

CHAPTER 7

LESSON 1

Rise of Greek Civilization

The early Greeks developed important settlements, trade routes, and political ideas in the Mediterranean region.

Mountains and Seas

[SS.6.G.2.1](#), [SS.6.G.2.5](#), [LA.6.1.6.1](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)

How did physical geography influence the lives of the early Greeks?

Greece was the first civilization to develop in Europe and the westernmost part of Asia. In other early civilizations, people first settled in river valleys that had rich soil. Greek civilization began in an area **dominated** by mountains and seas.

If you flew over this region today, you would see rugged landscapes and beautiful seas. The Greek mainland is on the southern part of Europe's Balkan Peninsula. A **peninsula** (puh • NIHN • suh • luh) is a body of land with water on three sides. Far to the east of the Greek mainland is another peninsula called Anatolia. It is part of present-day Turkey.

Between these two land areas are the dazzling blue waters of the Aegean Sea. The Aegean Sea is part of the larger Mediterranean Sea. There are hundreds of islands in the Aegean Sea. They look like stepping stones between the Greek mainland and Anatolia.

The Greeks traded goods and ideas between islands and along the area's coastlines. Today many Greeks fish and trade for a living, much as the ancient Greeks did before them. Other ancient Greeks settled in farming **communities**. These settlements began on narrow, fertile plains that ran along the coast and between the mountains. In the area's mild climate, farmers grew crops, such as wheat, barley, olives, and grapes. They also raised sheep and goats.

Even though some Greek communities were near the sea, others were far from the coast. Inland communities were separated from each other by rugged mountains and deep valleys. As a result, communities in many parts of ancient Greece became fiercely independent. They came to think of their communities almost as small separate countries.

Understanding Cause and Effect How did seas influence the way many ancient Greeks lived?



An Island Civilization

[SS.6.E.3.4](#), [SS.6.G.2.1](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)

How did the civilization of the Minoans develop?

Greek myths describe an early civilization that developed on Crete (KREET), an island southeast of the Greek mainland. About B.C.1900, a British archaeologist named Arthur Evans discovered a site on Crete

called Knossos (NAH • suhs). He unearthed the amazing palace of a legendary king named Minos (MY • nuhs).

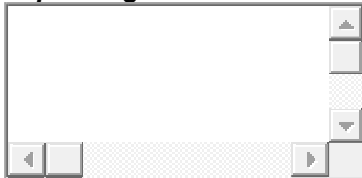
Evans **concluded** that Minos and his family lived in the palace. The palace had numerous rooms that were connected by twisting passageways. Some of these rooms were used to store oil, wine, and grain. Other rooms were workshops where people made jewelry, vases, and statues. There were even bathrooms in the palace.

An ancient people called the Minoans (muh • NOH • uhnz) built the palace at Knossos. The Minoan civilization was the first to develop in the Aegean region, but they were not Greeks. Their civilization lasted from about 2500 B.C. to 1450 B.C.

Trade was an important **economic** activity for the Minoans. They built ships using the wood from Crete's forests of oak and cedar trees. The Minoans sailed to Egypt and Syria. There they traded pottery and stone vases for ivory and metals. Minoan ships also patrolled the eastern Mediterranean Sea to protect Minoan trade from pirates.

Sometime around 1450 B.C., however, the Minoan civilization collapsed. Historians do not know why this happened. One theory for the collapse is that undersea earthquakes caused huge waves that destroyed Minoan cities. Other historians think that people from the Greek mainland, known as Mycenaeans (my • suh • NEE • uhns), invaded Crete.

Explaining What did the discovery at Knossos reveal about the Minoans?



A Mainland Civilization

[SS.6.E.3.4](#), [SS.6.G.2.6](#)

How did the Mycenaeans gain power in the Mediterranean?

About 2000 B.C., the Mycenaeans left their homeland in central Asia. They moved into mainland Greece. There, they gradually mixed with the local people and set up several kingdoms.

