Classical Greece, 2000 B.C.–300 B.C.

While empires were forming in Africa and Asia, the ancient Greeks were building city-states on the lands surrounding the Aegean Sea. Over several centuries, these city-states (particularly Athens) produced a civilization that would have a profound impact on the rest of the world. The map at the right shows the Greek city-states in 750 B.C. Use the map to answer the questions that follow.

1. Where were the Greek city-states located?
2. Why would the sea have been important to these early city-states?
3. What factors might have kept the Greek city-states from uniting as a single kingdom?

For more information about ancient Greece, Alexander, and related topics . . .

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This mosaic shows Alexander the Great at the Battle of Issus in 333 B.C. Alexander led a charge against a much larger army. Alexander's startled enemies fled.

Athens was named after the goddess Athena.

2000 B.C.
Minoan civilization prospers on Crete.

1500 B.C.
Mycenaean culture thrives on Greek mainland.
Greek City-States, 750 B.C.

- About 1200 B.C.: Trojan War takes place.
- 750 B.C.: Greek city-states flourish.
- 479 B.C.: Greece triumphs in Persian Wars.
- 334 B.C.: Alexander starts to build his empire.
Interact with History

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of ancient Greece? You can learn much about what a culture values from its works of art, literature, and from the statements of its leaders and philosophers. Look at these famous works of art from Greece and read the quotations.

What did the Greeks value?

“The river-god ... Achelous took the form of a bull and attacked him fiercely ... but Hercules ... conquered him and broke off one of his horns.”
Edith Hamilton, in Mythology (from Apollodorus)

This Greek vase depicts the mythological hero Hercules, noted for his strength and courage, battling Achelous.

This stone relief panel of Democracy crowning Athens was placed in the marketplace, where citizens could see it daily.

“Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people.”
Pericles, an Athenian statesman

The Greeks often used sculptures of graceful maidens, called caryatids, as building support columns.

“For we are lovers of the beautiful, yet simple in our tastes. ...”
Thucydides, a historian

EXAMINING the ISSUES

• What does the relief panel suggest about the role of democracy in Greek society?
• What special qualities do heroes and athletes possess?
• Why would the Greeks carve a statue of a lovely woman onto a building column or decorate their pottery with a heroic scene?

Break into small groups and talk about what common elements you see in these artworks. Also discuss what the quotes tell you about Greek culture and ideals. In what ways do you think Greek values still influence us today?

As you read about ancient Greece—its history, culture, and forms of government—note what roles these ideals played in Greek society.
SETTING THE STAGE  In ancient times, Greece was not a united country. It was a collection of separate lands where Greek-speaking people lived. By 2000 B.C., the Minoans lived on the large Greek island of Crete. The Minoans created an elegant civilization that had great power in the Mediterranean world. At the same time, Indo-European peoples migrated from the plains along the Black Sea and Anatolia. The Indo-Europeans settled in mainland Greece. Seaborne commercial networks spread ideas as well as resources throughout the eastern Mediterranean.

Geography Shapes Greek Life

Ancient Greece consisted mainly of a mountainous peninsula jutting out into the Mediterranean Sea. It also included approximately 1,400 islands in the Aegean (ih-JEE-uhn) and Ionian (eye-OH-nee-uhn) seas. Lands on the western coast of Anatolia were also part of ancient Greece. (See the map on page 112.) The region’s physical geography directly shaped Greek traditions and customs.

The Sea  The sea shaped Greek civilization just as rivers shaped the ancient civilizations of Egypt, the Fertile Crescent, India, and China. In one sense, the Greeks did not live on a land but around a sea. Greeks rarely traveled more than 85 miles to reach the coastline. The Aegean Sea, the Ionian Sea, and the neighboring Black Sea were important transportation routes for the Greek people. These liquid highways linked most parts of Greece. As the Greeks became skilled sailors, sea travel also connected Greece with other societies. Sea travel and trade were also important because Greece itself was poor in natural resources. Greece lacked timber, precious metals, and usable farmland.

The Land  Rugged mountains covered about three-fourths of ancient Greece. Mountains divided the land into a number of different regions. The mountain chains ran mainly from northwest to southeast along the Balkan peninsula. They significantly influenced Greek political life. Unlike the Egyptians or the Chinese, it was difficult to unite the ancient Greeks under a single government. Greece developed small, independent communities within each little valley and its surrounding mountains. Most Greeks gave their loyalty to these local communities.

In ancient times, the uneven terrain also made land transportation difficult. Early Greek roads were little more than dirt paths. For example, the city-state of Sparta was only about 60 miles from Olympia, the site of the Olympic Games. Yet it took Spartans almost seven days to travel that distance.

Much of the land itself was stony and only a small part of it—approximately 20 percent—was arable, or suitable for farming.

Vocabulary
peninsula: a piece of land that extends into a body of water and is connected to the mainland

THINK THROUGH HISTORY
A. Analyzing Causes  In what ways did Greece’s location by the sea and its mountainous land affect the development of its society?

Nestled at the base of a mountain range, this coastal Greek city has a rugged shoreline.
Tiny but fertile valleys covered about one-fourth of Greece. The small streams that watered these valleys were not suitable for large-scale irrigation projects.

With so little fertile farmland or fresh water for irrigation, Greece was never able to support a large population. It is estimated that no more than a few million people lived in ancient Greece at any given time. Even this small population couldn’t expect the land to support a life of luxury. As a result, the Greeks based their diet on basic staple crops such as grains, grapes, and olives. A desire for more living space, grassland for raising livestock, and adequate farmland may have been factors that motivated the Greeks to seek new sites for colonies.

The Climate Climate was the third important environmental influence on Greek civilization. Greece has a varied climate with temperatures averaging 48 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter and 80 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer. In ancient times, these moderate temperatures supported an outdoor life for many Greek citizens. Men spent much of their leisure time at outdoor public events. They met often to discuss public issues, exchange news, and take an active part in civic life.

Mycenaean Civilization Develops As Chapter 3 explained, a large wave of Indo-Europeans migrated from the Eurasian steppes to Europe, India, and Southwest Asia. Some of these people who settled on the Greek mainland around 2000 B.C. were later known as Mycenaeans. The name came from their leading city, Mycenae (my-SEE-nee).

Mycenae was located on a steep, rocky ridge and surrounded by a protective wall up to 20 feet thick. The fortified city of Mycenae could withstand almost any attack. From
Mycenae, a warrior-king ruled the surrounding villages and farms. Similar Mycenaean palace-forts dotted the southern part of Greece. Influential and militaristic rulers controlled the Mycenaean communities in towns such as Tiryns and Athens. These kings dominated Greece from about 1600 to 1200 B.C.

**Culture and Trade** The nobles who lived within the fortresses enjoyed a life of surprising splendor. They feasted in great halls 35 feet wide and 50 feet long. During banquets, the firelight from a huge circular hearth glittered on a dazzling variety of gold pitchers and silver cups. When the royal Mycenaens died, they were buried with their richest treasures. Warrior-kings won their enormous wealth by controlling local production and commercial trade. They also led their armies in search of plunder. However, few other Mycenaens had the wealth of the warrior-kings. Wealthy kings of the Bronze Age (2000–1100 B.C.) wielded bronze weapons and drank from cups of gold. The common people used tools made from less expensive materials such as stone and wood. Most were farmers, but others worked as weavers, goat herders, or stonemasons.

The warrior-kings of Mycenae also invaded Crete. The Minoan civilization had flourished on Crete for 600 years. The civilization ended abruptly and mysteriously in 1400 B.C. The Mycenaean invasions prevented the Minoans from rebuilding. However, the Mycenaens preserved elements of Minoan culture by making it part of their own lives.

From their contact with the Minoans, the Mycenaeans saw the value of seaborne trade. Mycenaean traders sailed to islands in the Aegean, coastal towns of Anatolia, and to cities in Syria, Egypt, Italy, and Crete. The Minoans influenced Mycenaean culture in other ways as well. The Mycenaens adapted the Minoan writing system to the Greek language and decorated vases with Minoan designs. Their legacy survived in the form of legends. These legends later formed the core of Greek religious practice, art, politics, and literature. Western civilization has roots in these early Greek civilizations.

**The Trojan War** About 1200 B.C. the Mycenaean kings fought a ten-year war against Troy, an independent trading city located in Anatolia. According to legend, a Greek army besieged and destroyed Troy because a Trojan youth had kidnapped Helen, the beautiful wife of a Greek king.

