

Chapter Preview

This chapter will examine the rise of Ancient Greece and the development of democracy, philosophy, and the arts during the Golden Age of Athens.

Section 1

The Rise of Greek Civilization

Section 2

Religion, Philosophy, and the Arts



Target Reading Skill

Sequence In this chapter, you will focus on using sequencing to help you understand how events are related to one another. Sequencing helps you see the order in which events happened and can help you understand and remember them.

► **The ruins of the Temple of Poseidon in Greece**



Ancient Greece

MAP MASTER Skills Activity



Location Notice the land of the ancient Greeks: the mainland and the islands in the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. The ancient Greeks also built colonies on the coast of Asia Minor, or modern-day Turkey.

Describe How would you describe the lands of the ancient Greeks?

Draw Conclusions Study the map to make some guesses about how the people of ancient Greece earned a living. What role did the sea probably have in their lives? Why do you think some Greeks left ancient Greece to build cities elsewhere?

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 map skills practice.



The Rise of Greek Civilization

Prepare to Read

Objectives

In this section you will

1. Understand how Greece's geographic setting influenced the development of Greek civilization.
2. Examine early Greek history.
3. Examine the development of democracy in Greece.

Taking Notes

As you read, find the main ideas and details concerning the rise of Greek civilization. Copy the chart below, and use it to record your findings.



Target Reading Skill

Identify Sequence

Noting the order in which events take place can help you understand and remember them. You can track the order of events by making a sequence chart. In the first box, write the first event, or the development that sets the other events in motion. Then write each additional event in a box. Use arrows to show how one event leads to the next.

Key Terms

- **peninsula** (puh NIN suh luh) *n.* an area of land nearly surrounded by water

- **epic** (EP ik) *n.* a long poem that tells a story
- **acropolis** (uh KRAH puh lis) *n.* a high, rocky hill where early people built cities
- **city-state** (SIH tee steyt) *n.* a city with its own traditions, government, and laws; both a city and a separate independent state
- **aristocrat** (uh RIS tuh krat) *n.* a member of a rich and powerful family
- **tyrant** (TY runt) *n.* a ruler who takes power with the support of the middle and working classes
- **democracy** (dih MAHK ruh-see) *n.* a form of government in which citizens govern themselves



Following their defeat of the Titans, Zeus and his brothers and sisters battled the giants. The gods Apollo and Artemis, above left, confront a group of helmeted giants.

First there was nothing. Then came Mother Earth. The gods of Night and Day appeared next, and then the starry Sky. Earth and Sky created the Twelve Titans (TYT unz). These great gods rebelled against their father Sky and took away his power. The youngest of the Titans, Cronos (KROH nus), ruled in his father's place. In time, Cronos had six children. The youngest, mighty Zeus (zoos), toppled Cronos from his throne.

With such stories, the people of ancient Greece described the struggles of their gods. Like their gods, the people of Greece had to struggle for power and independence. Their struggles began with the land itself.


Greece's Geographic Setting

The land of Greece looks as if the sea had smashed it to pieces. Some pieces have drifted away to form small, rocky islands. Others barely cling to the mainland. Greece is a country made up of peninsulas. A **peninsula is an area of land surrounded by water on three sides**. Look at the map titled *Ancient Greece*. As you can see, no part of Greece is very far from the sea.

Mountains are the major landform of Greece. Greece's islands are mostly mountain peaks. Mountains wrinkle the mainland, so there are only small patches of farmland. Only about one fifth of Greece is good for growing crops. No wonder the Greeks became traders and sailors. At times, they left Greece to found colonies far away.

What was life like for people living in Greece 3,000 years ago? In a way, the ancient Greeks were all islanders. Some lived on real islands completely surrounded by water or on small peninsulas. Others lived on what could be thought of as land islands. Instead of water, mountains separated these small communities from one another. The geography of Greece made it hard for people from different communities to get together.

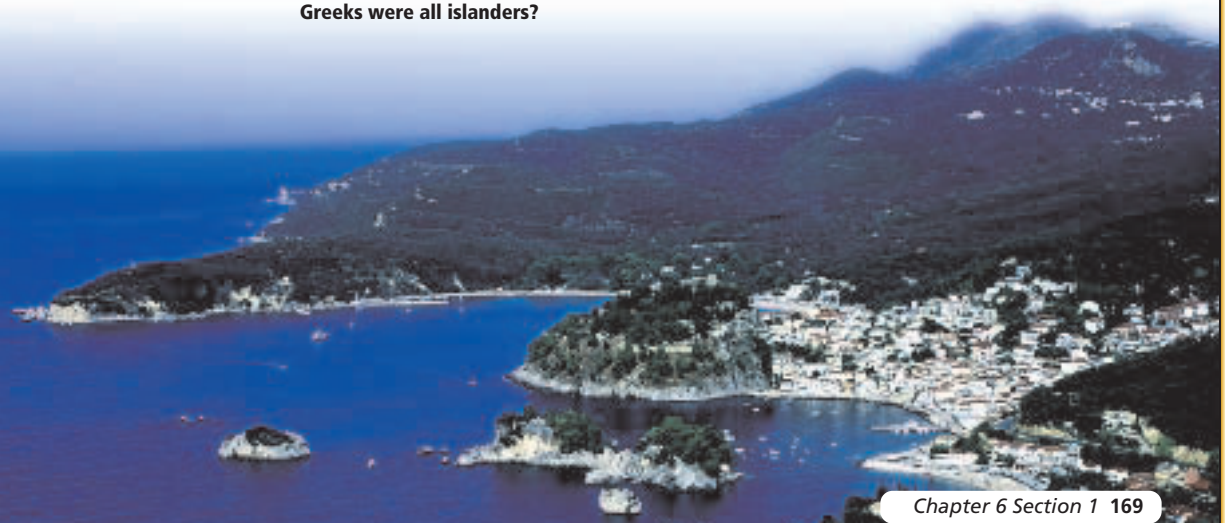
For this reason, it is no surprise that ancient Greek communities thought of themselves as separate countries. Each one developed its own customs and beliefs. Each believed its own land, traditions, and way of life were the best. And each was more than ready to go to war to protect itself. In fact, for most of their history, the Greeks were so busy fighting among themselves that it is easy to forget that they shared a common heritage, spoke the same language, and worshiped the same gods.

