



History

Who were the Ancient Greeks? (500BCE – 323BCE The Golden Age)

Intent:

In this unit children use a range of sources to find about the life and achievements of the Ancient Greeks. Through their investigations they find out about the city states of Athens and Sparta, warfare and seamanship, everyday life, beliefs, culture, and through Greek mythology, some of the key events and individuals from this period. This unit also focuses on the continuing legacy of Ancient Greeks. The children will explore the Ancient Greeks' influence on education, language, architecture and the Olympic Games. Links can be made with other ancient civilisations and societies they have studied. The emphasis throughout the unit is on developing the children's skills of historical enquiry including how evidence is used to make historical claims, and on developing their understanding of historical concepts such continuity and change, similarity and difference, and significance.

Please note that on the HA website there is an article to accompany this unit and written specifically to help teachers who are teaching the Ancient Greeks for the first time: **Teaching the Ancient Greeks by Jerome Freeman and Jon Nichol: <https://www.history.org.uk/primary/resource/8683>

Pupils should be taught to:

Study ancient Greek life including their achievements and influences on the western world.
Children should know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world including the nature of ancient civilisations.

Appreciate that different sources can be used to find out about the Ancient Greeks.

That different kinds of sources provide different information.

Understand chronology & build an overview of world history.

Investigate and interpret the past.

Communicate historically.

Build an overview of world history.

Prior learning:

ELG	Year 1	Year 2			
Builds on Past and Present.	Builds on Local History and significant individuals.	Builds on Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age.			

Key Vocabulary:

Tier 2 - Multiple meanings or high frequency

Timeline	Archaeology	Artefact	Evidence
Similarity	Difference	Change	Continuity

Tier 3 - Subject specific

Ancient	Modern	Civilisation	Citizen
Legacy	Architecture	Myth	Legend

Etymology and morphology

Prefix / Suffix / Root	Meaning	Examples
Auto	Self	Autograph, autobiography, autonomy
Chron	Time	Chronology

Geo	Earth	Geography
Graph	Write/draw	Graphic, grapheme
Path	Feeling	Sympathy, empathy, apathy
Tele	Far	Television, teleport, telephone

Idioms and colloquialisms	
	Meaning
Sour grapes.	Sour grapes originates from Aesop's fable, the 'Fox and the Grapes', in which a fox spies a juicy bunch of grapes hanging from a tree, try as he might though, he can't reach those grapes, gives up and walks off declaring, 'never mind, just as well, they would have been sour anyway'.
Spill the beans.	In ancient Greece, the voting system was for people to cast secret votes by putting either a white bean (positive vote), or a black bean (negative vote), into a jar. If the jar was knocked over, by accident, or other deceitful means, the secret was revealed, and the beans were spilled.
Wrong end of the stick.	In ancient Greece, the luxury of toilet paper did not exist. In its place, was a sponge or piece of cloth tied to the end of a stick, and this is what the ancient Greeks used to wipe their posteriors. To make matters worse, this stick seemed to be communal, as it was kept in a bowl of salt water, next to the hole in the ground; the lavatories of the day. You had to be very careful when the stick was passed around as needed... not to get hold of the wrong end!

Misconceptions	
Not true	Teach this
Pandora never had a box.	Pandora had a jar. The jar, or <i>pythos</i> , was the size of a small person and would have been used for storing wine or oil. Such jars were also sometimes used, in place of a coffin, as a burial container. It is believed that the error comes from a mistranslation https://listverse.com/2015/04/01/10-meaningful-literary-moments-that-were-lost-in-translation/ by the 16th-century writer Erasamus, who mixed up the word <i>pythos</i> with <i>pyxis</i> , which, of course, means "box."
Achilles's heel was not his heel.	Achilles's heel was not his actual heel. His Achilles Heel was his pride, and the whole heel thing was actually just a metaphor.

