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Knowledge organiser

Gods and Mortals

Ancient Greece

The ancient Greeks lived about 4000 years ago. Ancient Greece was made up of many city-states. These city-states were protected by a powerful city. Each city-state had its own laws, customs and rulers. Many city-states were at war with each other.



Map of ancient Greece showing city-states of Athens and Sparta

Greek soldiers

War was a big part of life in ancient Greece. The armies were mainly made up of foot soldiers, known as hoplites. They fought with a long spear and used a large shield for protection. In battle, hoplites fought together as a team. They would line up and interlock their shields to create a shield wall, then point their spears over the top. This formation, known as a phalanx, was very effective.



Life in ancient Greece

Ancient Greece was a warm, dry country. Most people worked as farmers, fishermen or traders.

Homes
Ancient Greek homes were usually built around a central courtyard. The walls were built from wood and mud bricks, with small windows. Rich people decorated their walls with paintings and colourful tiles. There were no bathrooms so people washed in public baths or streams. Mattresses were stuffed with wool, feathers or dry grass.

Family
Men made all the important decisions in ancient Greece. Women, in most city-states, were expected to look after the home and were taught home-making skills, such as cooking and weaving. However, women and girls in the city-state of Sparta had more freedom and were taught to read and write. Spartan children were sent away from home when they were six or seven years old. Boys were trained as soldiers and girls went to school.

Olympic Games
The ancient Greeks loved sport and started holding the Olympic Games. Wars were stopped so people could travel from all over Greece to take part in and watch the Games. They took part in running, long jump, shot put, javelin, boxing and horse riding events, winning a wreath of leaves. It was also a religious occasion, as the event was dedicated to a god called Zeus.

Culture
The ancient Greeks were great craftspeople. They made pottery vases that were decorated with scenes from daily life or geometric designs. They were fantastic builders and built temples to their gods, as well as statues and huge, open-air theatres. Ancient Greeks enjoyed music, dancing and feasting.



Gods and goddesses

The ancient Greeks believed the gods and goddesses watched over them from the top of Mount Olympus and that each god or goddess had power over a different part of the world.

Zeus	king of the gods and ruler of the skies
Poseidon	god of the sea
Hades	god of the underworld
Demeter	goddess of the Earth and harvest



Zeus Poseidon Hades Demeter

Greek myths

Greek myths are stories about the gods and magical creatures of ancient Greece. They taught people about values such as bravery, intelligence, right and wrong.

Icarus and Daedalus
Daedalus and his son, Icarus, built a labyrinth for King Minos of Crete. They were locked up but escaped by making wings from feathers and wax.

Theseus and the Minotaur
Theseus from Athens killed the minotaur belonging to King Minos and escaped from Crete with Princess Ariadne.

Pandora's box
Zeus gave a box to Pandora and told her never to open it. She opened the box and terrible things, such as hate and sickness, came into the world. The last thing to come out of the box was hope.

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Timeline of ancient Greece

c1600 BC	Greek civilisation begins. City-states are formed.
c1200 BC	The Trojan War is fought between ancient Greek city-states and the city of Troy.
c850–700 BC	The Greek alphabet is developed.
776 BC	The first Olympic Games are held in honour of the god Zeus.
c750–700 BC	Homer, a great poet, writes two long poems about the Trojan War called *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.
c600 BC	Greek coins are introduced.
c508 BC	Democracy is introduced in Athens, where citizens vote for people to be their representatives.
490 BC	The Greeks win the Battle of Marathon against the Persians.
c461 BC	The first Peloponnesian War is fought between Athens and Sparta.
c449–431 BC	Pericles, ruler of Athens, builds a temple called the Parthenon and supports playwrights, sculptors and thinkers.
431 BC	The second Peloponnesian War begins between Athens and Sparta.
336 BC	Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia, invades and conquers Persia and Egypt.
323 BC	Ancient Greek civilisation begins to decline after the death of Alexander the Great.
146 BC	The Romans conquer ancient Greece and Greece becomes part of the Roman Empire.

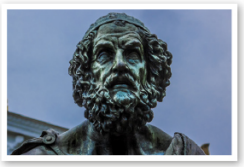
Battle of Marathon

10,000 Athenian soldiers fought 20,000 Persian soldiers at Marathon, 26 miles north of Athens. Despite there being many more Persians, the Athenians won. The Athenians sent a man called Pheidippides, a fast runner, to run the 26 miles to Athens to tell them of the victory in Marathon. Pheidippides ran to Athens, passed on the message about the victory and then died of exhaustion.

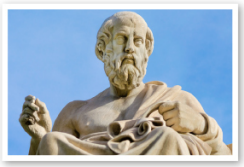
Trojan War

The Trojan War was between the city of Troy and the Greek city-states. It had been going on for a long time when Odysseus, a Greek soldier, had a plan to get inside the walls of Troy. The Greeks built a wooden horse and hid 30 soldiers inside. They left it outside the city gates and retreated. The Trojans took the horse into the city. That night, the Greek soldiers crept out of the wooden horse, opened the gates and let the Greek army into the city. The Greeks fought the Trojans and won the war.

Famous ancient Greeks



Homer
c800–701 BC
author of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*



Plato
c428–347 BC
philosopher, writer, mathematician and teacher



Aristotle
c384–322 BC
philosopher, scientist and teacher



Archimedes
c287–212 BC
mathematician, engineer, inventor and philosopher

Glossary

city-state	An ancient city and the surrounding area with an independent government, such as Athens and Sparta, in ancient Greece.
conquer	To take control of another country and its people, usually after a war or battle.
dedicate	To do something in honour of a person or a thing.
democracy	A system where the government is elected by the people.
god	A worshipped immortal being or spirit who is believed to have supreme power over some part of the universe or life.
hoplite	A heavily armoured, non-professional foot soldier of ancient Greece.
labyrinth	A confusing set of complicated, connecting passages and blind alleys that make it easy to get lost.
minotaur	In Greek mythology, a monster that is half man and half bull, who lived in the centre of a labyrinth.
Mount Olympus	A mountain peak in Greece where the ancient Greeks believed the gods lived.
myth	An ancient story that explains the early history of a group of people.
Peloponnesian War	An ancient Greek war between the city-states of Athens and Sparta.
philosopher	A person who studies or writes about human life.

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