æsir (pronounced 'A-seer') gods, including Odin, Frigg and Thor. Asgard is home to Valhalla, the place where fallen warriors go when they die.
- **Vanaheim** – home to the Vanir gods, including Freya, Freyr and Njord.
- **Midgard** – the Norse name for Earth, the realm of mortals.
- **Alfheim** – home of the elves.
- **Niflheim** – home of the frost giants.
- **Jotunheim** – home of the giants.
- **Helheim** – the underworld and realm of the dead.
- **Svatalfheim** – home of the dwarves and dark elves.
- **Muspelheim** – home of the fire giants.

Norse Mythology

Vikings believed in a polytheistic religion – a religion with many deities. Gods and goddesses were very important in Norse culture. The Vikings often made decisions or acted in ways to please the gods.

There are many different Viking gods, each possessing a mixture of human traits and magical abilities. They were split into different groups who were at war with each other, until they realised they were equally powerful:



Æsir

The gods of power and war



Vanir

The gods of fertility and nature

Norse Mythology

Click on each god or goddess to find out more.

Æsir



Vanir





Odin

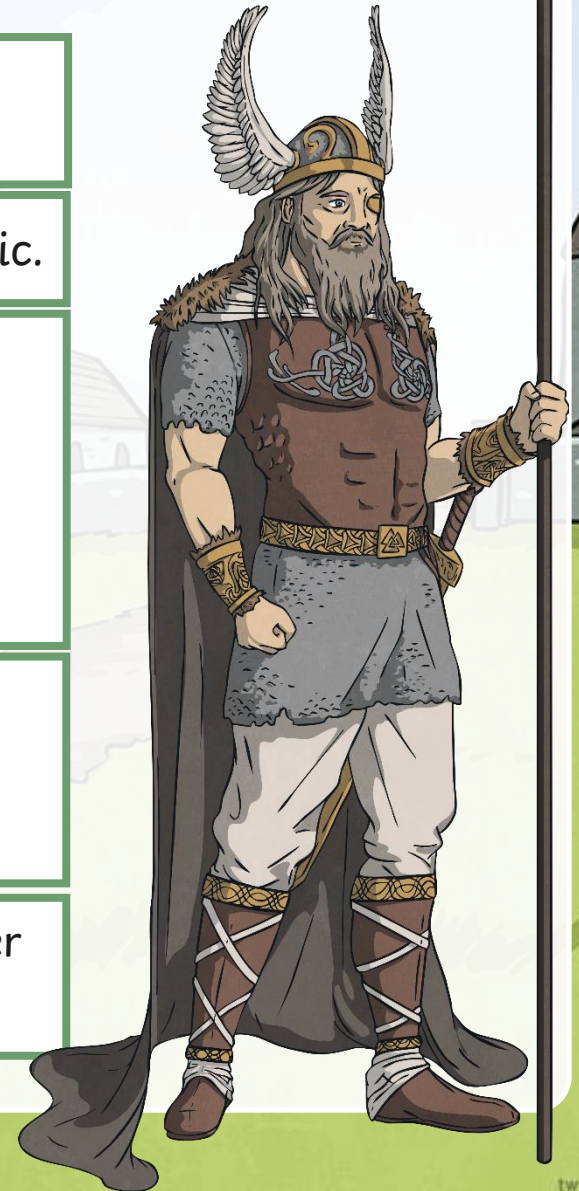
Odin is the chief god in Norse mythology and part of the Æsir pantheon. He is the king of Asgard.

Odin is the god of wisdom, poetry, death and magic.

Also known as the All-Father, it is believed that he gave up one of his eyes in order to gain understanding of the universe. He is also often accompanied by two ravens who help him see everything.

He rides into battle upon an eight-legged horse called Sleipnir and wields the mighty spear Gungnir, with which he never misses his target.

He is married to the goddess Frigg and is the father of many gods, including Thor and Baldr.





Thor

Thor is the god of thunder, storms, strength and fertility. He is part of the Æsir pantheon. He is the son of Odin and married to the goddess Sif.

Thor wields a magical hammer called Mjolnir which is so powerful it can destroy mountains. He is able to summon thunder and lightning using his hammer in battle against his enemies. Vikings believed that a thunderstorm was a sign that Thor was angry.

Thor also has incredible strength and is a mighty warrior. There are many tales of his battles, including with the giant serpent Jörmungandr during Ragnarök – the final battle of the gods.