Mycenaean Kingdom

Little was known about the Mycenaeans until the late 1800s. That was when a German archaeologist named Heinrich Schliemann (HYN • rihk SHLEE • mahn) discovered the ruins of a palace in Mycenae (my • SEE • nee). He named the people of this civilization the Mycenaeans.

Each Mycenaean king lived in a palace built on a hill. Thick stone walls circled the palace and protected the kingdom's people. Nobles lived outside the walls on large farms, called estates. The workers and enslaved people who farmed the land lived in villages on these estates.

Mycenaean palaces were centers of government. Artisans there made leather goods, clothes, and jars for wine and olive oil. Other workers made swords and ox-hide shields. Government officials recorded the wealth of the kingdom's residents. They also collected wheat, livestock, and honey as taxes.

Traders and Warriors

Minoan traders from Crete visited the Greek mainland. Gradually, the Mycenaeans adopted features of Minoan culture. They built ships and worked with bronze. They used the sun and stars to navigate the seas. The Mycenaeans also worshipped the Earth Mother, the Minoans' chief god.

By the mid-1400s B.C., the Mycenaeans had conquered the Minoans and controlled the Aegean area. This brought new wealth to the Mycenaeans, which they used to expand their military strength. The Mycenaeans were proud of their military successes in the Trojan War.

A Dark Age

However, the Mycenaean civilization **declined** over time. Mycenaean kingdoms fought one another, and earthquakes destroyed their palace fortresses. By 1100 B.C., the Mycenaean civilization had crumbled.

About this time, groups of warring peoples moved from place to place throughout the eastern Mediterranean region.

One of these groups was a Greek-speaking people known as the Dorians (DOHR • ee • uhns). They invaded the Greek mainland from the north and took control of most of the region.

Historians call the next 300 years of Greek history a Dark Age. During this difficult time, trade slowed down, people made fewer things to sell, and most were very poor. Farmers grew only enough food to feed their families. Many people also stopped writing and keeping records.

In Greece, several positive developments also happened during this time. Dorian warriors introduced iron weapons and the skill of iron making. Iron weapons and farm tools were stronger and cheaper than the bronze ones used by the Mycenaeans. As the Dorians pushed into Greece, thousands of people fled the Greek mainland. They settled on the Aegean islands and the western shore of Anatolia.

The Hellenes

By 750 B.C., many descendants of the people who ran away returned to the Greek mainland. They brought back new ideas, crafts, and skills. Small independent communities developed under local leaders who became kings. These people called themselves Hellenes, or Greeks. Farmers in these communities grew more food than their families could use. The Greeks traded their surplus food with each other and with neighboring peoples, such as the Egyptians and Phoenicians. As trade increased, a new need for writing developed. The Greeks adopted an alphabet from Phoenician traders who sailed from the Mediterranean coast.

The Greek alphabet had 24 letters that represented different sounds. It greatly simplified reading and writing in the Greek language. Record keeping became easier. Soon, people wrote down the tales that had been told by **bards**, or storytellers. Previously, these tales had been passed down from generation to generation orally. Now they could finally be kept in written form.

Determining Cause and Effect Determining Cause and Effect How did the Dorian invasion help spread Greek culture?



Thinking Like a HISTORIAN

Analyzing Primary and Secondary Sources

German historian Heinrich Schliemann is considered the modern discoverer of the Mycenaean world. Schliemann (1822–1890) discovered several palaces and the ancient city of Troy. Research a biography or articles about Schliemann to create a short report about the archaeologist. Present your report to the class. For more information about using primary and secondary sources, read the chapter *What Does a Historian Do?*

Colonies and Trade

[SS.6.E.3.1](#), [SS.6.E.3.3](#), [SS.6.E.3.4](#), [SS.6.G.2.6](#)

How did early Greeks spread their culture?

As Greece recovered from the Dark Age, its population increased rapidly. By 700 B.C., local farmers could not produce enough grain to feed the growing population. To solve this problem, Greek communities

began to send people outside the Aegean area to establish **colonies** (KAH • luh • nees). A colony is a settlement in a new territory that has close ties to its homeland.

