Pandora
Ancient Greek

Pandora was the first woman on Earth, created by the Gods on the instructions of Zeus as a punishment to men, because he was angry that Prometheus had just given men the gift of fire.

Pandora was made out of clay. The goddess, Athena, then breathed life into her and Aphrodite gave her beauty so that men would fall in love with her. Prometheus' brother, Epimetheus, fell in love with her and married her. As a gift, Hermes then gave Pandora a sealed pot, but told her that on no account must she open it.

Amongst the qualities bestowed on Pandora by the gods and goddesses was curiosity. Day after day, Pandora looked at the pot and wondered what was inside it. Sometimes, she lifted it up and held it in her hands, turning it around, as if she might perhaps be able to feel what was inside it without actually opening it.

Finally, though, Pandora could contain her curiosity no longer and she twisted the stopper out of the pot. Immediately, she wished she had not done so, for out flew all the evils in the world. Disease, misery and death raced straight past her and out into the world, stinging her as they went.

Pandora pushed the stopper back into the pot, but she was too late, for all the evils had already escaped and would never go back into the pot. She did, however, hear one small voice coming from inside and when, out of curiosity, she lifted the stopper once again, hope fluttered out into the world, too. So, although Pandora had released all the ills into the world, she had also allowed hope to follow.

1. Why did Zeus create Pandora and what did he hope she would do?

2. What did Aphrodite do and why did she do it?

3. Who gave Pandora the most dangerous gift and what was it?

4. If you had been Pandora's servant, what might you have seen, and what would you have said to her?

5. How would the world have been different if Pandora had not been curious?