

The Ancient World

Aimed at Key Stage 2

3000BC

Ancient Greek
Civilisation Begins



3000BC

First Olympic
Games held

776BC

508BC

First
Democracy
Athens

Battle of
Marathon

490BC

432BC

Parthenon
built



432BC

National Curriculum subject links

Ancient Greece – a study of Greek life and achievements and their influence on the western world

Coverage and links

This sequence of lessons looks at several aspects of Ancient Greek civilisation, and asks pupils to consider its significance to the world today. Through this enquiry, as well as learning factual detail about Ancient Greece – dates, names of gods, some key figures, etc. – pupils will gain a growing understanding of the concept of historical significance. At the end of the enquiry, pupils will begin to assess the Ancient Greeks against a set of criteria for judging significance.

In the first lesson, pupils will start by learning all about what we mean by 'Ancient Greece', placing it on a map and a timeline. Then they will use three of the films to start thinking about some of the Greeks' big ideas – democracy and philosophy – and start to assess their impact on the world today.

The second lesson looks at daily life, taking in food, family and religion as pupils again draw out aspects that we still see in the world today. Some will, of course, be everyday things, like olive oil or trips to the shops, whilst others will be bigger ideas, like the Greek gods whose legacy we still feel today.

The third lesson takes a more focussed look at the Olympic Games. Pupils will learn about how the games started and about some of the events and competitors. They will end this by looking at some of the aspects of the current games to see what is left over. The enquiry ends with a piece of writing about the impact of Ancient Greece on the world today.

The sequence of lessons sits alongside the lessons about Ancient Egypt and they could easily be taught together. At the end of both, pupils could then start to draw some comparisons between the two civilisations. Which has left the bigger impact on the world today?

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Suggested learning outcomes

By the end of these lessons, pupils will be able to...

- Give accurate dates for the Ancient Greeks and locate the Greek civilisation on a map
- Describe key features of life in Ancient Greece
- Begin to assess the long-term impact of the Ancient Greek civilisation.

Pre-lesson homework

To prepare for this sequence of lessons, pupils might do a short research project on a Greek god, a Greek ruler or a Greek philosopher. This research could then feed in to those sections of the lesson sequence.

Lesson 1 – What's left of Greek ideas?

Films to use

- **Who were the Greeks?**
- **Ancient Greece**
- **Democracy**

This lesson is all about the big ideas that we have inherited from Ancient Greece, and so, in the latter part of the lesson, pupils will be thinking about philosophy and democracy.

Start the lesson with some images of films, books, ideas and symbols that display evidence of ideas and culture developed and left behind by the Ancient Greeks. A good starting point might be the Percy Jackson series of books and films, but you might also include the medical snake and staff, a symbol of Asclepius, the god of Healing, or even recent films like Troy and Alexander. Get pupils talking about them – some pupils may be very familiar with them, others less so, but they can still comment on what sorts of things they can see in the pictures. You need to establish, either through an answer or by telling your class, that these images all have something to do with Ancient Greece. Now ask the class to think about why the stories and ideas from a people who lived 3000 years ago might still be popular today.

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Lesson 1 – What's left of Greek ideas? continued ...

Show Who were the Greeks? in which a philosopher talks about the earliest Greek settlements. At the end, have a quick discussion with your class about what they've heard about how these settlements started – through trading, building great palaces and then through war.

The first activity will be to locate the Greek civilisation on a map. Map 1 shows the cities of Ancient Greece and Map 2 shows the spread of Greek settlements across the Mediterranean. Ask the class lots of questions about the maps, especially the first one about all the cities.

- Can they see Athens, the present-day capital city of Greece?
- What about Sparta, where King Leonidas led 300 men in defending his people against the invading Persian army?

Then look at the map of the Mediterranean. This time find Greece and then ask questions about the spread of Greek settlements.

- What do pupils notice about where the settlements are?
- What can we infer from the fact that most settlements were very near the coast?

Then pupils will need to mark Ancient Greece on a timeline, either as a whole class activity or individually, if each pupil has a timeline that they are developing over their history studies in KS2. They should note that the earliest Greek civilisation started in about 800BC, and though it went through lots of different phases, the end of Ancient Greece was around AD600. Talk about the length of time here – how does it compare to other ancient civilisations? If Ancient Greece ended today, what year would it have started? Remember to talk about the differences between **BC** and **AD** and make sure that pupils aren't confused by this before moving on. Note, there is a 60 Second History film that covers **BC/AD** and **Timeline**

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Lesson 1 – What's left of Greek ideas? continued ...

Some pupils might want to go further and find out some other important dates, so they might find out about:

- King Leonidas and the Battle of Thermopylae
- The philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
- The writer, Homer
- Alexander the Great

Now show **Ancient Greece** in which our philosopher talks about how the city-states of Greece worked; how they were built and how they were run. At the end, ask your class if there is anything in what he has said that we still have today? After some general answers, focus in on the fact that cities had their own laws and they later started to have democracy. This might be a new word for some pupils and is a very important term for this lesson. You could demonstrate the concept of democracy in a very simple way with a small class election. Put your class into small groups and tell them that each group is going to choose someone who would like to be class president/litter monitor/paper recycler (or whatever suits you best). They have five minutes to work up a tiny campaign, then put the best candidates up for a vote. At the end, ask pupils why it might be good for people to have a say in who runs the country. At the end, show them **Democracy** and then ask why it was a good thing for the Ancient Greeks.