The Greeks founded many colonies along the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea between 750 B.C. and 550 B.C. Greek culture spread into new areas, such as southern Italy, Sicily, France, Spain, North Africa, and western Asia.

The colonies traded with their "parent" cities on the Greek mainland. They shipped grains, metals, fish, timber, and enslaved people to Greece. In return, the Greek mainland sent wine, olive oil, and pottery to the colonies. As the Greeks began to make coins from metal, this **affected** their trade. Trade expanded as merchants traded money for goods rather than bartered for goods. This system increased a colony's wealth. As the demand for goods grew, artisans made more goods to meet the demand. People in different colonies specialized in making certain products. For example, in colonies where farmers raised sheep, people began to make cloth from the sheep's wool.

Determining Cause and Effect How did the colonies affect trade and industry in the Greek world?



Connections to TODAY

Coins

The Greeks began making coins from silver in the 600s B.C. Current American quarters and dimes are made of layers of copper and nickel and covered with a copper-nickel alloy or blend. Many American coins have symbols similar to ones used on ancient Greek coins. If you could create a new American coin, whose image would you place on it?

The Greek City-State

[SS.6.W.3.2](#), [SS.6.G.2.2](#), [SS.6.G.2.6](#)

How did Greek city-states create the idea of citizenship?

Mountains and seas separated Greek communities from each other. As a result, people developed a loyalty to the community in which they lived. Communities became fiercely independent. By the end of the Dark Age, nobles who owned large estates had overthrown the Greek kings. Across Greece, nobles ruled numerous city-states. As in Mesopotamia, the Greek city-states were made up of a town or city and the surrounding area. Each city-state, or **polis** (PAH • luhs), was like an independent country. Today, English words such as *police* and *politics* come from the Greek word *polis*.

What Did a Polis Look Like?

The polis was the basic political unit of Greek civilization. At the center of each polis was a fort built on a hilltop. The hilltop that a fort stood on was called an acropolis (uh • KRAH • puh • luhs). Local people could take refuge in the acropolis when invaders attacked. The Greeks built temples on the acropolis to honor local gods.

Outside the acropolis was an open area called an **agora** (A • guh • ruh). This space was used as a marketplace. It was also an area where people could gather and debate issues, choose officials, pass laws, and carry out business. City neighborhoods surrounded the agora. Just beyond the city were the villages and farmland that also were part of the polis.

Because most city-states were surrounded by mountains and seas, they were usually small. Some were only a few square miles in area, while others covered hundreds of square miles. By 500 B.C., nearly 300,000 people lived in the city-state of Athens. Most city-states, however, were much smaller.

What Did Citizenship Mean to the Greeks?

Today, in the United States, a person who is born here is considered a citizen. We owe many of our ideas about citizenship to the ancient Greeks.

Who was a Greek citizen? Citizens were members of a political community with rights and responsibilities. In Greece, male citizens had the right to vote, hold public office, own property, and defend themselves in court. In return, citizens had the responsibility to serve in government and to fight for their polis as citizen soldiers. Ancient Greek citizenship was very different from that of ancient Mesopotamia or Egypt, where most people were subjects. They had no rights, no voice in government, and no choice but to obey their rulers.

In most Greek city-states, only free, land-owning men born in the polis could be citizens. They believed the responsibility to run the city-state was theirs because the polis was made up of their property. Some city-states later ended the requirement of owning land for a person to be a citizen. Women and children might qualify for citizenship, but they had none of the rights that went with it.

Citizen Soldiers

In Greece, wars were fought by wealthy nobles riding horses and driving chariots. By 700 B.C., citizens called hoplites (HAYP • lyts) made up the city-state armies. The hoplites fought on foot. Each heavily armed soldier carried a round shield, a short sword, and a spear. During battles, rows of hoplites marched forward together, shoulder to shoulder. They raised their shields above them to protect them from the enemy's arrows. This unified formation is called a **phalanx** (FAY • langks).

