

History
UNFOLDING

ANCIENT GREECE



MindSparks
CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY

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Introduction

The Triumph of the Ancient Greeks

Long before ancient Greek civilization began to develop, mighty empires had arisen in many other parts of the world. The Greeks would learn much from these other civilizations. Yet they always seemed to create something new out of what they learned. Great epics, written history, drama, science, mathematics, medicine—all these and more were a part of the great burst of creativity that took place in ancient Greece.

In other words, ancient Greece is not famous for its great wealth or power. It is famous, above all, for its ideas, its art, and its ideals of beauty and human striving. Many modern fields of knowledge really began with the Greeks. And what those Greeks accomplished still astonishes people all over the world today.

It is impossible to do justice in just 12 illustrations to all that the ancient Greeks achieved. But the 12 we have chosen focus on many of the central themes in the history of this great civilization. The illustrations are presented in four lessons. Each lesson uses three of the illustrations to explore one broad topic in the overall story. Briefly, the four lessons are as follows:

The Aegean Setting

The illustrations in this lesson focus on the geographical setting and the economic basis for the rise of ancient Greece. Unlike the great river-valley civilizations, the Greeks were forced to look outward across the sea. As a result, a spirit of adventure seemed to motivate them from the beginning.

Myths of a Heroic Age

The ancient Greeks told many dramatic stories about their gods. In this lesson, the focus is on the human qualities of those gods—and the god-like abilities and aspirations of various human heroes. In these myths, the Greeks expressed a sense that what is noblest about human beings is their capacity to strive and achieve at the highest level.

The Greek City-State

The key political units of ancient Greece, its city-states, were small. And ancient Greece as a whole rarely remained united for very long. Because of this variety, constant political experimentation could occur—including experimentation with a form of government called democracy.

Greece's Cultural Triumph

The best in body and in spirit—this could be the motto of ancient Greece. Whether in the physical contests of the Olympic games, or in the give-and-take of Platonic dialogue, the ancient Greeks believed in striving after the highest ideals. It is in the realm of these ideals—in art, ethics, science and ideas—that the real glory of Greece can be found.

Using Photos, Cartoons, and Other Visuals to Teach History

Many textbooks are full of colorful visuals. However, all too often these visuals function primarily as window dressing. They make the text more entertaining, or at least more palatable. Only occasionally do the visuals in textbooks do more than offer simple pictorial reinforcement of ideas already presented in the text. In many cases, they pander to the visual orientation of the young while doing little to help young people master the challenges of the visual media that dominate their lives.

By way of contrast, our approach to using visual materials emphasizes their unique strengths as historical documents. The lessons in this booklet focus students on the visual symbols and metaphors in editorial cartoons, the dramatic qualities of certain photographs, the potential of many images to make abstract ideas more specific and concrete, the implicit biases and stereotypes in certain images, their emotional power, and their ability to invoke the spirit of a time and place. In the process, we make every effort to strengthen students' visual literacy skills in general, as well as their ability to think critically and engage in spirited but disciplined discussions.

How to Use This Booklet

The booklet is divided into four lessons, with three illustrations per lesson. Each lesson consists of the following:

A BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET This page provides brief summaries explaining the three illustrations on which the lesson is based and their relevance to the lesson's objectives.

DIGITAL IMAGES The booklet's PDF allows you to project the images for use in your class discussions.

DISCUSSION-ACTIVITY SHEETS

Each sheet displays one illustration. It includes a sequence of questions to help you plan an all-class discussion while using the projected images. The questions take students step by step through an analysis of the illustration. If you wish, you may reproduce these pages and hand them out. In addition to the discussion questions on the illustration itself, one or two follow-up activities are suggested. Some of these can be made into individual assignments. Others will work best as small-group or all-class activities.

OBJECTIVE

1. Students will better understand how Greece's location, climate, and natural features helped to shape the kind of civilization that developed there in ancient times.
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The Aegean Setting

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

The first great civilizations grew up in fertile valleys along rivers. Egypt emerged on the Nile, early Mesopotamian cultures along the Tigris and Euphrates, the Indus civilization on the river of that name, and ancient China along the Huang-He—rivers provided the well-watered fertile soil that such civilizations needed. As this photo makes clear, Greece was different. Mountains divide mainland Greece into many separate regions. Its rocky hills and narrow valleys all seem to lead to the coast. To trade, Greeks were forced to look outward to the sea, to the islands of the Aegean Sea, and to other cultures along the coasts of the Mediterranean. This meant that ancient Greece would differ in many ways from other early civilizations.