Tell your class that the Greeks' other big idea was ideas. The Greeks thought that it was important to ask questions about the world, about the things we could see and the things we can't see, and about whether the way things are is the best way to be. The people who did this were called philosophers and the most important ones, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, are still studied today.

At this point you could ask pupils to think about some of the sorts of questions that the Greek philosophers asked:

- Could democracy, as we just learned about, work for the whole school?
- Is it the best way to decide who runs the country?
- Why should I be good?

To end the lesson, pupils could write their answer to one of those questions to go up on a wall display about the Greeks' big ideas.

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Lesson 2 – What's left from Ancient Greek daily life?

Films to use

- **Family life: women**
- **Family life: men**
- **Religion**
- **Greek gods**
- **Farming**
- **Off to market**
- **Trade**
- **Trade and money**

In this lesson, pupils will be working in groups on one of the topics from Greek daily life to prepare a short presentation for the rest of the class. Thus, it would be useful if your pupils can watch the films separately in groups on computers or tablets. If not, you could watch a film from each section and then give each group the transcripts from the other films.

The aim of each presentation is for pupils to tell us what they have learned about day-to-day life in Ancient Greece and what ideas from then we still see today. There are four topics, each with two films to watch. If time and circumstances allow it would be useful for each group to be able to carry out extra research for their topic as well.

The boxes in **figure 1** could be cut out and given to each group. It is likely that you will have more than four groups and it's fine to have the topics repeated.

The presentations could be done in this lesson or at the beginning of the next one. You could also divide the class in half if you have topics doubled up, so that everybody only sees one other presentation.

At the end of the presentations, there is an opportunity to ask questions to each group. Make sure that you draw out from them or, indeed, from others in the class, the evidence we see today of the impact of Ancient Greek daily life. There will be some products like olive oil and wine. Others might note that the names of and stories about the gods

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Lesson 3 – What's left of Ancient Greek sport?

are still around today. You might also ask about differences – how are we different to the Greeks? What have we lost from their civilisation?

Films to use

- **Olympic Games – how they started**
- **Olympic Games – athletes**
- **Olympic Games – events**
- **Olympic Games – women**

This topic is one where many pupils will be on the most secure ground, so keep challenging their current knowledge and ensure they add to it as much as possible.

Start this lesson by asking pupils to brainstorm in a group what they know about the Olympic Games today. There'll almost certainly be a rush of events, medals and competitors. All this is great – it will build excitement about the topic. Then ask if anyone knows where the Olympic Games started. See what responses you get and then show **Olympic Games – how they started**. In this film an Olympic trainer talks about the Greek tradition of different games, each held every four years in honour of different gods. At the end, ask your class to discuss what they heard about the Greek Olympics that has anything in common with the modern Olympics; it was every four years and held in the summer.

Now set up the first activity for this lesson. Pupils will need a set of blank cards – big enough to write a sentence or two on. On each one they will record something about the Greek Olympics to use later, so decide how many each pupil might have. Some might just fill in 4 or 5, others as many as 10.

Now show Olympic Games – athletes, Olympic Games – events and Olympic Games – women to the class. After each one allow time for pupils to record a piece of information about the games. As they work, talk about what they've just seen, remind them of things, perhaps even ask a few people to share.

For the next part you will need some kind of whole class continuum - simply asking pupils to stand somewhere along one wall would do it.

At one end, state: **In the Greek Olympics and still seen in the Olympics today**

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Lesson 3 – What's left of Ancient Greek sport?

And at the other end: **In the Greek Olympics and not seen at all in the Olympics today**

Pupils now choose one of their fact cards and come and stand somewhere between the two extremes. Is their fact a little like something we see today? Quite a lot like it? When everyone is in place, ask them to explain why they have chosen to stand in that position.

At the end, pupils should carry out the activity for all their facts across their table. This might take only a moment, so keep checking, and add questions to challenge – why have you got those two that way round? I know women compete alongside the men, but don't they still have different events? Anything to make them think about their answers.

Lesson 4 – What's left of Ancient Greece?

The final activity could be done at the end of a lesson, in a lesson of its own, or started in school and finished at home. The final piece will be their plan for a school exhibition about the influence the Greeks have had on us today. They will choose artefacts to display and write some words for a brochure for the event.

Begin this session by thinking aloud about the question: What's left of Ancient Greece?

- Do we just mean buildings and artefacts? Well there are quite a lot of those?
- What else could the question mean?

Keep the discussion alive for a few minutes, giving everyone a chance to give examples to back up the big ideas.

