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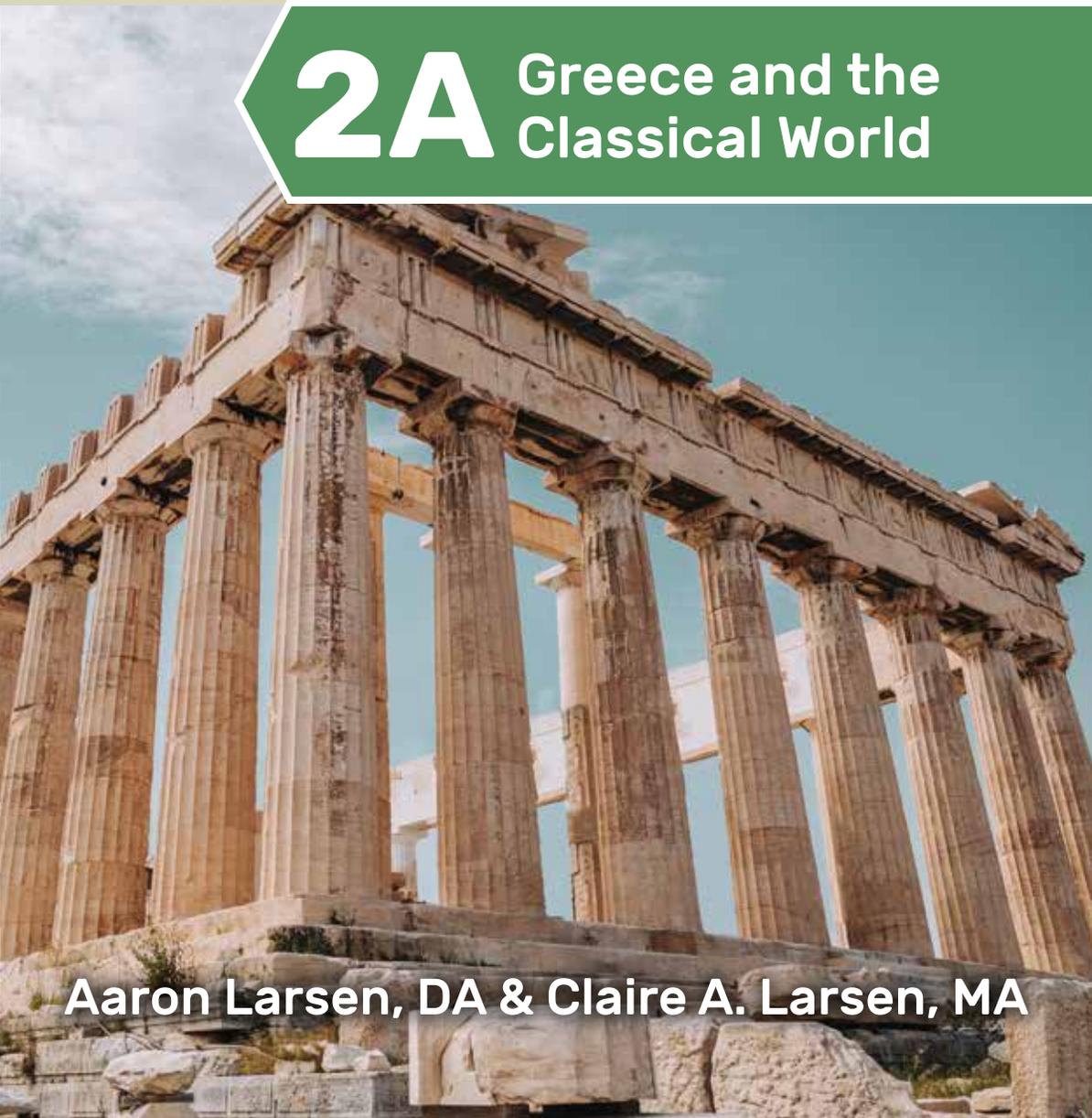


The **Curious** Historian

History & Culture
of the **Classical World**

2A

Greece and the
Classical World



Aaron Larsen, DA & Claire A. Larsen, MA

Dedication

To Nathan

. . . who has always loved everything Greek.

Classical Academic Press would like to thank the scholars, peer reviewers, and teachers who contributed their time, expertise, and feedback in various ways throughout the development of this text.



*The Curious Historian Level 2A: History & Culture of the Classical World
Greece and the Classical World Student Edition*

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Welcome to The Curious Historian

by Dr. Christopher Perrin

Welcome to History

We are so glad that you are continuing to study history with us! In each book in The Curious Historian series, you will find a rich, engaging presentation of information about important people and civilizations throughout history that still have much to teach us, even in our modern age. You will learn about the language, religion, arts, architecture, monuments, and writing of each of these civilizations. The full-color art and artifacts pictured throughout each book will help you understand what these civilizations created and will give you an appreciation of the wonder and beauty of history.

In *The Curious Historian Level 2A*, you will be delighted with the history and culture of the Greeks, who had a tremendous influence on many civilizations throughout history (including Mesopotamia and Egypt) and even on our world today. In addition to studying the Greeks and the changes that took place throughout the Near East during the first half of the Classical Age, we will continue exploring the fascinating events that took place to the east, in India and China.

The Curious Historian Level 2 is the second part of our three-level history series. The levels, each consisting of two semester-long texts, will cover the following eras:

LEVEL 1: THE ANCIENT WORLD	<i>Book 1A: The Early & Middle Bronze Ages</i> (the Egyptians and Mesopotamians)
	<i>Book 1B: The Late Bronze & Iron Ages</i> (the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Israelites, Assyrians, Persians, etc.)
LEVEL 2: THE CLASSICAL WORLD	<i>Book 2A: Greece & the Classical World</i> (Classical and Hellenistic Periods; the Far East)
	<i>Book 2B: Rome & the Classical World</i> (the Republic and Empire; the Far East)
LEVEL 3: THE MEDIEVAL WORLD	<i>Book 3A: The Early Middle Ages</i> (Migration Era and the Viking Age)
	<i>Book 3B: The Late Middle Ages</i> (Crusades and the High Middle Ages)

Throughout each book, you will learn about important people, leaders, kings, generals, philosophers, artists, and public speakers. You will read about why we remember them, what they did, and what they tried but failed to do. You will learn about what they have left behind that are still of great value to historians: monuments, writings, personal belongings, and more. You will learn these people's stories.

In fact, history is a story—a very long story with many, many interesting events. It is a record of what people have done, what they have thought, what they have built, what they have written, even what they have hoped for and believed in. History helps us remember some of the remarkable things that

humans have achieved over thousands of years, such as learning how to farm and build large cities, inventing systems of writing, and creating beautiful art and monuments.

History is also a story of conflict and failure. While people in the past achieved great things, they also fought terrible wars that destroyed much that was good. People sometimes struggled to do what was wise and good, and sometimes they were drawn to what was foolish, selfish, greedy, and destructive. The study of history shows us both the wisdom and the flaws of the people of the past, helping us to learn from their successes and mistakes.

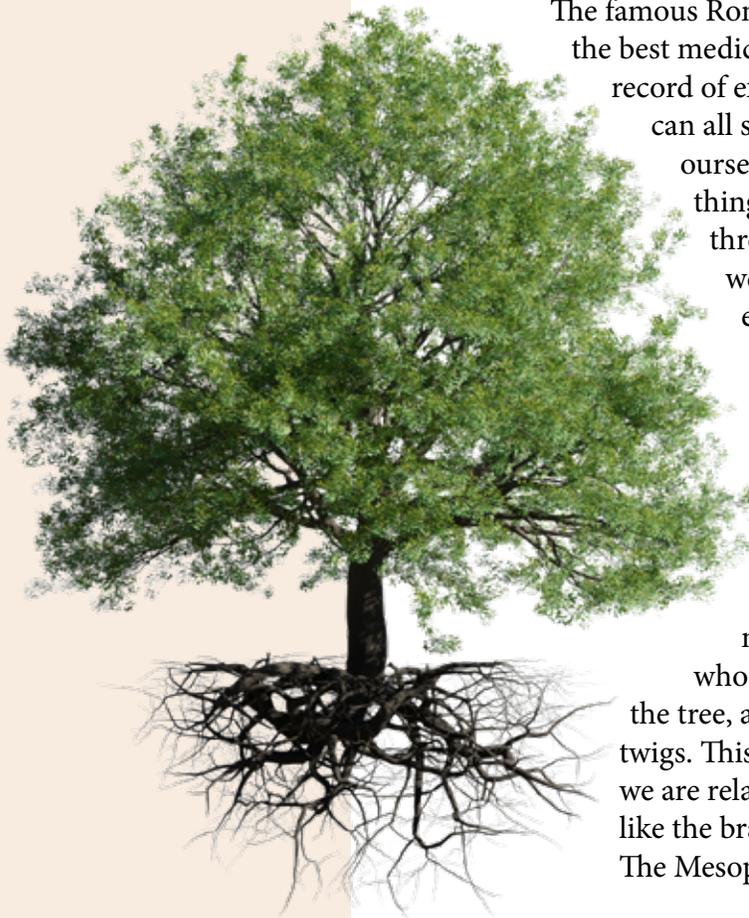
Know What Is Excellent

The study of the past has a lot to teach us about what people are like throughout history. This means it teaches us what we ourselves are like, because we are people too. History introduces us to various heroes and villains who teach us something of virtue and vice. It shows us how some people are tempted to become cowardly in times of danger, but also how some people demonstrate courage (fortitude) and bravery. It shows us how people with great power are easily tempted to become cruel and greedy, but also how some people use their power to generously bless and help others. It also shows us how people can be both kind and cruel at different times—for many people are a blend of virtue and vice! In other words, the study of history can serve as a model to help show us how to be virtuous and wise and avoid being selfish and cruel. It provides us with cautionary tales and warnings but also with inspiring stories that encourage us to be brave, generous, kind, and daring.

The famous Roman historian Livy said, “The study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind” because history gives a long record of examples of human behavior and experiences that we can all see. He said that in this record we will find both for ourselves and our country “examples and warnings: fine things to take as models, base [corrupt] things, rotten through and through, to avoid.” As students of history, we should imitate the virtuous (right or excellent) examples we find in history and avoid those things that are cruel and rotten. If Livy is right, then we can work to become better, more virtuous people by studying history.

Know Ourselves

To study history is to study who we once were and to learn why we are the way we are now. You might say that history is the study of our beginning. If we think of history as a tree, then the peoples who came before us are like the roots and the trunk of the tree, and we are like the most recent branches or the new twigs. This means that while we are the most recent people, we are related to those people who have gone before us, just like the branches of a tree are related to its trunk and roots. The Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and other



ancient peoples are the roots and trunk of the “history tree.” When we study this tree (these ancient peoples), we are studying ourselves, because in some important ways we came from these peoples.

We have built our modern cities, governments, and more on the foundations of these ancient civilizations. For example, if you visit a major American city, such as Washington, DC, you will find many museums, capitol buildings, and courthouses with great pillars and columns supporting triangular roofs. The design of these buildings



The US Capitol building in Washington, DC

imitates the architectural style of the Greeks and Romans, which in turn were imitating the great columns and angles of Egyptian structures. In other words, the great buildings in American cities are in fact ancient in their style and design!

Know the Future

The study of history helps us to understand ourselves now, but it also helps us to make educated guesses about what might happen in the future. Why is this true? Because humans have shared the same nature over thousands of years! History teaches us that people in all times tend to act in the same ways in similar circumstances.

Here is just one example. Throughout history, when people face threats from an invading army there are almost always some who wish to surrender out of fear, and others who are willing to betray their own city or country to save themselves or even to make a profit. There are also those who are willing to stand up and bravely fight to protect their country and those in danger. Therefore, we can predict that if, during our time, our country or city is threatened, we will likely find each of these types of people. So, as you can see, the study of history helps us to better anticipate what might happen in the future!

So, welcome back, once again, to the study of history. We hope this study will help you learn more about pursuing virtue and wisdom and avoiding selfishness and greed. We hope it will also help you know more about where you have come from and learn to wisely anticipate the future. And last but certainly not least, we hope this series will capture your curiosity and spark your imagination about the world of the past, leading you to see that the study of history is not only important but also fascinating!

A Note on the Sidebars and the Quips and Quotes Boxes

Each chapter lesson in *The Curious Historian Level 2A* is filled with a variety of sidebars. These sidebars are optional, and your teacher or parent will decide which ones you should read each week. The sidebar pieces, which are indicated by icons, help to provide additional information or summarize key facts.

-  *History Bits*: In *Level 2A*, these sidebars give a summary of the most important events during a particular time period or the key beliefs of a religion or idea system. Other times, the sidebars present interesting cultural information. You do not need to memorize the information included in the History Bits sidebars. However, it can be useful to review the lists before you complete the chapter exercises and quiz, which will sometimes ask you to supply three or four facts about one of the key time periods or idea systems discussed in the chapter.
-  *Religion in History*: Among many other things, the Bible is a historical record of ancient people, such as the Israelites. The Religion in History sidebars point out places where classical history intersects with historical events or figures mentioned in the Bible, such as Paul's ministry in Athens.
-  *To the Source*: Many of our English words come from Latin or Greek. When a vocabulary word has interesting or unusual roots, we have supplied this information in a To the Source sidebar. These word origins may be of particular interest if you are also using our Latin for Children or Greek for Children series. We have also noted a few places where the original Greek words, such as "metropolis," are still a part of our English language today (though with somewhat different meanings).
-  *Question Box*: Since we believe history is more than a boring list of dates and facts, we have tried to make it come alive for you by asking you to use your imagination and to draw connections between these early civilizations and our modern world. Asking thoughtful questions, such as those found in the Question Box sidebars, is just one way to help you think more deeply about some of the patterns and influences that still exist in our own lives today. For example, how does the geography of where we live influence our lives? Were the Persians and the Greeks both justified in starting the Persian Wars? What are the qualities of a reliable historian? We have inserted these Question Boxes at key points throughout the chapters to help you explore (with guidance from your teacher or parent) as many thoughts and connections as possible. Be as curious as you can when discussing these questions!
-   *Quips and Quotes Box*: Since we are studying a historical period from which many original records have survived, in many chapters we will be able to give you some examples of translations of quips and quotes by the famous poets, historians, philosophers, and other figures we are learning about. (A quip is a funny or clever remark.) You do not need to memorize the quotes, but we hope you will find them interesting to read. You might even want to pause and think about whether or not you agree with the quote, or about how it applies to your own life!

How to Teach *The Curious Historian Level 2A*

A Suggested Schedule

The Curious Historian (TCH) curriculum has been designed to be taught at the pace of one chapter per week, with each book to be completed over the course of a semester (i.e., *Level 1A* in the fall semester and *Level 1B* in the spring semester). The following is a basic suggested weekly schedule, assuming four classes per week for approximately 30–40 minutes each day, to be modified as necessary by the teacher. You can also find a suggested yearlong schedule at ClassicalAcademicPress.com/Pages/The-Curious-Historian, under the “Support” drop-down (found beneath the product photos).

If you purchased *The Curious Historian’s Archive: Extra Resources for Level 2A*, feel free to incorporate into your class schedule any of the information (such as the Biblical Connections or the Profiles and Legends pieces) supplied in the downloadable files that you feel is helpful or interesting to your students. Icons throughout the teacher’s edition indicate when to reference these optional pieces.

There are eighteen chapters in *TCH2A*: fourteen content chapters, three unit review chapters, and an end-of-book review chapter. This text also includes a book introduction (divided into three parts) and three unit introductions. The vocabulary and concepts covered in the three-part book introduction and the unit introductions will be important for students’ understanding of the rest of the text, so we highly recommend that you take time to cover the concepts presented there.

If taught four days a week, this text should take approximately nineteen weeks to complete. Some chapters and sections may move faster than others, depending on the interests and strengths of your students. There is flexibility within each chapter (including a variety of optional exercises for comprehension) and in the pacing of the curriculum as a whole to move at the speed that works best for your student(s)/classroom.

Day One: Review/Memory Work

Each chapter begins with a time line and a vocabulary section that is divided into Important Words, Important Figures, and Important Highlights. (Pronunciation for more challenging words, as well as extended definitions for some terms, can be found in the alphabetical glossary.) Take time to review these key terms, historical figures, and geographical concepts, and to note them in the context of the chapter time line. Next, introduce the new chapter verse(s) in the unit song (see appendix A for the song lyrics). Each class period should begin and end with a brief review of this content and memory work, incorporating content from previous chapters when appropriate, and with several rounds of singing all of the song verses students have learned up to that point.

If time permits, begin reading the lesson narrative.

Day Two–Day Three: Lesson Narrative

Start class with a brief review of the memory work and unit song, and then begin (or continue) to read the lesson narrative. You might read the narrative aloud, with students following along, or have your student(s) read the text aloud. Either way, be sure to pause throughout to emphasize key points, check for comprehension, and

engage in periodic discussions (the Question Boxes, while optional, will be particularly helpful here). Be sure to also stop to point out how the chapter maps and artwork fit into the narrative. While the various sidebar elements and longer “of the Age” pieces contain interesting and pertinent information, they are optional. You may wish to select just one or two to highlight for students, to assign them as homework, or to skip them altogether if you need to move more quickly through a particular chapter.