Loki

Loki is the god of mischief and chaos. He is known for playing tricks on the other gods. He is part of the Æsir pantheon.

Loki is shown in the tales to only care for himself and life's pleasures though he is also sometimes shown as playful and as helping the other gods (but only if it helps him by doing so).

He is able to change his shape to that of other living creatures, such as a mare, fly, salmon and a falcon.

He is married to the goddess Sigyn and is the father of Hel, the giant serpent Jörmungandr and the giant wolf Fenrir.





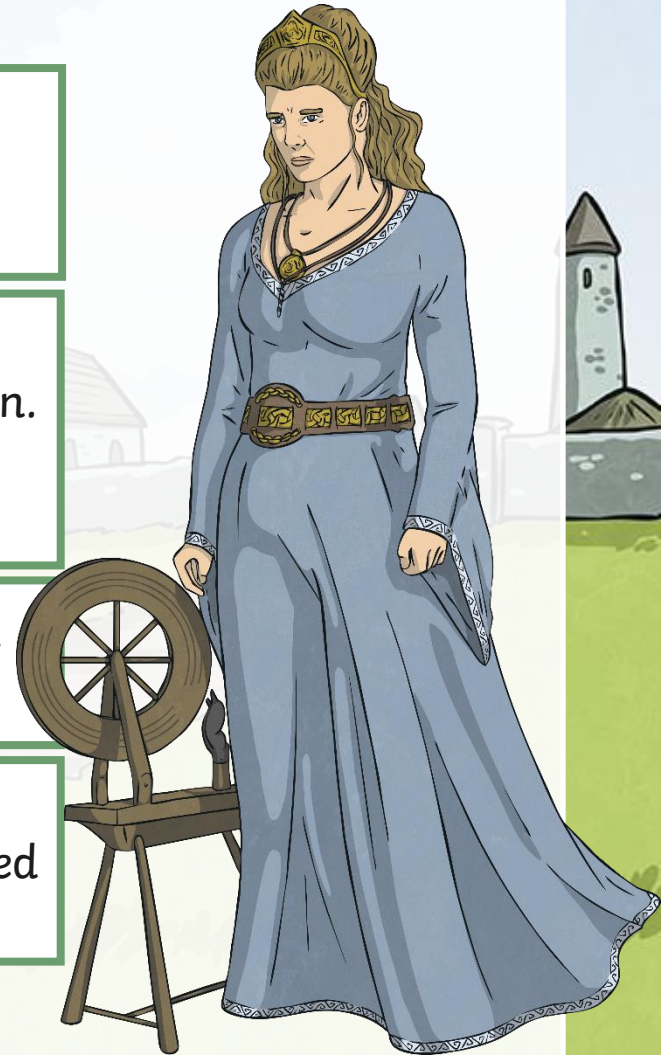
Frigg

Frigg, or Frigga, is the goddess of motherhood and the sky, the wife of Odin and mother of Baldr and Hodr. She is part of the Æsir pantheon.

Many of the stories surrounding Frigga are about her family role, alongside her husband and children. She is shown to be strong-willed and protective of those she loves.

Frigga is usually depicted as a beautiful woman in peaceful backgrounds, showing her calm nature.

Her symbols include the full moon, the spinning wheel, mistletoe and silver, which are often included in images of her.





Freya

Freya, or Freyja, is the goddess of love, war and death. She is the daughter of the god Njord and has a twin brother, Freyr. He is part of the Vanir pantheon.

Freya is often shown riding in her chariot which is pulled by two cats and has a cloak made from falcon feathers.

Freya rules over the heavenly field, Fólkvangr, where she welcomes those who died in battle but did not go to Valhalla.

Freya is married to the god Od although he is absent a lot of the time. Because of this, Freya is said to weep tears of red gold as she searches for him.



