Suggestions for Teaching The Greek Mythology Block

Background
In my view the main goal of this block is to share the Greek myths as pedagogical "soul food" for the students. Tell the stories of the major Greek gods, concentrating on those gods that "speak" to the challenging children in your class or the specific temperaments that are most prominent.

There are of course the requisite gods like Zeus, Apollo, Athena, Demeter, Persephone, Hades, Poseidon, to name those that come to mind right away, who are the "basics". You always have kids in your class who are the Zeus or Athena. And I feel all children love to hear and should know these gods’ stories, like the 100 places you have to see in the world...these are the 8-10 Greek gods everyone has to know.

Always tell these stories instead of leaning on having them (or, oops, you) read them. When you tell them to the students the images live in the students’ memories forever! The D’Aulaires’ book Greek Myths is the best resource for your storytelling and for drawings to copy in my view. I have also heard that Charles Kovacs’ book Ancient Greece is another excellent resource.

Teaching History –Volume I, Ancient India to Ancient Rome by Roy Wilkinson is essential reading for this block in my view.

Planning the Block
I believe that this block also has two other important purposes. It gives you ample time to work on the students’ grammar and writing skills. Subject-predicate, active/passive voice, using more developed modifiers, creating your own outline, and verb conjugation are all goals that work well with this block. Students can explore writing about the Greek gods in different ways as letters, poems, first-person accounts, etc. I also wrote some short compositions with mistakes for them to correct.

The other important purpose of this block in my view is to deepen the students’ artistic skills. This block lends itself to incredibly rich dramatic and visual artistic retelling! Give the students plenty of opportunities to express the stories you tell.

I also feel that 5th graders are ready to concentrate on proper proportion in relation to the developmental phase they are now entering and that is linked to the perfection of the Greek’s philosophy and architecture that you will study in the 2nd block. They followed my instruction with portrait or whole body drawings of some of the gods a few times a week for the 3 weeks. With that said here are the learning goals I created for the block based on my students’ abilities.
Grammar

- Identify active and passive voices
- Begin to write in active and passive voice
- Keep tenses consistent
- Keep subject/verb agreement
- Review irregular verbs, especially “to be”
- Begin to conjugate verbs

Writing

- Write at least 2/3 of the written portion of main lesson book generated from outlines drawn by the teacher
- Use appropriate paragraph format (sequencing thoughts)
- Write clear and complete sentences
- Identify and write topic sentences
- Correctly use punctuation (period, comma in listing, addressing and interjections, exclamation, question mark, quotation marks for simple quotes, capitalization and correct use of abbreviations, e.g. bibliographies, letters)
- Correct/prooﬁread own compositions, reworking rough draft and editing before the teacher reviews the writing
- Write from different character’s points of view
- Consistently use subject narrative (ie. ﬁrst person)

Spelling

- Begin to identify Greek roots, word origination with the names of the Greek gods/goddesses
- Continue work with phonetic spelling and syllabication through spelling dictation, practice, and spelling lists