Day Three–Day Four: Comprehension Exercises

Repeat the week’s memory work and unit song, and then finish or review the lesson narrative and have students work on completing the chapter exercises. Allow time to review and discuss the assignment(s) before moving on. Each chapter includes a variety of exercises, both written and oral, to help students review and retain the key concepts from the lesson narrative and expand upon the knowledge they have gained. We have noted particular exercises that may be considered optional, but you should feel free to make assignments based on your students’ needs and abilities. Consider choosing a few exercises to complete during class time, such as the Talk It Over or the optional Spotlight on Virtue questions, which are discussion based, and one or two other exercises to assign as homework.

Optional Exercises and Chapter Quiz

While optional, the Be Creative exercises and the Make/Do It Yourself projects allow students to interact with the chapter content in different and creative ways. You may wish to save these for day four (or, if your schedule allows, for a fifth day of history study), or integrate them earlier in the week during days two and three as a way to break up the lesson narrative and begin introducing firsthand application of the content. (Be sure to read through the Make/Do It Yourself instructions in advance, as many of these projects require various supplies.)

Consider assigning the optional chapter quiz either as an in-class exercise or as homework. (Note: There are no quizzes for the book introduction, unit introductions, or review chapters.)

Introduction Part I: Why Study the Greeks?

IMPORTANT WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
Culture ¹	All the ways that a society acts, makes things, and thinks about life
History	The study of how human societies have changed over time; a record of events that happened in the past
Artifact	Any object that is made or changed by man for a particular purpose
Architecture	The science and craft of building buildings
Virtuous	Doing what is right or excellent; having skill or excellence at being a student, neighbor, citizen, friend, and worker
<i>Arete</i>	The Greek word for “excellence.” The Greeks emphasized four forms of <i>arete</i> : justice, courage (fortitude), temperance, and prudence.
Virtue ²	A praiseworthy habit of thinking and acting that has become a deep and permanent part of a person’s character; an excellent quality that people should have
Vice	A blameworthy habit of thinking and acting that has become a deep and permanent part of a person’s character

IMPORTANT FIGURE

WORD	DEFINITION
Archaeologist ³	A person who studies found objects that once belonged to groups of people from the past

1. Vocabulary words in color are review words from *The Curious Historian Level 1*. You can find all of the vocabulary words from *Level 1* in the alphabetical glossary at the back of this book.
2. See the alphabetical glossary for an extended definition.
3. For the more difficult words, we have supplied pronunciations in the alphabetical glossary.



▼ The Parthenon in Athens

Who Were the Greeks?

? What Else?

What else comes to mind when you think of the Greeks?

▼ **The Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens**

► **A plate of fresh Greek seafood served with lemons**

► **The Procession of the Trojan Horse into Troy by Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo (oil on canvas, ca. 1760)**



Welcome to the fascinating world of the Greeks! I am Archibald Diggs, archaeologist extraordinaire, and I am here to accompany you through the history of the classical world and the ancient Greeks. As you will see, the Greeks were an amazing people. During the roughly 770 years of history that we will be studying, the Greek civilization was a major player on the stage of world history. Because so much of their literature and architecture has endured for centuries (hundreds of years), you will be able to get a very clear picture of what the Greek world once looked like and of how the Greeks shaped history! By studying their societies, important cities, leaders, beliefs, daily lives, and much more, you will see how the Greeks left behind a legacy (something that people are remembered for after they die) that has helped make our modern world even richer! —A.D.

As you will see, the Greeks also played an important role in the continuing history of the Egyptians, Persians, Indians, and many other peoples you met if you studied ancient history with us in *The Curious Historian Level 1* or in another textbook.

If you have not studied history with us before, you might be wondering why it is important that we study the ancient Greeks and other peoples who lived so long ago, and half a world away from us. You might be thinking, what did they do that makes it important for us to not only know about them, but to spend time studying them seriously, and with great curiosity? How could their culture, their philosophies, their heroes, and their language be that different from our own? (Remember, a culture is all the ways that a society acts, makes things, and thinks about life. Philosophy is the study of general questions about life, knowledge, wisdom, thought, and other similar concepts.) How can the past still have meaning for those of us living in the twenty-first century, a modern age of technology and information?

Well, that is just the point! The Greeks have left their mark on so many parts of modern life that without their contributions, our world today would be very different. Their language, architecture (the science and craft of building buildings), and new discoveries about the world around them had a huge influence on many civilizations throughout history! But before we talk about these contributions in more detail, let's briefly review why studying the past is so important.

The Importance of Studying History

As you might remember from *Level 1A*, history is the study of how human societies have changed over time. It is also a record of events that happened in the past. When we think about the past, and about all of the many peoples who lived long ago and the events that took place, we can do so in one of three main ways:

1. We can deny history and say the events of the past did not happen. (For example, some people might want to deny or forget history because they do not like certain violent events that took place in the past.)
2. We can ignore the past and say that those things happened but are not important to us.
3. Or, we can think about the past with eagerness and curiosity, because we realize that the events of history have shaped the present world we live in . . . and they will continue to shape the future world of our children and grandchildren!

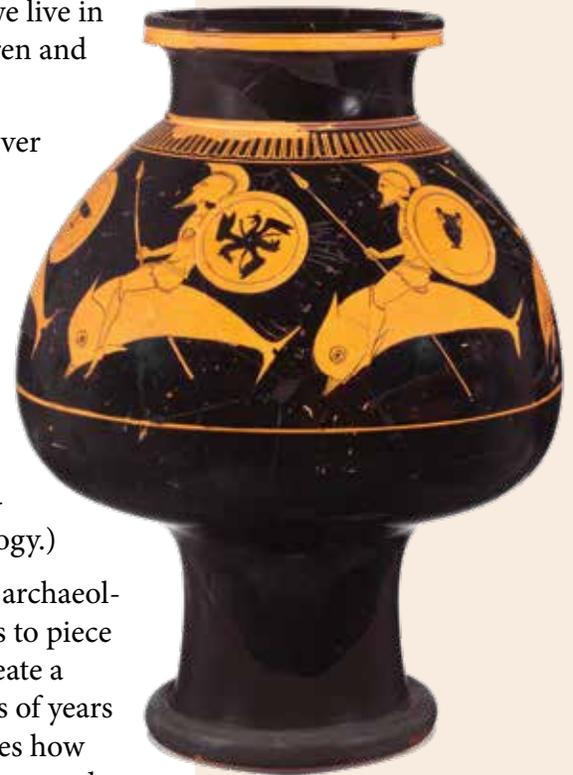
In one way, it is true that the past has already happened and will never change. But in other ways, the past is always changing because our understanding of the past is constantly changing.

How can something that has already happened keep changing? Remember that one of the ways we know what happened in the past is by studying the artifacts left behind, the writings of ancient peoples, and any other evidence that archaeologists find. (Artifacts are any objects, such as tools, pots, weapons, and toys, that are made or changed by man for a particular purpose. And archaeologists are the people who study found objects that once belonged to groups of people from the past. In other words, they practice the study of archaeology.)

Sometimes, we can be fairly certain about what happened, because archaeologists and historians have found enough artifacts and written records to piece together the events of a battle or the formation of an empire, or to create a picture of how people once lived. But then, decades or even hundreds of years later, an artifact or record might be uncovered that completely changes how we understand history! For example, historians are still trying to understand the events that caused many of the Late Bronze Age kingdoms to collapse ca. 1200 BC. And so far, no one has been able to translate the Linear A writings of the Minoans or the interesting symbols of the Harappans. It is possible that one day in the future, the codes will be cracked and historians will shed new light on these mysteries of the ancient past. If that happens, some chapters in history books will probably have to be changed!

Pieces of the Past

If you studied ancient history with us in *Level 1*, you have already seen how some Bronze and Iron Age monuments, literature, languages, and other pieces of the past still have an influence on our modern world. How many different examples can you think of?



▲ A Greek vase used for cooling wine

As curious historians, we want to know about the past and understand it as accurately as possible. We must be eager to learn new things when new information is discovered. Good historians never stop learning or being curious!

In our study of ancient history in *Level 1*, there were many times when we had to say “Historians are not certain” or “Historians disagree.” When we identified the years that an empire existed or the date for an important event, we often used the abbreviation “**ca.**” before the year. This abbreviation reminds us that many ancient dates are estimates and can’t be pinpointed exactly. Although historians attempt to give accurate dates for events, many times they cannot be certain exactly when something occurred in ancient history.

In *The Curious Historian Level 2A*, we will have to say “Historians are not certain . . .” a *lot* less often! You see, the Greeks made it easier for us to know who they were and what they did because they left behind so much for us to study!

In addition to the astounding works of Greek architecture that have survived the centuries, we also have a great many artifacts and written records. It is also helpful that people today still speak and write in the Greek language. (No one today speaks ancient Sumerian!) Of course, the modern Greek language is different in some ways from ancient Greek. But since modern Greek is close to older versions of Greek, scholars who are familiar with any form of the Greek language can much more easily translate and study Greek writings in the original language. In fact, writings in ancient, biblical, and medieval Greek are still studied by students in high schools, colleges, and seminaries (religious schools) today.



▲ The Greek alphabet painted on a cup

History and the Study of Virtue

Since history is about people, it is also about the study of the good and bad choices they make. We will study people who made wise and careful (prudent) decisions as well as people who made poor decisions. When people make virtuous choices, they benefit themselves and others, but when they make poor decisions, they bring harm to themselves and other people. To be **virtuous** means doing what is right or excellent. For example, virtuous people try their best to be courageous, diligent, patient, and careful with their words. Someone who is virtuous has a desire to be an excellent student, neighbor, citizen, friend, and worker.

The Greeks were famous for writing and thinking about human excellence. They even had a special word that they used to talk about qualities that were excellent. That word was **arete** (pronounced “ah-ray-TAY”). For example, a skilled rider had horseback-riding *arete*, a talented speaker or politician had speaking *arete*, an excellent doctor had medical *arete*, and a superb teacher had teaching *arete*. If you are a diligent, industrious, and attentive student, then you have academic (or intellectual) *arete*!

Another word for *arete* or human excellence is “virtue.” A **virtue** is a praiseworthy habit of thinking and acting that has become a deep and permanent part of a person’s character. We can also define a virtue as an excellent quality that people should have. To the Greeks, a virtue could be moral (having

To the Source:

ca. stands for the Latin word *circa*, meaning “around”

To the Source:

virtuous from the Latin *virtūs*, meaning “excellence, goodness; bravery”

Odysseus, the legendary hero of the Greek epic poem *The Odyssey*, is described as having many different kinds of *arete*. He was a skilled speaker, athlete, soldier, and sailor, and even an excellent cook! —A.D.

to do with how we treat our neighbors and friends), civic (having to do with how we behave as citizens and live in community with others), and academic or intellectual (having to do with how we behave as students or learners).

The Romans' word for "virtue" was *virtus*, from the Latin *vir*, meaning "man." We can think of a virtue as something that makes a man or a woman. A virtue is a habit of thinking and acting that essentially helps form who a person is. For example, there are various ways that students (like you!) can become formed as good learners by acquiring academic (intellectual) habits or *virtues* such as diligence, perseverance, and humility.

The Greeks emphasized four forms of *arete* that they thought made a man or woman truly excellent: justice, courage (also known as fortitude), temperance, and prudence. Justice is the virtue of giving to each person what he or she deserves or is owed. Courage (fortitude) is having bravery, strength, and endurance to face danger, difficulty, or fear without backing down. Temperance is the quality of having self-control and restraint to avoid taking a good thing to the point of it becoming extreme. (For example, reading is a good habit, but if you read excellent books all day long and neglect doing your chores or spending time with your family, then you would not be practicing temperance!) Prudence is seeing circumstances clearly and thinking carefully to make the best possible decision in a given situation. The Greeks thought those who studied history would become prudent by learning from the good (and bad) decisions made by others in the past!

The four virtues of justice, courage (fortitude), temperance, and prudence are often called the "classical" or "moral" virtues. They are also known as the "cardinal" virtues, from the Latin word *cardo*, meaning "hinge," because the ancient Greeks and Romans believed that the four cardinal virtues were the "hinges" of a moral life. Just as a door cannot function without its hinges, a person could not be virtuous without attempting to be just, courageous, temperate, and prudent.

The classical or cardinal virtues were considered to be so important that they were present in every area of life. For example, even though there were other specific academic virtues, such as persistence and diligence, courage and temperance were also considered to be important academic virtues! It is easy to see why. As a student, you must show courage when tackling the next difficult subject or assignment, and you must show temperance by not studying too little (laziness) or too much (excessive ambition). The cardinal virtues were also found in the civic or social virtues that describe how we should behave as citizens. For example, justice is a very important virtue for maintaining a well-ordered, peaceful society. To learn more about the classical (cardinal), academic (intellectual), and civic (social) virtues, see the chart in appendix C.

One of the main reasons people throughout the centuries have studied history has been to learn what it means to live worthy lives filled with virtue, or excellence. Careful students of history can find examples of ways to practice virtue, as well as examples of times when people were driven by **vice**: a blameworthy habit of thinking and acting that has become a deep and permanent part of a person's character.



▲ A statue of Arete, the Greek goddess of virtue



To the Source:

vice from the Latin *vitium*, meaning "fault, flaw, defect"

The Greek philosopher Aristotle, whom you will learn about in chapter 12, wrote an entire book dedicated to the subject of virtue and vice! He became famous for noting how sometimes a virtue such as courage could become corrupted by taking it to an extreme level, whether on purpose or by accident. For example, too *much* courage would lead to the vices of rashness and recklessness, such as when a soldier charges into battle with little thought or preparation. But too *little* courage would lead to the vice of cowardice, such as when a soldier runs away from the battle and leaves behind his fellow soldiers.

As we study the Greeks (especially the philosophers) and then in unit III the important idea systems that developed in India and China, you will see how many men (and sometimes women) throughout history were seeking to answer questions such as “What does it mean to try to be virtuous?” and “How can I live a good, excellent, moral life?”

Now that we have discussed some of the reasons why it is important to study history, let’s take a closer look in the next section of the book introduction at some of the Greeks’ important contributions to our modern world.

 EXERCISES

Practice the Facts

For each definition, unscramble the vocabulary word and write it on the line.

- _____ The study of how human societies have changed over time; a record of events that happened in the past
IHTYSOR
- _____ A praiseworthy habit of thinking and acting that has become a deep and permanent part of a person’s character; an excellent quality that people should have
UVTERI
- _____ A person who studies found objects that once belonged to groups of people from the past
HSCTAOAROIGEL
- _____ A blameworthy habit of thinking and acting that has become a deep and permanent part of a person’s character
EVCI
- _____ Doing what is right or excellent; having skill or excellence at being a student, neighbor, citizen, friend, and worker
SOUUTVRI
- _____ The science and craft of building buildings
ITCEATRHRUEC
- _____ Any object that is made or changed by man for a particular purpose
RACTFITA
- _____ All the ways that a society acts, makes things, and thinks about life
UTLERUC
- _____ The Greek word for “excellence”
TEERA

 Don't forget to learn this chapter's song verse(s)! The lyrics can be found in appendix A.

Introduction Part II: The Influence and Personality of the Greeks

IMPORTANT WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
Civilization	A society that is especially well organized and in which people have specialized jobs, invent and use many helpful tools, and have skills such as writing and building monuments
Literature	All of the written works of a civilization, such as books, poems, and legends, that are considered to be important and/or well written
Society	A group of people who have organized themselves in a particular way
Government	The person or persons who rule over or lead a group of people, make the laws, and enforce the laws
Personality	All of the behaviors and qualities that combine to make a person or society different from other people or societies

IMPORTANT FIGURES

WORD	DEFINITION
Linguist	A specialist who studies languages
Athena ¹	The Greek goddess of wisdom and strategy in war
Citizen	A person who lives in a particular town, city, or country and has all the rights and privileges available to someone living under that government
Deity	Another word for a god or goddess
Barbarian	The name the Greeks used for all “non-Greeks”; in modern usage, someone who is seen as uncultured, rude, and uneducated

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

WORD	DEFINITION
Parthenon	The largest of the Greek temples built in Athens; dedicated to the goddess Athena



▲ A coin featuring the goddess Athena and her symbol, an owl

1. In chapter 7, you will learn an extended definition of “Athena.”



The Contributions of the Ancient Greeks

We have benefited from the ancient Greeks in so many ways. The work of a man named Euclid formed the basis for much of our study of mathematics today, especially geometry. The philosophies and ideas of thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates are still taught in colleges and universities all over the world and have influenced many people throughout history, including the founders of the United States! The thrilling stories of the poet Homer and the fascinating myths of the many Greek gods and goddesses have delighted readers for centuries with their creative and suspenseful plots.