For many years, historians thought that the legendary stories told of the Trojan War were totally fictional. Then around 1870, a German archaeologist, Heinrich Schliemann, began excavating a hill in northwestern Turkey. He found the remains of nine layers of city life, one of which may date from this time period. His discoveries suggest that the stories of the Trojan War may have been based on real cities, people, and events.

In 1988, another German historian, Manfred Korfmann, excavated an ancient maritime cemetery near the hill believed to be the site of ancient Troy. Although some scholars disagree, Korfmann believes the Trojan War was a struggle for control of a crucial waterway in the Aegean Sea. In any event, the attack on Troy was probably one of the last campaigns of the Mycenaens.

**Greek Culture Declines Under the Dorian**

Not long after the Trojan War, Mycenaean civilization collapsed. Around 1200 B.C., sea raiders attacked and burned palace after palace. At Mycenae, a layer of ashes from a terrible fire covered the entire palace site. According to tradition, a new group of people, the Dorians (DAWR-ee-uhnz), moved into this war-torn countryside. The Dorian spoke a dialect of Greek and were distant relatives of the Bronze Age Greeks.

The Dorians were far less advanced than the Mycenaean Greeks. The centralized economy collapsed and trade eventually came to a standstill with their arrival. Most
important to historians, Greeks appear to have temporarily forgotten the art of writing during the Dorian Age. No written record exists from the 400-year period between 1150 and 750 B.C. Without written records, little is known about this period of decline.

**Epics of Homer** Lacking writing, the Greeks of this time learned about the Trojan War through the spoken word. Their greatest storyteller, according to Greek tradition, was a blind man named Homer. Little is known of his personal life. Some historians believe Homer composed his epics, narrative poems celebrating heroic deeds, between 750 and 700 B.C. The Trojan War forms the backdrop for Homer’s two great epic poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

The heroes of *The Iliad* are warriors: the fierce Greek, Achilles (uh-KHIL•eez), and the courageous and noble Hector of Troy. In the following dramatic excerpt, Hector’s wife begs him not to fight Achilles:

**A VOICE FROM THE PAST**

“O Hector, your courage will be your destruction; and you have no pity on your little son or on me, who will soon be your widow... if I lose you, it would be better for me to die...”

Then tall Hector... answered, “Wife, I too have thought upon all this. But I would feel deep shame if like a coward I stayed away from battle. All my life I have learned to be brave and to fight always in the front ranks of the Trojans, winning glory for myself...”

HOMER, *The Iliad*

Hector’s response to his wife gives insight into the Greek heroic ideal of aretē (ar•uh•TAY), meaning virtue and excellence. A Greek could display this ideal on the battlefield, in combat, or in athletic contests.

Homer’s other epic, *The Odyssey*, concerns the adventures of Odysseus (oh•DIH•see•uh). Odysseus uses his wits and trickery to defeat the Trojans. Much of this epic is set after the war. It concerns his ten-year journey home and the strange and mysterious lands Odysseus visits along the way.

**Greeks Create Myths** The Greeks developed a rich set of myths, or traditional stories, about their gods. Through these myths, the Greeks sought to understand the mysteries of nature and the power of human passions. Myths explained the changing of the seasons, for example.

Greeks attributed human qualities, such as love, hate, and jealousy, to their gods. The gods quarreled and competed with each other constantly. However, unlike humans, the gods lived forever. Zeus, the ruler of the gods, lived on Mount Olympus with his wife, Hera. Hera was often jealous of Zeus’ relationships with other women. Athena, goddess of wisdom, was Zeus’ daughter and his favorite child. The Greeks thought of Athena as the guardian of cities, especially of Athens, which was named in her honor. You will learn about Athens and other cities in Section 2.
Warring City-States

Setting the Stage  After the sea peoples invaded mainland Greece around 1200 B.C., the Dorians moved into the area. Greek civilization experienced a period of decline during the Dorian period. After many centuries, Dorians and Mycenaeans alike identified less with the culture of their ancestors and more with their local city-state. By 750 B.C. the Greeks saw the rise of powerful city-states.

Rule and Order in Greek City-States

By 750 B.C., the city-state, or polis, was the fundamental political unit in ancient Greece. A polis was made up of a city and its surrounding countryside, which included numerous villages. Most city-states controlled between 50 and 500 square miles of territory. They were often home to fewer than 20,000 residents. At the agora (the public center), or on a fortified hilltop called an acropolis (uh-KRAHP-ul-ih's), male citizens gathered to conduct business.

Greek Political Structures

There were many ways to rule a Greek polis. In some city-states, much like river-valley civilizations, kings or monarchs ruled in a government called a monarchy. In time, some city-states adopted an aristocracy (uh-BAHK-ruh-see), a government ruled by a small group of noble, land-owning families. These very rich families often gained political power after working in a king’s military cavalry.

Later, as trade expanded, a new class of wealthy merchants and artisans emerged in some cities. When these groups became dissatisfied with aristocratic rule, they sometimes took power or shared it with the nobility. They formed an oligarchy, a government ruled by a few powerful people. The idea of representative government also began to take root in many city-states. Regardless of its political structure, each polis enjoyed a close-knit community. Most Greeks looked down on all non-Greek foreigners, whom they considered barbarians.

A New Kind of Army Emerges

During the Dorian Age, only the rich could afford bronze spears, shields, breastplates, and chariots. Iron later replaced bronze in the manufacture of weapons. Harder than bronze, iron was more common and therefore cheaper. Soon, ordinary citizens could afford to arm and defend themselves.

The shift from bronze to iron weapons made possible a new kind of army composed of merchants, artisans, and small landowners. Citizens were expected to defend the polis. Foot soldiers, called hoplites, stood side by side, holding a spear in one hand and a shield in the other. This fearsome formation, or phalanx (FAY-lanks), was the most powerful fighting force in the ancient world.

Tyrants Seize Power

No ruler could ignore the power of the citizen-soldiers. In many city-states, unemployed farmers and debt-ridden artisans joined in revolt against the...
nobles. Powerful individuals, called tyrants, gained control of the government by appealing to the poor and the discontented for support.

The rule of some city-states passed from one tyrant to the next as competing groups took power. Other cities, however, found new ways of governing. Among these city-states were two of the most powerful, Sparta and Athens.

Sparta Builds a Military State

Located in the southern part of Greece known as the Peloponnesus (PEHL•uh-pub-NEE•sus), Sparta was nearly cut off from the rest of Greece by the Gulf of Corinth. (See the map on page 112.) Unlike other city-states, Sparta built a military state.

Sparta Dominates Messenians While other city-states founded colonies abroad, Sparta conquered neighboring Messenia around 725 B.C. and took over the land. The Messenians became helots (HEHL•uhhts), peasants forced to stay on the land they worked. Each year, the Spartans demanded half of the helots' yearly crop. Around 600 B.C., the Messenians, who outnumbered the Spartans eight to one, revolted. The Spartans just barely put down the revolt, and then dedicated themselves to the creation of a strong city-state.

Sparta’s Government and Society Two groups governed Sparta. An assembly, composed of all free adult males, elected officials and voted on major issues. The second group was the Council of Elders. It proposed laws on which the assembly voted. Five elected officials called ephors carried out the laws the council passed. These men controlled education and prosecuted court cases. In addition, two kings ruled over Sparta’s military.

Like its political structure, Sparta’s population was diverse and consisted of several social groups. The first were citizens descended from the original inhabitants of the region. This group included the ruling families who owned the land. A second group, noncitizens but free, worked in commerce and industry. The helots, near the bottom of Spartan society, were a little higher than slaves. Some also served as household servants or worked for the citizen hoplite warriors.

Spartan Education For men, daily life centered around military training. Training was rigorous. At the age of seven, boys left home and moved into army barracks. Wearing no shoes, they marched in light tunics during the day and slept on hard benches at night. Trainees gulped down meager meals of coarse black porridge. Such schooling produced tough soldiers.

Spartan girls also led hardy lives. Although they did not receive military training, they ran, wrestled, and played sports. Like the boys, they also learned to put service to Sparta above even love of family. As adults, women managed the family estates while their husbands served the polis. Although Spartan women did not have the right to vote, their roles in Spartan society surprised men from other Greek city-states. This was particularly true in Athens, where citizens expected women to remain out of sight and quietly raise children.

From around 600 until 371 B.C., the Spartans had the most powerful army in Greece, but they paid a high price for that position. All forms of individual expression were discouraged. As a result, Spartans did not value the arts and had practically no time for artistic expression. Spartans valued duty, strength, and discipline over individuality, beauty, and freedom.