Illustration 2

Unlike ancient Egypt or Mesopotamia, ancient Greece did not have enough fertile land to support large numbers of people. Still, most of its citizens had to make their living by farming. This illustration shows some Greek men using sticks to gather olives. Most olives were crushed to produce oil, which was used in cooking, lighting, and in many other ways. Grains such as wheat and barley were used to make the bread that was the main food in the Greek diet. Grapes were used to make wine. Many other kinds of fruits and vegetables were grown, and farm animals such as pigs, goats, sheep, cows, and horses were raised. As this illustration suggests, farming methods and tools were simple. Oxen and mules, along with human muscle, were practically the only sources of power.

Illustration 3

Greece's rocky lands made farming difficult. Yet after about 2000 BCE, the growth of an amazing civilization began in this region. From the start, trading and seafaring skills were key to this rising civilization's wealth and power. This illustration is a later artist's recreation of Piraeus, the port for the city-state of Athens. The Greeks traded pottery, wine, woolen cloth, tools, weapons, and other goods for timber, metals, and other resources. As Greece's population grew, many overcrowded Greek cities also set up colonies all over the Mediterranean region and far up into the Black Sea. These further helped the Greeks develop their great trading empire.

Lesson 1—The Aegean Setting

Illustration 1



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Discussing the Illustration

1. This photo shows Lindos and an ancient fortified area on a hilltop. Lindos is on the island of Rhodes at the southeastern edge of a sea that is a part of the Mediterranean Sea. Can you name it?
2. Many Greek cities had fortified hilltops like this one. They often contained temples to the city's god or goddess and other religious or defensive buildings. What name is used for these fortified areas?
3. Most great civilizations before Greece grew up in the valleys of great rivers. Why do you think this was so? Much of ancient Greece looks like Lindos. Given that fact, how did the geography of ancient Greece differ from that of the ancient river-valley civilizations?
4. The rocky hills, the mild climate, and the sea all affected the way of life of the ancient Greeks. What effects might these things have had on the Greeks? How might they have affected farming, trade, warfare, government, and other aspects of life?

Follow-up Activities

1. Rocky hills, a ragged coastline, and many small islands helped cause ancient Greece to be divided up into many small city-states and islands. Create a detailed map of one of these islands, or of one of the main city-states on the mainland such as Athens, Thebes, Corinth, or Sparta. Show nearby mountains and hills, rivers, fertile lands, lands used for olive trees and grape vines, pasture lands, ports, etc. Show your map in class and use it to talk about how geography may have affected life in that city-state.
2. **Small-group activity:** Many ancient Greek cities had an acropolis like the one in the above photo. The most famous acropolis was the one in Athens. Learn more about this acropolis. Ask your teacher or librarian to help you find a drawing or diagram showing all the buildings that were once on the Acropolis (or make such a diagram on your own). Use the drawing or diagram to explain to the class the structures on the Acropolis in Athens and what they were for.

Illustration 2



The Granger Collection, New York

Discussing the Illustration

1. This illustration shows a group of farm workers. What do they appear to be doing?
2. Olives were actually very important in several ways to ancient Greece. What were some of these ways?
3. Greece's land and climate made olives and grapes good crops to grow there. Can you explain why?
4. Raising olives and grapes was common in ancient Greece. But it was easier for a wealthier farmer to grow these crops than for a poorer farmer. From what you know about these crops, and from this picture, can you guess why?
5. Ancient Greece lacked enough good soil to grow all the wheat and other food crops its people needed. As a result, it bought more of those goods all over the Mediterranean in exchange for products made from its olives and grapes. Why would olives and grapes have been good crops to raise in order to trade with others?

Follow-up Activities

1. There were horses and cows in ancient Greece. But the main animal power used by farmers there was from oxen and donkeys, not horses. And the main meat and milk raised came from sheep and goats, not cows. Find out why. Also find out what problems this might have caused and what benefits it might have given the ancient Greeks. Your teacher or librarian can help you find materials on ancient Greek animal husbandry and the advantages and disadvantages of various farm animals.
2. **Small-group activity:** Create a mural of olive culture in the style of the drawing shown above. Ask your teacher or librarian to help you find materials on ancient Greek agriculture. Learn how olives were grown and harvested, as well as how they were made into oil, soap, lighting fuel, etc. Draw scenes showing the way olives were planted, raised, harvested, and made into key items for sale. Make at least five scenes in all for your mural. The above drawing can be one of them.