The success of the hoplites came from their pride in fighting as brave warriors. In Athens, for example, soldiers took this oath:

"I will not disgrace my sacred arms nor desert my comrade, [fellow soldier] wherever I am stationed [located]. . . And I will observe the established laws and whatever laws in the future may be reasonably established. If any person seek to overturn the laws . . . I will oppose him. I will honor the religion of my fathers."

—from *Athenian Ephebic Oath*, tr. Clarence A. Forbes

The polis gave Greek citizens a sense of belonging. This is similar to how people feel about their home states today. The citizens put the needs of the polis above their own. Such strong loyalty to their own city-state divided the Greeks. They were not as unified as a whole country. This lack of unity weakened Greece, making it easier to conquer.

Explaining What were the rights and responsibilities of Greek citizens?

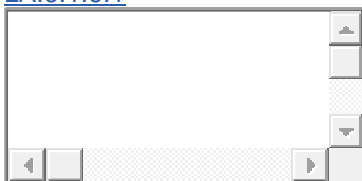


LESSON 1 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. Explain the difference between a *colony* and a *polis*.

[LA.6.1.6.1](#)



Answer the Guiding Questions

2. Analyzing What were the ancient Greeks' most important economic activities?

[SS.6.E.3.3](#)

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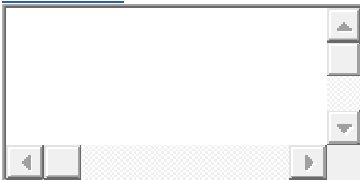
3. Explaining How did the Minoans develop wealth?

[SS.6.G.2.1](#)

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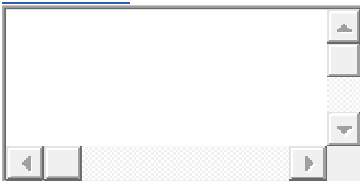
4. Summarizing What happened to Mycenaean civilization during the Dark Age?

[LA.6.1.7.1](#)

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5. Explaining Why did the Greeks establish colonies?

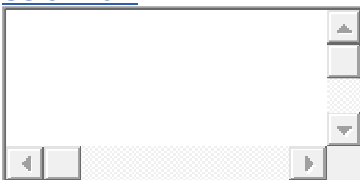
[SS.6.E.3.1](#)

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6. EXPOSITORY WRITING How did Greek city-states apply democracy? How did they limit democracy?

Write a short essay explaining your answers.

[SS.6.W.3.2](#)

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LESSON 2

Sparta and Athens: City-State Rivals

The city-states of Athens and Sparta had two quite different governments. Athenian democracy strongly influenced later forms of democracy.

Political Changes

[SS.6.W.3.2](#), [SS.6.W.3.3](#), [SS.6.G.2.2](#), [SS.6.G.2.5](#), [LA.6.1.6.1](#)

Which types of government did the Greek city-states have?

As Greek city-states grew, wealthy nobles seized power from kings. They did not rule very long, however. Owners of small farms resented the nobles' power. Many of the farm owners had borrowed money from the nobles to buy land. When the farmers could not repay the loans, the nobles often took their land. The farmers then had to work for the nobles or move to the city to find jobs. In some cases, they even had to sell themselves into slavery.

By 650 B.C., small farmers wanted political change and a greater voice in government. Merchants and artisans also called for reforms. Merchants and artisans had earned a good living in the growing city-states. However, because they did not own land, they were not **considered** citizens. That meant they had no role in ruling the polis.

The growing unrest led to the rise of tyrants. A **tyrant** (TY • ruhnt) is someone who seizes power and rules with total authority. Most tyrants who commanded city-states ruled fairly. However, the harsh rule of a few *tyrants* gave the word tyranny its current meaning; that is, rule by a cruel and unjust person.

The common people of Greece supported the tyrants when they overthrew the nobles during the 600s B.C. Tyrants also gained support from the hoplites, or citizen soldiers, in the army. Tyrants strengthened their popularity by building new temples, fortresses, and marketplaces. Nevertheless, most Greeks objected to rule by a single person. They wanted a government in which all citizens could participate.