Spartan women, such as the runner below, took part in athletic contests.
Athens Builds a Limited Democracy

Located on a rocky hill in eastern Greece, Athens lay to the north of Sparta. (See the map on page 112.) In outlook and values, Athens contrasted sharply with Sparta. An ambassador from the city-state of Corinth once compared the Spartans to the Athenians in a speech to the Spartan assembly. He told the Spartans that though they had the strongest army in Greece, they were too cautious. He also said that the Spartans lacked imagination and curiosity. Athenians, he said, were always eager to learn new ideas because they had been educated to think and act as free people.

Political Developments in Athens  Like other city-states, Athens went through a power struggle between rich and poor. However, Athenians avoided civil war by making timely reforms. Athenian reformers tried to create democracy, rule by the people. In Athens, citizens participated directly in political decision making.

Not everyone in Athens had a part in this new form of political participation. Only free adult males counted as citizens. Women, slaves, and foreigners living in Athens were excluded from citizenship and had few rights. Slaves formed about one-third of the Athenian population. They worked in mines, farmed fields, and did housework.

In general, Athenian women focused their attention on child rearing, weaving cloth, preparing meals, and managing the household. In this excerpt, a Greek historian describes what a husband expected from his wife:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST
You will need to stay indoors. . . . The greatest joy of all will be to prove yourself . . . a better helpmate to myself and to the children, a better guardian of our home, so will your honor increase. . . . [By being dutiful] you will enjoy your food, grow vigorous in health, and your complexion will in very truth be lovelier.

XENOPHON, Oeconomicus

In addition to having no part in government, women had very little to do with the city’s intellectual life.

Solon’s Political and Economic Reforms  Repeated clashes occurred between the aristocrats who governed Athens and the common people. A group of peasants foiled an attempt by an Athenian nobleman named Cylon (SI•luhn) to establish a tyranny. In return, they demanded a written code of laws. In 621 B.C., the Greek lawmaker Draco wrote the first legal code, dealing mainly with contracts and property ownership. Draco’s code included such unfair practices as debt slavery, in which small farmers worked as slaves to repay their debts. As a result, conflicts between the aristocrats and the poor continued. To prevent civil war, in 594 B.C. the aristocrats chose a trusted statesman named Solon (SO•luhn) to head the government. Athenians gave him full power to reform the law.

Solon outlawed debt slavery. He allowed all citizens to participate and debate policies in the Athenian assembly. In another political move, Solon introduced the legal concept that any citizen could bring charges against wrongdoers. In addition, his economic reforms benefited many. For example, by encouraging the export of grapes and olives, Solon initiated a profitable overseas trade and demand for these products.

Although Solon initiated political and economic changes, he neglected land reforms. At the end of his rule, fighting erupted between wealthy landowners and the poor.

Forms of Government

Monarchy
- State ruled by a king
- Rule is hereditary
- Some rulers claim divine right
- Practiced in Mycenae (1450 B.C.)

Aristocracy
- State ruled by nobility
- Rule is hereditary and based on land ownership
- Social status and wealth support rulers’ authority
- Practiced in Athens (594 B.C.)

Oligarchy
- State ruled by a small group of citizens
- Rule is based on wealth
- Ruling group controls military
- Practiced in Sparta (800–600 B.C.)

Direct Democracy
- State ruled by its citizens
- Rule is based on citizenship
- Majority rule decides vote
- Practiced in Athens (461 B.C.)

SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts
1. Which forms of government feature rule based on wealth or property ownership?
2. In which form of government do citizens have the most power?
farmers. Around 546 B.C., a nobleman and military leader named Pisistratus (py-SISTR-uh-lee) seized power and became one of Athens’ first tyrants. Seeking power at the expense of the nobles, he provided funds to help peasants buy farm equipment. He financed this reform by a tax on agricultural production. Pisistratus also launched a massive building program that gave jobs to the poor and earned him their support.

**Reforms of Cleisthenes** Beginning in 508 B.C., the Athenian leader Cleisthenes (KLIS-uh-nee) introduced further reforms. He worked to make Athens a full democracy by reorganizing the assembly to break up the power of the nobility. He also increased the power of the assembly by allowing all citizens to submit laws for debate and passage. Cleisthenes then created the Council of Five Hundred. This body proposed laws and counseled the assembly. Council members were chosen by lot, or at random. While these reforms allowed Athenian citizens to participate in a limited democracy, only one-fifth of Athenian residents were actual citizens.

**The Persian Wars**

Danger of a helot revolt led to Sparta becoming a military state. Danger of revolution among poverty-stricken farmers led to Athens becoming a democracy. The greatest danger of all—invasion by Persian armies—moved Sparta and Athens alike to their greatest glory.

**Battle at Marathon** The Persian Wars, between Greece and the Persian Empire, began in Ionia on the coast of Anatolia. Greeks had long been settled there, but around 520 B.C., the Persians conquered the area. When Ionian Greeks revolted, Athens sent ships and soldiers to their aid. The Persian king Darius defeated the rebels and then vowed to destroy Athens in revenge.

In 490 B.C., a Persian fleet carried 25,000 men across the Aegean Sea and landed northeast of Athens on a plain called Marathon. There, 10,000 Athenians, neatly arranged in phalanxes, waited for them. Vastly outnumbered, the Greek soldiers charged. The Persians, who wore light armor and lacked training in this kind of land combat, were no match for the disciplined Greek phalanx. After several hours, the Persians fled the battlefield. The casualties reportedly numbered 6,400 Persians and only 192 Athenians.

Though the Athenians won the land battle, their city now stood defenseless. According to tradition, army leaders chose a young runner named Pheidippides (fy-DIP-deez) to race back to Athens. He brought news of the Persian defeat so that Athenians would not give up the city without a fight. Sprinting the distance from Marathon to Athens, Pheidippides delivered his message, collapsed, and died. His heroic run inspired officials at the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens to add a 26-mile marathon to their competition.

In 1908, officials in London further lengthened the race. King Edward VII decided he wanted it to begin at Windsor Castle—385 yards from the city’s Olympic Stadium. The photo below shows Lameck Aquita of Kenya, who won the 1997 Boston Marathon with a time of 2 hours, 10 minutes, 34 seconds.

**Modern Marathons**

Today, the word marathon refers to a foot race of 26 miles, 385 yards. One of the largest and best known is the Boston Marathon. The history of this grueling race dates back to the Persian Wars and Pheidippides’ run from Marathon to Athens.

After running at top speed for approximately 25 miles, Pheidippides arrived in Athens. He gasped “Rejoice, we conquer,” and instantly died. His heroic run inspired officials at the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens to add a 26-mile marathon to their competition.

In 1908, officials in London further lengthened the race. King Edward VII decided he wanted it to begin at Windsor Castle—385 yards from the city’s Olympic Stadium. The photo below shows Lameck Aquita of Kenya, who won the 1997 Boston Marathon with a time of 2 hours, 10 minutes, 34 seconds.

**Thermopylae and Salamis** Ten years later, in 480 B.C., Darius the Great was dead. His son and successor Xerxes (ZURK-seez) tried to crush Greece. Xerxes assembled an enormous invasion force of ships and men. By then, however, the Greeks were badly divided. Some city-states agreed to fight the Persians. Others thought it wiser to let Xerxes destroy Athens and return home. Some Greeks even fought on the Persian side. Consequently, Xerxes’ army met no resistance as it marched down the eastern coast of Greece.

When Xerxes came to a narrow mountain pass at Thermopylae (thur-MAHP-uh-lee), 7,000 Greeks, including 300 Spartans, blocked his way. The Persian king underestimated their power. They fought for three days before a traitor told the Persians about
a secret path around the cliffs. Fearing defeat, the Spartans held the pass while the other Greek forces retreated. The Spartans’ valiant sacrifice—all were killed—made a great impression on all Greeks.

Meanwhile, in Athens, the citizens debated how best to defend the city. Themistocles, an Athenian statesman, convinced Athenians to evacuate the city and fight at sea. He positioned the Greek fleet in a narrow channel near the island of Salamis (SAL•uh•mihs), a few miles southwest of Athens. After setting fire to Athens, Xerxes sent his warships to block both ends of the channel. However, the channel was too narrow to permit the Persian fleet to maneuver well. Greek ships drove their battering rams straight into the wooden hulls, punching holes in the Persian warships. Xerxes watched in horror as more than one-third of his fleet sank. The Spartans defeated the rest of the Persian army at a third battle on the plain of Plataea (pluh•TEE•uh) in 479 B.C.