Lesson 1 — The Aegean Setting

Illustration 3



Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

Discussing the Illustration

1. Because of Greece's rocky soil, most ancient Greek cities had to trade with others in order to get the food and other goods they needed. This is Piraeus, which served as the port for ancient Greece's most famous city-state. Can you name that city-state? What seems to make this port ideal for trade?
2. Ships leaving ports like this usually had to stay close to land and sail along the coast from port to port. Why do you think ancient Greek sailors did not want to sail long distances on the open seas in the ships they had then?
3. Ancient Greece was able to develop into a great trading civilization, mainly because of its location. How would its location have helped it to become a great trading civilization, even with ships that had to hug the coast or hop from island to island?
4. As a trading civilization, ancient Greece was able to learn a great deal from the other great civilizations around it. Can you name some of those civilizations?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** The Greeks traded pottery, wine, woolen cloth, tools, weapons, and other goods for timber, copper, iron, and other resources. Pretend you are a Greek merchant who owns a ship docked in Piraeus. You need to plan a route for your ship's next voyage. Create a map of the Mediterranean region. Along the side, list the kinds and amounts of the goods you will take with you. Then show at least four ports at which you plan to trade, and name the goods you plan to buy at each port and bring back to Greece. (You will have to find out how much such a ship could hold, what kinds of containers it used, the locations of certain goods the Greeks needed, etc. Ask your teacher or librarian for help.)
2. Ancient Greek cities often set up colonies all over the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Make a map showing some of the main colonies they set up. If possible show which cities of ancient Greece set up each colony. Also show the key products the Greeks got from their various colonies.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will appreciate the emotional range and power of many Greek myths.
2. Students will understand that in Greek mythology, humans and gods shared many of the same strengths and weaknesses.

Myths of a Heroic Age

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

To understand ancient Greece, you need to understand its mythology. Greek religion was unusual in that its gods were so human in many ways. They argued, fell in love, grew jealous, and fought with one another and with humans. This 19th-century engraving shows Phaeton being struck down by Zeus, who was supreme among the gods. Phaeton was unsure whether the sun god Helios was truly his father. To prove it, he begged Helios to let him drive the chariot that pulls the sun across the sky. Helios reluctantly gave in. But Phaeton soon lost control of the chariot, swinging the sun too close to earth and setting huge regions on fire. To save the world, Zeus was forced to strike Phaeton down. The emotion and the violence in the story is typical of myths about Greek gods. So, too, is its moral—that ambition and pride are dangerous, but also noble.

Illustration 2

While Greek gods could be all too human, human heroes in Greek myths were often godlike. One of the most important human heroes of Greek mythology was a man named Odysseus. He is the main character in one of the first great classics of Greek literature—the *Odyssey*. Versions of this story had been told orally many times before a man we know as Homer finally wrote it down. Homer's *Odyssey* tells of the wanderings and adventures of Odysseus after the Trojan War. Here he is shown with his crew escaping Polyphemus, a one-eyed giant called a cyclops. In most accounts Odysseus is portrayed as brave, loyal, and wise. But some picture him as cunning and dishonest. In either case, he sums up a Greek ideal: the bold, independent individual who is a man of courage, resourcefulness, and endurance.

Illustration 3

In time, Greek storytelling took increasingly complex forms. One of the most admired still is ancient Greek drama. Greek theater began in ritual performances to honor Dionysus, the god of wine and religious ecstasy. Starting in Athens, three forms of drama developed: tragedy, comedy, and satyr plays (humorous stories based on Greek mythology). Plays were performed at annual festivals in huge outdoor theaters. Actors wore large masks to express their emotions. The four theater masks shown here were carved in relief on a theater wall.