 **Reading Check** What do we mean when we say the ancient Greeks were all islanders?

Greece's Coastline

Several typical geographic features appear in this picture of the northwestern coast of Greece. These features include a rocky coastline and rugged mountains.

Critical Thinking How did the geographic features shown affect the way ancient people lived in this area?



Greek Beginnings

Early Greek civilization arose on and off the Greek mainland. Two ancient peoples, the Minoans (mih NOH unz) and the Mycenaeans (my suh NEE unz), made an important impact on Greek history.



Early Greek Cultures

The fresco from the 1500s B.C., shown below, illustrates Minoan naval combat. A Mycenaean princess appears in the above photo. **Conclude** How do we know that both the Minoans and the Mycenaeans developed advanced cultures?

Minoan Civilization

From about 3000 to about 1100 B.C., Bronze Age people called the Minoans lived on the island of Crete (kreet). Washed by the waters of the Aegean (ee JEE un) and Mediterranean Seas, Crete was an ideal place for the Minoans to develop a broad sea trade network. Mainland Greece and other Greek islands, as well as Egypt and Sicily, traded with the Minoans, who at one time dominated the Aegean. Archaeological finds show that the Minoans had developed a vibrant culture. Samples of Minoan writing have been found on thousands of clay tablets. A grand palace once stood in the ancient Crete city of Knossos (NAHS us). Palace ruins hint at rooms once covered with fanciful wall paintings. Various statues found within suggest that the Minoans worshipped goddesses. In the middle of the 1400s B.C., Knossos was destroyed, and Minoan civilization declined. People from mainland Greece, the Mycenaeans, were the likely invaders.



The Mycenaeans After the Mycenaeans came into power, mainland and island cultures blended. However, the focus of these cultures moved to the mainland, where the city of Mycenae was located. At the height of their power, around 1400 B.C., the Mycenaeans controlled the Aegean Sea and parts of the Mediterranean. Like the Minoans, the Mycenaeans also used writing. Studies of the Mycenaeans' script show that they spoke an early form of modern Greek.


The Minoans had gained much of their power through trade. Although the Mycenaeans traded widely, they relied upon conquest to spread their power.

The Trojan War Greek myth tells the story of the Trojan War, a long struggle between Greece and the city of Troy on the west coast of Asia Minor, in present-day Turkey. It's possible that Mycenaean warriors inspired this legend.

According to the myths, the Greeks conquered Troy by using a trick—the Trojan Horse. Greek warriors hid inside a huge wooden horse. The horse was rolled to the city gates. Thinking it was a gift, the Trojans brought the horse into their city. During the night the Greek soldiers climbed out of the horse and let the rest of their army into Troy. The Greeks burned and looted Troy and then returned home.

Two epics, or long story-telling poems, about the Trojan War survive today. They are the *Iliad* (IL ee ud) and the *Odyssey* (AH d ih see). These epics may have been composed by many people, but they are credited to a poet called Homer. The poems were important to the Greeks. They taught them what their gods were like and how the noblest of their heroes behaved. Today, people think these poems came from stories memorized by several poets and passed down by word of mouth through many generations. Homer may have been the last and greatest in this line of poets who told about the Trojan War.


Most historians agree that the Trojan War did not happen exactly as Homer described it. Some believe that Homer's epics were inspired by a long battle between the Greeks and Trojans, but others argue that the epics were inspired by a series of minor battles. Troy was destroyed by a large fire in the mid-1200s B.C., an act that some historians believe may have been committed by invaders from Greece.

 **Reading Check** Contrast how Minoans and Mycenaeans spread their power.

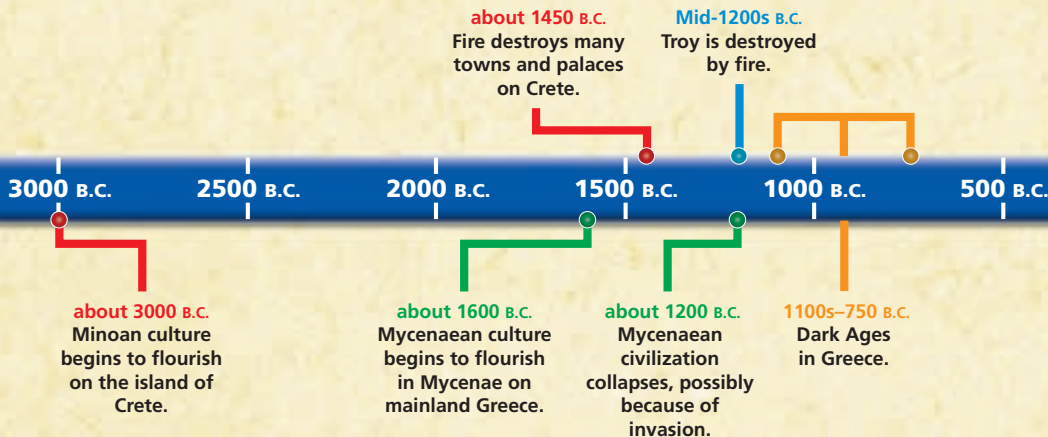


Links to Science

Troy Discovered Over the years, people came to believe that Troy and the Trojan War were fiction. An amateur archaeologist, Heinrich Schliemann (HYNrik SHLEE mahn), disagreed. In the late 1800s he used clues in the *Iliad* to pinpoint the location of Troy. When he and later archaeologists dug there, they found nine layers of ruins from ancient cities. One was possibly the Troy of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

A photograph showing the ruins of ancient Troy, featuring stone walls and structures amidst a landscape of trees and greenery.

Beginnings of Ancient Greek Culture: 3000 B.C.–750 B.C.