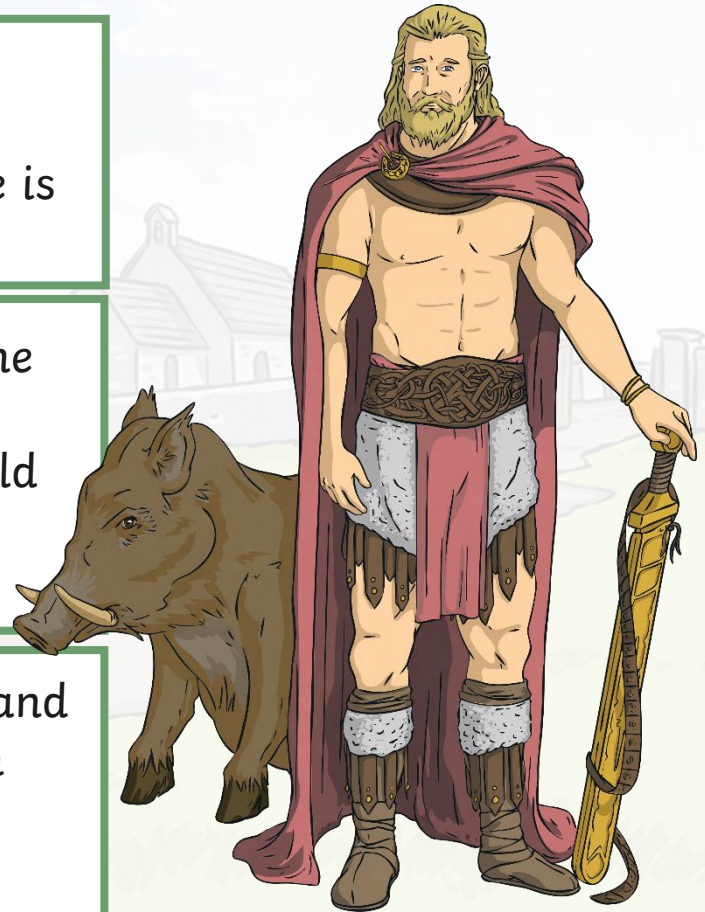


Freyr

Freyr, or Frey, is the god of fertility and prosperity. He is the son of the god Njord and twin brother of the goddess Freya. He is part of the Vanir pantheon.

Freyr rules over the rain and shining of the sun and therefore is responsible for the growth of crops in the fields. Vikings would pray to Freyr in the hope of a strong crop growing each year.

Freyr rides the shining boar Gullinbursti and owns the magical ship Skidbladnir, which can fold down and be carried in a pouch when not being used.



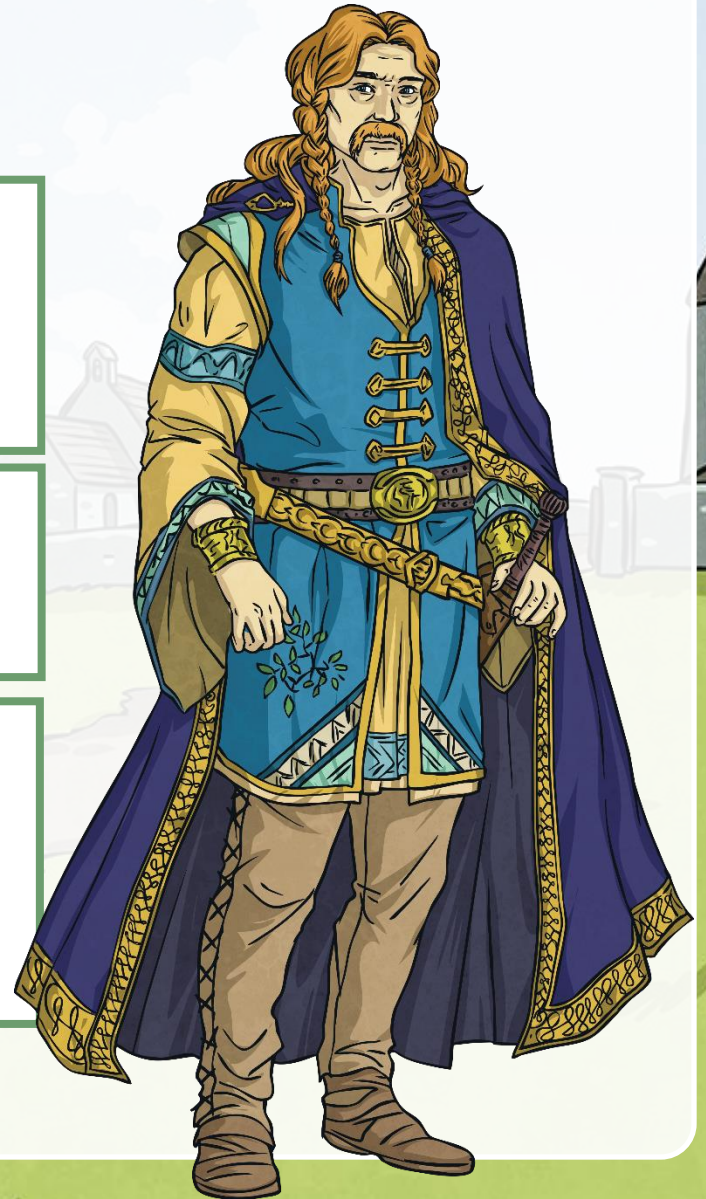


Baldr

Baldr, or Baldr, is the god of light and purity. He is the son of Odin and Frigg and the brother of Thor and Hodr. He is part of the Æsir pantheon.