Today, the ancient ruins of Greek cities, temples, and monuments spark curiosity in many people. Every year, thousands of tourists travel to Greece to marvel at the wonders the Greeks left behind. In the splendid capital city of Athens, you can climb a hill to where the beautifully sculpted columns of the **Parthenon**, the largest of the Greek temples built in Athens, still stand. As you walk around the outside of the famous temple, you can imagine what it would have looked like with a shining ivory and gold statue of **Athena**, the Greek goddess of wisdom and strategy in war, standing in the center. And in the nearby Theatre of Dionysus, you can sit on the stone seats and pretend to be part of an audience watching the latest play written by Sophocles. Then, you can travel to the coastal city of Corinth to see the striking Temple of Apollo with its few remaining columns. As you journey throughout Greece, the histories of many other ancient Greek cities, such as Sparta and Thessalonica, come alive when you stand among the ruins or visit the museums and gaze upon the artifacts!²

Many government buildings and homes throughout the world have been built in the style of Greek architecture. You might already know of some famous examples in the United States. Think of the beautiful columns that proudly support the US Capitol and Supreme Court buildings in Washington, DC, and many state capitol buildings. Impressive columns are also found on the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, as well as on other monuments. And beautiful mansions feature columns, triangular-shaped roofs, large front porches, and other elements of Greek architecture. One well-known example in Charlottesville, Virginia, is Monticello, which was once the home of Thomas Jefferson, the third US president.

▲ A modern view of the Parthenon
 ▲ The Temple of Apollo at Corinth
 ▲ Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom and strategy in war

▼ US Supreme Court building in Washington, DC
 ► The Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC
 ► Thomas Jefferson's Monticello

2. Marc Dubin, *Eyewitness Travel Guide to Greece: Athens & the Mainland* (New York: DK Publishing, 1997), 94–95, 162.



The Greek Language

One of the Greeks' most important contributions was their language. Did you know that linguists (specialists who study languages) have estimated that at least 150,000 English words come from the Greek language? Many of the terms used in science, medicine, or government come from Greek root words. For example, the English word "democracy" comes from the Greek word *demos*, meaning "people." One clue that an English word comes from a Greek root is if the English word has the letters *ph* pronounced like an *f*: for example, "telephone," "phrase," "graphic," and "phonetic." Another clue is if the English word has a silent *p* sound, such as in "psychology" or "pterodactyl." The following is a very short list of some other common English words that are formed from Greek roots.

ENGLISH WORDS THAT COME FROM GREEK

ENGLISH WORD	GREEK WORD(S)
Alphabet	<i>Alpha</i> and <i>beta</i> (the first two letters of the Greek alphabet)
Biology	<i>Bios</i> ("life") and <i>logos</i> ("reason, word")
Dinosaur	<i>Deinos</i> ("terrible") and <i>sauros</i> ("lizard")
Pantheon	<i>Pan</i> ("all, every") and <i>theos</i> ("god")
Politics	<i>Polis</i> ("city")
Theology (the study of religion)	<i>Theos</i> ("god") and <i>logos</i> ("reason, word")

In addition to individual words, many popular phrases and names come from the Greeks and the stories of their famous heroes and deities (gods and goddesses). One well-known example is the phrase "Achilles' heel," which is used to refer to something that makes someone weak or vulnerable. Achilles was a famous Greek warrior who was killed in battle (toward the end of the Trojan War) after being shot in the heel, the only part of his body that, according to legend, was vulnerable to injury. Much of his story is told in the Greek epic *The Iliad*. The warning to "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts" comes from another Greek tale in which the Greeks built a huge wooden horse, used it as a clever way to enter the city of Troy in secret, and then ambushed the Trojans.³ You and your parents have probably ordered things online from Amazon, but did you know the company is named after a group of female warriors who appear in many of the Greek legends? And numerous high school, college, and professional sports teams, such as "the Titans," "the Spartans," or "the Trojans," get their name from Greek history or myths. These phrases and names may not mean much to you right now, but as we explore the history and culture of the Greeks, you will start to recognize many of the connections!

3. To read about the events of the Trojan War, see the Profiles and Legends PDF in *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 2A*.

? Greek Architecture vs. Modern Architecture

Take a look at the pictures included in this introduction and compare the architecture of the ancient Greek buildings to that of more modern buildings such as the US Supreme Court Building and Monticello. (See page iii for a picture of the US Capitol.) How are the styles similar? How are they different? Based on what you see in the pictures, what are some common elements of Greek architecture?

The words "archaeology" and "archaeologist" also have Greek roots! The Greek word *archaios*, meaning "ancient," comes from two words put together: *arche*, or "beginning," and *logia*, or "the study of." Our English word literally means "the study of ancient things"! -A.D.



▲ A carving of Achilles about to kill Hector. Athena stands in between them.

Words from Greek Deity Names⁴

The names of various Greek gods and goddesses have also given us some English words. Here are a few examples:

1. **Echo:** from the nymph⁵ Echo, who was known for talking too much and was punished with only being able to repeat words spoken by other people
2. **Phobia** (a very strong fear of something): from Phobos, the god of fear
3. **Typhoon:** from the god Typhon, the father of all monsters and a giant who often appeared in the form of terrible storms



▲ *Nymph in a Forest* by Fritz Zuber-Buhler (1822–1896; oil on canvas)

- Tutankhamun's throne features an elaborate carving of the pharaoh and his wife
- A statue of Ramses II at the temple of Abu Simbel
- One of Queen Hatshepsut's obelisks still stands today, but the second in the pair has fallen down.



▲ A letter written in Aramaic

Now that you know how important the ancient Greek language is to the modern English language, pay close attention to new vocabulary words you learn in your classes. It is possible that some of the words or phrases might come from Greek roots!

The Personality of the Greek People

In *Level 1*, we learned about many different groups of people who formed impressive civilizations. Remember, a civilization is a society that is especially well organized and in which people have specialized jobs, invent and use many helpful tools, and have skills such as writing and building monuments. These ancient civilizations were spread all the way from Egypt in northern Africa to China and India in the Far East. In between were island civilizations such as the Minoans and Mycenaeans, and great Near Eastern empires such as Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia.⁶

Each of these groups had its own unique culture, which included the people's religion, language, literature, style of monuments, and more. (Remember, literature is all of the written works of a civilization, such as books, poems, and legends, that are considered to be important and/or well written.) As the various civilizations merged with others or disappeared, they left parts of their culture behind. And, as you have learned, some peoples left behind more than others. For example, the Egyptians are known for the huge pyramid tombs, splendid temples, and numerous monuments they constructed. It is as though the Egyptian pharaohs built these huge structures partly to remind future civilizations, "We were here, and we were a great people. Do not forget about us!"

On the other hand, the Arameans did not leave behind as many monuments or temples as reminders of who they were. Yet during their time on history's great stage, they made the trade routes stretching from Mesopotamia to Anatolia into busy ancient highways. Aramean merchants brought all kinds of goods, including food, timber, precious metals, and handcrafted items, back and forth across the Near East for people to buy and sell. The Arameans' influence on everyday life was so great that their language became the common language throughout most of the Near East.



4. Kate Miller-Wilson, "29 English Words with Origins in Greek Mythology," Your Dictionary, accessed February 3, 2021, <http://capress.link/tch2aintro202>; and Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire, *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1962), 92.
5. A nymph is a type of spiritual being considered less important than the main goddesses in a religion. Nymphs are always pictured as women and believed to live in nature, such as in trees, lakes, or mountains.
6. Do some of these terms, such as "Near East" and "Far East," look familiar? Don't forget you can look up *Level 1* vocabulary in the alphabetical glossary at the back of this book if you cannot remember what a word or phrase means!

In addition to their cultures, all people and societies have their own **personalities** that set them apart from others. A personality is all of the behaviors and qualities that combine to make a person or society different from other people or societies. (Remember, a society is a group of people who have organized themselves in a particular way.) For example, if you like to meet new people and have lots of conversations, someone might describe you as having an outgoing personality.

Greek civilization had its own personality too. As a people, the Greeks stood out in ways that no other civilization before them ever had. How? The historian H. D. F. Kitto writes that the Greeks, more than any other group of people, looked at the world in terms of “us and them.” In other words, the Greeks divided everyone in the world into one of two categories: Greeks and non-Greeks, whom they called **barbarians**.⁷ Later, the word “barbarian” began to be used to refer to someone who is seen as uncultured, rude, and uneducated. But in ancient times, the Greeks used the word to describe anyone who was not Greek.

The difference between Greeks and non-Greeks (barbarians) was based on more than whether a person spoke Greek or another language. The Greeks thought the difference was in the way they looked at and understood life. The Greeks were not necessarily more intelligent than the other groups of people. They knew that other peoples did amazing things too, but the Greeks believed they had a unique way of thinking. When the Greeks wondered, “Who am I, and why am I here on this earth?” or “Why do human beings have a mind, and how do we use it to make sense of this huge world?” they answered these questions in ways that were different from other civilizations of their time. And many of the written records of their thoughts and beliefs survived the centuries for us to read and study today. As you learn more about the Greeks, you will see how they thought about government (the person or persons who rule over or lead a group of people, make the laws, and enforce the laws), society, science, and life in unique ways.⁸

The Greeks found ways to make their important thoughts about religion, literature, government, mathematics, and philosophy available for others to understand. In *Level 1*, you learned how some ancient civilizations wrote down lists of rulers, stories of military victories, myths of gods and goddesses, and records about daily life, such as how successful the harvest was. The Greeks, however, left behind the *greatest* number of writings up to their time! These writings tell us much about how the Greeks thought about the world and about life. Most of the subjects that you study today, including mathematics, philosophy, physics, and literature, had their beginnings in Greek writings and studies.⁹



To the Source:

barbarian from the Greek *barbaros*, meaning “foreign, ignorant”



H. D. F. Kitto

(1897–1982)



The historian Humphrey Davy Findley Kitto was born in Gloucestershire, England, in 1897. His

interest in classical history started early, when he was just a young student. He continued his classical studies for many years, until he finally became professor of Greek at a British university. He wrote several books on Greek history and literature, but he is best remembered for his book *The Greeks* and its detailed study of their beliefs and character. He died in 1984.⁷

▼ An inscription in ancient Greek



7. H. D. F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1951), inside cover (author introduction); and “H.D.F. Kitto, Expert on Greek Literature,” *The New York Times*, January 26, 1982, <http://capress.link/tch2aintro203>.

8. Kitto, *Greeks*, 8–9.

9. Kitto, *Greeks*, 8–9.

Kitto also mentions another important difference in the way the Greeks thought about themselves. The Greeks believed, “We are free men, and all other men are slaves.” That is quite a statement! But the Greeks did not mean “free” in the way you might think. To the Greeks, freedom did not mean freedom from all authority or “Every man for himself!” Even the Greeks knew it was important to live under a system of government that would keep things organized and under control. And they knew that having a government meant there would always be someone, such as a king or governor, who was in charge of people. To the Greeks “freedom” meant two things: (1) No matter how they were governed, the government should respect the rights of its citizens, and (2) citizens should have a voice in how the society is governed.¹⁰

The Meaning of Freedom

Most Greeks would have agreed with Homer that a man was only half a man if he was enslaved to another person and not free. Why do you think they believed that?

 The Greek poet Homer is said to have written: “Zeus [the king of the Greek gods] takes away from a man half of his [humanity] if the day of enslavement lays hold of him.”¹¹

To be Greek was to be a member of society, not just a “subject” in the society. A Greek had rights and privileges, and had a voice in the decisions made by the government of his city-state. The Greek idea of a government that included the people’s participation was very different from the way governments in other civilizations in history were organized! In a Greek city-state, the actions of the government were supposed to be public. The Greeks did not think government should be private and controlled by just one person, because that could lead to rule by a tyrant. The Greeks believed the principles and actions of the government should be accepted by the citizens, and that the rulers and citizens should live according to laws that encouraged justice.¹²

Many of these ideas may not make sense to you right now. But, as we proceed through the chapters in this book, you will begin to see how the Greek mind and Greek society were unique, and how they influenced the history and culture for other civilizations from the time of the Greeks into our modern era.

The Lasting Effects of Greek Culture

The influence of the Greeks remained strong even after the powerful Romans conquered the Greek lands and created the most important empire of the Classical Age. The Roman Empire ruled the lands of the Mediterranean and beyond, and its soldiers were an ever-present authority that everyone had to obey. But long after their own rulers had been silenced, the Greeks continued to have a strong influence on the beliefs and customs of much of the Near East—including on the Romans themselves!

Does this glimpse into the world of the Greeks make you eager to learn about their important civilization? So much about the Greeks is fascinating and admirable. And so much of their history and culture remains today, beyond just their scattered ruins or the English words that have come from Greek. The Greeks also left behind their understanding of the world and their views on what it meant to be a citizen and to govern well.

10. Kitto, *Greeks*, 9–10.

11. Kitto, *Greeks*, 10.

12. Kitto, *Greeks*, 9.

Indeed, the Greeks have shaped much of who we are today. And in turn, the Greeks were shaped in many ways by the geography of the land where they lived. In the last part of the book introduction, we will take a look at how the ancient land of Greece influenced the Greek way of life!

To read retellings of the story of the Trojan War and of several myths featuring the goddess Athena, see the Profiles and Legends PDF in *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 2A*, available for purchase from Classical Academic Press.

EXERCISES

Practice the Facts

Complete each of the following sentences by filling in the blanks with the correct vocabulary word from the word bank.

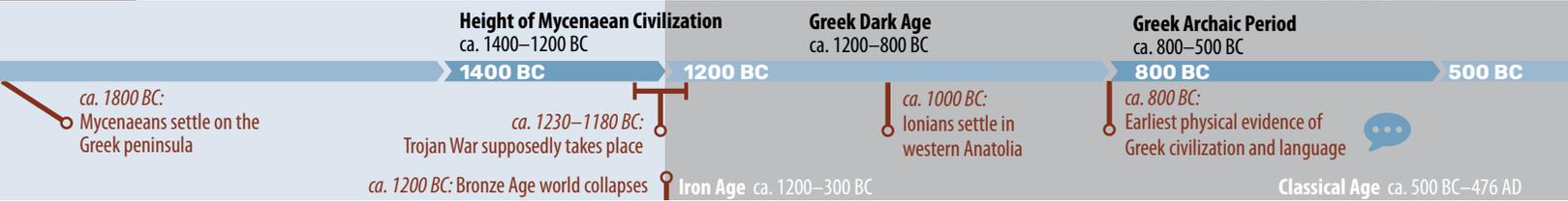
Parthenon • personality • civilization • Athena • citizen • society • deity • linguist • barbarians • literature

1. A _____ is a society that is especially well organized and in which people have specialized jobs, invent and use many helpful tools, and have skills such as writing and building monuments.
2. A specialist who studies languages is called a _____.
3. A _____ refers to all of the behaviors and qualities that combine to make a person or society different from other people or societies.
4. The Greeks called any non-Greeks “_____.”
5. _____ was the Greek goddess of wisdom and strategy in war.
6. A _____ is a person who lives in a particular town, city, or country and has all the rights and privileges available to someone living under that government.
7. The _____ is the largest of the Greek temples built in Athens.
8. _____ is all of the written works of a civilization, such as books, poems, and legends, that are considered to be important and/or well written.
9. A god or goddess can also be called a _____.
10. A _____ is a group of people who have organized themselves in a particular way.

Write It Down

With the help of a teacher or parent, use a dictionary to find more examples of English words that have Greek roots. Write down a few of the English words and their Greek roots, and then discuss the examples you found. Were you surprised at what you discovered?

1. English word: _____ Greek root: _____
2. English word: _____ Greek root: _____
3. English word: _____ Greek root: _____
4. English word: _____ Greek root: _____
5. English word: _____ Greek root: _____


MEMORY

Introduction Part III: Greek Geography and Time Periods

IMPORTANT WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
Peninsula	An area of land that is almost entirely surrounded by water
City-state	A city that rules itself and the territory around it, and has no higher ruler in charge of it
Isthmus	A thin stretch of land that connects two areas of land, such as a peninsula to a continent
Famine	A period when there is not enough food to feed the people in a particular area



Don't forget to learn this week's song verse(s)! The lyrics can be found in appendix A.

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

WORD	DEFINITION
Ionian Sea	The body of water to the west of Greece that separates the peninsula from Italy and is part of the larger Mediterranean Sea
Aegean Sea	The body of water to the east of Greece that separates the peninsula from Anatolia and is part of the larger Mediterranean Sea
Anatolia ¹	The large area of land in the northern part of the Near East that is now the country of Turkey. Another name for this area is Asia Minor.
Mount Olympus	The tallest mountain in Greece. Some ancient Greeks believed it was the home of their most powerful gods.
Gulf of Corinth	The body of water that almost entirely separates the Peloponnese from the rest of Greece
Isthmus of Corinth	The thin stretch of land that connects the Peloponnese to the Greek mainland
The Peloponnese	The southernmost section of the Greek peninsula. It is bordered by the Ionian and Mediterranean Seas and connected to the Greek mainland by the Isthmus of Corinth.
Classical Age	The period ca. 500 BC–AD 476 when Greek and Roman culture reached their greatest heights and had a tremendous influence on the world
Greek Classical Period	The period ca. 500–323 BC when each Greek city-state showed its “Greekness,” Greek culture spread into other parts of the Near East, and the Greeks fought important wars that changed the borders of both their city-states and their entire civilization

1. See the alphabetical glossary for an extended definition of “Anatolia.”

The Land of Ancient Greece

Did you ever wonder how much the geography of where you live affects the kind of life you lead? Maybe this idea sounds strange to you. But if you think about it, the ancient Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Greeks, and many other peoples throughout history were very influenced by the geography of the areas in which they lived. After all, a civilization's basic survival, prosperity (wealth), and military success depend on the land the people call their own.