Lesson 2—Myths of a Heroic Age

Illustration 1



The Granger Collection, New York

Discussing the Illustration

1. This 19th-century engraving is about one of ancient Greece's many myths. In it, a figure named Phaeton has just been struck down by a thunderbolt hurled by the Greeks' supreme god. Can you name this god?
2. Phaeton's father was the god Helios, who drew the sun across the sky with a chariot each day. Phaeton wanted proof that Helios really was his father. Helios agreed to give this proof by granting any wish of Phaeton's. From the details in the sky in the background of this illustration, can you guess what wish Phaeton's father granted him?
3. Phaeton was unable to control his father's horses or sun chariot. He swung too close to earth, setting fires across great regions. To save the earth, Zeus had to strike Phaeton down with a thunderbolt. Does this story (or myth) have a moral? That is, does it have a lesson to teach? If so, in your own words, what do you think that lesson is?

Follow-up Activities

1. What was Zeus supposed to have been like? Read more about the gods and myths of ancient Greece. Two good sources are *Mythology*, by Edith Hamilton (Little, Brown & Company, 1998) and *Myths of Greece and Rome*, by Thomas Bulfinch (Viking Penguin, 1981). In a brief essay, summarize one myth that you think shows what Zeus was like. At the top of your essay, make a list of five adjectives that best describe Zeus. Read your essay and your list in class. Then discuss with the class what we can understand about the Greeks by knowing about the kind of supreme god they believed in.
2. The story of Phaeton could be about courage, pride, a desire to do great things, foolishness, or many other emotions. What do you think it is about? Rather than answer that question directly, try to create a similar, Phaeton-like story of your own. But in this case, make your characters modern figures (real or imaginary) in contemporary settings. Share your story with the class.

Illustration 2



The Granger Collection, New York

Discussing the Illustration

1. Unlike Zeus or Helios, the figure guiding this ship is entirely human. Yet he also was a hero—perhaps the most important hero in Greek mythology. His story is told in two famous books by Homer, especially the second of the books. Can you name this hero and these two books by Homer?
2. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus has many adventures that test his courage and wisdom. This picture shows him trying to steer his ship to avoid huge boulders being hurled by a strange monster. Can you name this monster and describe its most noticeable features?
3. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the first great works of written literature from ancient Greece. Odysseus' story was told and retold over the centuries. What do you think made this hero and his story so important to the ancient Greeks? What do you think his story shows about the character traits and ideals the Greeks valued most?

Follow-up Activities

1. Do you admire Odysseus? Why or why not? Read more about him and his adventures. (There are a number of books for young readers on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Your teacher or librarian should be able to help you find some.) Based on what you learn, list three qualities or abilities that you admire about Odysseus. Describe one episode in the adventures of Odysseus where some of these qualities or abilities appear. Now do the same for three of Odysseus' qualities or abilities that you do not admire. Use what you have written in a discussion in class about the kind of hero Odysseus was.
2. **Small-group activity:** Create a mural made up of five scenes from the adventures that Odysseus has on his journey back from Troy to Ithaca. In creating this mural, try to copy the artistic style used in the drawing shown above. Write one or two paragraphs for each of the five scenes you create and include these paragraphs in your mural.

Illustration 3



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Discussing the Illustration

1. This stone relief is of some of the masks used in another of the great ancient Greek literary achievements. What literary form did the ancient Greeks invent in which masks such as these were used?
2. The four theater masks shown here were carved in relief on a theater wall. Going by these masks alone, what can you infer about the nature of ancient Greek plays and about the way they were performed?
3. Ancient Greek drama originated in rituals performed in honor of the Greek god of wine and religious ecstasy. Can you name that god? Why do you suppose Greek drama grew out of the rituals for this particular god?
4. Ancient Greek drama often stressed the tragic results that follow when individual ambition or pride guides human action. Why do you think this theme was so central in ancient Greek culture?

Follow-up Activities

1. Some accounts of ancient Greek theater say that Thespis was the earliest recorded playwright. Because of this view, the term “thespian” is now a common word for an actor on the stage. Thespis is often also called the “Father of Tragedy,” supposedly for adding characters who spoke as individuals rather than relying only a chorus singing a story in unison. Read more about Thespis and the transition from chorus to true drama in the ancient Greek theater. Report to the class in a brief talk entitled “Thespis: Was He the Father of Greek Tragedy?”
2. **Small-group activity:** One of the greatest ancient Greek tragedians was Sophocles. Learn more about him and choose a play to read and discuss. Then select a short passage to act out in class. Choose a passage that you think illustrates this statement about Greek drama: “Plays were parables depicting conflict between human ambition and divine will, and warnings of the consequences of hubris and blasphemy.”

