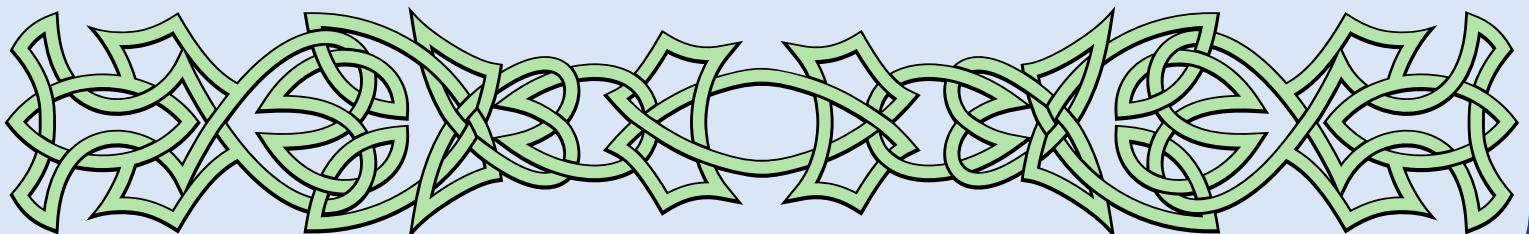


**Great Gods  
of  
Norse  
Mythology**

**By The Literacy Company**



# Norse Gods

There are many gods and goddesses in Norse mythology - some people, some giants, some dwarves. Norse gods live in Asgard which can only be reached by a rainbow bridge named 'Bifrost'. Most Norse stories feature two gods, Odin and his son Thor. Odin has a blood brother, a giant's son called Loki, who lives with the gods in Asgard.

The nine realms of the Norse universe are connected by a large mythical tree name Yggdrasill. Asgard, where the gods and goddesses live, is the top root of the tree, looking down on the other realms.



# Odin



Odin is the highest god and is known as the 'All-father'. As King of Asgard, he is the chief of all the other gods in Norse mythology. He is also the god of wisdom, war, poetry, death, foresight, prisoners, magic and the runic alphabet. Odin is wise and knows many secrets. In fact, he sacrificed his eye for wisdom and an unfathomable amount of knowledge about the universe.

## Family

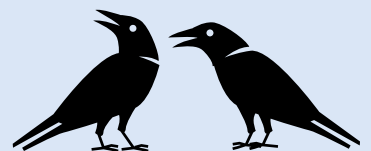
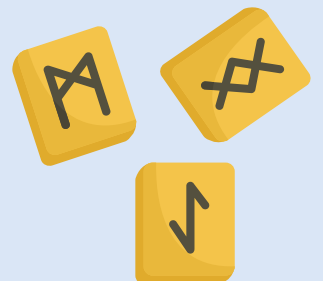
Odin is the son of Bor and the giantess Bestla. He is married to the goddess Frigg, and he is father to the gods: Thor, Baldr and Höðr (twins), Víðarr and Váli.

## Home

Odin lives in Valhalla, a great hall in Asgard which he rules over. He sits on a throne named Hlidskjalf and from there, he watches over the Nine Realms.

## Appearance

In most Norse texts, Odin is depicted as a long-bearded, one-eyed man wearing a broad hat and a cloak. He travels from place to place in disguise, to see the world as people see it. Odin is often accompanied by two ravens, whom he calls Huginn and Muninn. These birds fly around across the nine Norse worlds bringing news and knowledge back to Odin. They perch on his shoulders whispering into his ears.





### Symbols

The symbol associated with Odin is the Valknut symbol, which is made of three interlocked triangles. Valknut is believed to represent slain warriors. The word Valknut is derived from two words: Valr means slain warriors and knut means knot.

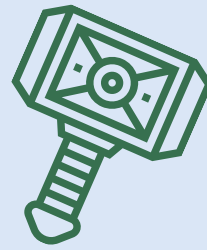
Another common symbol related to Odin is his spear, called Gungnir. He obtained this spear from the trickster god Loki after he stole it from the dwarfs who made it.