Timeline Skills

Two ancient peoples, the Minoans and the Mycenaens, made an important impact on Greek history.

Identify Where and when did Minoan culture begin to flourish? **Analyze** How did the location of Mycenaean culture differ from the location of the Minoan culture?

The Dark Ages of Greece

Not long after the end of the Trojan War, civilization in Greece collapsed. No one knows exactly why. Life went on, but poverty was everywhere. People no longer traded for food and other goods beyond Greece. They had to depend on what they could raise themselves. Some were forced to move to islands and to the western part of Asia Minor. They were so concerned with survival that they forgot the art of writing.

These years, from the early 1100s B.C. to about 750 B.C., have been called Greece's Dark Ages. Without writing, people had to depend on word of mouth to keep their traditions and history alive. Old traditions were remembered only in the myths that were told and retold.

Greece's Dark Ages were not completely bleak. During this time, families gradually began to resettle in places where they could grow crops and raise animals. Some of these family farms may have developed into villages. When they chose where to build their farms, people favored places near rocky, protected hills. Here they built structures to protect them from attack. The name for such a fortified hill was **acropolis**, meaning "high city."

After 800 B.C., people in Greece began writing again. It was during this period that Homer is believed to have composed his epic about the Trojan War.



Pottery painting of a Greek cobbler

✓ Reading Check What happened during Greece's Dark Ages?

Temple of Artemis

The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus was the largest of all ancient Greek buildings. The temple was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. In 1869 British archaeologist John Turtle Wood uncovered the remains of the temple. His discovery marked the first time an ancient Greek site had been excavated, or uncovered. Ancient Greeks worshipped Artemis as the goddess of wild animals and the hunt.



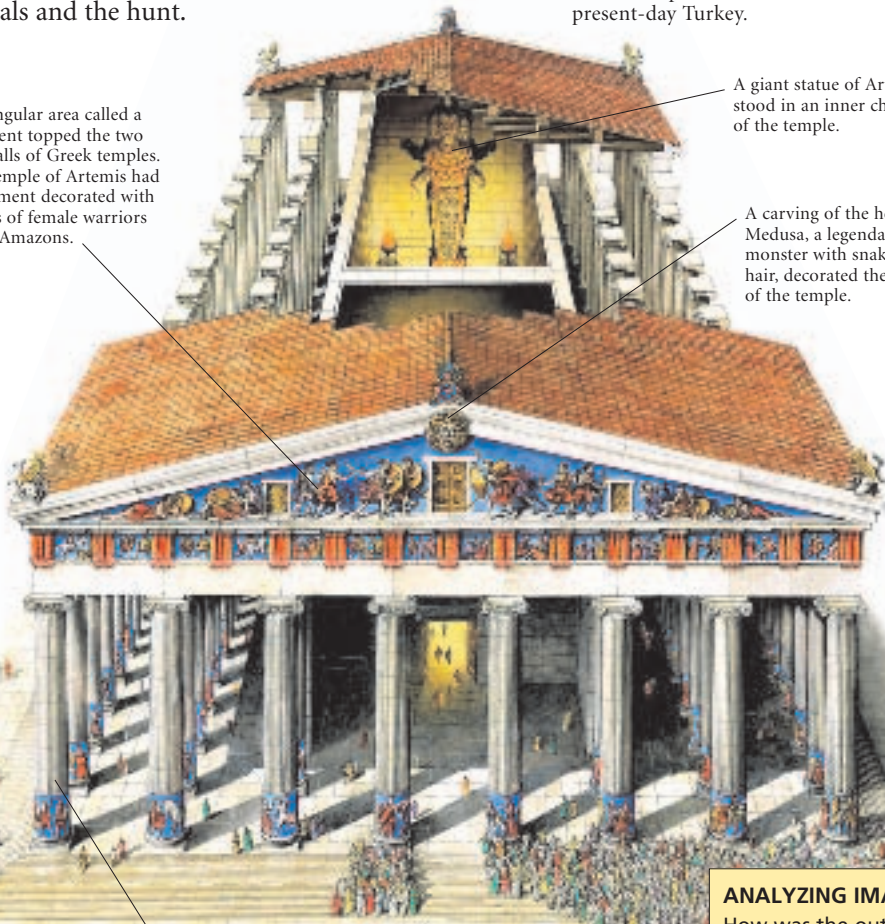
Ruins of the Temple

Fragments of marble are all that remain of the Temple of Artemis, located in present-day Turkey.

A triangular area called a pediment topped the two end walls of Greek temples. The Temple of Artemis had a pediment decorated with statues of female warriors called Amazons.

A giant statue of Artemis stood in an inner chamber of the temple.

A carving of the head of Medusa, a legendary monster with snakes for hair, decorated the front of the temple.



The columns stood more than 60 feet (18 meters) high. They numbered 127 in all.

ANALYZING IMAGES

How was the outside of the temple decorated?

City-States Develop

Historians believe that sometime around 750 B.C., villages in a small area probably joined to form a city in the shadow of an acropolis. At that time, each city began to develop its own traditions and its own form of government and laws. Today, we call these tiny nations city-states. **A city-state is not only a city, but also a separate independent state.** Each city-state included a city and the villages and fields surrounding it. Hundreds of Greek city-states grew up, each more or less independent.



Identify Sequence

What important changes led to the development of city-states in Greece?

Aristocracy: Nobles Rule The earliest rulers of city-states were probably chieftains or kings who were military leaders. By the end of Greece's Dark Ages, most city-states were ruled by **aristocrats, members of the rich and powerful families.**

Aristocrats controlled most of the good land. They could afford horses, chariots, and the best weapons to make themselves stronger than others.

A New Type of Ruler As the Greeks sailed to foreign ports trading olive oil, marble, and other products, the city-states became richer. A middle class of merchants and artisans developed. They wanted some say in the government of their cities. These people could not afford to equip themselves with horses and chariots for war. However, they could afford armor, swords, and spears. With these weapons, large groups of soldiers could fight effectively on foot. Gradually, military strength in the cities shifted from aristocrats to merchants and artisans.