As an example, let's compare Egypt to Greece. The geography of these two lands could not be more different! If you have studied the history of Egypt, hopefully you remember that the kingdom was defined by the Nile River, which meant the region was divided into two main types of land. The areas close to the river were good for farming, because they benefited from the Nile's yearly floods and the rich, fertile soil left behind by the floodwaters. Away from the Nile River, the rest of Egypt was mostly made up of hot, sandy desert.

On the other hand, the home of the ancient Greeks consisted of almost every kind of terrain and climate. The total area of land where the ancient Greeks lived is not all that large, but what the land of Greece lacks in size, it makes up for in variety. As the historian Kitto wrote, "Greece is a land of limestone mountains, narrow valleys, long gulfs, few rivers, and many islands."² A Greek who went for a walk could move from farmland to a wild, rugged mountainside in only a few miles.

◀ A view of the Greek landscape
◀ A deposit of natural marble
▼ A view of the Ionian Sea



Much of the land of Greece was rich in natural deposits of marble and silver. The Greeks used the beautiful marble stone to construct many of their temples, statues, and other important buildings, and the silver to craft jewelry, drinking cups, vases, and decorative bowls.³

Greece is located on a long **peninsula**,⁴ an area of land that is almost entirely surrounded by water. The western side of the Greek peninsula borders the **Ionian Sea**, which separates Greece from Italy. The eastern side is bordered by the Aegean Sea, which separates Greece and Anatolia, the large area of land in the northern part of the Near East that is now the country of Turkey. (Anatolia



To the Source:

peninsula from the Latin *paene*, meaning "nearly, almost," and *insula*, meaning "island"

2. Kitto, *Greeks*, 28.

3. Diane Harris Cline, *The Greeks: An Illustrated History*, National Geographic (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2016), 180; and Robert Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life in the Birthplace of Western Civilization* (New York: Sterling Publishing, 2008), 35.



▲ A view of Mount Olympus

is also known as Asia Minor.) The southern tip of the Greek peninsula juts out into the Mediterranean Sea.

The Greek peninsula is an especially mountainous land. Most of the mountain ranges run up and down the peninsula from northwest to southeast. Other ranges stretch from side to side across the peninsula. The tallest mountain in Greece is **Mount Olympus**. As you will learn in chapter 7, when we discuss Greek mythology and religion, some of the ancient Greeks believed Mount Olympus was the home of their most powerful gods.

Throughout the history of Greece, the numerous mountain ranges divided the land into areas that were somewhat isolated from each other. Instead of building one large kingdom that was centered around one main capital city, the Greeks built many individual city-states. Remember, a city-state is a city that rules itself and the territory around it and has no higher ruler in charge of it. Most of the Greek city-states had a strip of land that was good for growing crops, some higher pastureland where surefooted goats could graze, a few forested mountain areas, and a seaport where they traded the goods they produced.⁴

Even though the Greek city-states were not that far apart geographically, the mountains made communication and travel between them difficult. There were also no rivers that could be easily sailed to help connect the city-states. All of

4. Kitto, *Greeks*, 29.

these challenges helped to isolate the city-states and encourage their independence from one another.⁵ The city-states shared the most common elements of the Greek culture and personality but, as you will learn in the following chapters, the city-states developed some unique differences because of their individual locations. The challenging terrain also helped the Greeks to develop a nature of fierce determination and a desire to not give up even if a task was difficult.

The sea was another part of the geography that helped to shape the Greek personality. Many of the Greek city-states were built near or along the coast, or were located on islands in the Aegean Sea. Because the Greeks had to travel by sea in order to trade with other city-states and civilizations, they learned how to become skillful sailors. As they sailed back and forth across the seas, they also had the opportunity to learn about the people who lived beyond Greece's borders. The city-states (especially Athens and Corinth) that made the most use of the sea for trade and travel became the most well connected, wealthy, and culturally advanced of all the Greek city-states.⁶

Farming and Weather

The mountains of Greece meant there was little flat, fertile farmland. The people had to plant every bit of land they could with the crops they needed to survive. Some farmers lived close to their crops. But if it was possible, most people lived in the nearby city-state and walked to the fields each day so that their houses did not take up precious farmland. The thin, rocky soil meant it was hard to grow crops such as wheat, so the Greeks had to buy most of their wheat from other lands. But olive groves and grape vineyards flourished!⁷

The farmers planted the crops that needed the most care, such as vegetables and fruit, closer to the city. Crops that had to be tended less often, such as olive trees, grape vines, and grains (particularly barley), were planted farther away. If they lived close to the sea, the Greeks also enjoyed fish and shellfish from time to time. Today, olives, grapes, barley and other grains, and



The Influence of Geography

Everyone has been shaped by the geography of where he or she lives—even you! Think about the geographical features of the region you call home. How have they helped to make you the person you are?

▼ Olive trees and grape vines



5. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 35–36; and Susan E. Alcock, “Environment,” in *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Ancient Greece*, ed. Paul Cartledge (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 14.

6. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 36.

7. Alcock, “Environment,” 25; and Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 35.

fish continue to be popular foods among the Greeks and other Mediterranean people, making up a large portion of what they eat.⁸

While each city-state had its own weather patterns, the summers were generally hot and dry. Strong breezes blowing in from the sea kept the areas around the coast pleasant and mild. The winters were cool and damp, and the mountain slopes were often covered in snow. In some areas, the winters could become bitterly cold. Sometimes the mountains protected the land from the rain and violent storms that blew in from the sea, but in other regions the mountains acted like funnels, enabling the rain to stream down into the valleys below. One historian wrote the following vivid description of the Greek climate:

Earth and water, hill and plain, drought and damp, the snow storms of Thrace and the heat of a tropical sun—all the contrasts, all the forms of the life of nature, combine in the greatest variety of ways to awaken and move the mind of man.⁹

Today, thousands of tourists visit Greece to enjoy its beaches and sunny weather, but not everyone in ancient Greece seems to have appreciated the climate. The Greek poet Hesiod apparently hated the weather in his homeland! He wrote that the summers were “sweltering,” and the winters were so cold that “the wild beasts shudder and set their tails between their legs, even they whose hide is covered with hair.”¹¹

—A.D.

The Greeks were a social people who enjoyed the variety of weather and spent much of their time outside. In the wide-open spaces of the marketplaces and assembly areas, the people met regularly for conversation and thoughtful discussion. Greek plays were presented in outdoor theaters, and the people even gathered outside to discuss business and government matters. In fact, as you will learn in the coming chapters, many of the Greeks’ political and cultural contributions to history were activities that could best be done outdoors in large, open spaces. If the Greeks had lived in a different climate with less sunny and warm weather, they would not have been able to spend so much time outside, and their culture most likely would have looked very different!¹⁰

The rains came in late autumn, so fall was the time for planting crops in the fields. All winter long, the men and women farmed their land, until the crops were ready to harvest in the early spring. In the summer, after all the crops had been gathered, the men could go off to war if they were needed to fight. How-

ever, the weather on the Greek peninsula could be unpredictable. During some planting seasons, the autumn rains came regularly and the harvest was plentiful. But the expected rains did not come every year. Since some crops need more water than others, one crop might fail during a time of drought while another would make it safely to harvest time. Other years, the lack of rain affected every field and few crops grew that season, leading to a famine (a period when there is not enough food to feed the people in a particular area). Archaeological findings give us clues that food shortages were a common occurrence in



▲ The ancient Agora of Athens with the Acropolis rising behind it. Can you spot the Parthenon?

8. Alcock, “Environment,” 25, 27.

9. Ernst Curtius in *History of Greece*, vol. 1, as cited in Alcock, “Environment,” 13.

10. Kitto, *Greeks*, 36–37.

11. Kitto, *Greeks*, 34.

ancient Greece. For example, the bones and teeth of some skeletons show signs that people suffered from a lack of food and good nutrition.¹²

 “At the time when the Pleiades [a group of stars also known as the Seven Sisters] . . . are rising, begin your harvest, and plough again when they are setting.” And again he advised, “First of all, get yourself an ox for ploughing.”¹³
—the Greek poet Hesiod in *Works and Days*

Despite Hesiod’s good advice, many Greek farmers could not afford oxen because the animals needed too much food and water, and therefore were too expensive to keep. The Greeks also did not raise large herds of cows or sheep because the land was not grassy enough for many animals to graze. However, farmers usually had plenty of chickens, pigs, and even bees!¹⁴ Since goats do not need to eat much grass, they were also a popular animal among farmers. Now you know why goat milk and goat cheese have long been key parts of the Greek diet.

Of course, the threat of war kept people uneasy about their food supply too. If an army from another region attacked, the enemy might help themselves to the crops to feed their hungry soldiers, and then trample or burn the rest of the fields. The people found ways to preserve and store food in case of emergencies. They also joined with their neighbors and with other city-states to share food. But life for the early Greeks was uncertain. They didn’t always know if they would have enough food to survive until the next harvest.¹⁵

A Map of Ancient Greece

If you take a closer look at the map on page 20, you will see that the land of Greece can be divided into four main parts. The southernmost section of the Greek peninsula is an odd-shaped territory called **the Peloponnese**. The region looks a bit like a large right hand with a thumb and three fingers.

The Peloponnese is almost entirely separated from the rest of Greece by a body of water called the **Gulf of Corinth**, except for a narrow piece of land called the **Isthmus of Corinth**. An **isthmus**^o is a thin stretch of land that connects two areas of land, such as a peninsula to a continent. The Isthmus of Corinth acts almost like a strong cord, keeping the Peloponnese from breaking off from the rest of Greece and floating away into the Mediterranean Sea. Both the isthmus and the gulf are named after the important Greek city of Corinth.

The second part of the Greek peninsula, above the Isthmus of Corinth, is referred to as the “mainland.” It extends all the way north to the borders of the modern nations of Albania, Macedonia, and Bulgaria.

The Greek peninsula is what most people think of when they hear the word “Greece,” but the ancient Greeks also crossed the Aegean Sea and settled a large area of the Anatolian peninsula. The people who lived on the western coastline of Anatolia in cities such as Miletus and Ephesus were far from the mainland, but they were very much still considered a part of the Greek world.

12. Alcock, “Environment,” 28–29.

13. Cited in Alcock, “Environment,” 25.

14. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 35, and Alcock, “Environment,” 25.

15. Alcock, “Environment,” 30, 32.



To the Source:

isthmus a Greek word meaning “neck, narrow passage”

Finally, the fourth part of Greece is made up of many small islands scattered all throughout the Aegean Sea and spilling a little bit into the broader expanse of the Mediterranean Sea too. Many of the islands were settled by various smaller groups of Greek people, some of whom played significant roles in Greek history.

The entire Greek peninsula was once divided into a number of different geographical regions, each of which had one or more independent city-states. It is important to have a general idea of all the different regions, because as we move through our study of Greek history we will mention the locations where important events took place. You can see the various regions on the map. The following chart summarizes key facts about the most important geographical areas that you should know. You do not have to memorize all of the information, but as you read each chapter you may want to look back at the chart and the map. The more familiar you are with the different areas and cities, the easier it will be to



follow the courageous Greek armies as they march over the land and sail across the seas. You will also be able to more quickly locate the sites of famous buildings and ruins, some of which can still be visited today!

IMPORTANT GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS OF ANCIENT GREECE

REGION	LOCATION	IMPORTANT CITIES	FACTS
The Greek Peninsula			
Messenia	Western part of the Peloponnese “fingers”	Messene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fertile land • Messenians became Spartan slaves for a time.
Laconia	Eastern part of the Peloponnese “fingers”	Sparta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fertile land • Eurotas River
Elis	Upper western part of the Peloponnese “palm”	Elis, Olympia (sacred site)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name means “valley” • Held festival (first Olympic Games) in honor of god Zeus • Highly fertile land • Peneus River
Isthmus of Corinth	Strip of land connecting the Peloponnese to the northern mainland	Corinth, Megara	Temples of Apollo and Poseidon
Attica	Southeastern part of the mainland, just across the Isthmus of Corinth	Athens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some grain production and good olive trees • Silver mines
Boeotia	North of Attica and the Isthmus of Corinth	Thebes, Plataea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Later the center of the Boeotian League • Battle of Plataea ended Persian Wars on the Greek peninsula
Euboea	Island along the eastern coast of Boeotia and Attica	Eretria, Chalcis	Largest Aegean island
Thessaly	Large area just south of Macedonia ¹⁶	Larissa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain pass at Thermopylae • Had one large plain • Famous for raising horses, and thus for its cavalry
The Anatolian Peninsula			
Aeolia (or Aeolis)	Northwestern tip of the Anatolian coast	Pergamum	Founded by Greeks from Thessaly and Boeotia
Ionia	Central area of the western Anatolian coast	Ephesus, Miletus	Founded by Greeks from Attica and Euboea
Doris	Southwestern Anatolian coast	Halicarnassus	Founded by Greeks from the Peloponnese and Isthmus of Corinth

16. You will learn about Macedonia, the ancient kingdom to the north of Greece, in chapter 9.



To the Source:

classical from the Latin *classicus*, meaning “relating to the different classes of Roman citizens or to the armed forces.” It was also often used to mean “of the highest rank, superior.”

The Time Line of Greek History

If you studied ancient history with us in *Level 1*, you probably remember how historians divide the thousands of years of ancient history into three main periods: the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. After these three periods of ancient history comes the next important era in history: the **Classical Age**, ca. 500 BC–AD 476. During this time, the Greek and Roman cultures reached their height and had a tremendous influence on the rest of the world.

Do you notice something different about the dates for the Classical Age? This period begins with a BC date, but it ends with an AD date! Remember, BC and AD are acronyms, or letters that stand for a longer phrase, and they help us place an event within the overall time line of world history. The BC dates refer to events that happened before what is considered to be the birth of Jesus Christ. (The letters BC, which always come after the date, stand for “before Christ.”) BC dates go from highest to lowest. In other words, an event in 3500 BC happened 3,000 years before an event in 500 BC.

The AD dates refer to events that happened after the birth of Jesus Christ. (The letters AD, which always go in front of the date, are an abbreviation for the phrase *annō Domini*, meaning “in the year of our Lord.”) AD dates go from lowest to highest. This means that the capture and destruction of the city of Jerusalem by the Roman army in AD 70 happened 406 years before the end of the Roman Empire in AD 476. When you are memorizing dates, it is important to memorize the acronyms in addition to the years, so that you know when in history the dates fall. If you do not see a year listed with “BC” after it, you should assume that it is an AD date.

Neo-Assyrian Empire ca. 950–612 BC



◀A statue of Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom and strategy in war

Greek Dark Age
ca. 1200–800 BC
1200 BC

ca. 800 BC
Earliest physical evidence of Greek civilization and language



◀The Greek alphabet painted on a cup

ca. 750 BC
Greek colonization begins

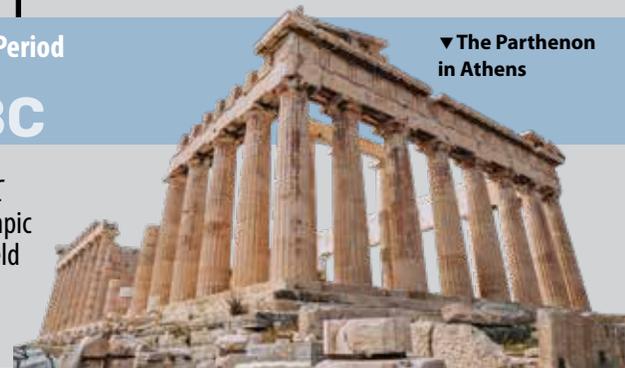
Greek Archaic Period
ca. 800–500 BC
800 BC

ca. 776 BC
First Olympic Games held



◀The Discobolus (“Discus Thrower”)