Tyrants ruled many of the Greek city-states until about 500 B.C. From then until 336 B.C., most city-states developed into either oligarchies or democracies. In an **oligarchy** (AH • luh • gahr • kee), a few wealthy people hold power over the larger group of citizens. In a **democracy** (dih • MAH • kruh • see), all citizens share in running the government. Two of the major city-states, Sparta and Athens, were governed differently and created very different societies.

Evaluating Why were tyrants able to hold power in various Greek city-states?



Sparta: A Military Society

[SS.6.W.3.2](#), [SS.6.W.3.3](#), [SS.6.E.3.1](#), [SS.6.G.2.5](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)

Why did the Spartans focus on military skills?

The city-state of Sparta was located on the Peloponnesus (peh • luh • puh • NEE • suhs) Peninsula in southern Greece. The Spartans were descended from the Dorians who invaded Greece in the Dark Age. Like other city-states, Sparta's economy was based on agriculture.

Sparta did not set up overseas colonies. Instead, Sparta invaded neighboring city-states and enslaved the local people. The Spartans called their enslaved laborers **helots** (HEH • luhts), a word that comes from the Greek word for "capture."

A Strong Military

About 650 B.C., the helots revolted against their Spartan masters. The Spartans crushed that uprising. Sparta's leaders wanted to prevent future revolts. They decided to make Sparta a **military** society that stressed discipline. They also believed in simplicity, and strength through self-denial. The leaders thought that a military society created more obedient and loyal citizens.

Sparta's government prepared all boys and men for a life of war. Boys left their homes at age seven to join the military. In military camps, they learned to read, write, and use weapons. They also were treated harshly. The military leaders believed that harsh treatment would turn the young boys into adults who would survive the pain of battle. The Greek historian Plutarch (PLOO • tahrk) described life for Spartan boys:

"They were enrolled in certain companies . . . , where they all lived under the same order and discipline, doing their exercises and taking play together. Of these he who showed the most conduct and courage was made captain; they . . . obeyed his orders and underwent patiently whatsoever punishment he inflicted [delivered]; so that the whole course of their education was one continued exercise of a ready and perfect obedience."

—from *Plutarch: The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*

Spartan men entered the regular army at age 20. Men could marry during their twenties, but they were not allowed to live at home. Instead, they stayed in military camps, sharing barracks and eating meals with other soldiers. A typical army meal was a dish called black broth—pork boiled in animal blood, salt, and vinegar. Spartan men could live at home again when they reached the age of 30, but they continued to train for combat. They finally retired from the army at age 60.

Since many Spartan men lived away from home, Spartan women enjoyed more freedom than the women of other Greek city-states. They could own property and travel. Girls were trained in sports, such as wrestling and throwing the javelin. They remained physically fit to fulfill their roles as mothers. Their main goal was to raise sons who were brave, strong Spartan soldiers.

Spartan women expected their men to either win or die in battle. Spartan soldiers must never surrender. One Spartan mother ordered her son to "Come home carrying your shield or being carried on it."

How Was Sparta Governed?

Sparta's government was an oligarchy. Two kings ruled jointly, but they had little power. Their only duties were to lead the army and carry out religious ceremonies. In addition to the kings, Sparta had two other governing bodies, the assembly and the council of elders.

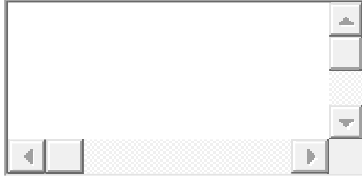
The assembly included all male citizens over the age of 30. The assembly made decisions about war and peace. However, the council of elders was the most powerful body in the government. Council members served as judges. They were the only officials who could order executions or exile. Each year, the council elected five people to be **ephors** (EH • fuhrs). The ephors enforced the laws and managed the collection of taxes.

Sparta's strict government brought **stability**. But that stability cost the people of Sparta. Because the government feared losing the helots, it discouraged free thinking and new ideas. Officials believed learning could lead to unrest. As a result, Sparta did not welcome foreign visitors and prevented citizens from traveling outside the city-state except for military reasons. It even discouraged people from studying literature and the arts.

