

**World History Unit 2: Ancient Greece**  
**NC Essential Standard 2: Ancient Civilizations and the Rise of Empires**

I. Geography

- A. located on the Balkan Peninsula in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas
- B. geographical features affected the development of Greece
  - 1. mountains and isolated valleys – made large areas of agriculture difficult
    - a. forced them to trade and colonize which allowed the Greek culture to spread
    - b. crops native to Mediterranean, mountainous area – grapes, olives, grains
    - c. ranchers – goat and sheep grazing
  - 2. lots of islands - caused city-states to be independent; difficult to communicate and govern the same
  - 3. economy – sailors, seafarers, merchants, traders, fishermen
- C. Culture, religion, and language will unify the Greeks despite their geography

II. The Early Period - (3000 BC – 1150 BC) – The Bronze Age

A. earliest inhabitants were part of an Indo-European race from the Black Sea – intermarried with natives on Greek islands and their children became the first Greeks

B. Minoans (1750-1500 BC) – first civilization in Europe

- 1. lived on the island of Crete; isolated from other early Greeks (peaceful, no defense walls)
- 2. ruled by King Minos (Minoans are named after him)
- 3. lifestyle – seafarers, sailors, fishermen – used a trident shaped three-pronged harpoon; Built ships with many masts and square sails – possibly the first navy in the world
- 4. wealth from trade (olive oil and wine) allowed for social equality
- 5. Women were treated well – most gods and priests were women – dressed in elaborate costumes
- 6. Laws of Gortis - oldest printed laws in the world (protected by Romans when they later invaded)
- 7. Palace of Knossos
  - a. Knossos was the largest city on the island and the center of government
  - b. 5 story palace with 250 rooms – lavishly decorated with gold, bronze, etc.
  - c. frescoes – colorful murals painted in wet plaster on the walls
  - d. advanced - running water, indoor plumbing, toilets
- 8. Wealth from trade allowed for leisure time – favorite sports were boxing and bull-jumping
- 9. End of the Minoans
  - a. natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruption, tsunamis which weakened their civilization and destroyed their buildings and ships (economy)
  - b. once weakened, they were attacked and easily conquered by the Myceneans

C. Myceneans (1400 – 1200 BC)

- 1. Mycenae – main city on the peninsula called Peloponnesus; mainland Greece
- 2. traded with and conquered the Minoans – adopted much of the Minoan culture
- 3. warlike and ruled by warrior-kings
- 4. economy - merchants, sailors, raised sheep, grew grain
- 5. cities were heavily fortified with stone walls and gates (Lion Gate guarded Mycenae)
- 6. Agamemnon – most famous warrior-king
- 7. The Trojan War – the last great Mycenean adventure
  - a. economic rivalry – Troy and Greece fought over control of the straits between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea
  - b. legend – Trojan King Paris kidnapped Helen (wife of Agamemnon’s brother, Menelaus, who was the king of Sparta)
  - c. ended when Greeks defeated the Trojans by sneaking a wooden horse filled with soldiers into the city
- 8. Mycenean civilization ended when they were attacked by the Dorians

III. The Middle Period - (1100 BC – 800 BC) – The Dark Ages

A. Dorians

- 1. conquered the Myceneans
- 2. primitive culture, nomadic and warlike

3. lost the ability to read and write; made no cultural achievements (Dark Ages)
4. relied on oral history due to decline in literacy and culture

B. Homer

1. blind epic poet living in 800 BC
2. epics – long, heroic poems
3. Illiad – describes the Myceneans and King Agamemnon during the Trojan War
4. Odyssey – describes the adventures of Odysseus during his 10 year journey home from the Trojan War and conflicts with the gods
5. effect of Homer’s epics – early Greek history was officially written down and recorded

IV. City-states

A. Polis – Greek word for city-state (our word – “political”)

1. the city and surrounding land
2. built on high areas with walled fortifications
3. each polis has its own style of government - loyalty to own polis rather than to Greece as a whole
4. agora – the marketplace located in the center of the polis
5. acropolis – a fortified hilltop in the center of the polis; contains temples to the gods

B. Types of city-state governments

1. Monarchy – rule by a king or queen; power is hereditary (passed father to son)
2. Aristocracy - the upper class or landowners rule
3. Oligarchy - rule by a small, elite group such as businessmen, military leaders, or the wealthiest in the city who have the power
4. Tyranny – tyrants; one ruler who gains power by force; often a military leader; like a dictator
5. Democracy – “Demos” is Greek for people; people have the power
  - a. Direct Democracy – all citizens speak and vote in assemblies (Athens)
  - b. Representative Democracy – people elect someone to represent them in government (US)

C. Hoplite Revolution

1. Hoplites - citizen foot-soldiers who supplied their own armor/weapons (only the middle-class could afford to fight)
2. fought in a phalanx - a massive square formation where soldiers put shields above and in front of them as protection; marched as one unit

D. Overpopulation & Colonies

1. Greeks colonized distant lands when food supply ran low in Greece
2. Colonies usually loyal to home city-state
3. All colonies collectively called “Magna Grecia” (Greater Greece)
4. spread language and religion throughout their colonies