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will better understand the origins of democracy in certain ancient Greek city-states.
 2. Students will appreciate some of the key differences between democracy in the Greek city-states and in our own time.
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The Greek City-State

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS**Illustration 1**

After 800 BCE, ancient Greece's wealth and population grew. Yet it did not unite into a single nation. That was partly due to geography. The Greek cities were cut off from one another by mountains and coastlines. They remained small, separate states. These city-states went through many political changes. A form of democracy developed in some. The most important democracy was at Athens. At the height of its power, Athens was ruled by elected officials and an assembly of citizens that met at the Pnyx, a hill out in the open. This photo shows the Areopagus, another small hill in Athens where an earlier council of elders had met. Over time, this hill became a symbol of freedom of speech and a place for debate among philosophers and others.

Illustration 2

Why did democracy develop in ancient Greece? There are many reasons for this. But a key one was actually Greek warfare. The city-states were often at war with one another. At first, warfare was carried on mainly by wealthy nobles rich enough to own horses. But over time, Greeks learned to fight in organized formations of foot soldiers called hoplites. The men on shore here are hoplites. Less wealthy men could afford the sword, shield, and helmet needed for such fighting. And even poor men could join Greek naval forces as rowers in Greece's famous triremes, such as those shown in this battle. The growing importance of such soldiers and sailors helped to give them greater power and say as citizens.

Illustration 3

In Athens and other democratic Greek city-states, free citizens had important rights. But this did not include everyone. Women, for example, could not vote or hold office. In fact, they took very little part in public life at all. Also, foreigners in Greek city-states usually had no political rights. And slavery was a part of life in ancient Greece, as it was in just about every early civilization. Prisoners of war from all over the Mediterranean were enslaved and put to work in households, mines and shops in the Greek city-states. This illustration on an Athenian krater, or vase, shows a young athlete at a sports arena with his slave. Some historians say the Greek citizen's love of liberty was strong in part because he could see so many unfree people all around him.

Lesson 3—The Greek City-State

Illustration 1



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Discussing the Illustration

1. This is the Areopagus, a small hill in Athens where a council of ruling elders once met, as did a homicide court. Later, an assembly of all citizens gained power, and it also met outside at a nearby hill called the Pnyx. What features in this photo suggest this is a city in ancient Greece? Why might citizens in a Greek city-state have preferred to meet outdoors?
2. The major Greek cities were rarely able to unite. Instead, each was the center of a small city-state with its own government. From what you know of Greece's geography, why do you suppose it was so hard for the cities of Greece to unite into a single nation?
3. In some Greek city-states, a form of democracy developed. What are some key features of a democratic government? What Greek city-state is usually seen as the best example of Greek democracy?
4. Oratory, or public speaking, was very important in ancient Greece's democratic city-states. Why do you think that was so?

Follow-up Activity

1. **Small-group activity:** Each member should learn more about one of the following figures in the political history of the city-state of Athens:

Solon
Peisistratus
Cleisthenes
Pericles
Alcibiades

Based on the research you do, each group member should prepare a brief description of the figure he or she has studied. The description should stress the effect this figure had, either for good or bad, on the growth of democracy in Athens. Use these essays and a copy of various illustrations of Athenian political sites such as the photo of the Areopagus in a bulletin-board display called "Ancient Athens: Democracy's Early Homeland." Try to arrange the essays in order of when each of these figures had his greatest effect on Athens, from the earliest figure to the latest.

Lesson 3—The Greek City-State

Illustration 2



The Granger Collection, New York

Discussing the Illustration

1. The Greek city-states were often at war with one another. In time, they learned to organize foot soldiers (like those on the shore here) into infantry phalanxes that could turn and fight as a unit. What name did the Greeks use for these infantry soldiers armed with a helmet, shield, and sword?
2. The Greeks also developed triremes, war ships that were fast and easy to maneuver. They are shown here in this 19th-century painting. Using what you know and what you see here, explain why you think these ships were so effective.
3. Before the hoplite phalanxes and triremes, cavalry manned by wealthy nobles played a larger part in Greek warfare. Why would such warfare have depended more on wealthy nobles?
4. Hoplites and trireme rowers were mainly ordinary poorer citizens. This was a key factor leading Athens and many other Greek states to become more democratic. Why do you suppose that was so?

