



Edna G. Olds Academy
A L.E.A.D Academy



Year 6

Class Assembly

Ancient Greeks





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Welcome to our assembly. During this half term, we have been linking our learning to the Ancient Greeks.

About 2,500 years ago, Greece was one of the most important places in the ancient world. The Greeks were great thinkers, warriors, writers, actors, athletes, artists, architects and politicians.

The Greeks called themselves Hellenes and their land was Hellas. The name 'Greeks' was given to the people of Greece later by the Romans. They lived in mainland Greece and the Greek islands, but also in colonies scattered around the Mediterranean Sea. There were Greeks in Italy, Sicily, Turkey, North Africa, and as far west as France.

They sailed the sea to trade and find new lands. The Greeks took their ideas with them and they started a way of life that's similar to the one we have today.

The Minoans were the first great Greek civilisation. They didn't live on mainland Greece but on the nearby island of Crete, between 2200BC and 1450BC. They were known as the Minoans after their legendary king, Minos.

After the Minoans came the Mycenaean civilisation, from mainland Greece. They were fine builders and traders, but they were also great soldiers. They famously fought in the battle of Troy.





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Democracy

Democracy is a fair political system where all adults vote for an elected government. This government then make decisions on how to run the country.

Adults in the UK vote in elections to choose a political party, MPs and the Prime Minister.

Democracy began in *Ancient Greece*. In fact, the *Ancient Greek* system is very famous and has helped to shape many systems of democracy around the world today.

There were three main systems of democracy in *Ancient Greece*:

- The *ekklesia* was the main assembly of citizens who met 40 times a year to make laws and decisions.
- Any male *Athenian* citizen could attend.
- Out of 40,000 men, about 5,000 attended regularly.
- They made decisions by a simple majority vote.

The *boule* were a group of 500 men who served for one year. They met daily and made lots of decisions. They decided what issues to take to the *ekklesia*. They were chosen randomly.

The *dikasteria*, or popular courts, was a group of 500 jurors who dealt with crimes. There were no rules or police so the *dikasteria* decided what would be tried and what the sentences would be. The jurors were chosen daily at random from a group of male citizens over 30 years old.





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Women, slaves, children and people who were not Athenian citizens were left out of the democratic process.

This is different to our country today, which in recent times has changed to provide greater democratic rights to its citizens. However, unfortunately, in some countries around the world this is not the case.

Sport

The Olympics actually started in Ancient Greece. The different city states often fought but during the Olympics, peace was declared and everyone came together to enjoy the games. The games began in 776BC in Olympia. It is believed that the games were a religious event to honour Zeus who was the king of the Gods.

In 490BC, the Persian Empire was very big. King Darius wanted to continue to expand the empire so he decided to invade Athens. The commander, Datis, and his fleet of 25,000 sailed to Marathon which was a few miles from Athens. The Athenian army was massively outnumbered!

The Athenians needed to ask for help! So they decided to ask the Spartans. Although they often fought against each other, when faced with an outside enemy the Greek city states usually joined forces. The Spartan army was very famous and would have been very useful to the Athenians. They sent a runner, Pheidippides, to Sparta to ask. He ran for 2 days and nights from Athens to Sparta, running 240km in total.





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The Persian army lost over 6,000 soldiers compared to only 192 Athenians! Pheidippides then ran 26 miles to Athens to tell of their victory, and also to warn them of a possible second Persian attack. This is why, today, when people run in a marathon, they run 26.2 miles.

Gods and Goddesses

The Ancient Greeks were a religious lot. They believed that their gods and goddesses controlled everything in the world and that they must be revered and appeased.

The Ancient Greek people built huge, beautiful temples and shrines where they could go to worship the gods.

They also held festivals in honour of the gods and people would pray and make offerings to them in hope of being granted good fortune in return.

The Ancient Greeks believed that the twelve most powerful gods lived at the top of a huge mountain called Mount Olympus. However, some very important gods such as Hades; God of the Underworld, did not live there.

Mount Olympus was where the gods held meetings and disputes were settled.

Zeus was the most powerful of all the gods. He was the God of the Sky and the King of Mount Olympus.

He was married to the Queen of the Gods, Hera, but he had many other lovers.

His temper affected the weather, and when he was angry he threw thunderbolts.





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Hera is the sister and wife of Zeus.
She was powerful and beautiful but very jealous and vain.
Hera is an earth goddess and the goddess of family and marriage.
Greek men thought of her as unpleasant.
She tried to kill Zeus's son, Hercules.

In our English lessons, we have been reading the book *Farther*, by Grahame Baker-Smith. The story is about a boy and his father, who live on an Island. The boy's father is desperate to fly and spends most of his time dreaming about achieving this; unfortunately, this has a negative impact on his relationship with his son.

The book has a number of similarities with the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus.

Daedalus is a brilliant inventor—the Thomas Edison of his day. Desperate to flee the island, Daedalus uses wax to build some wings for himself and his son Icarus, giving him the warning to avoid flying too close to the sun, as the wings might melt, but not to fly too low as the sea will dampen them.

As a result of reading the book, we researched and learnt about the Wright brothers, who were the first people to fly, inventing the aeroplane after a number of attempts and experiments.

After learning about them, we wrote some newspaper reports about the first ever successful flight.

Thank you for coming to our assembly.

