

Ancient Greece

What should I already know?

Greece is a country in the **continent** of Europe.



Greece is made up of the mainland and many islands. Its position by the sea meant that the Greeks were **seafaring** people. City-states (**polis**) were created and **trade** happened between each of the cities. Greece is a warm country, but winds from the Mediterranean, and rains from the north, kept temperatures liveable and created **fertile** farming conditions.

Greek Society

- Greece was divided into city-states (**polis**) that each had their own laws and way of life, but that all spoke the same language. Two of the most well-known city states are Athens and Sparta.
- In Athens, Greek styles of art, **architecture**, **philosophy** and theatre were developed - these helped shaped our modern society along with science, language and maths.
- Athens had a **democratic** government - this means that the people who lived there made decisions by voting, like we do in Britain.
- In Sparta, life was very different; all that was important was being able to defend Sparta in battle.
- The first Olympic games were held in 776 in the city-state Olympia.
- Religion was very important in Ancient Greece. They were **polytheists** - they believed in different gods and goddesses that were in charge of different parts of their lives, such as a god of the sea and a goddess of wisdom. Temples were built in their honour and they featured heavily in the stories of Greek **mythology**.
- A **polis** consisted of an **urban** centre, often fortified and with a sacred centre built on a natural **acropolis (citadel)** or harbour.

Vocabulary

acropolis	the citadel of an ancient Greek city
archaeologist	someone who studies the past by exploring old remains
architecture	the art of planning, designing and constructing buildings
citadel	a strong building in or near a city, where people could shelter for safety
civilisation	a human society with its own social organisation and culture .
climate	the general weather conditions that are typical of it.
continent	a very large area of land that consists of many countries . Europe is a continent .
culture	activities such as the arts and philosophy, which are considered to be important for the development of civilisation
deities	a god or goddess
democracy	a fair political system where all adults vote for an elected government. This government then makes decisions on how to run the country.
human features	features of land that have been impacted by human activity
empire	a number of individual nations that are all controlled by the government or ruler of one particular country
fertile	rich in nutrients to support the growth of many plants
merchant	a person who buys or sells goods in large quantities
mythology	a group of myths, especially all the myths from a particular country, religion, or culture .
philosophy	the study or creation of theories about basic things such as the nature of existence, knowledge, and thought, or about how people should live
physical features	natural features of land
polis	an ancient Greek city-state
polytheists	the worship of or belief in more than one god
seafaring	working as a sailor or travelling regularly on the sea
society	people in general, thought of as a large organized group
trade	the activity of buying, selling, or exchanging goods or services
urban	belonging to, or relating to, a town or city
warfare	the activity of fighting a war

Timeline

776 BC: The first Olympic games take place.

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

450 BC: Athens becomes a powerful city and controls an **empire**.

336 BC: Alexander the Great is King and helps the Greek **empire** expand further.

750 BC: Early Greek **culture** thrives. Homer writes The Iliad and The Odyssey.

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

432 BC: The **Parthenon**, the most famous building in Athens, is completed.

146 BC: Rome conquers Greece, making it part of the Roman **Empire**.