Then set up the task. There is going to be an exhibition about the influence of Ancient Greece on the world today. Pupils will have to choose between three and five artefacts from Ancient Greece or the modern world that should be in the exhibition. Then they will make a brochure in which they will write about these artefacts and write the introduction to the exhibition.

At the end of this there would be the possibility for some useful peer assessment, as everybody's choices are put up for wider discussion.

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Extension

There are opportunities in each lesson to extend pupils thinking.

- As pupils make their timelines in lesson 1, use the opportunity to check pupils' knowledge and understanding of the time period and what this means in terms of years and centuries.
- The group task offers an opportunity to extend pupils by giving them leading roles in their groups
- In the Olympics lesson some pupils could be challenged to write more cards.
- In the final activity, pupils could be challenged to find out about another area of Greek influence, such as in medicine or architecture.

Scaffolding

- Display all new vocabulary in the classroom and use it regularly in class talk.
- In the Olympics lesson some pupils might only fill in a few fact cards. They then might only work with these or perhaps have others provided for them.
- In the final task, some pupils might benefit from being given a list of items to choose from; perhaps three from a list of five. They might also be supported in their writing with the aid of some sentence starters.

Formative assessment opportunities

- In the first lesson it will be important to talk about the dates and passage of time, to ensure there are no misconceptions here.
- Before the final task it will be important to hear from all members of the class to make sure that they all have ideas about what to include.

Reflection

The essay written at the end of lesson 3 acts as a final outcome activity for this enquiry. After writing it, students should discuss their answers.

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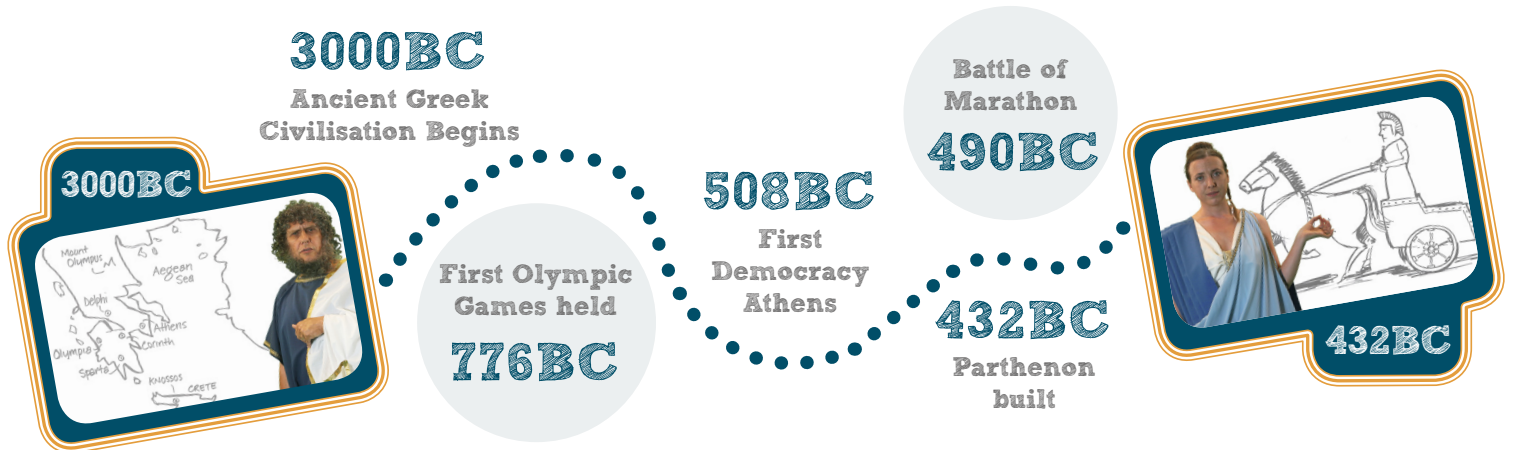


Figure 1. What's left from Ancient Greek daily life? Cutout boxes.

Topic 1 – family life

Films to watch

- **Family life: women**
- **Family life: men**

Things to think about

- **Who lived in a Greek household?**
- **Who did different jobs for the family?**
- **What were Greek houses like?**
- **What did children do?**

Topic 2 – Religion

Films to watch

- **Religion**
- **Greek Gods**

Things to think about

- **What gods did the Greeks worship?**
- **Who were the important gods?**
- **Where did they worship the gods?**
- **What stories did they tell about the gods?**

Topic 3 – Food and farming

Films to watch

- **Farming**
- **Off to market**

Things to think about

- **What sorts of crops did the Ancient Greeks grow?**
- **What solutions did farmers come up with for the problems they faced?**
- **What was the market like?**
- **Why was it hard to be a Greek farmer?**

Topic 4 – Trade

Films to watch

- **Trade**
- **Trade and money**

Things to think about

- **What were the Greeks good at making?**
- **Where did they sell their products?**
- **How did the Greeks manage to trade with other parts of the world?**

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Map 1 – Cities in Ancient Greece



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Map 2 – Greek settlements in the Mediterranean

