

# **TwoOldGuys™ Study Guides**

## **BI114 Biological Concepts for Teachers**

### **Chapter 4. History of Life**

#### **4.4. Mythologic Humanoids**

Based on Indiana's Academic Standards, Science, as adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education, Nov 2000.

*Numbers refer to the age-appropriate grade-level for the content.*

### **Review**

Thus far this chapter has presented a number of hypotheses: two alternative explanations of how Life may have originated from non-living chemicals; two explanations of how aquatic algae may have adapted to life as land plants; and two explanations of how aquatic animals (similar to crayfish or similar to fish) may have adapted to life as land-dwelling animals (similar to sowbugs or similar to salamanders). Additional hypotheses to explain how fossil form, and how we can estimate the age of fossils were presented.

As long as we are looking at hypotheses, we could attempt to compare fossil human-like creatures to mythological human-like creatures.

## the Hominoids: Myth versus Fossil

*grade 6: to 8; secondary: to college:*

The basic premise for this section is that mythological beasts in traditional stories are references to actual creatures encountered by ancient humans. For this to make sense, you must first be familiar with the tendency of male human story-tellers to embellish their stories. The most familiar example of this tendency is the “fish story.” The story teller, who claims to have caught the six-inch (152 mm) fish, will hold his hands about six and one-half inches [165 mm] apart on the first telling of the story. On each subsequent telling of the story the hand spread will grow by one-half to one inch [13 – 25 mm], until the story-teller runs out of arm length.

A few examples of actual creatures represented in mythology include (1) the [unicorn](#) – a goat of the Northern Alps with a pair of curved horns so close on the forehead that they curve around each other; (2) the [centaur](#) – a part horse, part man that is actually a man riding bareback on a horse on the steppes of Soviet Georgia, clinging to the horse’s neck with his head above the horse’s head; etc.

Among the mythological creatures are a surprising number of human-like beings. If you are not familiar with the Western European versions [Anglo-Saxon, Welsh, Gallic; Gaul, Teuton] you may have heard of the Scandinavian versions [Norse, Finnish] as represented in the famous trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, by J.R.R. Tolkien. On the other hand, the Leakey family [physical anthropologists and paleontologists] established that no fewer than five species of human-like beings coexisted with Humans in the Oldavi Gorge region in the Great Rift Valley of Eastern Africa. The anthropological concept of cultural memory suggests that the mythological human-like beings refer to the coexisting human-like

beings. In the table below, I have suggested a possible correlation between the mythological and fossil human-like beings.

Million Years BP	Mythological	Fossil
0.1	Humans	<i>Homo sapiens</i>
0.05	Giants	<i>Homo neandertalensis</i>
1.9	Elves	<i>Homo erectus</i>
2.0	"little people"	<i>Homo habilis</i>
3.7	Dwarves	<i>Australopithecus afarensis</i>
3.0	Trolls	<i>Australopithecus africanus</i>
2.0	Orcs & Ogres	<i>Australopithecus robustus</i>