Baldr is said to be so bright that light shines from him and he is so beautiful that flowers bow to him.

In Norse tales, Baldr was unable to be hurt by anything in existence, except for mistletoe. The gods would amuse themselves by trying their weapons on Baldr and seeing them fail to hurt him.





Heimdall

Heimdall is the guardian of the gods. He watches over the Bifrost – the rainbow bridge which leads to Asgard. He lives in a fortress which sits at the top of the Bifrost where he keeps watch. He is the son of Odin and part of the Æsir pantheon.

Heimdall has incredibly strong hearing and vision. He keeps watch for approaching enemies and uses his mighty horn, Gjallarhorn, to summon the other gods from across all nine worlds to battle if needed.

In tales, Heimdall is believed to have used his horn to sound an incoming invasion to Asgard at the beginning of Ragnarök.



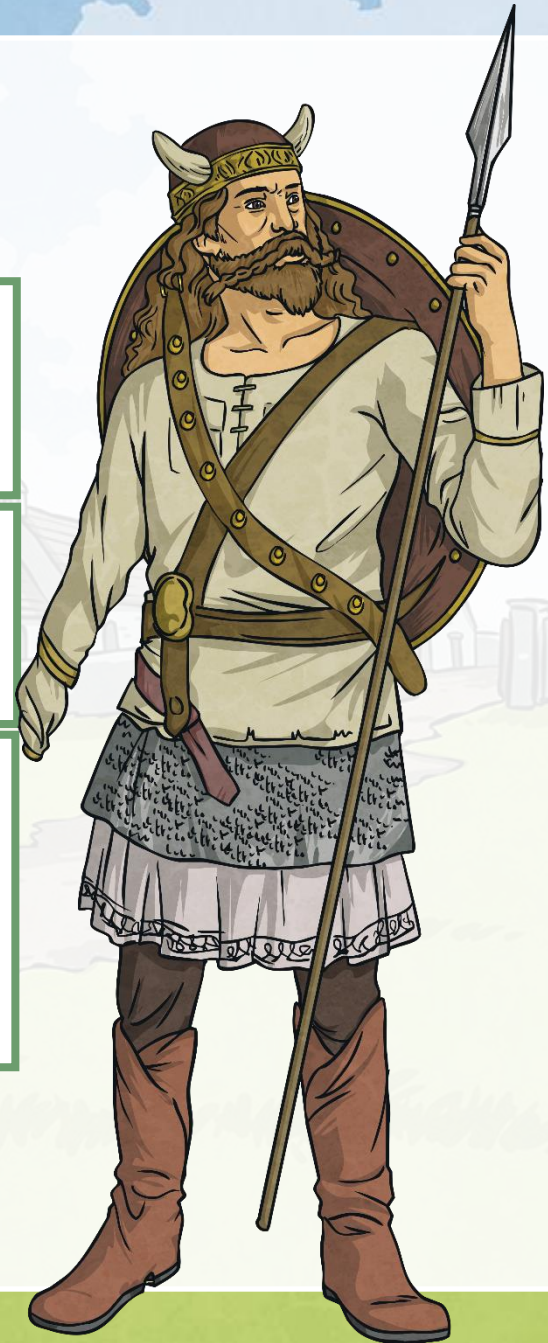


Týr

Týr is the god of single-handed combat, justice and law. He is the son of Odin and part of the Æsir pantheon.

Týr is one of the main Norse gods along with Odin and Thor, as people would pray to Týr in the hope of being victorious in battle.

Týr is shown as having one hand after the other was bitten off by the giant wolf Fenrir while trying to tame it as a pup. This sacrifice shows Týr as a heroic figure willing to put himself in danger in order to protect others.





Njord

Njord is god of the sea and is part of the Vanir pantheon.

Njord is also associated with wealth and Vikings would often describe rich people as being 'as rich as Njord'.

