

Key Dates

4-1184 BC	Believed to be the dates of the Trojan War
776 BC	The first ever Olympic Games were held
750 BC	Homer writes The Iliad, about the last year of the Trojan War
508 BC	The Athenians create Democracy.
490 BC	The Battle of Marathon
432 BC	The Parthenon is completed
431—404 BC	Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta (Sparta is victorious)
336—323 BC	Alexander the Great conquers most of the known world.
146 BC	The Romans invade Greece

Ancient Greece

About 2,500 years ago, Greece was one of the most important places in the ancient world. The Greeks called themselves Hellenes and their land was Hellas. The name 'Greeks' was given to the people of Greece later by the Romans. They lived in mainland Greece and the Greek islands, but also in colonies scattered around the Mediterranean Sea. There were Greeks in Italy, Sicily, Turkey, North Africa, and as far west as France.

The Minoans were the first great Greek civilisation and lived on island of Crete, between 2200BC and 1450BC.

Next came the Mycenaean civilisation, from mainland Greece. They were fine builders and traders, but they were also great soldiers.



A important Greek temple built in Athens in honour of the Goddess Athena. A temple is an important religious building

Key Vocab

Democracy	A democracy means 'rule by the people'. Here, people can take part in the decisions that affect the way their community is run.
Society	A community of people living together and having shared ways of living.
Evidence	Anything that can be used to prove something. For example, a piece of art from ancient Greece can be used as evidence.
Civilisation	A particular society at a particular time and place. For example, the ancient Greek civilization.
BC	Before Christ. A way of dating years before the birth of Jesus. The bigger the number BC, the longer ago in history it was.
Empire	A group of different countries with one leader
Philosophy	The word comes from the Greek language and means 'love of wisdom'. It is the study of difficult questions about human life and questioning the world
Myth	A well-known story, which was made up in the past to explain natural events.
Conflict	A disagreement about something important.

The Olympian Gods and Goddesses

Zeus— King of the Gods

Aphrodite—Goddess of Love

Athena—Goddess of War

Hades—God of the Underworld, also God of Wealth

Hermes—Messenger to the Gods, also known as a trickster!

Apollo— God of Music

Ares—Son of Zeus and Hera; he was God of War

Demeter—Goddess of the Harvest and of Fertility

Artemis—Goddess of Hunting

Dionysius—God of the Vine

Hephaestus—God of Fire (He was the workman of the immortals)

Hera—Queen of the Olympian Gods

Poseidon—God of the Sea

How was Greece ruled?

There was never one country called 'ancient Greece'. Instead, Greece was divided up into small city-states, like Athens, Sparta, Corinth and Olympia.

Each city-state ruled itself. They had their own governments, laws and army. So, ancient Greeks living in Sparta considered themselves Spartan first, and Greek second.

Famously, the city-states didn't get on very well and often fought each another. However, sometimes they joined together to fight against a bigger enemy, like the Persian Empire.

The Battle of Marathon

The Battle of Marathon was one of the most important battles in world history. The Persian army had come to conquer Athens, as a first step to taking over the whole of Greece, adding it to the already enormous Persian Empire. On the way to Marathon they had defeated several other Greek cities and far outnumbered the Athenians. With the Persians closing in on the Greek capitol, Athenian general Miltiades took command. Miltiades weakened the centre of his outnumbered force to strengthen its wings. His strategy was victorious over the Persians' strength, and the victory of "the Marathon men" captured the collective imagination of the Greeks.



Legacy

One of the most unique and wonderful of Greek inventions was philosophy. Philosophy was the special way Greeks attempted to make sense out of the world, in a non-religious way.

The people of Ancient Greece built fantastic temples, made scientific discoveries, wrote plays and founded the first proper democracy.

The first Olympic games were held in Greece in 776 BC.

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.