As a result of these changes, aristocratic governments were often overthrown and replaced by rulers called tyrants. **A tyrant was a ruler who seized power by force.** Tyrants were usually supported by the middle and working classes. Today, we think of tyrants as being cruel and violent. That was true of some Greek tyrants, but others ruled wisely and well.

✓ Reading Check What kind of ruler often replaced aristocratic governments?



The Aristocrats


Some wealthy ancient Greeks owned chariots. **Analyze** How did the aristocrats use their wealth to gain power?

Democracy in Greece

Eventually, the people of many city-states overthrew tyrants. Some of the cities adopted a form of government called democracy. **In a democracy, citizens govern themselves.** The city-state in which democracy was most fully expressed was Athens.

About 594 B.C., a wise Athenian leader called Solon (SOH luh) won the power to reform the laws. Solon was well known for fairness. His laws reformed both the economy and the government of Athens. One of his first laws canceled all debts and freed citizens who had been enslaved for having debts. Another law allowed any male citizen of Athens aged 18 or older to have a say in debating important laws. These laws and others allowed Athens to become the leading democracy of the ancient world.

Not everyone living in ancient Athens benefited from democracy. Only about one in five Athenians was a citizen. To be a citizen, a man had to have an Athenian father and mother. Some of the people living in Athens were enslaved. These people did not take part in democracy, nor did women or men with non-citizen parents. Men who were citizens of Athens were free and self-governing.

 **Reading Check** Why did some Athenians benefit more from democracy than others?



Tools of Democracy

Athenians used a machine to help select juries. A colored ball, top, dropped into an allotment machine, bottom, would fall at random next to the slots containing names of potential jurors. In the middle is a voting tablet used in Athens. **Infer** How do you think voting helped to strengthen Athenian democracy?



Section 1 Assessment

Key Terms

Review the key terms listed at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.

Target Reading Skill

Place these events in the correct order: rise of the city-state, height of Minoan civilization, Greek Dark Ages.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. **(a) Recall** Describe the geographic setting of ancient Greece.

(b) Predict What effect do you think the geography of Greece had on the kind of communities that developed there?

2. **(a) Recall** Describe early Greek civilization.

(b) Make Generalizations How were the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations similar?

3. **(a) Identify** What two kinds of government first developed in the Greek city-states after the Greek Dark Ages?

(b) Cause and Effect How did the rise of the middle class help shape government in ancient Greece?

Writing Activity

Write a description of the conditions in Greece during the period between the 1100s B.C. and the 700s B.C. Why are these years referred to as Greece's Dark Ages?

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Section 2

Religion, Philosophy, and the Arts

Prepare to Read

Objectives

In this section you will

1. Identify the religious beliefs of the ancient Greeks.
2. Explore how the Greeks searched for knowledge about the world.
3. Describe the relationship between the rise of democracy and the spread of new ideas in Greek city-states.

Taking Notes

As you read, look for details about the religion, philosophy, and the arts of the ancient Greeks. Use a copy of the outline below to record your findings.

I. The Golden Age of Athens

A. Period from 479 to 431 B.C.

B. Sources of wealth

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

II. Ancient Greek religious beliefs

Target Reading Skill

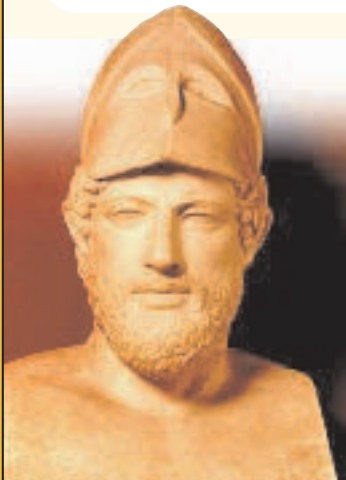
Recognize Sequence

Signal Words Signals point out relationships among ideas or events. This section discusses life in the Golden Age of Athens. To help keep the relationship between leaders, thinkers, and writers clear, look for words like *first*, *at that time*, and *in [date]* that signal the order in which these people were active.

Key Terms

- **tribute** (TRIB yoot) *n.* a payment made by a less powerful state or nation to a more powerful one

- **immortal** (ih MAWR tul) *n.* someone or something that lives forever
- **oracle** (AWH uh kul) *n.* in ancient Greece, a sacred site used to consult a god or goddess; any priest or priestess who spoke for the gods
- **philosopher** (fih LAHS uh fur) *n.* someone who used reason to understand the world; in Greece the earliest philosophers used reason to explain natural events
- **tragedy** (TRAJ uh dee) *n.* a type of serious drama that ends in disaster for the main character



Pericles led the Athenians in peace and war. The helmet he wears reminds us that he was a skilled general.

The Athenian leader Pericles (PEHR uh kleez) reminded the citizens that Athens was unique.

“Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighboring states; we are rather a pattern to others rather than imitators ourselves. Its administration favors the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy. If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all . . . [P]overty [does not] bar the way, if a man is able to serve the state. In short, I say that as a city we are the school of [Greece]. . .”

— The History of the Peloponnesian War

Thucydides

Pericles' words had special meaning: They were spoken during the first year of a war with Sparta, another Greek city-state. Eventually, it was conflict with Sparta that ended Athens' golden age of accomplishment.

The Golden Age of Athens

The years from 479 B.C. to 431 B.C. are called the Golden Age of Athens. During the Golden Age, Athens grew rich from trade and from silver mined by slaves in regions around the city. **Tribute, or payments made to Athens by its allies, added to its wealth.**

Athenians also made important achievements in the arts, philosophy, and literature, and democracy reached its high point. For about 30 years during the Golden Age, Pericles was the most powerful man in Athenian politics. This well-educated, intelligent man had the best interests of his city at heart. When he made speeches to the Athenians, he could move and persuade them.

Pericles was a member of an aristocratic family, but he supported democracy. Around 460 B.C., he became leader of a democratic group. He introduced reforms that strengthened democracy. The most important change was to have the city pay a salary to its officials. This meant that poor citizens could afford to hold public office.