▼The Parthenon in Athens



Iron Age ca. 1200–300 BC

Vedic Period (India) ca. 1600–500 BC

Zhou dynasty (China) ca. 1050–256 BC

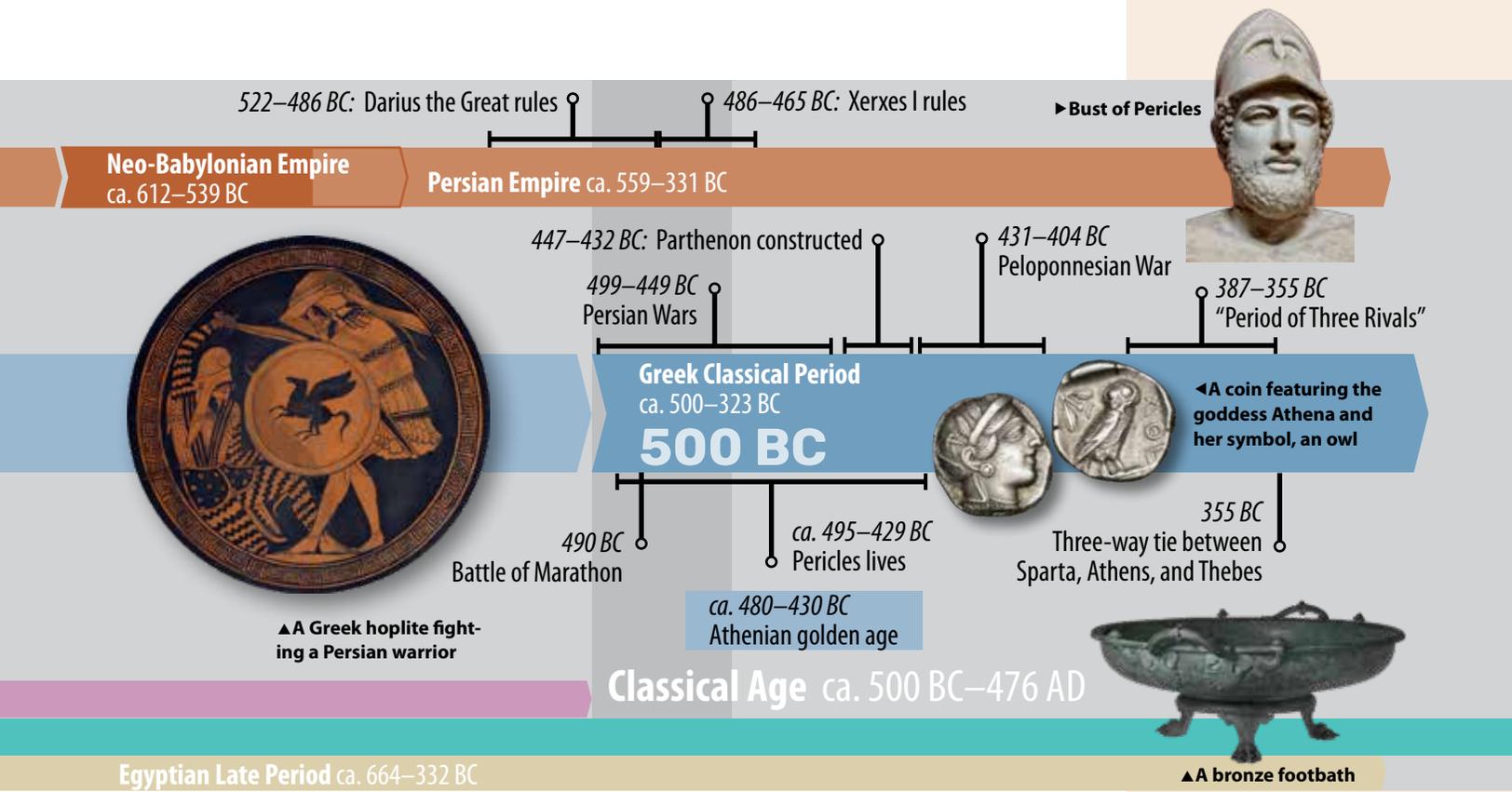
In this book, we will focus on Greek history, which took place during the first part of the Classical Age. (In *The Curious Historian Level 2B*, we will explore the later half of the Classical Age, which includes the mighty Roman Empire.) The Greeks have a long and interesting history, some of which overlaps with the kingdoms and peoples we studied in detail in *Level 1*. The following is a basic summary of the time line of Greek history.

The Bronze Age (ca. 3000–1200 BC): The Bronze Age was the ancient period when advanced groups of people learned to make tools and weapons out of bronze (from a mixture of the softer metals of copper and tin) instead of stone. During the Late Bronze Age, the Minoans built impressive palace-cities (ca. 2000 BC) on the Mediterranean island of Crete, and later the Mycenaeans created a kingdom (ca. 1800 BC) centered around the Greek peninsula, Crete, and the nearby islands.

The Iron Age (ca. 1200–300 BC): Around 1200 BC, many of the Bronze Age kingdoms collapsed, including the Mycenaean Civilization. No one knows exactly why or how the kingdoms fell apart, but historians use the dramatic changes that took place to mark the beginning of the Iron Age: the period ca. 1200–300 BC when iron became the most important metal used in making tools and weapons.

A time line is an important tool that helps us see when major events happened in history and how they were related to each other. For example, did they happen many years apart or very close together? The purpose of the time line shown here is to give you a “big picture” of the most important events in Greek history that you will learn about in all of unit I. We will also point out a few important events that were happening at the same time in other kingdoms, such as Egypt and Mesopotamia. Our master time line includes some extra information that you might find useful to know, such as when a city became the capital, when noteworthy people ruled, when important monuments were built, and one or two other interesting facts or events. So, when you put all of this together, the time line shows you the whole unit in one big picture.

-A.D.



In *Level 1B*, we focused on the history of the Near East during the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age. At the same time as the Phoenicians and Arameans were trading, the Israelites were becoming monotheistic, and the powerful Iron Age empires were ruling, important events were also taking place over in Greece. Scholars divide the centuries of Greek history during the Iron Age into four shorter periods:

1. The Dark Age (ca. 1200–800 BC): During the Dark Age, trade, construction projects, and writing stopped. Many different groups of people were migrating all throughout the ancient world, leading to constant change and confusion. It was also a time of violence. Eventually, some of the people settled down in small villages on the Greek peninsula and nearby islands. Gradually, trade and writing started again, and the Greek civilization and culture re-formed.

2. The Archaic Period (ca. 800–500 BC): Our study of ancient Greek civilization will begin with the Archaic Period, when trade and writing resumed. The Greeks also started to live in organized city-states, held the first Olympic Games, and began to display their unique culture through early forms of architecture, literature, and philosophy.

3. The Classical Period (ca. 500–323 BC): The Greek culture that has amazed the world for thousands of years reached its height during the Classical Period. (Remember, when we talk about the height of a culture or “the high point” of a kingdom, we do not actually mean the physical height of something. These phrases are used to refer to the time in history when a culture was the most widespread and reached its greatest level of influence, or when a kingdom was at its most prosperous and powerful.) Each city-state in its own way showed its “Greekness,” and Greek culture spread into other parts of the Near East. During the Classical Period, the Greeks also fought important wars that changed the borders of both the individual city-states and of their entire civilization.

4. The Hellenistic Period (323–30 BC): Toward the end of the Classical Period, two men rose to power: Philip II of Macedonia, and his son Alexander the Great. These two men conquered the lands of Greece, the Near East, and beyond, building a massive empire that paved the way for the Greek culture to spread throughout the known world. This process, called “Hellenization,” is why the last period of ancient Greek history is called the “Hellenistic Period.” In the years after the death of Alexander, the Greeks’ language, architecture, religion, philosophy, and other ways of life were carried all throughout the territory that had once been part of Alexander’s empire.

Now that you understand a little more about the geography of Greece and the different periods in Greek history, it is time to truly begin the story of Greece! Are you ready to learn how the Greeks built one of the greatest civilizations in the world?

To read about the famous storyteller Aesop, who was born near the end of the Greek Archaic Period, see the Profiles and Legends PDF in *The Curious Historian’s Archive: Extra Resources for Level 2A*.

Practice the Facts

On the line provided, write the number of the correct vocabulary word beside each definition.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|---|
| 1. Isthmus | _____ | A. An area of land that is almost entirely surrounded by water |
| 2. Gulf of Corinth | _____ | B. The tallest mountain in Greece; some ancient Greeks believed it was the home of their most powerful gods |
| 3. Isthmus of Corinth | _____ | C. The large area of land in the northern part of the Near East that is now the country of Turkey |
| 4. Famine | _____ | D. A city that rules itself and the territory around it, and has no higher ruler in charge of it |
| 5. Peninsula | _____ | E. A thin stretch of land that connects two areas of land, such as a peninsula to a continent |
| 6. Mount Olympus | _____ | F. The thin stretch of land that connects the Peloponnese to the Greek mainland |
| 7. The Peloponnese | _____ | G. The body of water to the east of Greece that separates the peninsula from Anatolia and is part of the larger Mediterranean Sea |
| 8. Ionian Sea | _____ | H. The body of water that almost entirely separates the Peloponnese from the rest of Greece |
| 9. Anatolia | _____ | I. The southernmost section of the Greek peninsula |
| 10. City-state | _____ | J. A period when there is not enough food to feed the people in a particular area |
| 11. Aegean Sea | _____ | K. The body of water to the west of Greece that separates the peninsula from Italy and is part of the larger Mediterranean Sea |

Can You Recall?

For each of the following questions about the geography of Greece, circle *all* of the correct answers.

1. What kind of crops did the Greeks usually grow?

olives wheat grapes oranges barley

2. What kind of landforms did the Greek peninsula have?

Wide, easy-to-navigate rivers rugged mountains swamps islands

lots of farmland isthmus forests coastlines

3. What bodies of water are near the Greek peninsula?

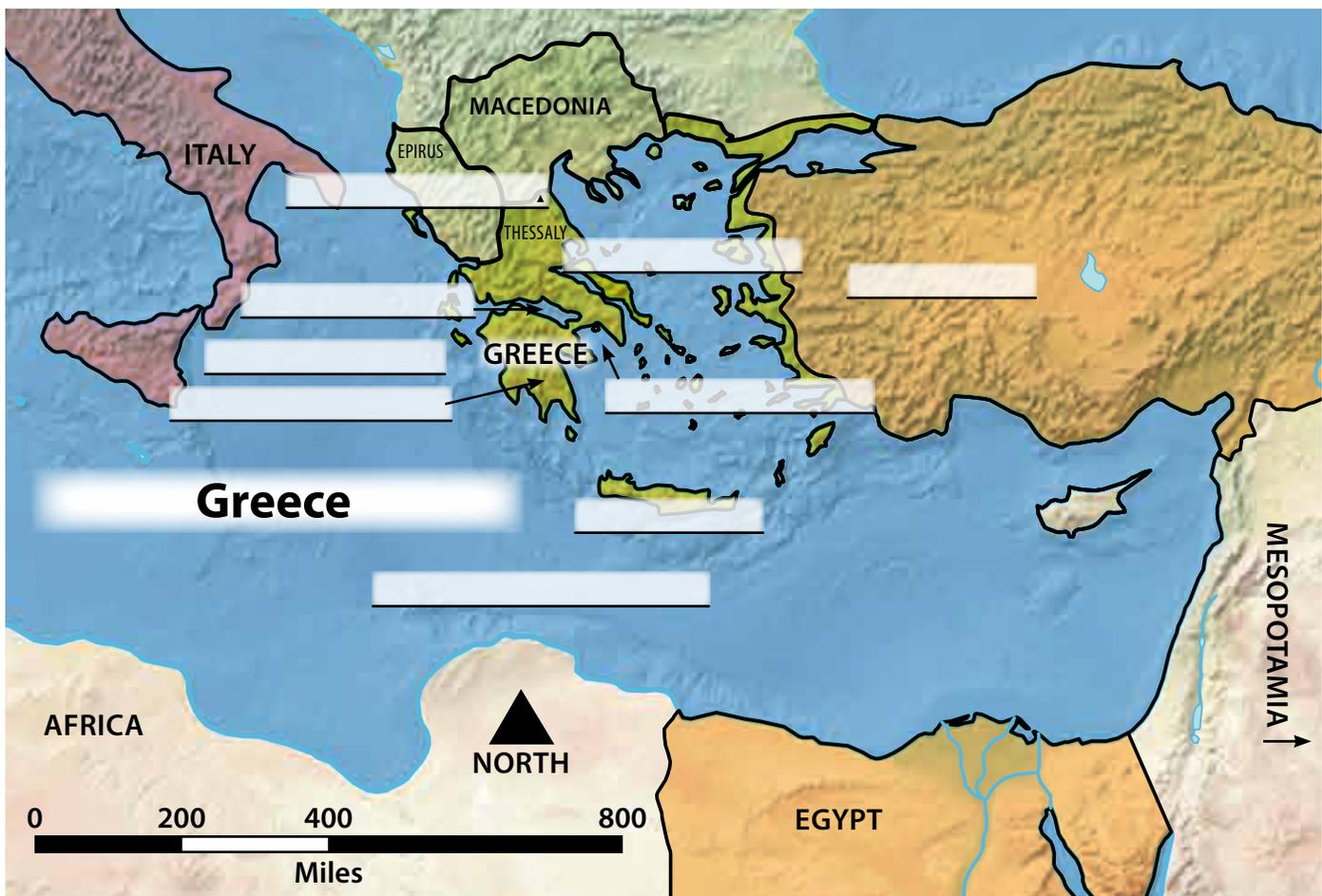
Aegean Sea Mediterranean Sea Tigris River Ionian Sea

Gulf of Corinth Persian Gulf Nile River Red Sea

Find It on the Map

Label the following on the map:

1. Ionian Sea
2. Aegean Sea
3. Mediterranean Sea
4. Isthmus of Corinth
5. Gulf of Corinth
6. The Peloponnese
7. Anatolia
8. Crete
9. Mount Olympus



An Introduction to Classical Greece

Unit I INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANT WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
Dark age	A period in a civilization's history for which historians have little information because there are few or no writings and artifacts. This term is usually used to emphasize the decline of a civilization after a golden age.
Golden age	A period when a kingdom or civilization is prosperous and at peace, and the people are able to focus on impressive achievements, such as building monuments, writing literature, and making new discoveries. It is also a time when the kingdom or civilization is at its greatest power, especially compared to its neighbors.
Migration	The movement of a group of people from one place to another
Dialect	A version of a language that is spoken in one particular area and is noticeably different from other versions of the same language, but still understandable by people who speak the shared language. (For example, the English language is used in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, but there are many different dialects spoken in each of those countries.)

IMPORTANT FIGURES

WORD	DEFINITION
Mycenaean civilization	The warlike people who came from the Greek peninsula and established their own prosperous sea trade around the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas, ca. 1400–1200 BC
Hellenes	The Greeks' name for themselves

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

WORD	DEFINITION
Greek Dark Age	A time in Greek history, ca. 1200–800 BC, during which the skill of writing was lost, no monuments were built, and society was unstable
Hellas	The Greeks' name for the area where they lived

 Don't forget to learn this week's song verse(s)! The lyrics can be found in appendix A.



◀The Greek alphabet painted on a cup

Neo-Assyrian Empire ca. 950–612 BC



◀A statue of Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom and strategy in war

Greek Dark Age
ca. 1200–800 BC
1200 BC

ca. 800 BC
Earliest physical evidence of Greek civilization and language

ca. 750 BC
Greek colonization begins

Greek Archaic Period
ca. 800–500 BC
800 BC

ca. 776 BC
First Olympic Games held



◀The Discobolus ("Discus Thrower")



▼The Parthenon in Athens

Iron Age ca. 1200–300 BC

Vedic Period (India) ca. 1600–500 BC

Zhou dynasty (China) ca. 1050–256 BC

▶The Beginnings of Greek Civilization

When does a civilization officially begin? It can be hard for historians to say for sure. We first peeked in on the Mesopotamian civilization around 3200 BC. How do we know what happened in the land between the rivers so many thousands of years ago? We have been able to learn about the Sumerians because archaeologists have found a great many fragments of clay tablets with cuneiform writing on them. Each tablet provides a clue as to how the Sumerian people lived. When we put all of the clues together, a picture slowly emerges. In a similar way, we have puzzle pieces that tell us about the early history of the Egyptian civilization from about the same time, ca. 3200 BC.

One of the challenges of studying ancient history is that artifacts and written records from ancient civilizations are very scarce. That means we might be lucky enough to learn about the “beginning” of one civilization, but be left wondering about the earliest years of another. So, what about the Greeks? When did the Greek civilization begin? The earliest fragments of information we have about the Greeks come from ca. 800 BC, about halfway through the Iron Age, so that is when historians begin to be fairly certain about events in early Greek history. Although it might be hard to believe, we have less information about the earliest Greeks than we do about the earliest Mesopotamians and Egyptians! However, we do know that traces of what would eventually become the Greek civilization existed long before 800 BC.

In chapter 5 of *Level 1B*, we learned about the mysterious Minoans, who built their civilization on the island of Crete ca. 1800–1400 BC, during the Bronze Age. The Minoans were a seafaring people who became wealthy by trading with other civilizations throughout the Mediterranean region. Unfortunately, because no one has been able to translate the Minoan language (called Linear A), we

522–486 BC: Darius the Great rules | 486–465 BC: Xerxes I rules

► Bust of Pericles

Neo-Babylonian Empire
ca. 612–539 BC

Persian Empire ca. 559–331 BC



▲ A Greek hoplite fighting a Persian warrior

447–432 BC: Parthenon constructed

499–449 BC
Persian Wars

431–404 BC
Peloponnesian War

387–355 BC
"Period of Three Rivals"

Greek Classical Period
ca. 500–323 BC
500 BC

◀ A coin featuring the goddess Athena and her symbol, an owl



490 BC
Battle of Marathon

ca. 495–429 BC
Pericles lives

355 BC
Three-way tie between Sparta, Athens, and Thebes

ca. 480–430 BC
Athenian golden age

Classical Age ca. 500 BC–476 AD



▲ A bronze footbath

Egyptian Late Period ca. 664–332 BC

only know a little about who the Minoans were and why their civilization ended.

Then, around the same time the Assyrians were ruling in Mesopotamia and the Middle Kingdom pharaohs were on the throne in Egypt, a new group of people whom historians call the Mycenaeans settled on the Greek peninsula, ca. 1800 BC. The Mycenaeans are thought to have been one possible reason why the Minoan civilization disappeared, since the warlike Mycenaeans conquered the areas the Minoans had previously ruled!