Consequences of the Persian Wars

With the Persian threat ended, all the Greek city-states felt a new sense of confidence and freedom. Athens, in particular, basked in the glory of the Persian defeat. After the war, Athens became the leader of an alliance of 140 city-states called the Delian (DEE•lee•uhn) League. The league drove the Persians from the territories surrounding Greece and ended the threat of future attacks. Soon thereafter, Athens began to use its powerful navy to control the other league members. The prestige of victory and the wealth of the empire set the stage for a dazzling burst of creativity in Athens. The city was entering its brief, golden age.

GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

1. Movement By what routes did the Persians choose to attack Greece? Explain why.
2. Location Where did most of the battles of the Persian Wars occur? How might their citizens be affected?

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

C. Recognizing Effects How did the Persian Wars affect the Greek people, especially the Athenians?

1. TERMS & NAMES

   Identify
   • polis
   • acropolis
   • monarchy
   • aristocracy
   • oligarchy
   • phalanx
   • tyrant
   • helot
   • democracy
   • Persian Wars

2. TAKING NOTES

   Create a time line of the major battles of the Persian Wars in Greece, using a chart such as the one below. For each battle, include the victor.

   first battle
   second battle
   third battle
   fourth battle

   Pretend that you are a newspaper reporter in ancient Greece. Write appropriate headlines for each battle.

3. CONTRASTING

   How was living in Athens different from living in Sparta?

   THINK ABOUT
   • roles of citizens
   • type/form of government
   • societal values

4. THEME ACTIVITY

   Power and Authority Draw a cartoon or write a political monologue about democracy from an Athenian slave’s point of view.
Democracy and Greece’s Golden Age

Term & Names
- direct democracy
- classical art
- tragedy
- comedy
- Peloponnesian War
- philosophers
- Socrates
- Plato
- Aristotle

Main Idea
Democratic principles and classical culture flourished during Greece’s golden age.

Why It Matters Now
At its height, Greece set lasting standards in art, politics, literature, and philosophy that are still adhered to today.

Setting the Stage
During Athens’ golden age, drama, sculpture, poetry, philosophy, architecture, and science all reached new heights. For 50 years (from 480 to 430 B.C.), Athens experienced a growth in intellectual and artistic learning. The artistic and literary legacies of this time continue to inspire and instruct people around the world.

Pericles’ Three Goals for Athens
A wise and able statesman named Pericles led Athens during its golden age. Honest and fair, Pericles held onto popular support for 32 years. He was a skillful politician, an inspiring speaker, and a respected general. He so dominated the life of Athens from 461 to 429 B.C. that this period often is called the Age of Pericles. He had three goals: (1) to strengthen Athenian democracy, (2) to hold and strengthen the empire, and (3) to glorify Athens.

Stronger Democracy
To strengthen democracy, Pericles increased the number of paid public officials. Earlier, only wealthier citizens could afford to hold public office because most positions were unpaid. Pericles increased the number of officials who were paid salaries. Now even the poorest could serve if elected or chosen by lot. Consequently, Athens had more citizens engaged in self-government than any other city-state. This reform made Athens one of the most democratic governments in history. However, political rights were still limited to those with citizenship status.

The introduction of direct democracy, a form of government in which citizens rule directly and not through representatives, was an important legacy of Periclean

Athenian and United States Democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Athenian Democracy</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>U. S. Democracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Citizens: male; 18 years old; born of citizen parents</em></td>
<td><em>Political power exercised by citizens</em></td>
<td><em>Citizens: born in United States or completed citizenship process</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Laws voted on and proposed directly by assembly of all citizens</em></td>
<td><em>Three branches of government</em></td>
<td><em>Representatives elected to propose and vote on laws</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Leader chosen by lot</em></td>
<td><em>Legislative branch passes laws</em></td>
<td><em>Elected president</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Executive branch composed of a council of 500 men</em></td>
<td><em>Executive branch carries out laws</em></td>
<td><em>Executive branch made up of elected and appointed officials</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Juries varied in size</em></td>
<td><em>Judicial branch conducts trials with paid jurors</em></td>
<td><em>Juries composed of 12 jurors</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>No attorneys; no appeals; one-day trials</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Defendants and plaintiffs have attorneys; long appeals process</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Skillbuilder: Interpreting Charts**
1. What does this chart suggest to you about the origins of U. S. democracy?
2. What is the main difference between Athenian democracy and democracy in the United States?
Athens. Few other city-states practiced this style of government. In Athens, male citizens who served in the assembly established all the important government policies that affected the polis. In a speech for the slain soldiers killed in the first year of the Peloponnesian War, Pericles expressed his great pride in Athenian democracy:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law; when it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of public responsibility, what counts is not membership in a particular class, but the actual ability which the man possesses. No one, so long as he has it in him to be of service to the state, is kept in political obscurity because of poverty.

PERICLES, Funeral Oration

Athenian Empire Pericles tried to enlarge the wealth and power of Athens. He used the money from the Delian League’s treasury to build Athens’ 200-ship navy into the strongest in the Mediterranean. A strong navy was important because it helped Athens strengthen the safety of its empire. Athenian prosperity depended on gaining access to its surrounding waterways. It needed overseas trade to obtain supplies of grain and other raw materials.

Glorifying Athens Pericles also used money from the empire to beautify Athens. Without the Delian League’s approval, he persuaded the Athenian assembly to vote huge sums of the league’s money to buy gold, ivory, and marble. Still more money went to a small army of artisans who worked for 15 years (447–432 B.C.) to build one of architecture’s noblest works—the Parthenon.

Greek Styles in Art

The Parthenon, a masterpiece of craftsmanship and design, was not novel in style. Rather, Greek artisans built the 23,000-square-foot building in the traditional style that had been used to create Greek temples for 200 years. In ancient times, this temple built to honor Athena contained examples of Greek art that set standards for future generations of artists around the world.

Greek Sculpture Within the Parthenon stood a giant statue of Athena, the goddess of wisdom and the protector of Athens. Pericles entrusted much of the work on the temple, including the statue of Athena, to the sculptor Phidias (FIDH-ee-uhs). The great statue of the goddess not only contained precious materials such as gold and ivory, it stood 38 feet tall!

Phidias and other sculptors during this golden age aimed to create figures that were graceful, strong, and perfectly formed. Their faces showed neither laughter nor anger, only serenity. Greek sculptors also tried to capture the grace of the idealized human body in motion. Their values of order, balance, and proportion became the standard of what is called classical art.

Classical works such as the Parthenon and the statue of Athena showcased the pride that Athenians had for their city. (See History Through Art, page 122.)

Greek Drama

The Greeks invented drama and built the first theaters in the west. Theatrical productions in Athens were both an expression of civic pride and a tribute to the gods.

HISTORY MAKERS

Pericles 4947–429 B.C.

Pericles came from a rich and high-ranking noble family. His aristocratic father had led the Athenian assembly and fought at the Battle of Salamis in the Persian Wars. His mother was the niece of Cleisthenes, an influential statesman. Well known for his political achievements as a leader of Athens, some historians say Pericles the man was harder to know. One historian wrote, [Pericles] no doubt, was a lonely man. Among the politicians, including his supporters, he had no friend. He avoided all social activity . . . [and] he only went out [of his home] for official business. . . .
Architecture and Sculpture

The Parthenon, the most magnificent building on the Acropolis, shows the classical Greek ideals of balance and proportion in art. The Parthenon is so harmonious with its site, it appears to grow directly out of solid rock. Its architects knew geometrical principles and how to modify them to please the eye. Its 46 support columns lean slightly inward. Brightly painted sculptural friezes (decorative relief panels) and statues adorned the rectangular building.

Athena in the Parthenon

Greek statues depicted their gods in idealized human form. Inside the marble temple stood a huge statue of Athena, nearly 40 feet high. It portrayed the goddess in full battle armor, holding a six-foot high figure of victory. This is a copy of the original statue, which vanished during the fifth century A.D.

Theater at Delphi

Public theater performances during the fifth century B.C. were sponsored by the state. Hundreds of theaters were built, such as this one preserved at Delphi in central Greece. Notice how this theater is set directly into the natural setting of the hillside. The masks used by the actors in tragedies and comedies became favorite subjects in Greek art.

Summarizing

What are the main things you associate with classical Greek art? Give examples from buildings and sculpture shown on this page.

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R3

Connect to History

Researching

Find buildings and artworks in your local community that show Greek influences. Work in small groups to develop a guidebook to these treasures.

For an Internet activity on the Parthenon...
Actors used colorful costumes, masks, and sets to dramatize stories about leadership, justice, and the duties owed to the gods. As part of their civic duty, wealthy citizens bore the cost for producing the plays. The Greeks wrote two kinds of drama—tragedy and comedy.

