

Name: _____

An Introduction to Ancient Greece

Ancient Greece was not one large empire but a collection of smaller city-states. The term the Greeks used was polis, which meant "city-state." A polis was bigger than a city but smaller than a state. They were scattered throughout the Mediterranean area. Some were sea-ports; others were more inland. Some of the more famous city-states were Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Delphi, and Thebes.



Can you find some of the more famous city-states on the map of Ancient Greece?

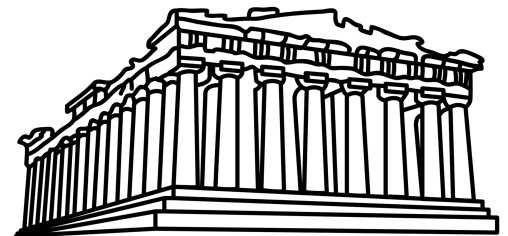
Circle the city-states.

Athens

Athens was the birthplace of democracy, or the idea that each person could have a voice in what laws were passed and who made up the government.

Sparta

Sparta was a place of great determination. The Spartans believed in a strong army. All Spartan boys were trained to be soldiers. When the Persians invaded Greece, the other city-states looked especially to Sparta and its army to keep them safe.



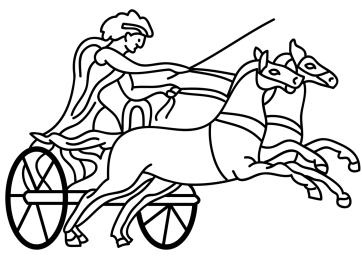
The Parthenon was built in the 5th century BC in Athens. It is a temple to honor the Greek goddess Athena and remains today as a symbol of Ancient Greece and the beginning of Athenian democracy.

Fun Fact:

The word "polis" means city-state. In modern times, the word is widely used in the sense of 'city' and is found in the names of many American cities. Can you think of a city with 'polis' in the name?



Name: _____



Greek City-States

Ancient Greece was not a country with a single government. Instead, ancient Greece was divided into hundreds of independent city-states, or polises. These city-states usually included a city, like Athens, and its surrounding countryside, farms, and small villages. Each city state had its own government, laws, and customs.

Though the Greek city-states were fiercely independent, these city states did have many things in common. They worshipped the same gods, they spoke the same language, and they had the same cultural background. And in times of foreign invasion (such as the Persian wars), they would band together to fight a common enemy.

Most of the city-states were monarchies ruled by a king. Some of the city-states were oligarchies ruled by the powerful elite members of society. Athens had a very special kind of government called democracy, which meant 'rule of the people.' In Athenian democracy, people voted for the laws that they wanted.

Answer in complete sentences.

1. What is a city-state?

2. How were city-states different from one another?

3. What did the city-states have in common?

4. When did the city-states unite?

Fill in the chart:

Types of Government

	Monarchy	Oligarchy	Democracy
Definition			
Advantages			
Disadvantages			



Fun Fact: Most ancient Greeks were loyal to their own city-state. If asked where they came from, they would reply, "I am from Sparta," "I am a citizen of Athens," or "I come from Thebes." They would probably not say, "I am from Greece."

How do you reply when someone ask where you are from?

Name: _____

The Greek City-States

Read the passage. Fill in the blanks with words from the word list.

voted agora gods polis philosophers city-states
acropolis arts government oligarchy army

Though everyone in ancient Greece spoke the same language and worshipped the same _____, Greece was not a united country. Instead Greece was split into hundreds of _____, which were small countries that included a city and the surrounding farmland. The Greek word for a city-state is a _____. A typical polis had a marketplace called an _____ and a fortress on a high hill called an _____.

Each city-state had its own form of _____ and system of laws. Athens, for example, is known for its democratic government where all citizens _____ to choose new leaders or make new laws. Sparta, on the other hand, was ruled by an _____, which consisted of two kings and a council of important citizens.

Each polis had very different beliefs.

Spartans believed in a strong _____ and were trained to be soldiers. In contrast, Athenians loved the _____. Athens produced many great _____ and writers.



Fun Fact:

Myron's Discobolus, meaning 'Discus Thrower', is one of the most famous Classical Greek statues, held up as a masterpiece of Greek Art.