Follow-up Activities

1. A famous battle between Greek hoplites and Persian soldiers took place at Marathon in 490 BCE. It was led by Miltiades of Athens. Learn more about it and its importance in the Persian Wars the Greeks fought from 490 to 449 BCE. Based on what you read, write a “news report” on the battle (as if you were an on-the-scene reporter). Create a map of the battlefield as a part of your news report. Include interviews with soldiers. Offer your own analysis of the battle and its overall importance for Athens and all of Greece.
2. **Small-group activity:** The 19th-century painting here is of the naval battle at the harbor of Syracuse in the Peloponnesian War. Learn more about this battle and its importance. Create the imaginary front page of a newspaper reporting on the outcome of the battle. Use the above illustration in your front page. Design a headline and write two or three main stories on the battle. Create a map showing details of the battle and include it in your newspaper front page. Display your front page on a bulletin board in class.

Lesson 3—The Greek City-State

Illustration 3



The Granger Collection, New York

Discussing the Illustration

1. The ancient Greeks developed some of the world's first democratic governments. Liberty was prized by the citizens of these democratic city-states. And yet, as this illustration shows, not everyone in these city-states enjoyed that liberty. Can you guess what this illustration shows?
2. This illustration is on a *krater*, a vase used to mix wine and water. How does the illustration make clear the power and authority of one of these figures and the subordinate or inferior status of the other? What attitude toward slavery do you sense the artist who created this image must have had? Why?
3. Many slaves were people captured during wars. At the height of its greatness, Athens had perhaps 400,000 people. As many as 100,000 may have been slaves. Women and foreigners were also without rights as citizens. Does knowing this lead you to admire ancient Greek democracy less than you otherwise might? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. Ancient Athens had perhaps 100,000 slaves in the years when its democratic government was fully developed. Many worked in households or on farms. Others worked in the shops of artisans. Still others mined silver at Laurion near Athens. Read more about the jobs slaves did. Rank these jobs in order of the ones you would most prefer to the ones you would least prefer. Use this list as a framework or guide for a brief talk you give in class on the nature of slavery in ancient Greece.
2. The ancient Greek city-state of Sparta was very different from Athens in many ways. Sparta controlled a large number of people who were like slaves. They were called "helots." In Athens, citizens rarely worried much about slave revolts or violence by unhappy slaves. But Spartans worried constantly about the helots, who revolted from time to time. Read more about Sparta. In a brief essay, give your views as to why Sparta worried so much more about its helots than Athens ever did about its slaves.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will better understand the artistic, intellectual, and other cultural achievements of ancient Greece.
 2. Students will better appreciate these achievements and their impact on world history.
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Greece's Cultural Triumph

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

Ancient Greece was rarely united politically. But certain festivals and other events did bring Greeks together. One of the most important of these took place at Olympia every four years. In this Olympic festival, athletes from the Greek cities gathered to compete in foot races such as the one shown here and in many other athletic contests. The Olympic festival expressed many of ancient Greece's most cherished ideals. It united Greece, but in a way that allowed each city to compete against the others. It glorified human abilities and the human form. It fostered the ideal of the heroic individual who could become godlike through his own talents, courage, and supreme effort.

Illustrations 2A & 2B

Ancient Greece is not famous for its wealth or power. It is famous for its ideas, its art, and its ideals of beauty and human achievement. In these areas, it still amazes people. Illustration 2A is a marble statue of a sphinx given to the Sanctuary of Delphi by some wealthy citizens around 560 BCE. It is lifelike and detailed but still somewhat formal (or stiff), as is the Egyptian artistic style that may have influenced it. A better example of what makes Greek sculpture so unique is Illustration 2B. It is a relief sculpture on a funerary stele showing a seated Athenian woman and another woman holding an open jewelry box. Notice how graceful, natural, and personal it is. In this, as in many Greek works of art, the beauty, grace, and individuality of human life is portrayed and celebrated.

Illustration 3

The greatest accomplishments of ancient Greece had to do with the mind. The Greeks learned much from ancient Egypt, the Persians, and other civilizations near them. Yet they always created something new out of what they learned from others. Great epics, written history, drama, science, medicine—all these and more were a part of the great burst of creativity that took place in ancient Greece. Many modern fields of knowledge began with the Greeks. One of the greatest Greek philosophers was Socrates. This 1787 painting by Jacques-Louis David is titled “The Death of Socrates.” Socrates did not write down his ideas, but his student Plato did. Plato and his own pupil Aristotle have influenced all of Western philosophy, up to the present time.