V. Athens (city-state on the peninsula, Attica)

A. developed a strong navy; also known for literacy, culture, philosophy, and many achievements

B. formed the first democracy

1. Solon –introduced some ideas of democracy by letting the poor have veto power over the assembly
2. Clisthenens
  - a. introduced a representative system that became the foundation for democracy
  - b. Council of 500 –10 tribes represented the population; each tribe elected 50 citizens to make decisions for the city

C. Athenian Democracy (direct democracy)

- a. Executive Branch – Council of 500 – members are chosen by lottery
- b. Legislative Branch – Ecclesia (assembly) – made of all citizens, rich and poor, who directly participate and are allowed to speak their opinion
- c. Judicial Branch – Heliastic Court – juries made of citizens that also serve as investigators; citizens took turns being judges

D. Citizens in Athens

- a. freemen, landowners, males over the age of 18 or 21
- b. born to Athenian parents
- c. served in the assembly; took turns as judges and public officials; have voting power
- d. non citizens included: women, foreigners, and slaves – all were denied political rights

## VI. Sparta (city-state on the peninsula, Peloponnesus)

- A. lived a simple life; their existence centered around war and military discipline
  - 1. boys had military training beginning at age 7 until age 60; given little food and treated harshly to be able to endure the hardships of war
  - 2. girls are trained just like boys to be healthy and strong in order to have healthy children
- B. very little education, art, or cultural achievements
- C. developed a strict society after the helots (slaves) revolted – helots did all farming and craftsmanship
- D. Code of Lycurgus – laws that emphasized duty to Sparta and the importance of the military
- E. Spartan government
  - 1. Executive Branch – 2 kings and an oligarchy of 5 Ephors
    - a. ephors – officials who make the laws and handle finances; real power; elected once a year
  - 2. Legislative Branch – Gerousia (“Council of Old Men”) – the Elders
    - a. every male citizen attends the assembly to vote on laws of the ephors and elders
  - 3. Judicial Branch – Council of 28 Elders
    - a. 28 elders are chosen by lot ; must be over age 60
- F. Citizens – males over the age of 30

## VII. The Persian Wars

- A. Herodotus – “the father of history;” considered the first historian; wrote about the Persian Wars
- B. Cause - The Ionian Revolt (499 – 494 BC)
  - a. Greeks had colonial interest in Ionia so they helped them revolt against Persian control
  - b. the Persians crushed the revolt and King Darius I of Persia vowed revenge on Athens
- C. Major events
  - 1. Battle of Marathon (490 BC) - Persia invaded Greece
    - a. Athens was outnumbered by the Persians but defeated them anyway due to the phalanx
    - b. Pheidippides – ran 26 miles from Marathon to Athens to report the Greek victory (“Nike”); warned Athens not to surrender but to prepare for attack from Persia; died from exhaustion
  - 2. Battle of Thermopylae (480 BC)
    - a. Xerxes – son of Darius I vowed to finish his father’s goal of revenge on Athens
    - b. King Leonidas of Sparta led 300 Spartans to sacrifice themselves by fighting off the Persians and allowing the other Greeks to retreat to Athens
    - c. Persia defeated the Spartans at Thermopylae and then burned Athens
  - 3. Battle of Salamis (island off of coast of Athens)
    - a. naval battle between 300 Greek triremes and 500 wooden Persian ships (big and bulky)
    - b. Athens used wealth from silver mines to develop triremes (ships with 3 levels of oarsmen, move quickly through seas and easy to maneuver) with battering rams
    - c. triremes could quickly retreat but the Persians ran into their own ships trying to flee; Greeks won losing only 40 ships to Persia’s 200
- D. Effects of the Persian Wars
  - 1. Greek city-states unified against Persia; unusual because normally independent and fight each other
  - 2. ended the Persian threat
  - 3. Delian League – alliance formed by Athens (most powerful Greek city-state); pay taxes to Athens
    - a. Athens was prosperous, imperialistic, advanced in the arts and science, etc.
    - b. Greek culture reached its peak; an abundance of food, money and time to spend on the arts
    - c. Pericles made Athens the cultural center of Greece
      - 1. Funeral Oration – speech given by Pericles at a funeral for Athenian soldiers
      - 2. message was democracy – the power of Athens was in the hands of the people
      - 3. Thucydides – historian that recorded the speech
    - d. Peloponnesian League – formed by Sparta in retaliation to growing Athenian power

## VIII. The Peloponnesian Wars

- A. Thucydides – historian that wrote about the Peloponnesian Wars
- B. Cause – Athens continues to increase power, wealth, and control over the eastern Mediterranean area; Sparta is called on by other city-states to put a stop to Athenian power