**Tragedy** A tragedy was a serious drama about common themes such as love, hate, war, or betrayal. These dramas featured a main character, or tragic hero. The hero usually was an important person and often gifted with extraordinary abilities. A tragic flaw—an error in judgment or personality defect—usually caused the hero’s downfall. Often this flaw was hubris, or excessive pride.

In ancient times, Greece had three notable dramatists who wrote tragedies: Aeschylus (EHS•kuh•luhs), Sophocles (SAHF•uh•kleez), and Euripides (yoo•RIP•uh•DEEZ). Aeschylus wrote more than 80 plays, of which seven survive. His most famous work is the trilogy *The Oresteia* (oh•res•STEE•uh), based on the family of Agamemnon, commander of the Greeks at Troy. Sophocles wrote about 100 plays, including the tragedies *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone*. Euripides, author of the play *Medea*, often featured sympathetic portrayals of women in his plays.

**Comedy** In contrast to Greek tragedies, a comedy contained scenes filled with slapstick situations and crude humor. Many Greek comedies were satires, or works that poked fun at a subject. Playwrights often made fun of customs, politics, respected people, or ideas of the time. Aristophanes (AR•ih•STAHF•uh•neez) wrote the first great comedies of the stage, including *The Birds* and *Lysistrata*. For example, *Lysistrata*, named for its female lead, portrayed the women of Athens forcing their husbands to end the Peloponnesian War. The fact that Athenians could listen to criticism of themselves showed the freedom and openness of public discussion that existed in democratic Athens.

**Spartans and Athenians Go to War**

Tensions between Athens and Sparta had been building for years. Hostilities became especially strong as Athens evolved from a limited city-state to a vast naval empire. Many people in both cities thought war was inevitable. Instead of trying to avoid conflict, leaders in both Athens and Sparta pressed for a war to begin, as both groups of leaders believed their own city had the advantage.

**Peloponnesian War** Sparta declared war against Athens in 431 B.C. When the Peloponnesian War between the two city-states began, Athens had the strongest sea power in Greece. Sparta had the advantage on land because the inland city could not easily be attacked by sea. Pericles’ strategy was to avoid land battles with the superior Spartan army and wait for an opportunity to strike Sparta’s allies from the sea.

Eventually the Spartans marched into Athenian territory. They swept over the countryside, burning the Athenians’ local food supply. Pericles responded by bringing residents from the surrounding countryside inside the safety of Athens’ city walls. The city was safe from hunger as long as ships could sail into port with food from Athenian colonies and other foreign states.

**Sparta Gains the Edge** However, two events spelled disaster for Athens. In the second year of the war, a frightful plague killed roughly one-third to two-thirds of Athens’ population, including Pericles. In 415 B.C., Athens suffered a second disaster. The Athenian assembly sent a huge fleet carrying 27,000 soldiers to destroy the polis of

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**Spotlight on**

### The Plague

An unidentified disease struck Athens during the height of the war. The disease caused a terrible plague in 430 B.C.

According to Thucydides (thoo•SID•ih•DEEZ), the plague’s symptoms included high fever, inflamed eyes, sore throat, coughing, extreme thirst, vomiting, and red blisters on the skin. As the disease spread, some victims lost their eyes or their fingers or toes. Many thousands died.

The following excerpt is from Thucydides’ account of the Peloponnesian Wars:

*They became infected by nursing one another and died like sheep. . . . Bodies of dying men lay one upon another. . . . The temples . . . were full of corpses of those who had died in them.*
Syracuse, one of Sparta’s wealthiest allies. The expedition suffered an unmistakable defeat in 413 B.C. The Athenian historian Thucydides recalled: “They [the Athenians] were destroyed with a total destruction—their fleet, their army—there was nothing that was not destroyed, and few out of many returned home.” Somehow, a terribly weakened Athens fended off Spartan attacks for another nine years. Finally, in 404 B.C., Athens and its allies surrendered.

**War Brings Political Changes** After 27 years of war, Athens had lost its empire, power, and wealth. In addition, general confidence in democratic government began to falter. One leader after another proved weak, corrupt, or traitorous. The assembly often changed its decisions and did not stick to a single political program.

**Philosophers Search for Truth**

In this time of questioning and uncertainty, several great thinkers appeared. They were determined to seek the truth, no matter where the search led them. The Greeks called such thinkers **philosophers**, meaning “lovers of wisdom.” These Greek thinkers based their philosophy on the following two assumptions: (1) The universe (land, sky, and sea) is put together in an orderly way, and subject to absolute and unchanging laws, and (2) people can understand these laws through logic and reason.

One group of philosophers, the Sophists, questioned people’s unexamined beliefs and ideas about justice, and other traditional values. One of the most famous Sophists was Protagoras, who took a position questioning the existence of the traditional Greek gods. He also argued that there was no universal standard of truth, saying “Man [the individual] is the measure of all things. . . .” These were radical and dangerous ideas to many of the citizens of Athens.

**Socrates** One of the strongest critics of the Sophists was **Socrates** (SAHK•ruh•TEEZ). Unlike the Sophists, he believed that absolute standards did exist for truth and justice. However, he encouraged Greeks to go further and question themselves and their moral character. Historians believe that it was Socrates who once said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” Those who understood Socrates admired him deeply. The majority of citizens, however, could not understand this strange old man and his ideas.

In 399 B.C., when Socrates was about 70 years old, he was brought to trial for “corrupting the youth of Athens” and “neglecting the city’s gods.” In his own defense, Socrates said that his teachings were good for Athens because they forced people to think about their values and actions. The jury disagreed and condemned him to death. Later, he died after drinking a slow-acting poison.

**Plato** A student of Socrates, **Plato** (PLAY•toh), was approximately 28 years old when his teacher died. Later, Plato wrote down the conversations of Socrates “as a means of philosophical investigation.” Sometime between 385 and 380 B.C., Plato wrote his most famous work, The Republic. In it, he set forth his vision of a perfectly governed society. It was not a democracy. In his ideal society, all citizens would fall naturally into three groups: farmers and artisans, warriors, and the ruling class. The person with the greatest
insight and intellect from the ruling class would be chosen philosopher-king. Plato’s writings dominated philosophic thought in Europe for nearly 1,500 years. His only rivals in importance were Socrates and his own pupil, Aristotle (AR•ih•STAHT•uhl).

Aristotle  The philosopher Aristotle questioned the nature of the world and of human belief, thought, and knowledge. Aristotle came close to summarizing all the knowledge up to his time. He invented a method for arguing according to rules of logic. He later applied his method to problems in the fields of psychology, physics, and biology. His work provides the basis of the scientific method used today.

One of Aristotle’s most famous pupils was Alexander, son of King Philip of Macedonia. Around 343 B.C., Aristotle accepted the king’s invitation to tutor the 13-year-old prince. Alexander’s status as a student abruptly ended in 336 B.C., when he became the ruler of Macedonia. You will learn about Alexander the Great in Section 4.
Sports Through Time

Throughout history, communities worldwide have valued athletes who possess great physical strength, agility, and balance. In ancient times, the Greeks believed that athletic competitions were a way to please the gods and honor dead heroes. One of Greece’s many athletic festivals—the Olympic Games—continues today. Dedicated to the god Zeus, the Olympics began in 776 B.C. The Greeks even suspended wars between city-states so that athletes could compete. This love of sport lives on among different people and cultures throughout the world today.

Olympics in Greece

Every four years, some 40,000 Greeks crowded into the stadium built in Olympia to watch the competitions. The earliest games featured foot races of about 200 yards. Later, athletes also competed in wrestling, boxing, jumping, javelin-and discus-throwing events. Athletes were proud of their bodies and emphasized physical fitness. Myron’s famous marble sculpture of a discus thrower is dated about 450 B.C. The sculpture survives in this Roman copy (left) of the Greek bronze.

Victorious Olympians received a crown made of wild olive leaves.

Olympic chariot racing began in the seventh century B.C. Prizes went to the chariot’s owner, not the driver.
Sumo Wrestling in Japan
Sumo wrestling is a sport that is native to Japan. Originally sponsored by imperial families, it dates back to the eighth century. Sumo’s popularity remains strong and today is considered the national sport of Japan. During a match, wrestlers wear loincloths and battle each other inside a 15-foot circle. Many of these athletes weigh more than 300 pounds. All use their size and strength to overpower an opponent.