Lesson 4—Greece's Cultural Triumph

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. This scene is of one of the most famous gatherings in ancient Greece. It took place every four years in the same location. Can you explain what it is and where in ancient Greece it took place?
2. At the ancient Olympic festival, Greek cities sent their best athletes to compete against one another in various games. The first games were foot races such as the one show here. What were some of the other athletic contests in the ancient Olympics?
3. The Olympics were actually a religious festival. In honor of what Greek god were these games held? Why do you think the Greeks saw the Olympics as a good way to honor their gods? What features in this illustration help to show what these games were like and what values or ideals they expressed?
4. The Olympics were one of the few things that seemed to unite all Greeks—at least while the games were on. From what you know about the ancient Olympics, how did they help unite the various Greek city-states?

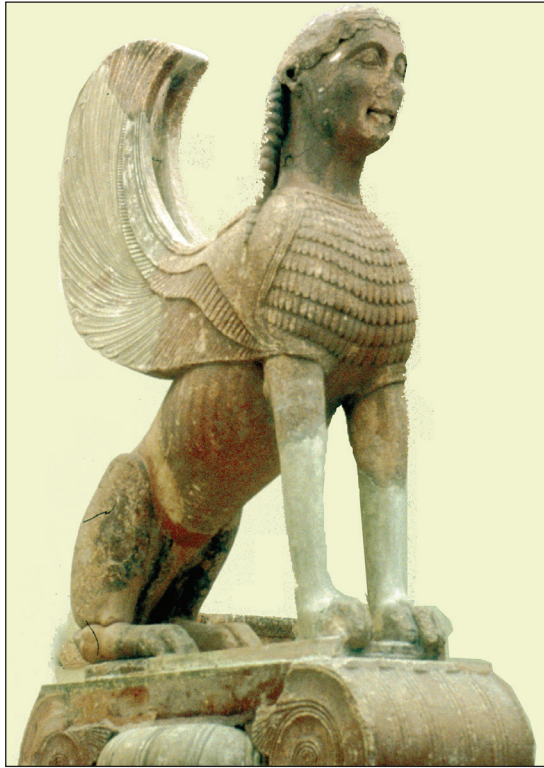
Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** Read more about the ancient Olympic festival. Using your school or public library, make photocopies of as many illustrations of the ancient Greek games as you can find. Look for illustrations of events, athletes, ceremonies, etc. Include these in a bulletin-board display, along with a map of ancient Olympia and descriptions of each illustration. Call your bulletin-board display “Ancient Greece and Its Olympic Heroes.”
2. **Small-group activity:** Add to the display of the group doing Activity 1 above. First, read about both the ancient and the modern Olympics. Then create a chart comparing the two festivals in terms of each of the following:
 - The sports or other events included
 - The way the athletes are chosen
 - The benefits to the athletes
 - The meaning of the festival to society as a wholeInclude your chart in the bulletin-board display.

Lesson 4—Greece's Cultural Triumph

Illustrations 2A & 2B

2A



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2B



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Discussing the Illustrations

1. Illustrations 2A and 2B are both ancient Greek works of art. In general, what differences in style do you notice between them? Does it surprise you they were both produced by the same culture? Why or why not?
2. Illustration 2A is a marble statue of a sphinx given to the Sanctuary of Delphi by some wealthy citizens in the sixth century BCE. What ancient civilization created huge statues of the mythic creature called a sphinx? Does the style of this statue remind you of that same ancient civilization's art? Why?
3. Illustration 2B is a fifth-century-BCE relief sculpture on a funerary stele. Some say it differs from the sphinx not so much in how realistic or lifelike it is, but in how "natural," "personal," or "graceful" it is. Do you agree? Why or why not? Which of these works seems most typical of ancient Greek art? Why?
4. Ancient Greece is still famous today more for its art and ideas than for its wealth or power. Do you think it should be? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activity

1. **Small-group activity:** The earliest Greek sculptors learned a great deal from Egyptian sculpture. However, ancient Greek sculpture differs in many ways from ancient Egyptian sculpture. Your task is to show the similarities as well as the differences. In your library, look through art-history books or books on ancient civilizations. Find at least four or five photos of ancient Greek sculpture. Now find at least four or five photos of ancient Egyptian sculpture; if possible, make photocopies of these illustrations. Then write descriptions for each of them. Wherever possible, describe the way Greek sculpture is or is not similar to Egyptian sculpture. Arrange the illustrations and your descriptions in a bulletin-board display called "Egypt and Greece: Two Civilizations Set in Stone."

