

**Early Peoples Activity Sheet:**  
**Ancient Greeks**

**1. Physical Features and Trade**

- a) Look at the map of Ancient Greece on page 4. From a geographical perspective, what does it tell you about Ancient Greece?**

The ancient Greek world was centred around the Aegean Sea. The Empire was spread across the sea and contained many small islands in between. The distance across the sea was quite vast so they must have had good ships.

The indents on the land indicate mountains. This shows that the landscape was also quite mountainous.

- b) Why did ancient Greeks trade?**

The lands of the Minoans, Mycenaeans, and later Greeks lacked many natural resources. They needed to trade overseas to get certain metals and other items.

- c) Who did they trade with and how?**

They built ships to move people and goods all over the Mediterranean region. The Mycenaeans were the first to trade widely across the Mediterranean. Their ships brought goods to and from such places as Asia Minor, Sicily, and Egypt.

- d) Why did people leave Greece and settle overseas?**

In the Greek city-states, good farmland was hard to find. Neighbouring cities sometimes fought over land. People left Greece to settle overseas, where fertile land was more readily available.

- e) Look at the image of the remains of the Greek ship found in Cyprus. Why did archaeologists conclude it was a trading ship?**

Archaeologists found hundreds of jars of wine and almonds in the remains of the ship.

**2. Warfare**

- a) In 490 B.C. who did Sparta and Greece unite against in war?**

King Darius and the Persian Empire.

- b) Why did they unite?**

King Darius of Persia demanded that all Greek cities pledge their loyalty to him. Athens, Sparta and several others refused.

- c) What was the outcome of the Persian Wars?**

The Persians were defeated. The Greeks defeated King Darius in 498 B.C. and then defeated his son, Xerxes in a later campaign in 480 B.C.

**d) Why did Sparta and Greece begin fighting each other in 431 B.C?**

During the 470's B.C., Athens founded its own empire. Its growing power worried Sparta, and in 431 B.C. Sparta launched the Peloponnesian War against Athens.

**e) Who won the Peloponnesian War?**

Sparta defeated Athens in 404 B.C. after several phases of war.

**f) Who was Alexander the Great?**

Alexander was the ruler of Macedonia who conquered the southern Greek city-states and defeated Persian ruler Darius III and took control of his empire which stretched from Egypt to India.

**g) What was the most powerful part of the Greek army?**

The infantry, or foot soldiers.

**h) Who were the hoplites?**

The hoplites were the best of the infantry fighters. They fought using both long spears and short swords and protected themselves with round shields.

**i) What was the phalanx and what was their role in battle?**

Rows of hoplites marched tightly together, creating a unit called a phalanx. In battle, the phalanx of two opposing sides would march toward each other and fought until one side fled in defeat.

**j) Who was expected to fight whenever there was a war?**

Most able male citizens were expected to fight whenever there was a war.

**k) What type of weaponry would poorer citizens fight with?**

Poorer citizens fought with lighter or no armour and used such simple weapons as slingshots.

**l) Which Greek city-state was the only city-state to have a permanent army?**

Sparta.

**m) Describe the life of a soldier in the Spartan army.**

At age 7, he left home to begin training as a soldier. He was placed in a unit called a company. The bravest boy in each company was chosen as the captain, and the other boys would have to obey his orders. At age 30, he was given his full rights as a citizen. He would serve in the military until he was 60. In return for his service he would be given land from the government, which was farmed by slaves.

**3. Law**

**a) Who were the aristocrats and what was the government they formed called?**

They were rich landowners. Around 750 B.C. they began taking control of city governments and created a government called oligarchy (rule by the few).

**b) What did oligarchies develop into?**

In Athens and several other cities, the oligarchies developed into democracies.

**c) What did aristocrat Solon contribute to the Athenian democracy?**

Solon made the first laws that gave poor Athenians legal rights and gave more citizens a role in the government.

**d) What changes did Pericles make to the law in 457 B.C.?**

In 457 B.C., Pericles changed the law so that citizens could hold public office.

**e) Describe the constitution of Athens?**

Under the constitution of Athens, male citizens could vote on laws, decide on government policies, and elect generals during wartime.

**f) What rights were allowed to Athenian women?**

Female citizens did not take part in the process given to men.

**g) What were the three branches, or parts, of the Athenian model of democratic government?**

1. Legislative Branch: Assembly of all citizen and the boule formed the legislative branch. Any citizen could propose a law in the assembly.
2. Various officials carried out the laws.
3. Judicial branch was made up of the courts. Greeks served on juries to decide if laws followed the city's constitution and if accused lawbreakers were innocent or guilty.

**h) What were the first recorded laws in Athens?**

The first recorded laws in Athens made murder a crime. Stealing was also illegal, as was taking actions that harmed the city. Insulting or hitting a fellow citizen was also against the law.