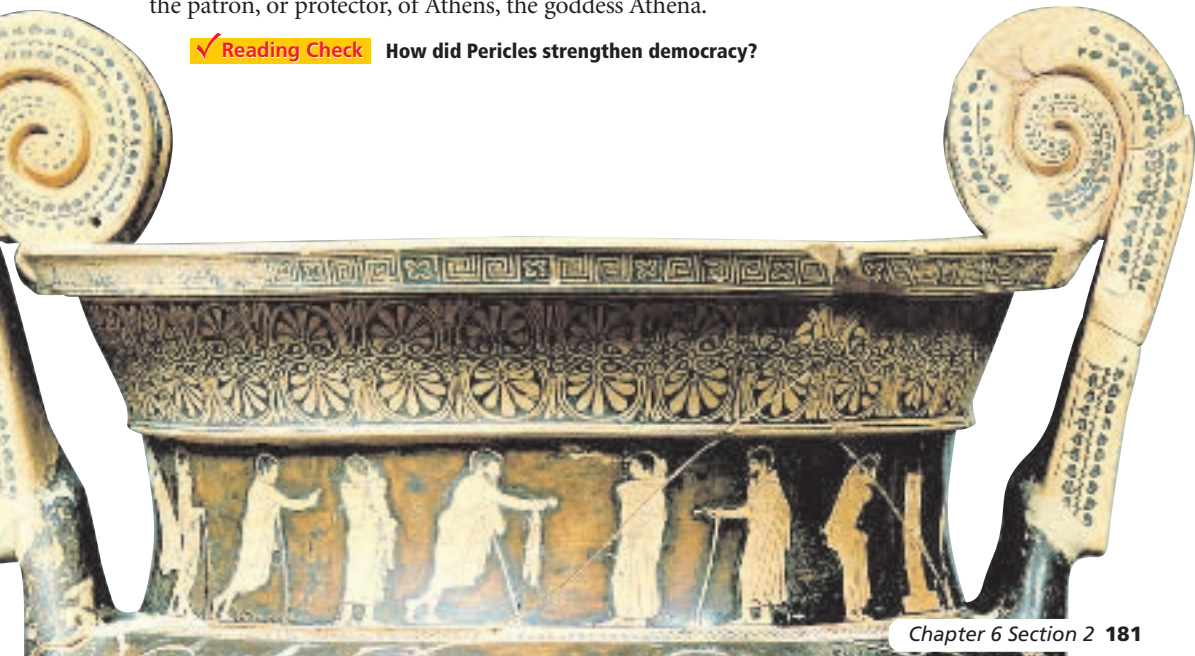
One of the greatest accomplishments under the rule of Pericles was the construction of the Parthenon (PAHR tuh nahn) between 447 and 432 B.C. The construction of the Parthenon was part of the general reconstruction of the Acropolis at Athens. Many of the buildings there had been destroyed by invaders from Persia about three decades earlier. The Parthenon was a temple built to honor the patron, or protector, of Athens, the goddess Athena.



An ancient Athenian silver coin bearing an owl, a symbol of the city

✓ Reading Check How did Pericles strengthen democracy?

A vase depicting citizenship in Athens



Ancient Greek Religious Beliefs

Greeks worshiped a family of gods and goddesses called the Twelve Olympians (oh LIM pea unz). Each ruled different areas of human life and the natural world. The chart titled “A Family of Gods” gives you more information about some of the Olympians.

The Greeks took great care when honoring their gods. They wished to give thanks and to receive blessings. They also tried to avoid angering the gods.

Gods and Goddesses Wherever the Greeks lived, they built temples to the gods. Because the gods had human forms, they also had many human characteristics. The main difference between gods and humans was that the gods were **immortal, which meant they lived forever**. They also had awesome power.

Mythology tells us that the Greeks worshiped gods led by Zeus, the king of the gods. From Mt. Olympus, Greece’s highest mountain, Zeus ruled the gods and humanity. In addition to worshiping gods, the Greeks also honored mythical heroes like Achilles (uh KIL eez), whose great deeds are told in the *Iliad*.

Although the Greeks worshiped all their gods, each city-state honored one of the twelve gods, in part by building a temple to that god. Athena (uh THEE nuh), for example, was the patron goddess of Athens. The Greeks also honored their gods by holding festivals and by sacrificing animals and offering food to the gods. To honor Zeus, the city-states came together every four years for an Olympian festival and games. Modern Olympic Games are based on this tradition.

Poseidon, Athena, Apollo, and Artemis are shown in this relief.





Delphi

The Tholos Temple at the Sanctuary of Athena Pronaia was once the gateway to Delphi. In the vase painting, Aegeus, a legendary Athenian king, consults a priestess at Apollo's oracle in Delphi. **Conclude** *Why did the ancient Greeks visit oracles?*

The Oracles In ancient cultures, people often looked to their gods for signs or advice. They wanted the gods to show them how to live or how to behave. They wanted the gods to show them how to live or how to behave. The Greeks visited **oracles, sacred sites where it was believed the gods spoke**. At these shrines, the people would ask the gods to give them advice or to reveal the future. Sometimes the advice came through dreams. Often a response would come in the form of a riddle, delivered by priests or priestesses thought to be capable of hearing the voice of the gods. Oracles of various gods were located throughout Greece. Heads of state often sought advice on governing and wars from the oracle of the god Apollo at Delphi (DEL fy), an ancient town in central Greece. Because such advice was taken very seriously, the oracles had a great impact on Greek history.

✓ Reading Check How did the Greeks honor their gods?

Chart Skills

The Greeks believed the world was ruled by gods and goddesses. Ten of them are listed in the table below.

Identify Who was considered to be the leader of all gods and goddesses?

Analyze Why do you think this chart is titled "A Family of Gods?"