The Mycenaeans lived in a large half circle area that spread across the Greek peninsula, the island of Crete, and parts of western Anatolia. They established their own prosperous sea trade and built impressive fortresses (military structures or walled towns that house soldiers) high up on cliffs. We know more about the Mycenaeans than we do about the Minoans because historians have been able to translate the Mycenaean writing system, called Linear B, and some of the Mycenaean records. Linguists discovered that Linear B uses a writing system similar to that of the Minoans' Linear A, and that Linear B is a very early form of the Greek language. By using their knowledge of ancient

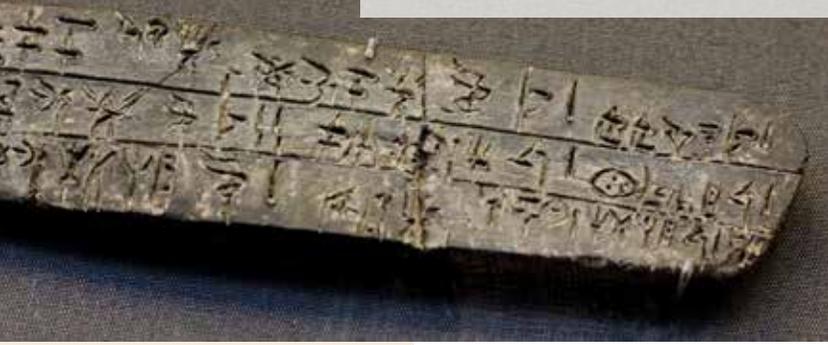


◀ A hand-drawn copy of Linear A inscriptions found carved inside a cup

Minoan & Mycenaean Civilizations



A clay tablet inscribed with Linear B symbols



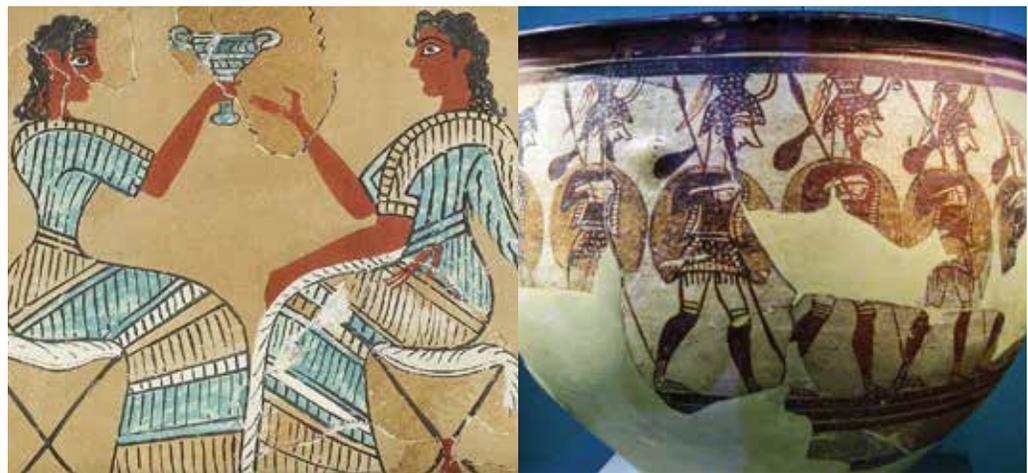
Greek, experts have been able to decipher Linear B!

What else do we know about the Mycenaeans? They were ruled by a wealthy people who drank from gold cups. Each fortress-city had its own king and a mighty army of soldiers who fought with the finest bronze weapons and wore helmets covered with boar's teeth. We also know the Mycenaeans were creative and made fine pottery and beautiful jewelry.

No one knows for sure what the Mycenaeans actually called themselves. Historians named them after Mycenae, the largest of the fortress-cities. Some have also called them "the Achaeans" because this is the term the ancient Greeks use to refer to themselves in some of their oldest works of literature. The Mycenaeans, or Achaeans if you prefer, are thought to be the earliest ancestors of the Greek civilization.



▲ Minoan clay jar painted with an octopus
▼ A golden burial mask excavated at Mycenae ca. 1875



▲ Fresco of two Minoan women

▲ A vase painted with Mycenaean soldiers

The Greek Dark Age

The opposite of a dark age is a golden age: a period when a kingdom or civilization is prosperous and at peace, and the people are able to focus on impressive achievements, such as building monuments, writing literature, and making new discoveries. It is also a time when the kingdom or civilization is at its greatest power, especially compared to its neighbors.

—A.D.

What happened to the Mycenaeans is a puzzle, just as it is with the Minoans. Between 1230 and 1100 BC, the cities of the Mycenaean Civilization collapsed one by one, along with other Bronze Age kingdoms. Scholars have suggested many ideas for why all of this change happened. Possible reasons include a series of volcanoes and earthquakes, times of famine or drought, violent invaders, and disease. In fact, it was probably a combination of at least some of these things! But no one knows for sure. With the prosperous Mycenaean civilization gone, the land of Greece entered what some historians call a **dark age**: a period in a civilization's history for which historians have little information because there are few or no writings and artifacts.

We know very little about the years of the **Greek Dark Age** because it was a time of confusion and conflict. For about

400 years, ca. 1200–800 BC, no monuments, temples, fortresses, or palaces were built. This was partly because there was no central government to organize the people to work on large construction projects. The splendor of Mycenaean craftsmanship disappeared, and instead the people made plain, simple pots and tools.¹ The skill of writing was lost, forgotten, or abandoned in most areas, so we have very few written records from this period. After all, if you are constantly on the move, you do not have much time to be keeping records or teaching others how to use your writing system!



▲ Some of the ruins at Karphi

Society was also unstable as groups of people moved from place to place. For a while, not many people started farms or permanent villages because no one knew when the next group of invaders would come. People had to be ready to pick up and flee to a new place quickly! Other people moved to new sites, such as places high up in the mountains, where the terrain made it harder for enemies to attack but provided little in the way of good farmland.²

 **Dark Ages**

At different times in history, and in various parts of the world, there have been periods that scholars call “dark ages.” Why do you think “dark” is a good adjective to describe the events in Greece between 1200 and 800 BC?

 **The Arrival of New Peoples**

Around the time the Mycenaean fortress-cities and other Bronze Age kingdoms collapsed, many new groups of people were moving into the Mediterranean area. (We studied one of these groups, the Sea Peoples, in chapter 7 of *Level 1B*.) According to the traditional Greek accounts, there were three main “groups of Greeks” who migrated in and around the Greek peninsula and Aegean Sea region: the Ionians, the Dorians, and the Aeolians. (Remember, a migration is the movement of a group of people from one place to another.) In chapter 3, when we learn more about the Greek settlements in Anatolia, we will discuss why people choose to migrate. Can you guess, based on what you already know, what some of these reasons might be?

 **Greek Settlements on the Anatolian Peninsula**

REGION	LOCATION	IMPORTANT CITIES	FACTS
The Anatolian Peninsula			
Aeolia (or Aeolis)	Northwestern tip of the Anatolian coast	Pergamum	Founded by Greeks from Thessaly and Boeotia
Ionia	Central area of the western Anatolian coast	Ephesus, Miletus	Founded by Greeks from Attica and Euboea
Doris	Southwestern Anatolian coast	Halicarnassus	Founded by Greeks from the Peloponnese and Isthmus of Corinth

The first group, the Ionians, migrated south from the territory north of Greece and settled in the area of Attica and on the island of Euboea. Around 1000 BC,

1. Carlos Gómez, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece* (London: Amber Books, Ltd., 2019), 46–47.
 2. Gómez, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece*, 46–47.

when another group known as the Dorians moved into southern Greece, many Ionians left the mainland and crossed the Aegean Sea to settle along the western coastline of Anatolia. They established a number of city-states in Anatolia, but continued to have a close relationship with the other Greeks who lived across the sea on the mainland.

In addition to living in the Peloponnese, the Dorians also settled a small area of the southwestern Anatolian peninsula. And many Greeks from the third group, the Aeolians, migrated from the eastern mainland regions of Thessaly and Boeotia to the northwestern tip of the Anatolian peninsula.³

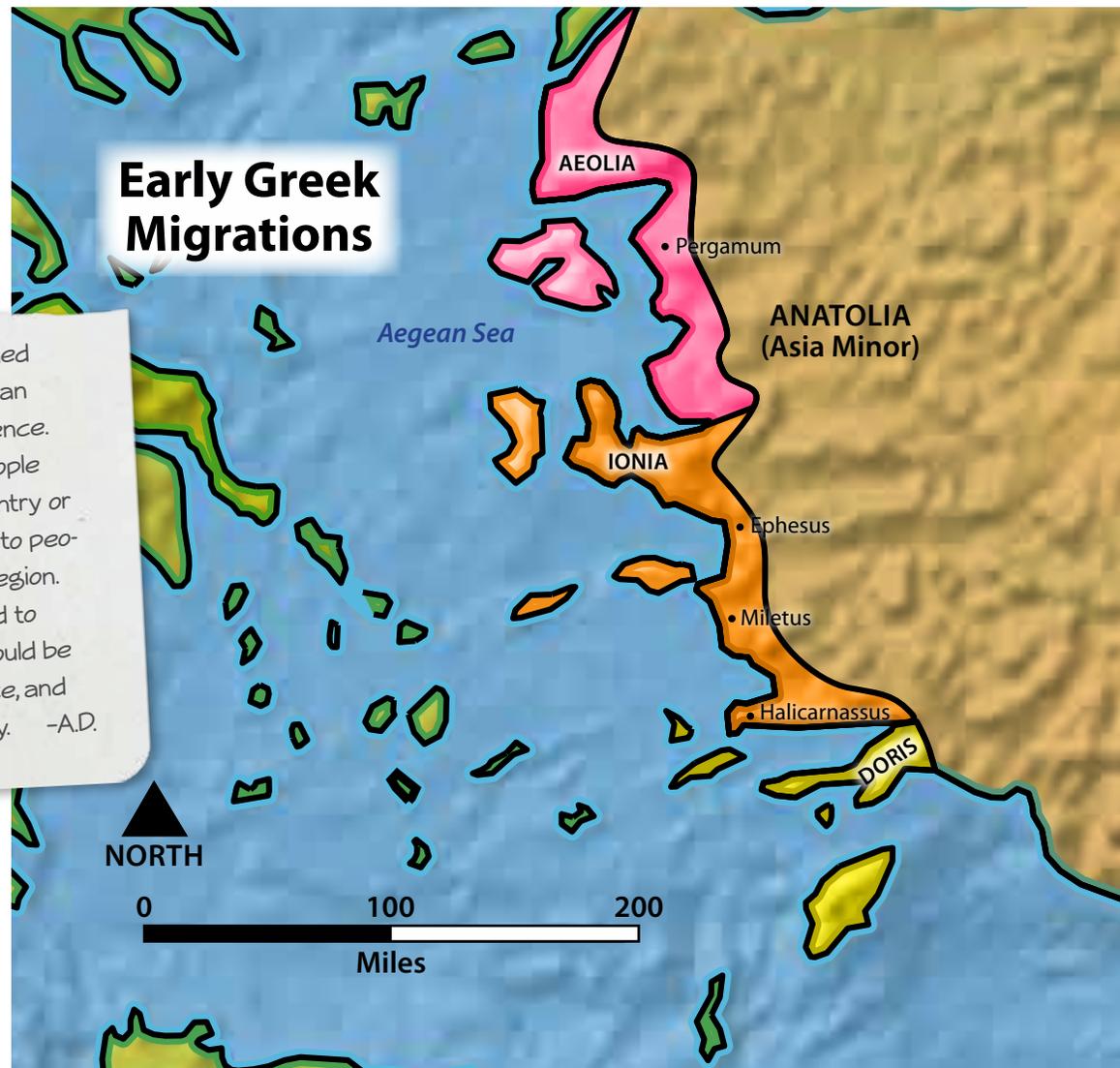
Each of these groups of Greeks spoke a different dialect of the Greek language. A **dialect** is a version of a language that is spoken in one particular area and is noticeably different from other versions of the same language, but still understandable by people who speak the shared language. For example, the English language is used in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, but there are many different dialects of English spoken in each of those countries. We can still understand people from Great Britain or Australia, but they use a slightly different vocabulary, such as the word “boot” for the trunk of a car and the word “torch” for a flashlight. The pronunciation of some words also can sound slightly different, depending on the dialect.



To the Source:

dialect from the Greek *dialektos*, meaning “conversation” (from *dia*, meaning “between, through,” and *legein*, meaning “to speak”)

3. Paul Cartledge, “Who Were the Greeks?” in Cartledge, *Cambridge Illustrated History*, 40, 44.



Early Greek Migrations

People who migrate are usually called “immigrants” or “emigrants.” Here is an easy way to remember the difference. The term “immigrant” refers to people who are migrating *into* a new country or region. The word “emigrant” refers to people who are *exiting* a country or region. For example, if your family decided to move from Greece to Italy, you would be emigrants who are leaving Greece, and immigrants who are entering Italy. —A.D.

The End of the Dark Age

As the Greek Dark Age continued, people gradually became more settled and began to live in permanent small villages once again. The communities were quite poor at first, but they grew as more families joined them. Life centered around the village, since people did not travel far away from their homes. The Greek people called the area where they lived **Hellas** and referred to themselves as **Hellenes**. The name came from a mythical male hero called Hellen.

The Dark Age was a grim time for the Greek people, with nothing especially noteworthy for us to spend time studying. But the Greeks would not stay in the Dark Age forever! Villages and cities were getting larger as the Greek population increased, and trade was expanding once again too.

Another important change that helped to bring the Greeks out of their Dark Age was the development of a new writing system based on the Phoenician alphabet. As you learned in *Level 1B*, around 1050 BC the Phoenicians began to spread an alphabet of twenty-two simple letters that were easy to learn and to write. Each of the twenty-two letters in the Phoenician alphabet represented a unique sound, so the letters could be put together in an unlimited number of combinations in order to record all of the words in a language.

Many Mediterranean peoples, including the Israelites, Arameans, Greeks, and later the Romans, used the Phoenician alphabet by changing it in various ways to match the sounds of their own spoken language. In fact, our English alphabet comes from the ancient Romans' Latin alphabet, which in turn was based on the Phoenician alphabet!⁵ You will learn more about the Greek writing system in chapter 5, but it is important to note that the return of writing helped the Greek civilization move out of the Dark Age.

So, with trade expanding, prosperity growing, and a new writing system in place, the Greeks are at last ready to move into their Archaic Period. This fascinating golden age is when Greek culture as we know it today truly takes shape!

The Legend of Hellen

The Greek hero Hellen was the son of Deucalion and Pyrrha. According to Greek mythology, Hellen's parents were good, virtuous people who were chosen by the gods to be the only survivors of a great flood, similar to the one written about in the book of Genesis in the Christian Old Testament. The couple lived in an ark for nine days and nine nights as the floodwaters raged around them. Finally, the rain stopped, and they left the ark to explore what was left of the world. Zeus took pity on the lonely couple and allowed them to populate the world again. In order to do so, Zeus instructed them to throw stones over their shoulders. When the stones hit the ground, each one turned into a person. The first stone they threw became their firstborn son, whom they named Hellen. Over time, Hellen and his own sons became strong leaders who united many of the Greek city-states. And that is supposedly how the land of the early Greeks got the name Hellas!⁴



► A clay jug inscribed with five Phoenician letters

4. N. S. Gill, "Why Were the Ancient Greeks Called Hellenes?" ThoughtCo, accessed February 8, 2021, <http://capress.link/tch2au03>; and D'Aulaires, *Greek Myths*, 74, 76–77.

5. For a longer discussion of the Phoenician alphabet and phonograms (symbols that each represent unique sounds), see chapter 9 of *Level 1B*.

Greek Dark Age
ca. 1200–800 BC

Greek Archaic Period
ca. 800–500 BC

1200 BC

800 BC

ca. 1050 BC:  Phoenician alphabet begins to spread

ca. 1000 BC: Ionians settle in western Anatolia

ca. 800 BC:  Earliest physical evidence of Greek civilization and language

Iron Age ca. 1200–300 BC

Classical Age ca. 500 BC–476 AD

MEMORY 

 Don't forget to learn this chapter's song verse(s)! The lyrics can be found in appendix A.

Unit I: The Greek Classical Period

**Chapter 1:
The World of the Greek Polis**

IMPORTANT WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
<i>Polis</i> (plural: <i>poleis</i>)	The Greek word for a city-state
<i>Agora</i>	The wide-open, flat space that was in the center of a Greek city and served as both the marketplace and a meeting place
<i>Acropolis</i>	The fortified high point of a Greek city and the place where the most important temples were often built
Pantheon	The group of gods and goddesses that a polytheistic culture believes in and worships
<i>Agoge</i>	The Spartan military training program, in which boys took part from age seven to age twenty

IMPORTANT FIGURES

WORD	DEFINITION
Polytheist	A person who worships more than one god
Patron god	A god chosen by the people to serve as the special protector or guardian of their city

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

WORD	DEFINITION
Greek Archaic Period	The period, ca. 800–500 BC, during which the Greeks started to live in organized city-states, held the first Olympic Games, and began to display their unique culture
Athens	The most famous of the Greek <i>poleis</i> , known for its remarkable architecture, philosophers, writers, and scientists. The city of Athens is the modern-day capital of Greece.
Attica	The southeastern part of the Greek mainland, just across the Isthmus of Corinth, where Athens is located
Sparta	The most powerful of the Peloponnesian <i>poleis</i> , known for its excellent army and strict military lifestyle
Laconia	The region at the eastern part of the Peloponnese “fingers” where Sparta was located

The Formation of City-States

Around 800 BC, the Greek people emerged from their Dark Age. Throughout the Dark Age, the Greeks had lived in small villages scattered all around the peninsula. Over time, the villages became larger cities. The cities in turn kept getting bigger, until each one was usually surrounded by a number of smaller villages and areas of farmland. As the villages grew larger, the communities became more prosperous. Soon, the villagers began looking to the larger city as a market to sell their crops and the other goods they produced, as a place of protection, and as a social and religious center.¹ Thus, the Greeks created a number of formal city-states across the peninsula. The Greeks called each city-state a *polis*.^{*} The plural is *poleis*.