- C. Major events
  1. Sparta declares war on Athens forcing people inside the city walls
  2. due to an overcrowded city and poor sanitation, a plague (typhus) killed 1/3 of the population in Athens, including Pericles (leader of Athens)
  3. Athens rebuilds and again becomes aggressive causing Sparta to attack again
  4. 404 BC – Athens was forced to surrender
- D. Effects
  1. decline in the power of Athens - lost colonies, gave up fleet, forced to ally with Sparta
  2. weaker city-states are vulnerable to attack by Philip and Alexander the Great of Macedon
- IX. The Classical Period - (800 – 323 BC) – The Golden Age – Major Greek Achievements
  - A. Philosophy – the love of wisdom (“Philo” – love and “Sophia” – wisdom)
    1. challenged the belief that events were caused by the whims of the gods; debated ethics and morality
    2. taught logic – rational thinking and rhetoric – public speaking
    3. Famous philosophers were Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle
    4. Socrates (469 – 399 BC)
      - a. encouraged students to examine their beliefs and “Know Thyself;” think for themselves
      - b. Socratic Method – to teach by asking questions
      - c. arrested for “corrupting the youth” of Athens and for failing to respect the gods; given the death penalty and forced to drink poison from the hemlock plant
    5. Plato (427-347 BC)
      - a. *The Republic* – book about an ideal society where the philosophers ruled because they were the wisest; soldiers protected the city; workers farmed and produced necessities
    6. Aristotle (384 – 322 BC)
      - a. Syllogism – a set of logical statements (method of teaching); *The Lyceum* – school that became a model for later universities
  - B. Mythology – a collection of myths
    1. Myth – a legendary story involving gods and heroes that explains a cultural practice or natural phenomenon; believe gods rule every aspect of life (gods had humanlike qualities/personalities)
    2. polytheistic – Zeus is king of the gods (believe they live on Mt. Olympus)
  - C. Alphabet (from the Greek letters Alpha and Beta)
    1. adopted from the Phoenicians (alphabet with 22 letters and no vowels)
    2. Greeks added vowels; Romans later adopted the Greek alphabet and we adopt the Romans
  - D. Art, Architecture, Drama, and Literature
    1. tributes to the gods, in honor of the gods; based on legends of gods
    2. Architecture - showed balance to reflect the harmony and order in the universe
      - a. Phidias – chief builder and main sculptor of Athens
        1. Colossal statue of Zeus ; Statue of Athena
        2. The Parthenon (built in 447 BC)
          - a. located on the acropolis; a temple to Athena
          - b. greatest example of Greek architecture; Doric columns
      3. 3 styles of Greek columns
        - a. Ionic – scrolls that curl at the end
        - b. Doric – plain, simple, straight across the top
        - c. Corinthian – detailed, ornate, fancy
    3. Art - idealistic – wanted to show humans in their most perfect form
    4. Drama - first performed for religious festivals; based on myths and legends
      - a. Thespis – a famous Greek actor (our word for actors “thespians”)
      - b. Dionysus – god of wine and fertility; honor him at festivals and plays
      - c. do not use props or scenery but masks and costumes; no female actors
      - d. Amphitheaters – outdoor theaters; carved out of the mountainside for better acoustics
    5. Literature
      - a. Tragedy –ends in human suffering and disaster (Sophocles - *Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex*)
      - b. Comedy – humorous, satiric, mocks society and government
- E. The Olympics (“athlos” is Greek for contest)

1. Religious festivals to honor Zeus; began in 776 BC – also when the Greek calendar starts
2. held in the city Olympia; games lasted for 5 days
3. competed in the nude (females had separate games honoring Zeus’s wife, Hera)
4. all wars were suspended during the athletic games
5. promote a healthy mind and body
6. Pentathlon – the main event consisting of running, jumping, wrestling, discus throwing, and javelin hurling; winner of the most events was the top athlete
7. “Gymnasium” – public facilities with practice grounds, baths, and lecture rooms, etc.
8. Prize – crown of olive leaves; coin with face on it; free meals in the agora; national heroes

#### X. The Hellenistic Age

##### A. Philip of Macedon

1. Macedonia, rugged mountainous area north of Greece
2. Battle of Chaeronea (338 BC) – Philip united all Greek city-states under his control; next planned to conquer Persia to create a large empire

##### B. Alexander the Great

1. conquered Persia and established Greek colonies
2. empire stretched throughout the Mediterranean, to Persia, Egypt, and Asia Minor; empire was the largest created by one man at that time in history –stretched as far as India
3. greatest achievement – the spread of Greek culture (language, religion, arts, etc.)

##### C. Hellenism

1. A blend of eastern and western cultures; combined Greek, Persian, Egyptian, and Indian cultures
2. Dissolution of Alexander’s Empire- After dying from a fever, Alexander’s empire was split up among his generals
3. Alexandria, Egypt (many cities in the empire with named in his honor)
  - a. became the cultural center of the empire; built a large library
  - b. famous for the Pharos Lighthouse (wonder of the world)
4. Hellenistic Achievements
  - a. Pythagoras – theory the world is based on mathematical patterns; theorem for right triangles; weights and measures
  - b. Euclid – wrote a book called “The Elements” about geometry
  - c. Archimedes – calculated the value of pi; lever and pulley system
  - f. Hippocrates – the “father of medicine,” wrote the Hippocratic Oath on ethics for all doctors
  - g. Zeno – founded a philosophy called Stoicism (accept what life brings)
  - h. Epicurus – founded a philosophy called Epicureanism (pursue pleasure by avoiding pain)