**i) How were crimes reported?**

Athens did not have police who tracked down criminals. Instead, citizens accused each other of breaking the law.

**j) How did trials work in Athens?**

Juries consisted of 201 jurors, sometimes reaching up to over 1000. Jurors were citizens. Criminals and their accusers both argued their case to the jury. Witnesses also appeared. The jury would vote in secret to decide whether the accused was guilty or not. A vote of at least half the jurors plus one decided the result.

**k) What types of punishment were imposed on those who broke the law in Athens?**

The guilty might have to pay a fine or lose some legal rights. Other criminals were exiled or executed. Few people went to jail as jails were costly to build and run.

**4. Roles of key groups:**

**i) Women**

**a) What roles, outside household duties, did women have?**

Women spun thread and wove cloth to make clothes for their families. The poorest women often had to take jobs outside the home. They worked in shops or as servants to the wealthy. Some ran inns or worked outside their homes making cloth.

**b) What role did women play in religious ceremonies?**

As priestesses, women performed the rituals connected to goddesses and some gods. The ceremonies were often held in temples. In some cases, only women could enter the temples.

**c) What does the decoration on the water vessel depict on page 21?**

The decoration shows women carrying the same kind of jug on their heads. It depicts the daily chore of collecting water from public fountains and carrying them home to their families.

**d) In what ways was life for women in Sparta different from other parts of Greece?**

Girls went to schools run by the government and played sports. They were expected to have children, preferably sons, so Sparta would have more soldiers. The women were not expected to work outside the home, and they had slaves to do household chores. Female citizens of Sparta had more independence.

**ii) Slaves**

**a) Who were slaves?**

After a war, defeated enemies were forced to work on farms as slaves. Greeks also bought slaves captured in foreign lands.

**b) What type of duties did slaves perform?**

Slaves performed a wide range of duties. Female slaves lived with the free women of a household and worked next to them spinning and weaving. Male slaves also did household chores and ran errands for their masters. Some worked as farmers or artisans. Some owned by the city mined silver, a very dangerous and difficult job.

**c) What rights did slaves have?**

In Athens, slaves didn't have any rights but in some parts of Greece they had some legal rights. A law code found in Crete, outlined punishments for some crimes committed against slaves.

**d) Some slaves could earn money and hold important jobs. What type of jobs could they hold?**

Artisan, banker, doctor and teacher. They could even buy their freedom from their masters or earn it by serving as soldiers.

**e) Who were the Helots of Sparta**

Helots were people from Messenia and other regions directly around Sparta. They were conquered and kept as slaves.

**f) Why did Spartans declare war on the helots each year?**

Helots greatly outnumbered the Spartans, who feared the helots would act together and rebel. By declaring war on them each year, young men could kill helots without breaking the law against murder.

**5. Religion**

**a) Why did Greeks create myths?**

To understand their history and the world around them, the Greeks created myths. These stories described the actions of the gods and goddesses thought to control the world.

**b) Where did the Greeks believe that the 12 most powerful gods lived?**

Mount Olympus, the highest mountain in Greece.

**c) Match the god with their interests/powers.**

Zeus – most powerful god, ruled over heaven and the sky. He made lightning appear by throwing thunderbolts.

Poseidon— god of the sea and earthquakes.

Apollo – was god of the sun and also of medicine, music and poetry

Artemis – goddess of hunting and the moon

Athena – the goddess of warfare and wisdom

**d) Why did people of ancient Greece not want to upset the gods?**

The Greeks thought the gods played an active role in human events. The gods might answer prayers for help. They did not want to upset the gods because if they became angry they could cause illness or natural disasters.

**e) How do historians know about ancient Greek myths?**

Some of what historians know about ancient Greek myths comes from the epic poetry of Hesiod and Homer.

**f) How did Greeks worship their gods?**

Each god was honoured at a holy place called a sanctuary. The sanctuary included an altar where sacrifices were made and might also have a temple. Priests and priestesses took care of the temple. People would offer food or drink to the gods. Priests and priestesses performed other rituals.

**g) What was an oracle?**

An oracle was someone who people thought was able to speak to a particular god or goddess. Many oracles were women. The most famous oracle was for Apollo at Delphi.

**h) What was the most important ritual at a Greek religious ceremony?**

Making a sacrifice was the most important ritual at a Greek religious ceremony. An animal was sacrificed on a temple's altar and then roasted for everyone to eat.

**i) Religious festivals honoured who?**

Religious festivals honoured the god or goddesses that looked after a particular city.

**j) What did the festival entail?**

A typical festival featured a procession. Festivalgoers ate, drank, and enjoyed different forms of entertainment. Speakers recited the works of Homer, and people sang and danced.