Vikings believed that whenever Njord was angry or sad, storms would rage at sea. Vikings would pray to Njord in the hope of a safe journey on their voyages.

Njord is the father of the twins Freya and Frey and married to the giant goddess Skadi.





Skadi

Skadi is the goddess of winter, mountains and skiing. She is a jötunn (giant) and lives in the highest of the mountains where the snow never melts.

Skadi is a huntress and is often shown with her hunting bow, skis and occasionally with snow shoes.

She was once married to the god Njord. Odin allowed her to marry one of the gods but only by looking at their feet. Thinking they belonged to the beautiful god Baldr, Skadi chose the shapeliest feet which actually belonged to the sea-ravaged god Njord.



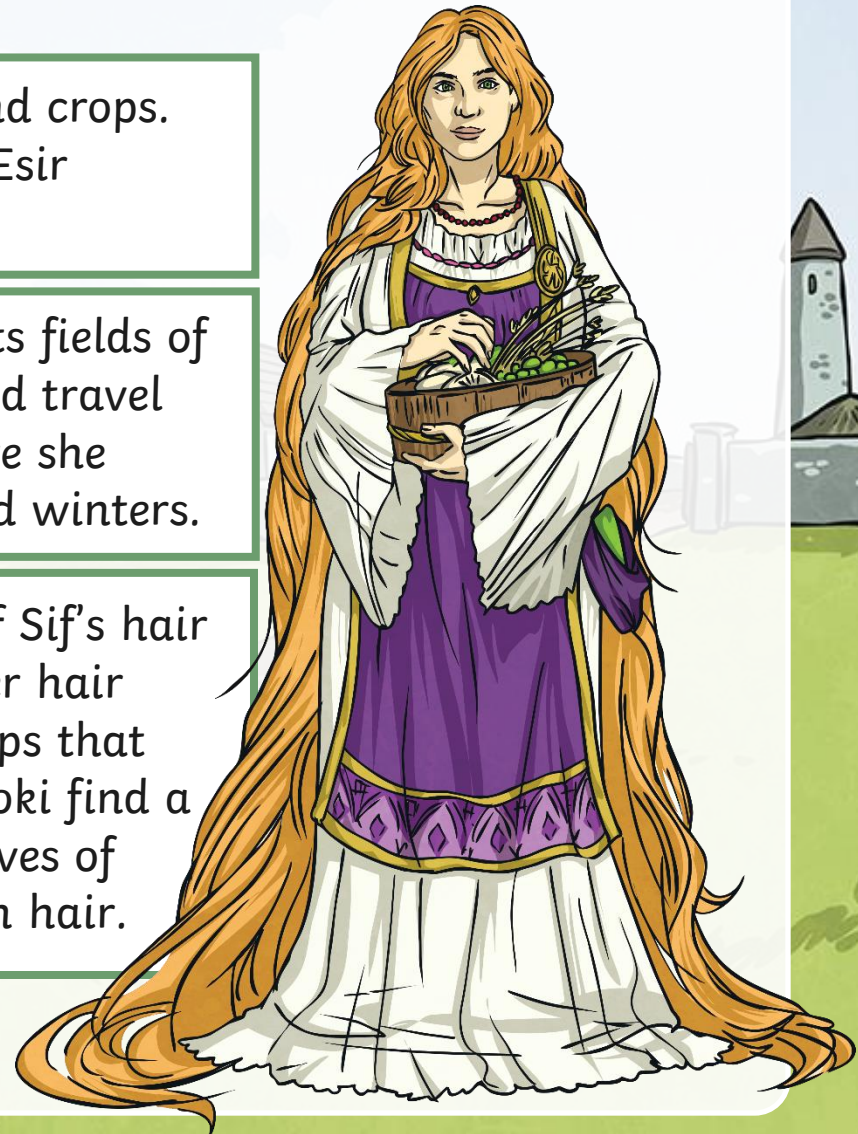


Sif

Sif is the goddess of the earth, homes and crops. She is the wife of Thor and part of the Æsir pantheon.

Sif has long golden hair which represents fields of golden wheat. Vikings believed she would travel around seeking families and farms where she would protect crops from cold winds and winters.

In one tale, the trickster god Loki cut off Sif's hair as she slept. When she woke and saw her hair was gone, she wept and the fields of crops that she protected flooded. Thor demanded Loki find a way to make amends and had the dwarves of Nidavellir make her a cap of floor-length hair.