The Greek *poleis* formed in several different ways. Sometimes, a few small, independent villages would join together to make their own *polis*. Other times, a small village (or a couple of villages) might willingly join an already established *polis*, because the villagers knew the strong walls of the larger *polis* would offer them safety and protection if the villagers were threatened by invaders. Still other villages were forced to join the nearby *polis*. And in some of the mountainous areas there were no *poleis* at all because the land was not suitable for settling down. Throughout the Greek peninsula, across the islands of the Aegean Sea, and over on the coast of Anatolia, the Greeks founded more and more *poleis*. In fact, at one time there were about 1,500 such Greek city-states!²

In addition to building their *poleis*, the Greeks traveled to faraway places, constructed new monuments and temples, expanded their networks of trade, and refined the new writing system they had adopted from the Phoenicians. All of these important cultural changes mark the transition of the Greeks from their Dark Age into their **Archaic Period**, ca. 800 BC to 500 BC, when the Greeks started to live in organized city-states, held the first Olympic Games, and began to display their unique culture.



To the Source:

English words that come from *polis*: politics, policy, police, metropolitan, cosmopolitan



▲ A terra-cotta head of a woman, most likely from a sphinx statue

▼ A bronze plate decorated with winged horses



▼ A cosmetic vase adorned with painted animals and geometric shapes



1. Kitto, *Greeks*, 68.

2. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 10.

The World of the Greek *Polis*

Many civilizations in history have built city-states, including the Sumerians and the Phoenicians, but the way the Greeks thought about and organized their *poleis* was different from all the other city-states of the ancient world. Although “city-state” is the best English word we have for the Greek word *polis*, it does not really give us a complete understanding of how the Greeks thought about their *polis*. To the Greeks, the *polis* was not just a city area that governed itself.³ The Greeks’ *polis* was their entire world! Everything in a Greek person’s life centered around the *polis* where he or she lived. Therefore, to understand the Greeks, we need to understand what a *polis* was and how it was organized. Let’s first take a look at the two most famous city-states, and then explore what a typical Greek *polis* looked like.

As we mentioned, the *polis* usually included not just the main city, but also all of the villages and farmlands around it. A Greek *polis* was not always large, but unlike the Sumerian and Phoenician city-states it usually included more territory than just the city and the area immediately surrounding it. For example, **Athens**, the most famous of the Greek *poleis*, included the city of Athens and its outer limits, as well as the neighboring port town of Piraeus and the whole region of **Attica**, the southeastern part of the Greek mainland just across the Isthmus of Corinth. The entire *polis* of Athens was about as large as a good-sized modern county in the United States. Athens became known for its remarkable architecture, philosophers, writers, and scientists. Today, the city of Athens is the modern capital of Greece and one of the oldest cities in the world!

Another famous *polis* was **Sparta**. Located in **Laconia**, the region at the eastern part of the Peloponnese “fingers,” Sparta became known for its excellent

◀ *Akropolis* by Leo von Klenze (oil on canvas, 1846)

▼ A modern view of the Acropolis of Athens



3. Paul Cartledge, “Power and the State,” in Cartledge, *Cambridge Illustrated History*, 139; and Kitto, *Greeks*, 64–65.



To the Source:

agora from the Greek *ageirein*, meaning “to gather, assemble”

army and strict military lifestyle. It was the most powerful of the Peloponnesian *poleis*. Like other Greek city-states, Sparta was made up of a cluster of villages, each of which had grown bigger until they merged and created their own city. However, one of the things that made the *polis* of Sparta unusual is that it never had a wall built around it. Why not? The Greek historian Plutarch described Sparta as a city that was “well fortified [with] a wall of men instead of brick.”⁴ The Spartans did not need a city wall for protection because they could rely on the strength of their well-trained soldiers! And indeed, Sparta was not overtaken by an enemy for many hundreds of years—not until long after the Classical Period.

Each *polis* was unique in the way it was laid out, but there was a typical pattern for most of the Greek city-states. With the exception of Sparta, the *polis* usually had a wall around the main city. In the center of the city was the *agora*,^{*} a wide-open, flat space that served as both the marketplace and a meeting place for the people of the *polis*. The *agora*

was sometimes paved with smooth stones and other times simply an area of pounded-down earth. Around all sides of the *agora* were the important government and administrative buildings of the *polis*.



Ancient Spartan ruins surrounded by olive groves



View of the ancient Agora from the Areopagus, a rock outcropping northwest of the Acropolis

4. Plutarch, “Life of Lycurgus,” in *Parallel Lives*, trans. John Dryden, accessed March 30, 2021, <http://capress.link/tch2a0101>.

The *agora* was especially important because it was where most of daily life happened! The city's people would gather at the *agora* to chat, discuss *polis* business, debate intellectual ideas, hold legal trials, watch live theater performances, enjoy community celebrations, and more.⁵

The city's most important temples were usually found on the *acropolis*,⁶ the fortified heart of a Greek city. The *acropolis* was the highest point of land within the city's walls, which made it the easiest spot in the *polis* to defend during an enemy attack. Often, several temples, shrines, and altars were built on the *acropolis*. The most important and impressive temple was usually the one dedicated to the city-state's patron god. (Remember, a patron god is the god chosen by the people to serve as the special protector or guardian of their city.) A huge statue of the patron god or goddess often stood inside the temple on the *acropolis*.

View of the Parthenon and other ancient buildings atop the Acropolis of Athens



Every *polis* in Greece had its own *agora* and *acropolis*. When you see the two words capitalized, it means we are specifically referring to the famous Acropolis and Agora in Athens. You can still visit their ruins today!

The Greeks were polytheists and worshipped a dozen main gods and goddesses (sometimes more), but each city had its own favorite deity. Can you guess which patron deity Athens is named after? In chapter 7, you will learn much more about the fascinating Greek pantheon (the group of gods and goddesses that a polytheist culture believes in and worships), as well as the elaborate temples the Greeks built for their gods!

For the most part, the Greek *poleis* were able to supply everything the people needed for daily life. Each *polis* had an area of fertile land for farming (although, as we have mentioned, areas of good soil were somewhat limited in Greece). The *polis* also usually had areas with natural deposits of good stone for building and clay to make fine pottery. Olive trees provided a source of food, as well as oil that could be used for cooking, making soap, and burning in lamps. The vineyards produced luscious grapes for making good wine.⁷

The Bible: Paul in Athens

In the first century AD, the apostle Paul visited Athens. While waiting for his friends to meet him there, he spent time every day speaking to people in the local synagogue and in the *agora*, where the Greeks often enjoyed debating intellectual ideas. Sure enough, a few of the Athenian philosophers began to debate with Paul. Acts 17:18 (NIV) tells us: "Some of them asked, 'What is this babbling trying to say?' Others remarked, 'He seems to be advocating foreign gods.' They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection."

To the Source:

acropolis from the Greek *akros*, meaning "highest point," and *polis*

All throughout history, the Greeks have been known as a social people who liked to express their ideas. As the historian Kitto wrote, "Talk was the breath of life to the Greek."⁶ -A.D.

5. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 40–41.

6. Kitto, *Greeks*, 36.

7. Kitto, *Greeks*, 37.

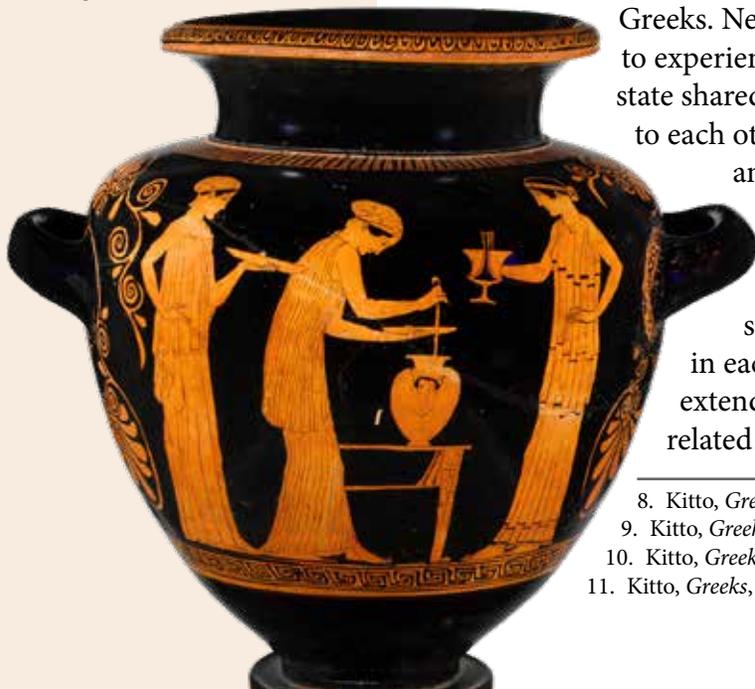


▲ This terra-cotta wine jar shows figures competing in a musical contest.

▼ Ancient Greeks used olive oil as fuel for terra-cotta oil lamps such as this one.



▼ This jar was used for storing liquids. Can you spot the woman ladling wine?



When the crops did not produce a good harvest, or when a particular *polis* needed something that its region did not have, the *poleis* would trade with each other. For example, a *polis* with an extra-large crop of olives might trade with another *polis* for vegetables or grain. Because the Greeks were surrounded on three sides by water, they became good sailors. There was constant back-and-forth business among the *poleis* on both sides of the Aegean Sea and with the islands in between. The Greeks also traded with the neighboring kingdoms and civilizations around them.⁸

Look back at the map on page 38 and picture the Greek peninsula and the island of Crete as making a C shape, with the Aegean Sea and its many islands in the middle of the C. You could say the land of the Greeks is “looking” (or “pointing”) toward the Near East. Can you recall where the other important civilizations at this time in history were located? The seafaring Phoenicians, the kingdoms of Egypt and the Levant, and the great empires of Mesopotamia were all to the east of Greece! It was as though many of the Greek *poleis* were facing the rest of the kingdoms of the ancient world. The Greeks had numerous opportunities to explore and trade far beyond the horizons of the Aegean.⁹

Greek Social and Political Life

The *polis* also was the center of the Greeks’ social life. On important festival days, all sorts of community activities took place, including athletic competitions, theatrical productions, and certainly lots of feasting! The ancient Greeks were very social. They liked being around other people and spent as much time together as possible.

Throughout history, many people have chosen to live in the countryside or on the outskirts of a city, and only go into town when they need to for errands, appointments, or events. The opposite was true of the ancient Greeks! Most Greek farmers chose to live in the *polis* and walk out to their fields each day to tend to the crops. In the evenings, they returned home to the city to enjoy visiting with friends and taking a stroll through the square.¹⁰

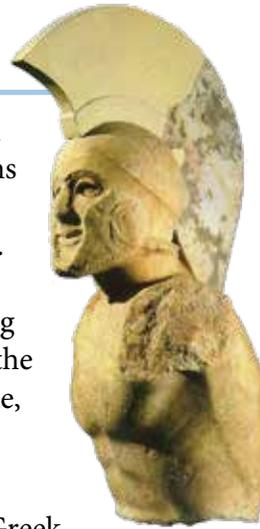
As you can see, community life was important to the ancient Greeks. Nearly everyone wanted to be a part of the *polis* in order to experience the sense of belonging that the people of each city-state shared. The people in each *polis* had a certain connection to each other, almost like a “*polis* personality.” If you lived in ancient Greece, you might say to a traveler, “You must be from Athens,” or “You must be from Corinth!” The personality of one *polis* could be very different from that of another *polis*, but all of the people were still Greek and shared a common culture. The people in each individual *polis* were their own community, like an extended family, even though not everyone in the *polis* was related by blood.¹¹

8. Kitto, *Greeks*, 30–31.

9. Kitto, *Greeks*, 31.

10. Kitto, *Greeks*, 68.

11. Kitto, *Greeks*, 78.



Signs of Community

You could tell where a person lived in ancient Greece because the *polis* personality showed in the way he or she talked or acted. The same is true of people today! You might say to someone, “You must live in Texas,” or “You must be from New York.” What are some ways people show the “personality” of the place where they live?

◀ A marble statue of a Spartan warrior wearing a Corinthian helmet

To the Source:

agoge a Greek word meaning “the act of carrying away,” from the verb *agein*, meaning “to lead”

To the Source:

Today, the adjective *spartan* is often used to describe something, such as a room or a way of life, that is extremely simple, with no comforts or luxuries.

We know quite a bit about the ancient Spartans because of what other Greeks wrote about them. Since the Spartans emphasized all things military, they did not leave behind much in the way of their own written records, literature, or architecture. Just think how much more we would know about Spartan culture and daily life if they had!

—A.D.

The Spartan Way of Life

The *polis* of Sparta is an excellent example of how each Greek city-state developed its own individual personality. The Spartans thought differently about the military, family, and work than other Greeks did. True Spartans were not farmers or craftsmen. Instead, Spartan society was centered around its warriors.¹² Every Spartan man had to be a professional soldier. The farming was mostly left to the Spartan slaves. Everyone in Sparta, even the children, had to have a strong sense of obedience, self-discipline, courage, and endurance—all qualities that make good soldiers.

The Spartan way of life was strict and difficult. From a young age, Spartan children were taught to be strong and brave. The Greek historian Plutarch wrote, “Spartan nurses taught Spartan babies to avoid any fussiness in their diet, not to be afraid of the dark, not to cry or scream, and not to throw any other kind of tantrum.”¹³ All Spartan boys lived at home with their mothers until they were seven years old. Then they were taken away to be educated in the *agoge*, the Spartan military training program, until they reached the age of twenty. Once a boy left to train at the *agoge*, he never lived with his family again. Although girls were not taken from their families, they too were trained to be physically strong. Needless to say, Spartan children did not have what we would consider a normal family life!

Life in the *agoge* was very difficult. Each boy was given one piece of clothing that he wore every day, in summer and winter, no matter how cold, rainy, or hot the weather was. He was being trained to be strong and to endure, whatever the weather conditions. A Spartan boy wore no shoes. Instead, he went barefoot, even when climbing mountains or walking over rough ground. This was to make his feet hard so that he would be able to march anywhere, even if he had no sandals. And a Spartan boy was always a little bit hungry. He was never given enough to fill his stomach, so that he would learn how to do his duties as a soldier even if he was hungry. If a boy got too hungry, he was allowed to steal food . . . as long as he did not get caught! If he were caught, he would be severely punished. But the punishment was not for the act of stealing. It was for not being clever enough to steal without being seen!¹⁴

Every day, the teachers or leaders of the *agoge* would inspect the boys and their living quarters. The boys had to be fit and healthy, and their living quarters neat and tidy. Everything had to be perfect. Every ten days, the students would be tested on what they had learned. There was no room for sloppiness or laziness among Spartan boys!

Once a young man turned twenty, he was allowed to marry, but he still had to live away from his family in a community men’s house. All Spartan men received formal military training until they were thirty years old. At thirty, a young man

12. Kitto, *Greeks*, 91; and Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 127.

13. Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, 16.3, as cited in Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 126.

14. Gómez, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece*, 126.



▲ This cup used for wine features a male athlete with a javelin (a throwing spear).

▼ A tall jug used for storing olive oil



▼ A Spartan Woman Giving a Shield to Her Son by Jean-Jacques-François Le Barbier (oil on panel, 1805)



could finally become a full Spartan citizen and live at home with his wife and children . . . at least, until he was called away to battle.¹⁵

Spartan girls, too, had strict training while growing up. They learned the arts of singing and dancing, but they were also trained in physical activities such as running, wrestling, and throwing the javelin (a long, lightweight spear) and discus (a round disk, about the size of a dinner plate, made of wood or metal). Giving girls such rigorous physical training was very unusual among the ancient Greeks, but the Spartans thought it was important because girls needed to be healthy and strong in order to give birth to babies who would grow up to become great warriors. Spartan women also had more time to do physical exercise than other Greek women because the Spartans had slaves who did the housework and cooking for them.¹⁶

Women in Sparta were given greater freedom and honor than women elsewhere in the Greek world. Because so many Spartan men died in battle or were frequently off on military campaigns, Spartan women were allowed to own property and were more involved with the business of their city-state. In most of the other *poleis*, only the men had such privileges.¹⁷

The Spartans also had great respect for women because they were the mothers of the mighty Spartan warriors. In ancient times, giving birth to a child was dangerous, and many complications could happen. Because the people did not have all of the medical knowledge that we have today, it was common for a woman and her baby to die during the birth process. To a Spartan, if a woman died in childbirth, it was considered as heroic as a soldier dying in battle, and she was given a tombstone with her name inscribed on it. Only warriors who died in battle and women who died in childbirth were given that honor in Sparta.¹⁸

The Spartans were both admired and feared by their fellow Greeks who came from freer, less strict city-states. The Greeks in the other *poleis* highly respected the Spartans for their self-discipline, courage, and military skills. And as you will see in later chapters, the Spartan warriors would play an important role in the larger picture of Greek history!