**k) What was the Panhellenic Festivals?**

The Panhellenic Festivals were the most important festivals. It was open to all Greeks and people from across Greece came to worship and celebrate at these events. The festivals helped create a sense of shared culture among the city-states.

**l) Name the three different styles of temples.**

1. Doric Order – oldest and most common. Columns had no square base and the buildings had simple decorations.
2. Ionic Order – featured more elaborate designs on the columns and featured a scroll design.
3. Ornate Order – designed to look like the leaves of the acanthus plant.

**m) Death and Funerary Customs**

**Explain ancient Greek funerary and burial customs.**

Friends and relatives came to mourn the dead before burial. Sometimes the dead person was cremated before burial. At the cemetery, mourners placed coins and daily items in the dead person's grave, thinking the items would be needed in the afterlife. Relatives continued to bring food and drink to the grave to honour the dead person.

**6. Everyday life**

**a) Who ruled the household?**

The father ruled the household, and laws protected his right to control the others. When a father died, his property was divided among his sons.

**b) How old were women when they married?**

Most girls married in their midteens, but their husbands were often twice their age. In Sparta, the bride and groom were usually closer in age.

**c) Explain what would happen in a divorce?**

The husband would have to give back the dowry. Children usually remained in their father's household. Each were allowed to remarry.

**d) Describe a Greek wedding.**

Held at night, the wedding featured a feast at the home of the bride's father. Then the bride rode in a chariot to her husband's home. Gifts were given.

**e) Describe how a Spartan wedding differed to Greek weddings.**

Spartan weddings did not have such a formal wedding ceremony, and a wedding was not announced in public until the wife became pregnant. The bride lived with her parents until her husband returned from his military duty at age 30.

**f) What were homes generally made out of?**

Most homes were built of dried mud bricks placed on a base of stones. Inside walls were covered with plaster, and roofs were made of clay tiles. Simple houses had dirt floors.

**g) Describe a typical Greek home.**

In most Greek homes, the rooms surrounded a courtyard. Larger homes had separate kitchens and bathrooms. Spartan houses were generally smaller and simpler.

**h) What did most Greeks wear in their daily lives?**

Most Greeks wore a garment called a chiton, made from wool or linen. It had no sleeves and was worn with a belt. The sides were fastened at the shoulder with a pin. A woman's chiton reached her ankles, a man's reached his knees.

**i) Why were helots in Sparta forced to wear animal skins?**

In Sparta, helots were forced to wear animal skins, so they were easy to tell apart from citizens and other residents.

**j) What was used to make the most important daily foods eaten by Greeks?**

The most important daily foods came from grains – mostly wheat and barley. These were used to make breads, cakes and porridge.

**k) What type of proteins did the Greeks eat?**

The Greeks ate such protein-rich foods as fish and fowl. Eel was a popular seafood among the wealthy. Wealthy farmers would eat meat from cattle, sheep and other livestock they raised. Meat also came from hunting wild animals such as deer, wild boar, pigeons and ducks.

**l) What type of food did Spartans eat?**

The Spartans ate a simple stew made with beans.

**m) What types of foods did athletes eat and what group of people were they generally from?**

Many Greek athletes ate special diets, they tried to eat as much meat as possible and avoid bread. Athletes often came from wealthier families, so they could afford to eat meat, which was expensive in some parts of Greece.

**n) Why were olives important to Athenians?**

In Greek mythology, it is said that the goddess, Athena gave the people of the city-state, Athens, an olive tree as a gift. Out of gratitude, the people dedicated their city to Athena and she became the patron deity of the city.

**o) Education: What was the nature of education in Greek city-states?**

Most Greek city-states did not have public schools, and very few children received a formal education. Most learned what they needed to know from their parents and other relatives. The wealthy could afford to send their children to private teachers. Most girls, however, did not take classes.

**p) What was an important goal of Greek education?**

One important goal of education was to produce citizens who maintained good ethics and followed traditions.

**q) What areas did sons from wealthy families study when they were older?**

Sons of wealthy families went to schools run by well-known philosophers. Students studied law, medicine, or philosophy. Young men also received military training so they could defend their city-state.

**r) What kind of education did Spartans receive?**

Sparta had special training for its young. The boys strengthened their bodies through athletics and learned how to fight. Many learned how to read and write, and they learned songs about religion and recited lines from Homer's *Iliad*.

**s) What was unique about Spartan education?**

Unlike other city-states, Sparta paid for its girls to attend school. In school, Spartan girls danced to help strengthen their bodies, and they sang songs about Spartan history.

**t) Where did Greek boys and men train and why did they train and compete naked?**

Greek boys and men trained and played at a gymnasium. The athletes practiced and competed naked, so they could freely move their bodies.

**u) What type of activities did athletes do at the gymnasium?**

Ran races, threw spears (javelins), threw the discus, wrestled and boxed, as well as taking classes in philosophy.