

## **The Gods**

**Zeus** - King of the gods and husband of Hera, Zeus claims neutrality in the mortals' conflict and often tries to keep the other gods from participating in it.

**Hera** - Queen of the gods and Zeus's wife, Hera is a conniving, headstrong woman. She often goes behind Zeus's back in matters on which they disagree, working with Athena to crush the Trojans, whom she passionately hates.

**Athena** - The goddess of wisdom, purposeful battle, and arts; Zeus's daughter. Like Hera, Athena passionately hates the Trojans and often gives the Achaeans valuable aid.

**Thetis** - A sea-nymph and the mother of Achilles, Thetis gets Zeus to help the Trojans and punish the Achaeans at the request of her angry son.

**Apollo** - A son of Zeus and twin brother of the goddess Artemis, Apollo is god of the sun and the arts, particularly music. He supports the Trojans and often intervenes in the war on their behalf.

**Aphrodite** - Goddess of love and daughter of Zeus, Aphrodite is married to Hephaestus but maintains a romantic relationship with Ares. She supports Paris and the Trojans throughout the war, though she proves somewhat ineffectual in battle.

**Poseidon** - The brother of Zeus and god of the sea. Poseidon holds a long-standing grudge against the Trojans because they never paid him for helping them to build their city. He therefore supports the Achaeans in the war.

**Hephaestus** - God of fire and husband of Aphrodite, Hephaestus is the gods' blacksmith and is known as the crippled god. He helps the Achaeans by forging a new set of armor for Achilles and by rescuing Achilles during his fight with a river god.

**Artemis** - Goddess of the hunt, daughter of Zeus, and twin sister of Apollo. Artemis supports the Trojans in the war.

**Ares** - God of war and lover of Aphrodite, Ares generally supports the Trojans in the war.

**Hermes** - The messenger of the gods. Hermes escorts Priam to Achilles' tent in Book 24.

**Iris** - Zeus's messenger.

**The Achaeans** (also called the “Argives” or “Danaans”)

**Achilles** - The son of Peleus and the sea-nymph Thetis. The most powerful warrior in The Iliad, Achilles commands the Myrmidons, soldiers from his homeland of Phthia in Greece. Achilles’ wrath at Agamemnon for taking his war prize, the maiden Briseis, forms the main subject of The Iliad.

**Agamemnon** (also called “Atrides”) - King of Mycenae and leader of the Achaean army; brother of King Menelaus of Sparta.

**Menelaus** - King of Sparta; the younger brother of Agamemnon, husband of Helen.

**Odysseus** - A fine warrior and the cleverest of the Achaean commanders. Along with Nestor, Odysseus is one of the Achaeans’ two best public speakers.

**Nestor** - King of Pylos and the oldest Achaean commander. He often acts as an advisor to the military commanders, especially Agamemnon.

**Diomedes (also called “Tydides”)** - The youngest of the Achaean commanders. After Achilles withdraws from combat, Athena inspires Diomedes with such courage that he actually wounds two gods, Aphrodite and Ares.

**Great Ajax** - An Achaean commander, Great Ajax also called “Telamonian Ajax” or simply “Ajax” is the second mightiest Achaean warrior after Achilles. His extraordinary size and strength help him to wound Hector twice by hitting him with boulders. He often fights alongside Little Ajax, and the pair is frequently referred to as the “Aeantes.”

**Little Ajax** - An Achaean commander, Little Ajax is the son of Oileus (to be distinguished from Great Ajax, the son of Telamon). He often fights alongside Great Ajax, whose stature and strength complement Little Ajax’s small size and swift speed.

**Idomeneus** - King of Crete

## **The Trojans**

**Priam** - King of Troy and husband of Hecuba, Priam is the father of fifty Trojan warriors, including Hector and Paris.

**Hector** - A son of King Priam and Queen Hecuba, Hector is the mightiest warrior in the Trojan army. He is devoted to his wife, Andromache, and son, Astyanax, but resents his brother Paris for bringing war upon their family and city.

**Paris (also known as “Alexander”)** - A son of Priam and Hecuba and brother of Hector. Paris’s abduction of the beautiful Helen, wife of Menelaus, sparked the Trojan War.

**Hecuba** - Queen of Troy, wife of Priam, and mother of Hector and Paris.

**Helen** - The most beautiful woman in the ancient world, Helen was stolen from her husband, Menelaus, and taken to Troy by Paris.

**Aeneas** - A Trojan nobleman, the son of Aphrodite, and a mighty warrior. The Romans believed that Aeneas later founded their city (he is the protagonist of Virgil’s masterpiece the *Aeneid*).

**Andromache** - Hector’s wife.

**Astyanax** - Hector and Andromache’s infant son.

**Polydamas** - A young Trojan commander, Polydamas sometimes figures as a foil for Hector, proving cool-headed and prudent when Hector charges ahead.

**Glaucus** - A powerful Trojan warrior, Glaucus nearly fights a duel with Diomedes. The men exchange armors after they realize that their families are friends illustrates the value that ancients placed on kinship and camaraderie.

**Agenor** - A Trojan warrior who attempts to fight Achilles in Book 21. Agenor delays Achilles long enough for the Trojan army to flee inside Troy’s walls.

**Dolon** - A Trojan sent to spy on the Achaean camp in Book 10.

**Pandarus** - A Trojan archer. Pandarus's shot at Menelaus in Book 4 breaks the temporary truce between the two sides.

**Antenor** - A Trojan nobleman, advisor to King Priam, and father of many Trojan warriors. Antenor argues that Helen should be returned to Menelaus in order to end the war, but Paris refuses to give her up.

**Sarpedon** - One of Zeus's sons. Sarpedon's fate seems intertwined with the gods' quibbles, calling attention to the unclear nature of the gods' relationship to Fate.

**Chryseis** - Chryses' daughter, a priest of Apollo in a Trojan-allied town.

**Briseis** - A war prize of Achilles. When Agamemnon is forced to return Chryseis to her father, he appropriates Briseis as compensation, sparking Achilles' great rage.

**Chryses** - A priest of Apollo in a Trojan-allied town; the father of Chryseis, whom Agamemnon takes as a war prize.