Lesson number	Key enquiry question & learning objective	Suggested learning activities	Cumulative questions
1	<p>Q: Who were the Ancient Greeks?</p> <p>L.O. TU chronology & build an overview of world history.</p>	<p>Get children to locate Ancient Greece on a map (and a timeline) and consider why its position was significant e.g. proximity to Europe, the Middle East, North Africa. Ask them to locate the city states of Athens and Sparta. Tell the children that these two city states had their own laws, money, rulers, and were rivals. In small groups ask them to carry out research into the similarities and differences between the two city states and report back their findings under the following headings: how they were ruled; the lives of men, women and children, warfare, slaves, culture, religion.</p> <p>Discuss some of the terminology that might emerge from this activity e.g. democracy, civilisation, culture, laws, justice.</p> <p>Information about life in Athens and Sparta e.g. BBC Schools Primary History website (Ancient Greece) or the British Museum website for Ancient Greece.</p>	1 - 4
2	<p>Q: What do artefacts tell us about what life was like in Ancient Greece?</p> <p>L.O. TBAT investigate and interpret the past.</p>	<p>Provide the children with photographs of Ancient Greek pottery and statues. These should include illustrations/representations of different aspects of Ancient Greek life including soldiers, ships, gods and goddesses, rulers, writing, everyday life. Ask them in small groups to look at specific photographs and record the details they see both in writing and through making accurate drawings. Ask them to record what the object is, what it might have been used for, what information it provides us about an aspect of life in Ancient Greece. Prompt them further by asking them questions such as <i>What made the Ancient Greek fighters so powerful? How their boats might have attacked enemy boats? How was religion in Ancient Greece different to Christianity or other religions? How can we tell that a particular ruler was so important? What can we learn about everyday life?</i></p> <p>Get each group to report back their findings and use these to build up a picture of life in Ancient Greece. Get the whole class to identify the key characteristics. Finally get the class to speculate about what other sources they might need to get a fuller picture about life in Ancient Greece.</p>	5 - 7
3	<p>Q: Can we learn anything from Greek myths and legends?</p> <p>L.O. TBAT communicate historically.</p>	<p>Explain to the children the meaning of the terms myths and legends. Explain why these were so important in Ancient Greece. Read one Ancient Greek myth to the class and ask them what it tells us about life in Ancient Greece.</p> <p>Divide the class into small groups and give each group a photocopied text of a Greek myth/legend to read. Ask them to underline the key points of the story and discuss why they have chosen these. Each group could then retell their stories to the rest of class or re-enact it using drama.</p> <p>Each group then has to answer the question – <i>What evidence is there to prove that their myth/legend might be true?</i> Carry out research using a range of sources including photographs of artefacts, archaeological sites, and where helpful, secondary sources. They could also identify which parts might not have been true and give simple reasons.</p> <p>As an extension activity you could give some children different versions of the same myth/legend and ask them to make comparisons and speculate as to why there are differences.</p>	6 - 9

		In a final presentation to the whole class, each group has to answer the question: <i>Can we learn anything from Greek myths and legends?</i>	
4	<p>Q: What do archaeological sites tell us about life in Ancient Greece?</p> <p>L.O. TBAT investigate and interpret the past.</p>	<p>Provide the children with photographs and plans of Ancient Greek archaeological sites such as temples, theatres e.g. the Greek theatre at Ephesus, The Temple of Apollo at Delphi, the Parthenon in Athens.</p> <p>Ask them in small groups to investigate a specific site and record their findings both in writing and through making accurate drawings. Ask each group to devise a tour guide for use at their site – it might help to provide the groups with a simple template or criteria for this activity. Ask them to select some pictures of the artefacts from the previous sub-section to enhance their guides.</p> <p>Get each group to share their tour guides and/or to take the rest of the class on a tour of their site.</p>	10 & 11
5	<p>Q: What are the similarities and differences between our school and schools in Ancient Greece?</p> <p>L.O. TBAT build an overview of world history.</p>	<p>Provide the children with a range of primary (e.g. photographs of artefacts) and secondary sources (e.g. school library books, appropriate websites) which provide evidence of life in Ancient Greek schools. Ask them use these sources to carry out research and record their answers in a table that is divided into 4 columns with the following sub-headings – <i>key features of school life, school life in Athens, school life in Sparta and school life today</i>. The table should also be divided into rows – each one assigned to an aspect of school life e.g. <i>boys, girls, rich, poor, slaves, age when children start school age when children leave school, subjects taught at school, sports played at school, other activities, equipment used at school, school buildings</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a whole class start to identify some of the similarities and differences between then and now before going on to explore some of the differences between schooling in Athens and Sparta. <p>Finally, ask the children to write two paragraphs – one describing the differences between schools in Ancient Greece and today, and one explaining the differences between schools in Athens and Sparta.</p>	12 - 14
6	<p>Q: How have the Olympic Games changed since they were first held in Ancient Greece?</p> <p>L.O. TBAT communicate historically.</p>	<p>Provide the children with images and film clips of London 2012. Get them to design and write a short chapter for a school history book summarising the events from these Games – <i>What sports were played? What were the main venues? How many countries were involved? How did the games open and close? What were the most memorable moments?</i> Ask them to select two or three images that best encapsulate London 2012 and include them in their work.</p> <p>Tell the children that the Olympic Games originate from Ancient Greece. Set out the historical context and stress the religious significance of the Games.</p> <p>Following on from this ask the groups to design a 5-day programme for the Ancient Olympic Games working from pictorial sources and writing an explanatory caption for each used. Get them to present their programmes to the rest of the class.</p>	15 - 18

		<p>After their presentations, give the children Judith Swaddling's Ancient Olympic 5-day programme (available free in PDF format) so that they can make comparisons with their own.</p> <p>Finally, as a whole class make comparisons between the Ancient and modern Olympic Games teasing out the similarities and differences.</p> <p>The Ancient Olympic Games by Judith Swaddling, British Museum Press.</p> <p>https://www.britishmuseum.org/learn/schools/ages-7-11/ancient-greece/classroom-resource-olympic-games</p>	
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British Museum Online Resources

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/learn/schools/ages-7-11/ancient-greece>

BBC Primary History Teacher's Resources

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/ks2-history/zfbwhbk>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/history/zfmj92p>