### Top fact

Odin was known in Old English as Woden. Each week, we are reminded of Odin as the day Wednesday was named after him - Odin's day or Woden's day.

# Thor



Thor is a strong and mighty Norse god and probably the most well-known of all the gods. Straightforward and good-natured, Thor is the defender of Asgard and of Midgard. Thor is the god associated with thunder and lightning, and is by far the strongest of all the gods. Thor's greatest enemies were the giants of Jotunheim.

## Family

Thor is Odin's oldest son. His mother is Jord (the personification of Earth). Thor is married to Sif, the goddess of Earth and fertility, who has golden hair. He has a daughter (named Thrud) and a stepson (named Ullr) with Sif but also has two sons Modi and Magni who have different mothers.



## Appearance

Thor represents strength and is often depicted as large and muscular with red hair and a red beard. Thor wears iron gloves which help him to grip his weapon - the hammer.





### Symbols

Thor owns a remarkable hammer called 'Mjolnir' which was made for him by the dwarves and is capable of crushing mountains. This hammer acts like a boomerang and is returned to Thor when needed. Trolls and frost giants fear this hammer as it has killed so many of their family and friends. Thor also owns a belt named 'Meginjard'. When he wears this belt, his strength is doubled. Thor travels round in a chariot drawn by two goats.



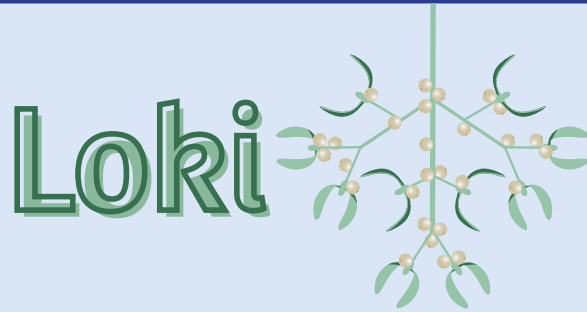
### Top facts

Like his father, Thor has a day of the week named after him. Thursday is derived from 'Thor's day.'

Thor was the inspiration for the Marvel superhero. His character is played by Chris Hemsworth in Marvel's Avengers films.



# Loki

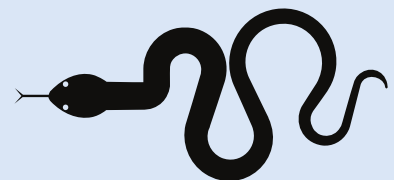
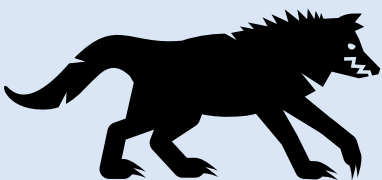


Loki is the god of mischief and mayhem in Norse mythology and is known for his trickster ways. Loki is very handsome. He is plausible, convincing, likable and by far the most cunning of all the residents of Asgard. Sadly, there is so much darkness inside of him - so much envy and anger. He drinks too much, and he cannot guard his words, thoughts or his deeds when he drinks. He has the ability to shape shift into animals and different humans. Loki makes the world more exciting but less safe.

## Family

Loki is the son of Laufey. It is not known whether she was a goddess or giant, but it is known that she was as thin and sharp as a needle. Loki's father was Farbauti: a giant. Loki has split feelings towards the gods of Asgard - sometimes friend of the gods and sometimes friend of the giants. The gods of Asgard do not know how or when Loki came to Asgard, but it is known that he is Odin's blood brother. Loki is both Thor's friend and his betrayer.

He is the father of monsters: Hel (the goddess of the land of the dead), Fenrir (the wolf demon that eats Odin during Ragnarok - the end of everything) and Jormungandr (the world serpent). Loki and his children are there for Ragnarok, but not on the side of the gods of Asgard.





### Appearance

Loki is often seen wearing green robes and is known to have a thin face, red hair and green eyes. Loki walks in the sky with shoes that fly.

### Symbols

Loki wears a helmet with two horns. He is also linked to mistletoe and two snakes.

### Top facts

In the Marvel films, Loki is known as Thor's adopted brother rather than Odin's blood brother in Norse mythology.