Bragi

Bragi is the god of poetry, music and wisdom. He is renowned for his wisdom, fluency of speech and skill with words. He is part of the Æsir pantheon.

Bragi has a long beard and runes marked on his tongue. He plays music and recites poetry in the halls of Valhalla, greeting fallen warriors as they enter the afterlife. He also travels between the nine worlds, singing of peace and working together.

Bragi is married to the beautiful goddess Idun.





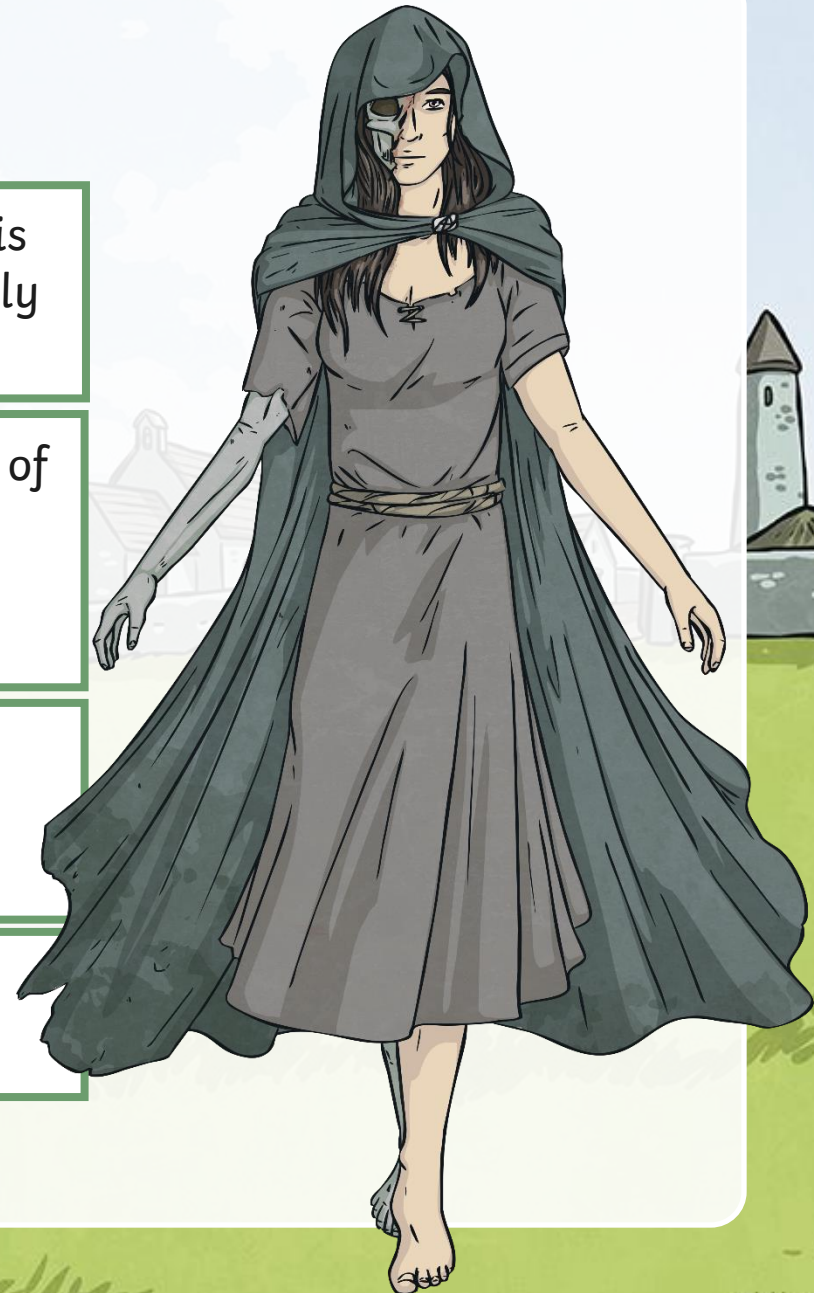
Hel

Hel is the goddess of the underworld. She is the daughter of Loki and regarded as highly dangerous.

Hel is often shown as having half the face of a beautiful woman and half the face of a monster. She is greedy and cruel and unconcerned with the problems of others.

She rules over the underworld realm, also called Hel, the ninth of the nine worlds, which lies at the roots of Yggdrasil.

Hel watches over the dead who arrive and dwell in the underworld.



