

Ancient Greeks

About 2,500 years ago, Greece was one of the most important places in the ancient world. The Greeks were great thinkers, warriors, writers, actors, athletes, artists, architects and politicians. They lived in mainland Greece and the Greek islands, but also in colonies scattered around the Mediterranean Sea. They sailed the sea to trade and find new lands. The Greeks took their ideas with them and they started a way of life that's similar to the one we have today.

Map of Ancient Greece

Greece's position next to the sea (there are over 1400 islands) meant Ancient Greeks were seafaring people. Trade between the islands led to the creation of 'city-states' (polis). Each city-state was ruled by a powerful city, led by a ruler or (later) government. Greece is a warm country, but winds from the Mediterranean, and rains from the north, kept temperatures livable and created fertile farming conditions.



Ancient Greece has been widely studied, mainly through its art. It is considered the most influential art ever made.



Key Vocabulary

Archaeologist	Someone who studies things from the past.
Archaeology	The study of things that people made, used and left behind.
Landmarks	an object or feature of a landscape or town that is easily seen and recog-
Trade	the action of buying and selling goods and services.
Democracy	A system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members
Mountain	A mountain is a landform that rises high above the surrounding terrain in a limited area
Mythical	Something that only exists in myths and is not believed to be real.
Olympics	The greatest of the games or festivals of Ancient Greece, held every four years in honour of Zeus.
Tunic	A piece of clothing with no sleeves, reaching from the shoulders to the knees.

776 BC – The first Olympic games take place in honour of Greece

600 BC – The first Greek coins are used to buy and sell goods

570 BC – Pythagoras is born. He made major breakthroughs in science and maths.

508 BC– Democracy begins in Athens, giving greater power to the people.

432 BC – The Parthenon, the most famous building in Athens, is completed

400–300 BC – Socrates, Plato and Aristotle live.

336 BC– Alexander the Great is King .

146 BC – Rome conquers Greece, making it a part of the Roman Empire.

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Who were the Ancient Greek Gods and Goddesses?

It was believed that the family of Greek gods lived in a cloud palace above Mount Olympus (the highest mountain in Greece). These gods were thought to have special powers, and each had control over a different aspect of life. Many of them also appear in the tales of Greek mythology.

How did Ancient Greek influence the wider world?

Even after 3,000 years, we're still using ancient Greek ideas in maths, science and art. Our alphabet is based on the Greek one. Check a dictionary and you'll find hundreds of words that come from the Greek language. Today, we also live in a democracy. Unlike in ancient Greece, women get to vote, too. Juries of 12 people decide if someone is guilty of a crime - we don't use ostracons anymore!

What are the human and physical features of Greece?

Ancient Greece consisted of a large mountainous peninsula and islands in the Aegean Sea. Its location encouraged trade. Mountains separated Greek cities. Greece's mountainous terrain separated the ancient Greek cities. Greece has the longest coast-line in Europe and is the southernmost country in Europe. The mainland has rugged mountains, forests, and lakes, but the country is well known for the thousands of islands dotting the blue Aegean Sea to the east, the Mediterranean Sea to the south, and the Ionian Sea to the west.



Alexander the Great, a Macedonian king, conquered the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt, the Middle East, and parts of Asia in a remarkably short period of time. His empire ushered in significant cultural changes in the lands he conquered and changed the course of the region's history.

The City of Troy

Troy was a city in the Mediterranean, which waged a ten year war against Ancient Greece. The war was described in the epic poem *The Iliad*, by the poet Homer. The war is partly mythical, with the gods supposed to have taken sides, but it may have been based on a real war in the 12th century BCE. The war was finally ended by the famous trick, The Trojan Horse. A prince called Aeneas escaped when the city was being burnt and went on to become the founder of the Roman State.

The Trojan Horse was a sneaky wooden contraption that allowed the Greeks to



Greece is part of Europe, which is a continent. There are 44 countries in Eu-