Mayan Ball Courts in Mexico
This photograph of a site at Chichen Itza in Mexico shows a stone ring Mayans once used when playing an ancient game. During the seventh century, Mayan athletes played a ball game on walled I-shaped courts. Participants wore protective padding around their waist and on one knee. The object was to get a rubber ball through the stone ring without touching it with their hands. The ball court game had close ties to the Mayans’ religious beliefs. While the exact rules are unknown, the losers were usually sacrificed to the gods.

Soccer in Nigeria
Soccer is one of the most popular sports in the world. Known as football in some countries, soccer developed in England during the 1800s. Few items are needed to play the game: a ball, an open field, and players who are willing to run. The Nigerian soccer player pictured above was a participant in the 1994 World Cup, an international soccer competition. The World Cup attracts all-star teams from around the world.

Crowds flocked to the hippodrome to watch horse races during the Olympic Games. This bronze statue shows a jockey riding bareback at one of these spectacular events.
4

Alexander—Empire Builder

**MAIN IDEA**

Alexander the Great conquered Persia and Egypt and extended his empire to the Indus River in northwest India.

**WHY IT MATTERS NOW**

Alexander’s empire extended across three continents that today consist of many nations and diverse cultures.

**SETTING THE STAGE**

The Peloponnesian War severely weakened several Greek city-states. This caused a rapid decline in their military and economic power. To make matters worse, in the 50 years after Sparta defeated Athens in 404 B.C., the two city-states had continued to fight each other. In the nearby kingdom of Macedonia, King Philip II took note. Philip dreamed of first taking control of Greece. Then Philip planned to move against Persia and seize its vast wealth. Philip also hoped to avenge the Persian invasion of Greece in 480 B.C.

**Philip Builds Macedonia’s Power**

Just north of Greece, the kingdom of Macedonia had rough mountains and a cold climate. The Macedonians were a tough people who lived in mountain villages rather than city-states. The Macedonian language was related to Greek. Most Macedonian nobles thought of themselves as Greeks. The Greeks, however, looked down on the Macedonians as uncivilized foreigners who had no great philosophers, sculptors, or writers. They did, however, have an important resource in their shrewd and fearless kings.

**Philip’s Army**

In 359 B.C., Philip II became king of Macedonia. Though only 23 years old, he quickly proved to be a brilliant general and a ruthless politician. Philip transformed the rugged peasants under his command into a well-trained professional army. He organized his troops into phalanxes that were 16 men across and 16 deep. Philip used this heavy phalanx formation armed with 18-foot pikes to pave the way for cavalry strikes through enemy lines.

Once his phalanx had broken through, Philip used the fast-moving cavalry to crush his disorganized opponents. When he first used these tactics against northern opponents who had invaded Macedonia, Philip’s powerful army proved unbeatable. Within a short time, he was preparing to invade Greece.

**Conquest of Greece**

The Athenian orator Demosthenes (dee-MAHS-thuh-NEEZ) tried to warn the Greeks of the threat Philip and his army posed. He urged them to unite against him. However, the Greek cities could not agree on any single policy. Finally, in 338 B.C., Athens and Thebes—two Greek city-states—joined forces against Philip. By then it was too late. The Macedonians soundly defeated the Greeks at the battle of Chaeronea (KAIR-uh-NEE-uh). Philip’s 18-year-old son Alexander led a successful cavalry charge that helped win the battle. The defeat at Chaeronea ended Greek freedom and independence. The city-states retained self-government in local affairs. However, Greece itself remained firmly under the control of a succession of foreign powers—the first of which was Philip’s Macedonia.

Although Philip planned to invade Persia next, he never got the chance. At his daughter’s wedding in 336 B.C., a former guardsman stabbed him to death. With the support of the army, Philip’s son Alexander immediately proclaimed himself king of Macedonia.
Because of his accomplishments over the next 13 years, he became known in history as Alexander the Great.

**Alexander Defeats Persia**

Although Alexander was only 20 years old when he became king in 336 B.C., he was well prepared to lead. Under Aristotle’s teaching, Alexander had learned science, geography, and literature. Alexander especially enjoyed Homer’s description of the heroic deeds performed by Achilles during the Trojan War. To inspire himself, he kept a copy of the *Iliad* under his pillow.

As a young boy, Alexander learned to ride a horse, use weapons, and command troops. Once he became king, Alexander promptly demonstrated that his military training had not been wasted. When Thebes, a city in central Greece, rebelled, he destroyed the city. About 6,000 people were killed. The survivors were sold into slavery. Frightened by his cruelty, the other Greek cities quickly gave up any idea of rebellion.

**Invasion of Persia**

With Greece now secure, Alexander felt free to carry out Philip’s plan to invade Persia. In 334 B.C., he led 35,000 soldiers across the Hellespont into Anatolia. Persian messengers raced along the Royal Road to spread the alarm about the invasion. Within a short time, a Persian army of about 40,000 men rushed to defend Persia. The two forces met at the Granicus River. Instead of waiting for the Persians to make the first move, Alexander ordered an elite cavalry unit to attack. Leading his troops into battle, Alexander smashed the Persian defenses.

Alexander’s victory at Granicus alarmed the Persian king, Darius III. Vowing to crush the Macedonians, he raised a huge army of between 50,000–75,000 men to face the Macedonians near Issus. Realizing that he was outnumbered, Alexander surprised his enemies. He ordered his finest troops to break through a weak point in the Persian lines. The army then charged straight at Darius. To avoid capture, the frightened king fled, followed by his panicked army. This victory gave Alexander control over Anatolia.

**Alexander’s Ambitions Grow**

Shaken by his defeat, Darius tried to negotiate a peace settlement. He offered Alexander the western third of his empire. Alexander’s advisers urged him to accept. However, the rapid collapse of Persian resistance fired Alexander’s ambition. He rejected Darius’s offer and confidently announced his plan to conquer the entire Persian Empire.

Then Alexander marched into Egypt, a Persian territory, in 332 B.C. The Egyptians welcomed Alexander as a liberator. During his stay, he visited the temple of the god Zeus-Ammon. Alexander was crowned pharaoh—a title that Ptolemy used later to begin the Ptolemic pharaoh line. Alexander also founded the city of Alexandria at the mouth of the Nile.

**Conquering the Persian Empire**

After leaving Egypt, Alexander moved east into Mesopotamia to confront Darius. The desperate Persian king assembled an army of 250,000 men. The Persian chariots were armed with deadly scythes protruding from the wheel hubs. The two armies collided at Gaugamela (*gaw-guh-MEE-luh*), a small village near the ruins of ancient Nineveh. Alexander launched a massive phalanx attack followed by a cavalry charge. As the Persian lines crumbled, Darius again panicked and fled. Alexander’s victory at Gaugamela ended Persia’s power. The Macedonian army now marched unopposed into Persia’s wealthiest provinces.
Within a short time, Alexander's army occupied the capitals of Babylon, Susa, and Persepolis. These cities yielded a huge treasure, which Alexander distributed among his army. After a stay of several months, a fire broke out in Persepolis, Persia’s royal capital. Some historians say Alexander left the city in ashes to signal the total destruction of the Persian Empire. The Greek historian Arrian wrote about Alexander’s expeditions about 500 years later. Arrian explains that the fire was set in revenge for the Persian burning of Athens 150 years before. But others doubt that the fire was planned.

**Alexander’s Other Conquests**

Alexander now reigned as the unchallenged ruler of southwest Asia. He was more interested in expanding his empire than in governing it. He left the ruined Persepolis to pursue Darius and conquer Persia’s remote Asian provinces. Darius’s trail led Alexander to a deserted spot south of the Caspian Sea. There he found Darius already dead, murdered by one of his provincial governors. Rather than return to Babylon, Alexander continued east. During the next three years, his army fought its way across the desert wastes and mountains of Central Asia. He pushed on, hoping to reach the farthest edge of the continent.

**Alexander in India** In 327 B.C., Alexander and his army reached and crossed into the Indus Valley. At the Hydaspes River, a powerful Indian army that included 200 elephants blocked their path. After winning a fierce battle, Alexander’s soldiers marched some 200 miles farther, but their morale was low. They had been fighting for 11 years and had marched more than 11,000 miles. They had endured both scorching...
deserts and drenching monsoon rains. The exhausted soldiers yearned to go home. Bitterly disappointed, Alexander agreed to turn back.

On their homeward journey, Alexander and his troops crossed a brutally hot desert. Everyone was desperately thirsty. Some of the men collected water in a helmet—which they offered to their general. According to Arrian, Alexander saw an opportunity to inspire his discouraged men by sharing their hardship:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST
He received it [the water], and thanked those who had brought it; and . . . poured it out in the sight of all the troops; and at this . . . the whole army was so much heartened that you would have said that each and every man had drunk that water which Alexander thus poured out.