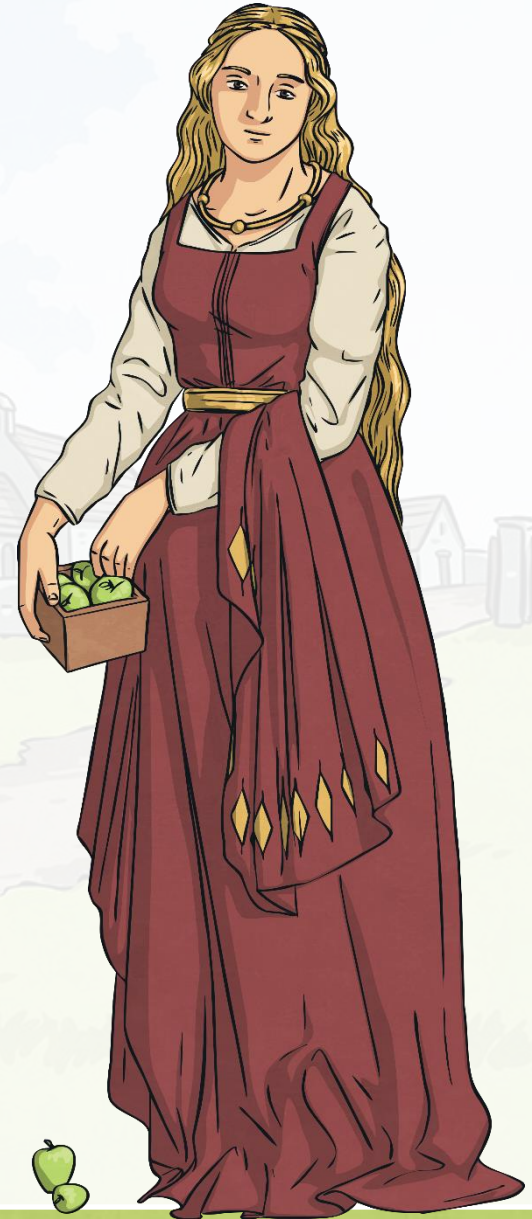


Idun

Idun is the goddess of the spring, new life and youth. She is the wife of the god Bragi. She is part of the Æsir pantheon.

Idun is often shown as a beautiful young woman carrying a basket of fruit. The fruit she carries grants immortality and her power keeps the gods of Asgard youthful.

In one tale, the god Loki turns into an eagle and steals Idun away. Her absence causes the gods to turn old and grey and Loki is ordered to return her to Asgard.





Vidar

Vidar, or Vitharr, is the god of vengeance. He is the son of Odin and the brother of Thor. He is part of the Æsir pantheon.

Vidar is very powerful and one of the mightiest of the gods – only Thor is stronger than him. He wears a pair of magical shoes that are incredibly strong and they helped him defeat the giant wolf Fenrir during Ragnarök.

Vidar is sometimes known as 'Vidar the Silent', which may show that Vidar took a vow of silence as part of his role as the god of vengeance.



Viking Gods Card Game

The image displays three cards from a 'Viking Gods Card Game'. Each card features a central illustration of a deity and a 2x2 grid for recording attributes. The cards are set against a background of a blue sky with clouds, a green field, and a lighthouse.

Thor God of Thunder	
Power	Skills
Weapon	Importance

Freya Goddess of Love, War and Death	
Power	Skills
Weapon	Importance

Odin God of Warriors and Battle	
Power	Skills
Weapon	Importance

Viking Gods

First, take a card and find out which god or goddess you have.
Here is a card for **Thor – God of Thunder**.

Thor God of Thunder	
Power	Skills
Weapon	Importance

The next thing you need to do is find out some information about your god or goddess.

Thor

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Viking Gods

When you have your information, you need to use it to fill in the scores.
Give each category a mark out of 10.



How powerful is Thor?
Does he have a special skill?
Does he have a weapon?
How important is he?

Viking Gods Card Game

When all the cards are finished you are ready to play the game!

1. Share the cards between all players.
2. Players must keep their pile of cards in the same order.
3. Each player looks at one card at a time.
4. The first player chooses the category they think their card is strongest on and reads it out.
5. All players share the score on their card for that category.
6. The player with the highest score wins all the cards used that round and puts them at the bottom of their pile. It is that player's turn to pick the next category.
7. If more than one card has the same top value, the cards are placed in the middle until someone wins a round and the same person reads out another category.