🗨️ The Spartan poet Tyrtaeus wrote the following verses about the mighty army of his *polis*:

Go forth, children of citizens of Sparta,
the land of brave men.

With left hand

the shield put forward firmly,

The spear raised with your right

Go forth and show your courage

without fearing for your life

Because fear for one's own life

does not become a Spartan.¹⁹

15. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 128.

16. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 129; Marilyn A. Katz, "Women, Children and Men," in Cartledge, *Cambridge Illustrated History*, 128; and Gómez, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece*, 285–286.

17. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 129–130.

18. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 125.

19. Cline, *Greeks: An Illustrated History*, 132.

In order to look especially fearsome to their enemies, the Spartans dyed their cloaks and tunics crimson (a very deep shade of red) to hide any bloodstains. Under their helmets, the Spartans wore their hair long. Letting their hair fly out behind them as they ran into battle was a sure way to intimidate the enemy! Each Spartan carried a sturdy dagger that was sixteen inches long, with a blade three inches wide. The daggers were actually a little shorter than a typical Greek sword. According to the historian Plutarch, an unknown Spartan warrior claimed their blades were shorter so that the Spartans could get closer to the enemy!²⁰

The Greek shields were large enough to serve as stretchers for the dead and wounded. Plutarch also wrote that when a Spartan mother handed her son his shield for the first time, she would tell him,

“Come back with your shield—or on it.” In other words, her warrior-son should either return victorious, or come back dead. But he should never lose his shield in battle, or drop his weapons and flee from the enemy! A Spartan warrior was fierce indeed.²¹

—A.D.

▼ A Spartan warrior with his red cloak



◀ This cup was used for drinking wine and portrays a boy holding a spear and shield for a young soldier preparing for battle.

The Polis as a Form of Government

In addition to being the center of community life for the Greeks, the *polis* was also the center of government for the Greek civilization. Like many of the early Near Eastern city-states, each *polis* governed itself. In other words, the Greek *poleis* were not united under one main government that made the decisions and laws for all of them. The Greeks knew that other civilizations had larger forms of government, and they respected and admired the might and achievements of the mighty barbarian kingdoms and empires around them. Yet the Greeks believed that a man could only be truly free if the government respected his rights as a citizen and allowed him to have a voice in decisions that would affect his *polis*.

Of course, there were requirements for a person to be a citizen, and not everyone was allowed to have a say in how things worked. In the next chapter, you will learn about the requirements for a Greek person to be a citizen, but generally only adult men were considered citizens. Women and slaves could never be full citizens of a *polis*.

Judaism: The Jews and the Spartans

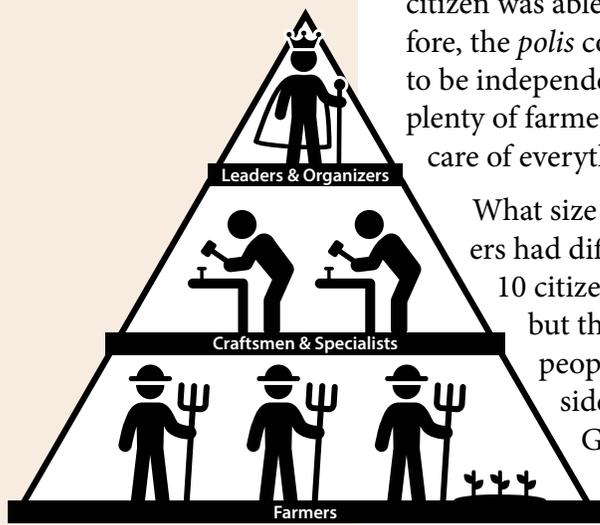
A document called 1 Maccabees records the words that the Spartan king Areus (309–265 BC) wrote to the Jewish high priest Onias I and gives us a clue about a possible connection between the Spartans and the Jews. In his letter, King Areus seeks an alliance with the Jews and refers to writings he found that discuss how the two peoples shared a common ancestor in Abraham. Scholars are not certain if the records are true or just a tale, and there is no evidence that Jews officially settled in Sparta. However, a number of Jews were living in the Peloponnese by the first century AD.²²

20. Peter Chrisp, Joe Fullman, Susan Kennedy, and Philip Parker, *History Year by Year: The History of the World, from the Stone Age to the Digital Age* (New York: DK Publishing, 2013), 46, 48.

21. Cline, *Greeks: An Illustrated History*, 121.

22. Jewish Virtual Library, “Sparta,” accessed April 13, 2021, <http://capress.link/tch2a0104>.

Because every citizen was expected to have a say in the business and government of his *polis*, the Greeks were careful to never let a *polis* grow too large! One Greek philosopher, Aristotle, described the ideal *polis* as one in which every citizen was able to recognize most of the other citizens in his city-state.²³ Therefore, the *polis* could not be too big. On the other hand, the *polis* was supposed to be independent and not rely on any other *polis*. Therefore, the *polis* needed plenty of farmers, craftspeople, merchants, soldiers, and other specialists to take care of everything, which meant the population could not be too small.



What size was “too big” or “too small” for a *polis*? The ancient Greek writers had different opinions! Aristotle said that a *polis* had to be larger than 10 citizens, or else it would be impossible for the city to provide for itself, but that a population of 100,000 citizens would be far too large for the people to govern themselves. Plato, another Greek philosopher, considered the ideal size of a *polis* to be 5,000 citizens, but many of the Greek city-states had smaller populations. Throughout the history of Greece, the sizes of the *poleis* varied. Only Athens and two other *poleis* ever had more than 20,000 citizens.²⁴

Problems with the *Poleis*

So far, we have talked about many positive reasons why the Greeks formed *poleis*. Does this mean the system of Greek city-states was perfect? Of course not! In fact, the idea of the Greek *polis* had a couple of big problems. First, the *poleis* would often fight against each other. Although there was a sense of unity within the individual *polis* communities, there was not the same sense of unity shared among all of the Greek city-states. Greece was not a unified kingdom. Conflicts between *poleis* would start over land, natural resources, and other such reasons. Second, because the *poleis* were not united, it was harder for the Greeks to work together to defend their land when they were attacked by outsiders. In later chapters, you will see examples of how some *poleis*, such as Athens and Sparta, were bitter rivals, and how other times the *poleis* had to find ways to join together to defend their land from a shared enemy, such as the Persian Empire.

Overall, though, the *polis* system worked well for the Greeks. It gave the people a sense of who they were and where they belonged. Each *polis* had its own identity, and the people clung fast to it. And for the most part, the *polis* allowed the citizens to have a voice in their government and to be a part of the decision-making process.

In the next chapter, we will learn what the government of the *polis* typically looked like. How could everyone have a say in what happened in the *polis*? And do we really mean *everyone* had a say in the government? You’ll find out!

To read about the life of slaves in ancient Greece, see the Profiles and Legends PDF in *The Curious Historian’s Archive: Extra Resources for Level 2A*.

? Near Eastern versus Greek City-States

We already mentioned that one of the main differences between the Greek and Near Eastern city-states was the physical size of the Greek *poleis*. What are some other differences you can think of? Are there any ways the Greek *poleis* were similar to the Near Eastern city-states?

23. Kitto, *Greeks*, 65.

24. Kitto, *Greeks*, 65–66.

Talk It Over

Imagine that you and your classmates (or your family) are farmers in ancient Greece. Discuss whether or not you think your small village should join with the larger city and become part of the *polis* that is forming in the area. What would be the advantages of joining the *polis*? What are some of the disadvantages?

Practice the Facts

On the line provided, write the number of the correct vocabulary word beside each definition.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------|--|
| 1. Patron god | _____ | A. The Spartan military training program, in which boys took part from age seven to age twenty |
| 2. Attica | _____ | B. The Greek word for a city-state |
| 3. Greek Archaic Period | _____ | C. The group of gods and goddesses that a polytheistic culture believes in and worships |
| 4. Sparta | _____ | D. The southeastern part of the Greek mainland, just across the Isthmus of Corinth, where Athens is located |
| 5. <i>Agoge</i> | _____ | E. A god chosen by the people to serve as the special protector or guardian of their city |
| 6. Athens | _____ | F. The most powerful of the Peloponnesian <i>poleis</i> , known for its excellent army and strict military lifestyle |
| 7. <i>Acropolis</i> | _____ | G. The period, ca. 800–500 BC, during which the Greeks started to live in organized city-states, held the first Olympic Games, and began to display their unique culture |
| 8. Laconia | _____ | H. The wide-open, flat space that was in the center of a Greek city and served as both the marketplace and a meeting place |
| 9. <i>Polis</i> | _____ | I. The region at the eastern part of the Peloponnese “fingers” where Sparta was located |
| 10. <i>Agora</i> | _____ | J. The most famous of the Greek <i>poleis</i> , known for its remarkable architecture, philosophers, writers, and scientists |
| 11. Pantheon | _____ | K. The fortified high point of a Greek city and the place where the most important temples were often built |

Time Check

How much can you remember about what was happening in the Near East and Far East during the Greek Dark Age and Archaic Period? Circle the correct answer for each of the following questions. (*Hint:* If you need help completing this exercise, you can use the time lines in appendix E and the kingdom charts in appendix F.)

- The Greek Dark Age (ca. 1200–800 BC) overlaps with which two periods in ancient Egyptian history?
 Old Kingdom and First Intermediate New Kingdom and Third Intermediate
- Which dynasty ruled China ca. 1050–256 BC, during the Greek Dark Age and the Greek Archaic Period?
 Zhou dynasty Xia dynasty
- Which two Near Eastern empires ruled Mesopotamia during the Greek Archaic Period (ca. 800–500 BC)?
 Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires Egyptian and Persian Empires
- Which period in ancient India, ca. 1600–500 BC, overlaps with the Greek Archaic Period?
 Harappan Period Vedic Period

Write It Down

Based on what you learned in the book introductions and in this chapter, write three sentences describing the Greek “personality.” (Be sure to use complete sentences!)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Draw a Picture

On a separate sheet of paper, draw a picture of what you think a Greek *agora* or *acropolis* might have looked like. Look back at some of the pictures in this chapter if you need inspiration!

What If...

Complete each of the following sentences by filling in the blank with the correct vocabulary word. Use the words in the word bank to help you. (Hint: Some of the vocabulary words are from the book introductions and the unit I introduction.)

Hellene • Sparta • *polis* • dialect • barbarian • Archaic Period • Athens

1. If I were a Greek who lived in an independent city-state that ruled itself, I would be a member of a _____.
2. If I were a non-Greek living in the Near East, the Greeks would call me a _____.
3. If I attended the *agoge* for most of my life and was trained to be a mighty warrior, I would be a citizen of _____.
4. If I lived during the time when the Greeks started to form organized city-states, held the first Olympic Games, and began to display their unique culture, I would be living in the Greek _____.
5. If I spoke the Greek language and was born in the land of Greece, I would call myself a _____.
6. If I lived in the most famous Greek *polis*, my home would be in _____.
7. If I spoke a version of Greek that is noticeably different from other versions of Greek but still understandable by other Greek speakers, I would be speaking a _____.

True or False

If the sentence is true, circle *T*. If the sentence is false, circle *F*.

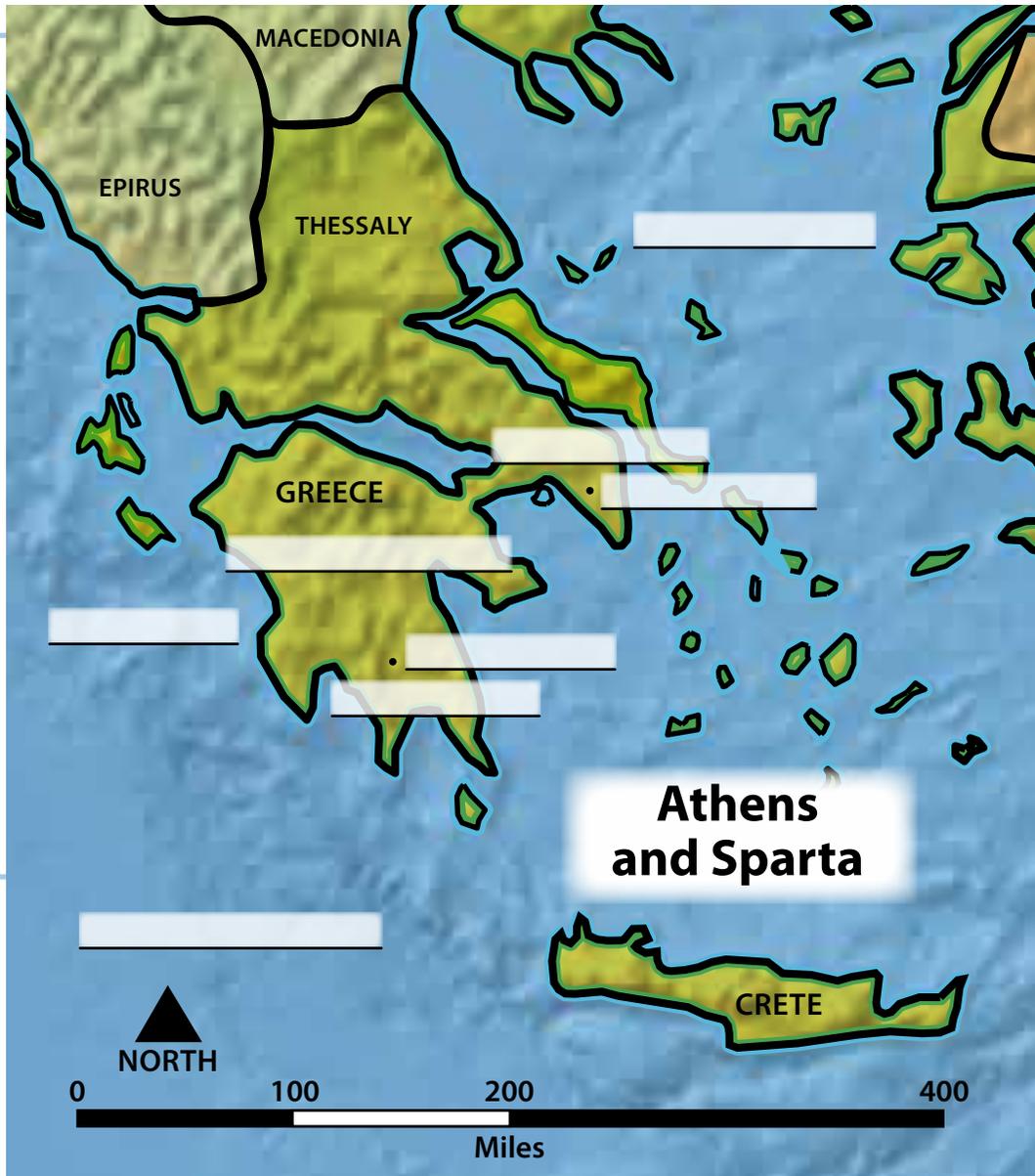
1. The Spartans had a strong sense of family, and the family members lived together until the children were grown up and married. T F
2. Both young boys and girls in Sparta had rigorous physical training. T F
3. A Spartan woman who died in childbirth was considered a hero and given the honor of a tombstone carved with her name. T F

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 4. A Spartan man was not allowed to get married until he was thirty years old. | T | F |
| 5. The Spartan way of life emphasized obedience, strength, and endurance. | T | F |
| 6. The Spartan polis had high, thick walls all around the city. | T | F |

Find It on the Map

Label the following on the map. In the unit I chapters, we will give you a few hints for the locations that might be harder to remember, but in the unit review you will have to label them *without* the hints!

1. Ionian Sea
2. Aegean Sea
3. Mediterranean Sea
4. The Peloponnese
5. Athens
6. Attica (*the territory where Athens was located*)
7. Sparta
8. Laconia (*the territory where Sparta was located*)



Think About It

The Spartan *agoge* was a very strict military training program that emphasized physical fitness. Would you like to go to such a school? Why or why not? Write down some of your thoughts. (Be sure to use complete sentences!)

Make It Yourself



In this chapter, you learned about how the Greek city-states were built. Each *polis* had a wall around the city and an *agora* in the center where merchants would sell their goods and the people would gather to talk or debate, watch theater performances, and hold trials. The temples were built on the *acropolis*, the highest point in the city. Can you picture all of this in your mind? Now, try constructing your own 3D model of a *polis*!

1. Begin by using modeling clay to form the topography (land structure) of your *polis*. Consider whether your *polis* will have farmland (represented by green clay) and access to the sea (represented by blue clay). Remember, you will need a high hill for the *acropolis*, and a flat space near the center for the *agora* (both represented by brown clay).
2. Using twigs or Popsicle sticks, construct a wall around the entire *polis*. Remember, the wall would need to be high enough to offer protection for the people living inside the city!
3. Near the center of the hill (but not at the highest point), use smooth stones to construct the *agora*.
4. At the highest point in your *polis*, use tan or white clay to shape at least one temple to stand on the *acropolis*. Remember to make your temple as elaborate as possible since it is dedicated to the patron god of the *polis*!
5. Consider adding other touches to your *polis*, such as roads, smaller buildings, or plants and trees.