ARRIAN, Anabasis

By the spring of 323 B.C., Alexander and his army had returned west to Babylon. Restless as always, Alexander announced plans to organize and unify his empire. He would construct new cities, roads, and harbors and conquer Arabia. However, Alexander never carried out his plans. One year after his return, he became seriously ill with a fever. Eleven days later, Alexander died—a month short of his 33rd birthday.

Alexander’s Legacy As he lay dying, Alexander correctly predicted that his empire would go to the strongest general. His Macedonian generals fought among themselves until three ambitious generals won out. Antigonus (an•TIG•uh•nus) became king of Macedonia and took control of the Greek city-states. Ptolemy (TAHL•uh•mee) seized Egypt, took the title of pharaoh, and established a dynasty. Seleucus (sih•LOO•kuhs) took most of the old Persian Empire, which became known as the Seleucid empire. Ignoring the democratic traditions of the Greek polis, these rulers and their descendants governed with complete power over their subjects.

Alexander’s conquests ended the era of independent Greek city-states. As he and his army marched through the Persian Empire, thousands of Greek artists, merchants, and officials followed. Alexander himself adopted Persian dress and customs and married a Persian woman. He included Persians and people from other lands in his army. As time passed, Greek settlers throughout the empire also adopted new ways. A vibrant new culture emerged from the blend of Greek, Egyptian, and Eastern customs.

Alexander’s Empire and Its Legacy 336-306 B.C.

1. TERMS & NAMES
   Identify
   • Philip II
   • Macedonia
   • Demosthenes
   • Alexander the Great
   • Darius III

2. TAKING NOTES
   Using a diagram like the one below, label how far north, south, east, and west Alexander ruled.

   north
   west
   south
   east

   Alexander’s Rule

   Which conquests do you think was the most significant? Why?

3. HYPOTHEZISING
   If Alexander had lived, do you think he would have been as successful in ruling his empire as he was in building it?

   THINK ABOUT
   • skills needed for military leadership
   • skills needed to govern an empire
   • Alexander’s demonstrated abilities

4. THEME ACTIVITY
   Empire Building In small groups, create an illustrated time line of Alexander’s conquests. Include at least five main events.
The Spread of Hellenistic Culture

**MAIN IDEA**

Hellenistic culture, a blend of Greek and other influences, flourished throughout Greece, Egypt, and Asia.

**WHY IT MATTERS NOW**

Western civilization today continues to be influenced by diverse cultures.

**SETTING THE STAGE**

Alexander the Great's ambitions were cultural as well as military and political. He started new cities as outposts of Greek culture. These cities, from Egyptian Alexandria in the south to the Asian Alexandrias in the east, adopted many Greek patterns and customs. After Alexander's death, trade, a shared Greek culture, and the Greek language continued to link these cities together. But each region had its own traditional ways of life, religion, and government that no ruler could afford to overlook. Alexander's successors gradually began dynasties in each of these lands. They encouraged local traditions while transplanting Greek culture.

**Hellenistic Culture in Alexandria**

After Alexander's death, a vibrant new culture emerged. Greek (Hellenic) culture blended with Egyptian, Persian, and Indian influences. This blending became known as Hellenistic culture. Koine (koy-NAY), the popular spoken language used in Hellenistic cities such as Alexandria, was the direct result of cultural blending. The word *koine* came from the Greek word for common. The language was a dialect of Greek. This language enabled educated people and traders from diverse backgrounds to communicate in cities throughout the Hellenistic world.

**Trade and Cultural Diversity**

Among the many cities of the Hellenistic world, the African city of Alexandria became the foremost center of commerce and Hellenistic civilization. Alexandria occupied a strategic site on the western edge of the Nile delta. Ships from all around the Mediterranean docked in its spacious harbor. Its warehouses bulged with wheat and other products from the Nile Valley. Alexandria's thriving commerce enabled it to grow and prosper. By the third century B.C., its diverse population exceeded half a million people. Greek officials, Jewish merchants, and Egyptian priests mingled in crowded marketplaces with visitors from the rest of Africa, Persia, and India. Alexandria became an international community, with a rich mixture of customs and traditions from Egypt and from the Aegean.

**Alexandria’s Greatest Attractions**

Both residents and visitors admired Alexandria’s great beauty. Broad avenues lined with statues of Greek gods divided the city into blocks. Rulers built magnificent royal palaces overlooking the harbor. A much visited tomb contained Alexander’s elaborate glass coffin. Soaring more than 400 feet over the harbor stood an enormous stone lighthouse called the Pharos. This lighthouse contained a polished bronze mirror that reflected the light from a blazing fire.

Alexandria’s greatest attractions were its famous museum and library. The museum was a temple dedicated to the Muses, the Greek goddesses of arts and sciences. (The word *museum* comes from muse.) It contained art...
galleries, a zoo, botanical gardens, and even a dining hall. The museum was an institute of advanced study.

Teachers and students were only a short distance from the nearby Alexandrian Library. Its collection of half a million papyrus scrolls included many of the masterpieces of ancient literature. As the first true research library in the world, it helped promote the work of a gifted group of scholars. These scholars greatly respected the earlier works of classical literature and learning. They produced commentaries that explained these works.

**Science and Technology**

During the Hellenistic period, the center of scholarship gradually shifted away from Athens. Hellenistic scholars, particularly in Alexandria, succeeded brilliantly in preserving Greek and Egyptian learning in the sciences. Until the scientific advances of the 16th and 17th centuries, scholars in Alexandria provided most of the scientific knowledge available to the West.

**Astronomy**

Alexandria’s museum contained a small observatory in which astronomers could study the planets and stars. One astronomer, Aristarchus (Ar•ih•sta•ruh•kuhs) of Samos, reached two significant scientific conclusions. In one conclusion, he estimated that the sun was at least 300 times larger than the earth. Although he greatly underestimated the sun’s true size, Aristarchus disproved the widely held belief that the sun was smaller than Greece. In another conclusion, Aristarchus proposed that the earth and other planets revolve around the sun. Unfortunately for science, other astronomers refused to support Aristarchus’ theories. By the second century A.D., Alexandria’s last renowned astronomer, Ptolemy, incorrectly placed the earth at the center of the solar system. Astronomers accepted this view for the next 14 centuries.

**Greek Astronomy**

**The Earth**
- Eratosthenes’ estimate of the circumference: 24,062 miles
- Actual circumference: 24,860 miles

**The Sun**
- Aristarchus’ estimate: 300 times the size of the earth
- The sun is actually 1.3 million times the size of the earth

**The Solar System**
- Ptolemy’s view of the universe
- The Sun
- Mercury
- Venus
- Earth
- Mars
- Jupiter
- Saturn
- Uranus
- Neptune
- Pluto

**SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts**

The foundations of modern scientific thought were laid during the Hellenistic period.

1. Where were Greek astronomers’ ideas most incorrect compared with modern concepts?
2. Which estimate is closest to modern measurements? How could the Hellenists be so accurate?

While Hellenistic astronomers debated the earth’s position in the solar system, a scholar named Eratosthenes (e•rah•thuh•thuh•nee•z) closely calculated the earth’s true size. Eratosthenes was the director of the Alexandrian Library. He was also a highly regarded astronomer, poet, historian, and mathematician. He skillfully used geometry to compute the earth’s circumference at 24,662 miles. Today, we compute the earth’s circumference at 24,860 miles. His estimate was within 1 percent of our modern calculations.
Mathematics and Physics  Both Eratosthenes and Aristarchus used a geometry text compiled by Euclid (YOOklihd). Euclid was a highly regarded mathematician who opened a school of geometry in Alexandria. His best-known book, the *Elements*, contained 465 carefully presented geometry propositions and proofs. Muslim and European universities used the *Elements* until well into the 1900s. It is sometimes said that only the Bible has been more widely used and studied. Euclid's work is still the basis for courses in geometry.

Another important Hellenistic scientist, Archimedes (AHr•kub•MEE•deer) of Syracuse, studied at Alexandria. He accurately estimated the value of pi (π)—the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter. He showed its value to be between 3 10⁄71 and 3 1⁄7. Archimedes also explained the law of the lever and invented the compound pulley to lift heavy objects. The writer Plutarch described how Archimedes demonstrated to an audience of curious onlookers how something heavy can be moved by a small force:

*A VOICE FROM THE PAST*

Archimedes took a . . . ship . . . which had just been dragged up on land with great labor and many men; in this he placed her usual complement of men and cargo, and then sitting at some distance, without any trouble, by gently pulling with his hand the end of a system of pulleys, he dragged it towards him with as smooth and even a motion as if it were passing over the sea.