Lesson 4—Greece’s Cultural Triumph

Illustration 3



The Granger Collection, New York

Discussing the Illustration

1. Many historians say the greatest achievements of ancient Greece had to do with ideas and the mind. This 18th-century painting by Jacques-Louis David dramatizes a central and tragic moment in the life of one of Greece’s greatest philosophers. Can you name that philosopher, explain this scene, and explain why it is recalled as such a heroic moment?
2. Along with Socrates, a number of other ancient Greek philosophers raised many of the problems philosophers have dealt with ever since. What kinds of problems or questions do philosophers think, write, and talk about?
3. Socrates never wrote his ideas down. However, another philosopher who admired Socrates did write, and in his books, he often has Socrates leading debates with others. In that way he tried to pass on Socrates’ ideas. Can you name that philosopher? Why do you suppose he presented ideas in the form of dialogues between Socrates and others?

Follow-up Activities

1. Another famous painting about Greek philosophers is “The School of Athens,” by the Renaissance artist Raphael. Find a copy of this painting in an art-history book. Find out as much as you can about the painting and the figures in it. Prepare a brief talk on the painting to give in class. Bring a copy of it with you when you give your talk. In the talk, sum up what you know about Raphael. Give your own opinion of “The School of Athens,” and explain why you think Raphael chose to portray the ancient Greek thinkers as he did in this painting.
2. **Small-group activity:** Learn more about Plato and Aristotle, another famous Greek philosopher. Discuss the two philosophers and try to imagine what they might say about some difficult issue or question today. Create your own brief dialogue for them on this topic. Your dialogue can be funny, but it should also be true to the key ideas of each of these men. Act out your dialogue in front of the class.

Image Close-ups

The Aegean Setting **Illustration 1**



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The Aegean Setting Illustration 2



The Granger Collection, New York

The Aegean Setting **Illustration 3**



Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

Myths of a Heroic Age
Illustration 1



The Granger Collection, New York

Myths of a Heroic Age

Illustration 2



The Granger Collection, New York

Myths of a Heroic Age
Illustration 3



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The Greek City-State **Illustration 1**



© Instructional Resources Corporation

The Greek City-State

Illustration 2



The Granger Collection, New York

The Greek City-State

Illustration 3



The Granger Collection, New York

Greece's Cultural Triumph

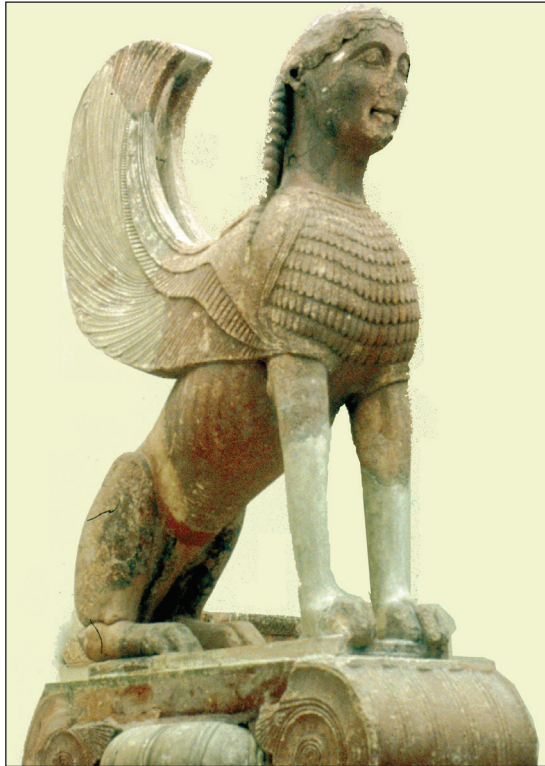
Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Greece's Cultural Triumph
Illustrations 2A & 2B

2A



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2B



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Greece's Cultural Triumph
Illustration 3



The Granger Collection, New York