A Family of Gods

Zeus (zoos)	Ruler of all gods and humanity
Hera (HIHR uh)	Goddess of marriage and childbirth
Apollo (uh PAHL oh)	God of music, poetry
Artemis (AHR tuh mis)	Goddess of hunting
Athena (uh THEE nuh)	Goddess of wisdom and war
Ares (EHR eez)	God of war
Aphrodite (af ruh DY tee)	Goddess of love
Hermes (HUR meez)	Messenger of the gods
Poseidon (poh SY dun)	God of earthquakes and the ocean
Demeter (dih MEE tur)	Goddess of fertility

The Search for Knowledge

Most Greeks believed that their gods were responsible for all natural events. But a few thinkers disagreed. About 150 years before the Golden Age of Athens, some people thought about new ways to understand the world.

Greek Science and Philosophy You learned earlier about philosophy, which is a system of beliefs or values. **Philosophers believed that people could use the powers of the mind and reason to understand natural events.** One of the first philosophers, Thales (THAY leez), believed that water was the basic material of the world. Everything was made from it. Over the years, various philosophers had other ideas about the universe. They did not do experiments. But they were careful observers and good thinkers. Democritus (dih MAHK ruh tus), who lived in the 400s B.C., thought that everything was made of tiny particles he called atoms. More than 2,000 years later, modern science showed that he had been correct.

Socrates During the Golden Age and later, several important philosophers taught in Athens. One was a man called Socrates (SAHK ruh teez). People in the marketplace of Athens could not help but notice this sturdy, round-faced man. He was there at all hours of the day, eagerly discussing wisdom and goodness.

Socrates wanted people to consider the true meaning of qualities such as justice and courage. To do this, he asked questions that made others think about their beliefs. Sometimes they became angry because Socrates often showed them that they didn't know what they were talking about. "Know thyself" was his most important lesson.

Death of Socrates

Socrates urged his students to question and critically examine all around them. For "corrupting the youth" in this way, an Athenian jury sentenced him to death.

Conclude *Why do you think some people believed Socrates corrupted the youth of Athens?*



Recognize Sequence and Signal Words

What words signal that Democritus lived in the same century as Pericles?

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on Greek philosophers.



In 399 B.C., Socrates was brought to trial. The authorities accused him of dishonoring the gods and misleading young people. He was sentenced to death by forced suicide, a common sentence in Athens at the time. Socrates drank a cup of hemlock, a poison, and died.

Plato and Aristotle Much of what is known about Socrates comes from the writings of Plato (PLAY toh), one of his students. Socrates' death caused Plato to mistrust democracy. In *The Republic*, Plato wrote that society should be made up of three groups: workers, soldiers, and philosopher-rulers. Plato founded a school in Athens called the Academy, where he taught a student named Aristotle (AR uh staht ul). Aristotle believed that reason should guide the pursuit of knowledge. He later founded his own school, the Lyceum.

✓ Reading Check How did Socrates challenge the values of the people of Athens?



The Golden Rectangle

Greek architects based the design of their buildings on a figure called the Golden Rectangle. A Golden Rectangle is one with the long sides about one and two-thirds times the length of the short sides. The Greeks thought Golden Rectangles made buildings more pleasing to look at. Modern architects have also used the Golden Rectangle.

The Acropolis

Once the religious center of Athens, the Acropolis now serves as a monument to Greek architecture.

- 1 The Propylaea, the entrance to the Acropolis, was completed in 432 B.C.
- 2 The Odeion (theater) of Herodes Atticus was built in A.D. 161.
- 3 The Erechtheion, named after a legendary king of Athens, was completed in 406 B.C.
- 4 Completed in 438 B.C., the Parthenon served as a temple to Athena, the patron goddess of Athens.

Predict Why do you think the Athenians built the Acropolis?

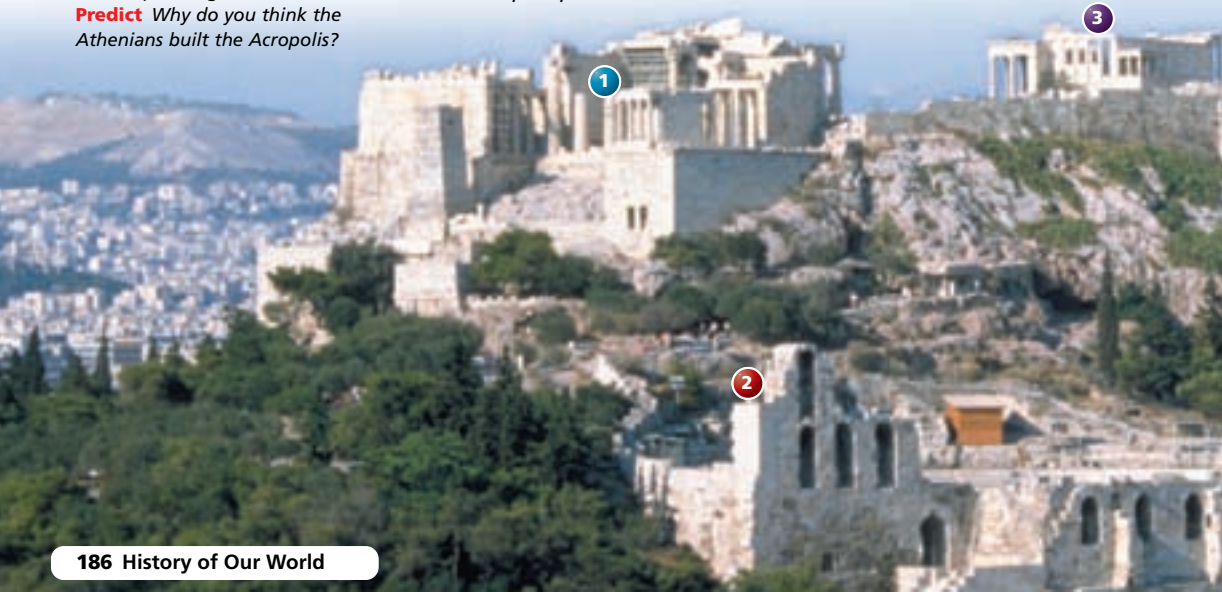
Visual and Dramatic Arts

The ancient Greeks devoted great attention to their arts. The Greeks used visual arts, such as architecture and sculpture, to glorify and honor their gods. The ancient Greeks are also known as the first playwrights, or people who write plays.