PLUTARCH, Parallel Lives: Marcellus

Gifted in both geometry and physics, Archimedes also put his genius to practical use. He invented the Archimedes screw, a device that raised water from the ground, and a catapult or missile-throwing machine. Building on the knowledge of Archimedes, Hellenistic scientists later built a force pump, pneumatic machines, and even a steam engine.

Philosophy and Art

Like earlier Greek philosophers, Hellenistic scholars believed that the universe followed rational principles. They felt that philosophy offered the best way to understand these principles. The teachings of Plato and Aristotle continued to be very influential in Hellenistic philosophy. In the third century B.C., however, new schools of philosophy were concerned with how people should live their lives. Two major philosophies developed during the Hellenistic period—Stoicism and Epicureanism.

Stoicism and Epicureanism  A Greek philosopher named Zeno (335–263 B.C.) founded the school of philosophy called Stoicism (STOH•ih•SHUHM). Stoics believed in a divine power who controlled the universe. They proposed that people should live a virtuous life in harmony with natural law. Stoics also preached that vices such as human desires, power, and wealth were dangerous distractions that should be controlled. Stoicism explained nature and provided an ethical approach to life. The philosophy also promoted social unity and encouraged its followers to focus on things they could control. Its ethical doctrine appealed to people of many different races, cultures, and economic backgrounds.

**Background**  A stoic has come to mean someone who is indifferent to or unaffected by pain.
Epicurus (EH-puh-KYUR-uhhs) founded the school of thought called Epicureanism. He taught that the universe was composed of atoms and ruled by gods who had no interest in humans. Epicurus believed that the only real objects were those that the five senses perceived. He taught that the greatest good and the highest pleasure came from virtuous conduct and the absence of pain. Epicureans proposed that the main goal of humans was to achieve harmony of body and mind. Today, the word epicurean means one devoted to pursuing human pleasures. However, during his lifetime, Epicurus advocated moderation in all things.

**Realism in Sculpture** Like science, sculpture flourished during the Hellenistic age. Rulers, wealthy merchants, and cities all purchased statues to honor the gods, commemorate heroes, and portray ordinary people in everyday situations. The largest known Hellenistic statue was created on the island of Rhodes. Known as the Colossus of Rhodes, this bronze statue stood more than 100 feet high. The colossal statue could not have stood with its feet straddling the harbor entrance, as legend suggests.

One of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the Colossus of Rhodes was toppled by an earthquake about 225 B.C. Later, the bronze was sold for scrap. Another great Hellenistic statue was discovered by archaeologists in 1863, the famous Winged Victory of Samothrace. It commemorates a naval victory by the Greeks against foes who would have enslaved them.

Hellenistic sculpture moved away from the harmonic balance and idealized forms of the classical age. Sculptors created more realistic and emotional works. Instead of the serene face and perfect body of an idealized man or woman, Hellenistic sculptors created more natural works. They felt free to explore new subjects, carving ordinary people such as an old, wrinkled peasant woman.

By 150 B.C., the Hellenistic world was in decline. A new city, Rome, was growing and gaining strength. Through Rome, Greek-style drama, architecture, sculpture, religion, and philosophy were preserved and eventually became the core of Western civilization.
Chapter 5 Assessment

TERMS & NAMES
Briefly explain the importance of each of the following to Classical Greece.

1. Trojan War
2. Homer
3. polis
4. phalanx
5. classical art
6. Aristotle
7. Macedonia
8. Alexander the Great
9. Hellenistic
10. Archimedes

REVIEW QUESTIONS

SECTION 1 (pages 111–114)
Cultures of the Mountains and the Sea
11. Why was sea travel so important to early Greece?
12. Why did the Greeks develop myths?

SECTION 2 (pages 115–119)
Warring City-States
13. What were the two most powerful city-states in early Greece?
14. What were the consequences of the Persian Wars?

SECTION 3 (pages 120–125)
Democracy and Greece's Golden Age
15. What were Pericles' three goals for Athens?
16. Who were the three renowned philosophers of the golden age?

SECTION 4 (pages 128–131)
Alexander—Empire Builder
17. Why was Greece so easily conquered by Macedonia?
18. What was the full extent of Alexander's empire before his death?

SECTION 5 (pages 132–135)
The Spread of Hellenistic Culture
19. What four influences blended to form Hellenistic culture?
20. What did the Epicureans believe?

The Legacy of Greece

Government
- Direct democracy; citizens rule by majority vote
- Written code of laws
- Citizens bring charges of wrongdoing; trial by jury
- Expansion of citizenship to all free adult males, except foreigners

Arts
- Drama and poetry
- Sculpture portraying ideals of beauty
- Painted pottery showing scenes of Greek life
- Classical architecture

Culture
- Greek language
- Mythology about gods and goddesses
- Olympic Games
- Philosophers search for truth

Science and Technology
- Disagreement whether sun or earth at center of universe
- Accurate estimate of circumference of earth
- Euclid's geometry textbook
- Development of lever, pulley, pump

Visual Summary

On page 110, you drew certain conclusions about what qualities Greeks valued without knowing details about their history. Now that you have read the chapter, reexamine the artworks and reread the Greeks' words. Conduct a class debate about how the values and heritage of Greece have influenced modern society.
CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

1. LIVING HISTORY: Unit Portfolio Project
   
   **THEME POWER AND AUTHORITY** Your unit portfolio project focuses on how people in history have gained power and authority. For Chapter 5, you might use one of the following ideas.
   
   - Write an epic poem (about 2–3 pages) about a legendary battle or hero that you read about in Chapter 5. Use Homer’s *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey* as a reference.
   - Design a museum exhibit with the title *Power and Authority in Classical Greece.* Include a sketch of the exhibit layout and a one-page description of the exhibit.
   - Create an imaginary television talk show about this topic: What makes a leader successful? Guests should include people mentioned in this chapter. Prepare a list of questions the host will ask. Videotape the show.

2. CONNECT TO TODAY: Cooperative Learning
   
   **THEME CULTURAL INTERACTION** Like many other facets of classical Greek culture, the influence of classical Greek art and architecture spread throughout the world, including the United States. Create a “Then and Now” board showing examples of art and architecture in the United States that were influenced by classical Greek styles.
   
   - Find examples from classical Greece. Sketch, photocopy, or otherwise render them on a poster board.
   - Find buildings or other art that show evidence of a classical Greek influence. Photograph or render them on the poster board.
   - Label the board clearly. Include at least four examples.

3. INTERPRETING A TIME LINE
   
   Revisit the unit time line on page 106. Look at the Chapter 5 section of the time line. Can you find evidence of how geography or a natural phenomenon might have influenced an event? Explain your conclusion.

CRITICAL THINKING

1. POWERFUL MEN
   
   There is a saying that “the measure of man is what he does with power.” Would you consider Alexander the Great or Pericles a “better” man? Why?

2. CLASSICAL GREEK INFLUENCES
   
   **THEME CULTURAL INTERACTION** Copy the web below on your paper. Fill in examples of how classical Greece has influenced the United States.

3. EMPIRE BUILDERS
   
   **THEME EMPIRE BUILDING** Thinking back to Pericles and Alexander the Great, what qualifications or characteristics do you think are needed for a leader to build an empire? Why?

4. ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES
   
   In the following selection from *Politics,* Aristotle presents his views on where the power of the state should reside. His conclusions reflect the idea that moderation is the best path to civic virtue. Read the paragraph and then answer the questions that follow.

   **A VOICE FROM THE PAST**
   
   Where ought the sovereign power of the state to reside? . . . The state aims to consist as far as possible of those who are alike and equal, a condition found chiefly among the middle section. . . . The middle class is also the steadiest element, the least eager for change. They neither covet, like the poor the possessions of others, nor do others covet theirs, as the poor covet those of the rich. . . . Tyranny often emerges from an over-enthusiastic democracy or from an oligarchy, but much more rarely from middle class constitutions . . .

   - What is Aristotle arguing here?
   - How closely does this model of an ideal state correspond to the reality of Athenian democracy?
   - Do you agree with Aristotle? Support your opinion.

FOCUS ON GEOGRAPHY

Notice the present-day boundaries that appear on this map of Alexander’s empire.

- What modern nations were once part of this empire?
- How did the physical characteristics of the empire block its unification and lead to the formation of separate nations?

Connect to History

Compare Greece’s size with the area it once controlled. How did it influence such a large area?