

## Ancient Greece: Teacher's Guide

**Grade Level:** 6-8

**Curriculum Focus:** Ancient History

**Lesson Duration:** 2 or 3 class periods

### Program Description

Warring city-states flourished into centers of culture 2,500 years ago and gave birth to many ideas in art, literature, philosophy, and science. Discover the events and the players that made it all happen. *Alexander the Great*—See how this illustrious conqueror used military expertise and consultation with the gods to destroy rivals and expand the Greek Empire. *Philosophy*—Discover Socrates and Plato, the Socratic method of learning, and the Allegory of the Cave. *Mythology*—Get on board Odysseus' voyage, and find out how Greek gods and stories, like The Odyssey, teach important moral lessons.

---

### Onscreen Activities

Segment 1, History: Alexander the Great

- Activity: Create a map of ancient Greece showing Alexander's expansion through the Middle East. Then compare your ancient map to a modern-day map.

Segment 2, Philosophy: Socrates and Plato

- Activity: Socrates believed it was important to think deeply about life. Select a question that the class can explore together, such as "What makes something fair?" Then hold a roundtable discussion about it.

Segment 3, Mythology: Homer's Odyssey

- Activity: Research Greek mythology and write your own adventure story about an achievement that you have accomplished. Use mythological characters to represent the forces that you struggled against for success.
- 

### Lesson Plan

#### Student Objectives

- Learn about key elements of ancient Greek civilization, including government, mythology, philosophy, sports, art, and architecture.

- Understand the influence of ancient Greece in the world today.

## Materials

- *Ancient Greece* video and VCR, or DVD and DVD player
- A picture of the Lincoln Memorial (<http://sc94.ameslab.gov/TOUR/linmem.html>)
- Print and Internet references on ancient Greece

## Procedures

1. Ask students what they know about ancient Greece. Have them brainstorm ideas, and write their suggestions on the board. To spark conversation, you may want to show them a picture of the Lincoln Memorial. If students are familiar with this structure, explain that it was built to honor Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States. Ask students what this structure has to do with ancient Greece. (*Its style first appeared in ancient Greece.*)
2. Review facts about ancient Greece. Have students locate Greece on a world map. Explain that a great civilization thrived there between 500 and 323 B.C., during a time in history called the classical Greek period. The ancient Greeks developed new ideas for government, science, philosophy, religion, and art. The center of ancient Greek culture was the city-state of Athens. Although wars between Athens and the city-state Sparta would eventually weaken Greek civilization, its influence is visible today.
3. Explain that in this activity, students will be researching the different aspects of ancient Greek life. Divide students into five research groups, and assign each group a topic below:
  - Art and architecture
  - Government
  - Mythology
  - Philosophy
  - Sports
4. Have each group research their topic and answer their set of questions below. (If groups are large, students may want to work separately or in pairs.) Students should use print and online resources. The final task is to find examples of ancient Greek influence in modern culture.

### *Art and Architecture*

- What did buildings look like in ancient Greece? What were the different styles of architecture?
- What types of art could be found ancient Greece?
- How did temples play a part in Greek life? What did they look like?
- Who were patrons of the arts in ancient Greece?
- What did you learn about the artists of ancient Greece?



- Write at least three ways that ancient Greek culture is reflected in today's society.

#### *Government*

- How did the government function in ancient Greece?
- Who were the leaders, and what was expected of citizens?
- How frequently did leaders change, and how were changes made?
- Was there slavery in ancient Greece?
- What wars occurred?
- Write at least three ways that ancient Greek culture is reflected in today's society.

#### *Mythology*

- How did people in ancient Greece use storytelling to explain the world around them?
- Who are some of the mythological heroes of ancient Greece?
- Name at least 10 gods of ancient Greece. Explain what each god stood for.
- Who wrote mythology?
- According to the ancient Greeks, what happened to people when they died?
- Write at least three ways that ancient Greek culture is reflected in today's society.

#### *Philosophy*

- Who were some philosophers in ancient Greece?
- What were some ideas or beliefs of each one?
- What did they write?
- What important questions about life did the Greek philosophers try to answer?
- How were the philosophers regarded and treated?
- Write at least three ways that ancient Greek culture is reflected in today's society.

#### *Sports*

- Who played sports in ancient Greece?
- What sports did they play?
- Who watched sports in ancient Greece?
- How did athletic competition develop in ancient Greece?
- How did the ancient Greeks feel about athletes?
- Write at least three ways that ancient Greek culture is reflected in today's society.

5. Have each group review their questions and add a question of their own.

6. When each group has completed answering the questions, have it create a collage of modern-day examples of ancient Greek culture using magazines, newspapers, or pictures from the Internet.
7. Invite groups to present their collages to the class and explain how the examples reflect ancient Greek culture. Have groups hang their collages in the classroom.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. What do you think are the more important contributions the ancient Greeks made to the world today?
2. What are some subjects that interested the Greek philosophers? What ideas did they develop?
3. Was everyone eligible for citizenship in ancient Greece? If not, who was excluded? Would ancient Greece still be considered a democracy today? Why or why not?
4. Compare the myths of ancient Greece with other fables, folktales, or tall tales that you have studied. What are some common themes? How are Greek myths different?
5. Compare the modern Olympics to the Olympics in ancient Greece.
6. Find two buildings in your community, one in classical Greek style and another in a modern style. If such buildings are not available where you live, use those in your state capital or in Washington, D.C. Discuss and explain differences in style, structure, and appearance.

### *Assessment*

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students actively participated in group project, researching important facts and working collaboratively with others; thoroughly completed their assigned questions; presented information in a clear manner; demonstrated an understanding of the material researched.
- 2 points: Students participated in group project, researching facts and working with others; completed most of their assigned questions; presented information in a fairly clear manner; demonstrated an understanding of the material researched.
- 1 point: Students took part in the group project, researching some facts and working with others; did not complete their assigned questions; presented little or no information in group presentation; demonstrated little understanding of the material researched.

### *Vocabulary*

#### **ancient**

*Definition:* Relating to the historic period beginning with the earliest known civilizations and extending to the fall of the Roman Empire in A.D. 476.

*Context:* The culture of ancient Greece had rich traditions, many of which exist today.



**architecture**

*Definition:* A particular style or fashion of building.

*Context:* Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian are three styles of Greek architecture found in buildings around the world today.

**classical**

*Definition:* Relating to the ancient Greek and Roman world, especially to its literature, art, architecture, or ideals.

*Context:* The classical age of Greece began with the Persian War (490-479 B.C.) and ended with the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.

**heritage**

*Definition:* Something, such as culture, passed from generation to generation.

*Context:* Greek heritage included mythology, philosophy, government, and much more.

**legacy**

*Definition:* Something handed down or that remains from a previous generation or time.

*Context:* One legacy of Socrates was his dialogues, or using questions and answers as a teaching method.

**mythology**

*Definition:* A group of myths that belong to a particular people or culture that tells about their history, heroes, and gods.

*Context:* Ancient Greek mythology includes stories about powerful gods who look and act like humans, but who can control nature and are immortal.

**philosophy**

*Definition:* Academic study that is devoted to the examination of basic concepts, such as truth, beauty, freedom, and reality.

*Context:* Scholars study Aristotle's philosophy.

## *Academic Standards*

### **Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)**

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- World History: Understands how Aegean civilization emerged and how interrelations developed among peoples of the eastern Mediterranean and Southwest Asia from 600 to 200 B.C.



- World History: Understands major global trends from 1000 B.C. to A.D. 300.

### **The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)**

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org>

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Culture
  - Time, continuity, and change
-