The Parthenon Today, the Athenian leader Pericles is probably best known for making Athens a beautiful city. The Acropolis, the religious center of Athens, had been destroyed in 480 B.C., during one of the city's many wars. Pericles decided to rebuild the Acropolis and create new buildings to glorify the city.

The builders of the new Acropolis brought Greek architecture to its highest point. Their most magnificent work was the Parthenon, a temple to the goddess Athena. The temple was made of fine marble. Rows of columns surrounded it on all four sides. Within the columns was a room that held the statue of Athena, made of wood, ivory, and gold. The statue rose 40 feet (12 m), as high as a four-story building.

The great statue of Athena disappeared long ago. However, much of the sculpture on the inside and outside of the temple still exists. Many of the scenes that decorate the Parthenon have three important characteristics. First, they are full of action. Second, the artist carefully arranged the figures to show balance and order. Third, the sculptures are lifelike and accurate. However, they are ideal, or perfect, views of humans and animals. These characteristics reflect the goal of Greek art. This goal was to present images of perfection in a balanced and orderly way.



Dramas In addition to their achievements in architecture and sculpture, Athenians were the first people known to write dramas. Among the city's greatest achievements were the plays written and produced in the 400s B.C., during the Golden Age.

Some of the most famous Greek plays were tragedies. **A tragedy is a serious story that usually ends in disaster for the main character.** Often, tragedies told of fictional humans who were destroyed when forced to make impossible choices. A Greek tragedy consisted of several scenes that featured the characters of the story. Between the scenes, a chorus chanted or sang poems. In most plays, the author used the chorus to give background information, comment on the events, or praise the gods.

Comedies During the 400s B.C. in Athens, poets wrote comedies that made fun of well-known citizens and politicians and also made jokes about the customs of the day. Because of the freedom in Athens, people accepted the humor and jokes.

✓ Reading Check What was the role of the chorus in Greek drama?



Greek actors performed in outdoor theaters, such as the one shown above at Epidauros. By using different masks, such as the one at top, actors could play a variety of roles.

4



Many City-States, One People

The citizens of Greek city-states such as Athens had strong patriotic feelings and valued their freedoms. For these reasons, they took a very active role in their government. They were able to develop new ideas in philosophy, religion, government, and the arts in part because of the value they placed on free thinking. The spread of education and growing wealth through trade with Egypt, Sicily, and other places gave the Greeks the freedom to explore new ideas.

Though Athens was the most important city-state, it was not the only one in Greece at this time. City-states in Greece competed against one another, but their citizens spoke the same language and had many of the same customs. They thought of themselves as part of the same people, calling themselves Hellenes.

One example of the common culture of the city-states was the Olympic Games, which were held every four years throughout ancient Greece. The first recorded Olympic Games were held in 776 B.C. Other Olympic Games were held fairly regularly over the next thousand years. Athletes from city-states around Greece competed for prizes in competitions in running, horse racing, boxing, and many other events.

Aristides, a general at the Battle of Marathon, writes his name for someone who wants him banished from Athens. Inset photo is of a voting tablet used in Aristides' trial.



✓ Reading Check What role did education and growing wealth play in the development of philosophy and the arts in ancient Greece?

Section 2 Assessment

Key Terms

Review the key terms listed at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.

Target Reading Skill

Review the section "The Search for Knowledge" on pages 184–185. Find the words that signal time related to the lives of the philosophers.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Define** What was the Golden Age of Athens?

(b) **Draw Conclusions** Why do you think Pericles called Athens "the school of all Greece"?

2. (a) **Explain** How did the Greeks attempt to understand the world?

(b) **Explore Details** What did Socrates mean when he said, "Know thyself"?

3. (a) **Explain** What characteristics did people in city-states throughout Greece share?

(b) **Infer** How did the growth of wealth through trade contribute to the spread of new ideas in Greece?

Writing Activity

Write a brief essay describing the achievements of Athenians during the Golden Age.

Go Online
PHSchool.com

For: An activity on Greek architecture
Visit: PHSchool.com
Web Code: mud-0620



Focus On Ancient Greek Theater

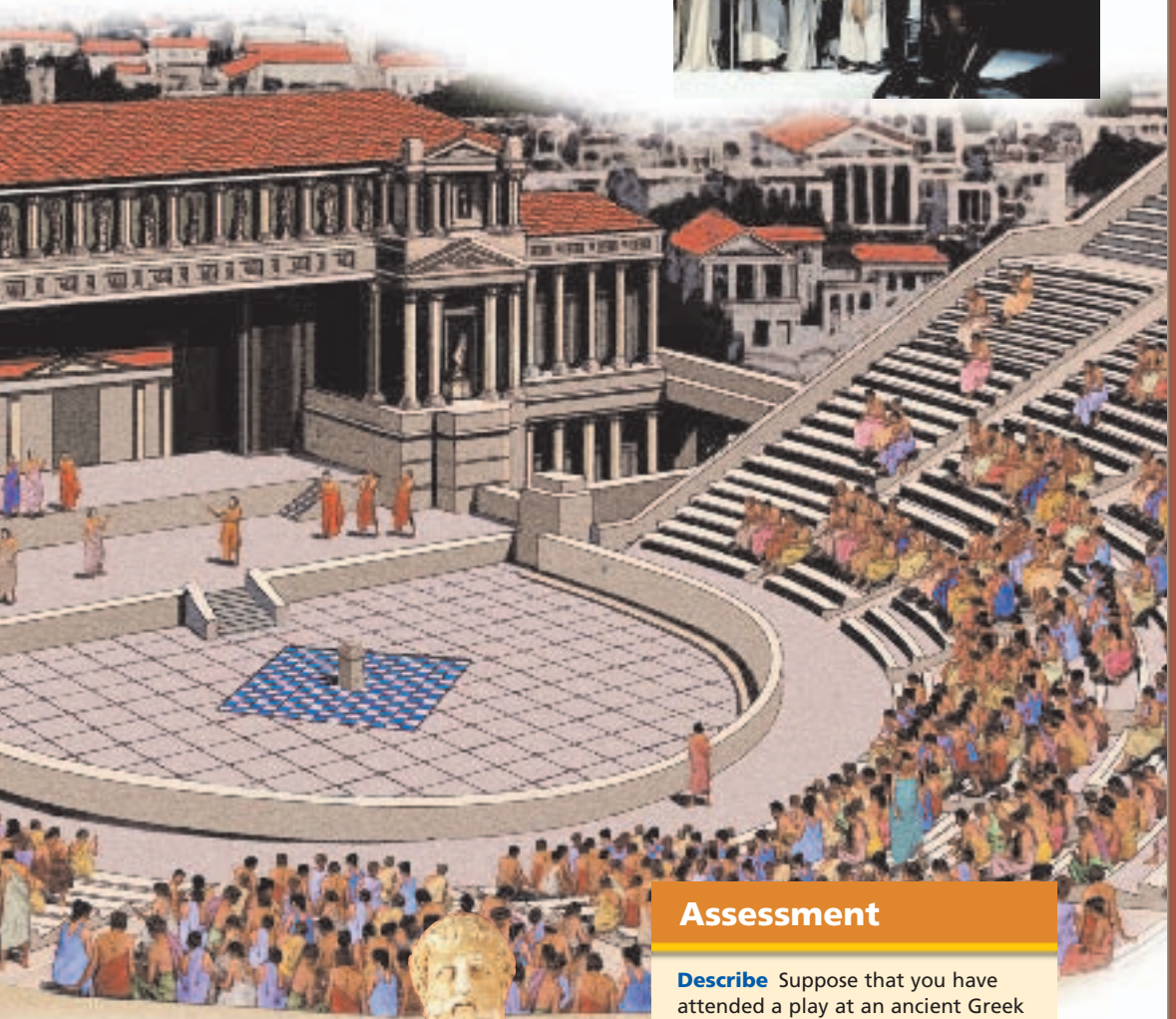
Drama was an important part of Greek culture. Many Greek plays were tragedies. These were often based on myth and were solemn and poetic. The main character was usually a good but imperfect person faced with a difficult choice. His or her struggles usually ended in death. Comedies dealt with well-known people and problems of the day. Greek plays were performed by only a few actors who played several roles. Instead of makeup, actors wore masks to indicate the kind of characters they played. A chorus danced, chanted, and commented on the action.



The Theater Early Greek theaters were probably just open areas in cities or next to hillsides. The audience would watch and listen to a chorus singing about the adventures of a god or hero. Later, theaters became much more complex but remained outdoors and open to the sky, much like a stadium today. The *theatron*, or “viewing place,” was where the spectators sat. The theater illustrated to the right could seat 17,000 spectators! Rows of seats curved halfway around a large semicircular area called an *orchestra*. Behind the *orchestra* was a building called the *skene*. The *skene* was usually decorated as a palace or temple, depending on what background was needed for a particular play. Actors could enter and exit through the doors of the *skene*.

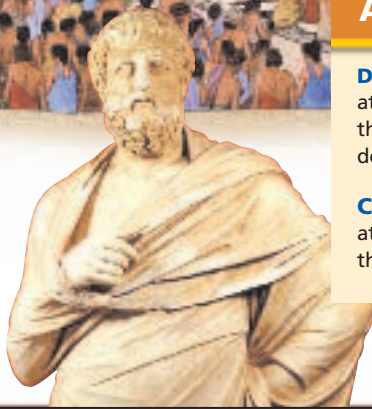
Scene from Ancient Greek Play

These present-day actors are performing an ancient Greek play. They wear masks, just as their ancient counterparts did.



A Great Greek Playwright

Sophocles was one of three great writers of Greek tragedies. Only seven of his plays have survived.



Assessment

Describe Suppose that you have attended a play at an ancient Greek theater. Write a letter to a friend describing your experience.

Compare How did the experience of attending a Greek theater differ from that of attending a play today?

Drawing Conclusions



Greek actor's mask

The teacher looked at Lisa and asked, "How did the people of Athens feel about drama?"

Lisa had read the assignment, but there wasn't anything in the book about how Athenians felt about drama. She did remember a few facts, though. "They had a lot of theaters and put on a lot of plays. They had play-writing contests. So I guess if they had so many plays, drama must have been pretty important to them."

Like Lisa, when you draw a conclusion, you figure out something based on the information you have read or seen. Drawing conclusions is a skill that will help you benefit from your schoolwork and anything you read.

Learn the skill

Use these steps to learn how to draw a conclusion:

- 1 Gather factual information about the topic.** Find out as many factual details as you can by reading about your topic and then talking with people who know about the subject.
- 2 Combine the facts with other information you already know.** Add the information you find in your research to what you already know.
- 3 Write a conclusion that follows logically.** A conclusion is usually an educated guess.



Practice the Skill

Turn to page 171, and reread the first four paragraphs of text in the main column. Use this information to draw conclusions about the Trojan War.

- 1 The text tells you about the people who may have inspired the legend of the war. It tells where the war was fought, and it describes the heroes, how they fought, and how the story was handed down to us. Choose one of these topics. Write down facts about that topic.
- 2 Combine whatever facts you already know with the facts you have just read. You might know something about stories of other wars or about how people react to war stories.
- 3 Try to form an educated guess about your topic—something that is not specifically stated in the text. Your conclusion might answer a question starting with *why*. For instance: Why has the history of the Trojan War fascinated so many people through the centuries? Check your conclusion to make sure it is supported by the facts.

Apply the Skill

Turn to page 175, and reread the paragraphs titled Democracy in Greece. Use facts from that text plus facts you already know to draw conclusions about American democracy.

The Trojan horse inside the ancient city of Troy