In addition, Sparta resisted other types of change. For example, Spartans continued to use heavy iron bars for money when other Greeks used coins. This discouraged trade and isolated Sparta from the rest of Greece. While other city-states built up business and trade and improved their standard of living, Sparta remained a poor farming society.

For Sparta's strong, well-trained army, the only important goals were military power and victory. The Spartans **achieved** Greece's greatest military strength and power. Sparta would play a key role in defending Greece against invaders.

Determining Cause and Effect Why did Sparta fall behind other Greek city-states in many areas?



Athens: A Young Democracy

[SS.6.W.3.2](#), [SS.6.W.3.3](#), [SS.6.W.3.6](#)

How did the culture in Athens differ from other Greek city-states?

Another great Greek city-state was Athens. It was located northeast of Sparta, about a two-day trip away. Athens was founded by the descendants of the Mycenaeans and differed from Sparta in its ideas about society and government.

An Athenian Education

Athenians received an education far different from that of the Spartans. Athens educated its males, as Sparta did. In Athenian schools, boys studied subjects such as arithmetic, geometry, drawing, music, and public speaking. They also participated in sports. The Athenians believed that this type of education produced young people with strong minds and bodies. At age 18, when boys finished school, they were expected to take an active role in public affairs.

Athenian mothers educated their daughters at home. Girls were taught spinning, weaving, and other household duties. In some wealthy families, they learned to read, write, and play music. Women were expected to marry and care for their children. For the most part, women were not active in business or government in Athens.

Early Reforms

The history of Athens was much like that of the other Greek city-states. By about 600 B.C., most Athenian farmers owed money to the nobles. Some farmers were forced to sell themselves into slavery to repay their debts. Athenians began to rebel. Farmers called for an end to all debts. They also asked that land be distributed to the poor.

To avoid an uprising, the nobles agreed to make some changes. They turned to a respected merchant named Solon (SOH • luhn) for leadership. In 594 B.C., Solon ended the farmers' debts and freed those who were enslaved. He also opened the assembly and the law courts to all male citizens. The assembly was responsible for passing laws written by a council of 400 wealthy citizens.

The common people praised Solon's reforms. Still, many Athenians were unhappy. Wealthy people felt Solon had gone too far, while poor people thought he had not gone far enough. By the time Solon left office, he had lost much of his support.

In 560 B.C., a tyrant named Peisistratus (py • SIHS • truht • uhs) took over the government. A relative of Solon, Peisistratus made reforms that went even further than those that Solon had made. Peisistratus divided large estates among farmers who had no land. He provided loans to help farmers buy equipment to work their farms. He gave citizenship to Athenians who did not own land. He also hired the poor to **construct** temples and other public works. Since religion was important in Athens, Peisistratus built additional shrines to different gods. He also encouraged the worship of the goddess Athena. Under Peisistratus, festivals held to honor Athena were expanded by the addition of athletic contests.

Toward Democracy

After the death of Peisistratus, a noble named Cleisthenes (KLYS • thuh • neez) became the next leader of Athens. Prizing democracy, Cleisthenes made the assembly the city-state's major governing body. As before, all male citizens could participate in the assembly and vote on laws. Assembly members could now discuss issues freely, hear legal cases, and appoint army officials.

Cleisthenes also created a new council of 500 citizens. They were to help the assembly manage daily government affairs. The council introduced laws and controlled the treasury. They also managed relations with other city-states. Each year Athenian citizens held a lottery to choose the council members. Athenians preferred the lottery system over an election. In their view, an election might unfairly favor the rich, who were well-known. Terms on the council were limited to one year, and no one could serve on the council for more than two terms. Thus, every citizen had a chance to be a council member.

While Cleisthenes's reforms made the government of Athens more democratic, many residents were still excluded from the political process. People who were not citizens still could not participate in the government. This group included all Athenian women, foreign-born men, and enslaved people.

Explaining Why was Solon chosen to be leader of Athens?



Connections to TODAY

The Olympics

The ancient Olympic Games were held every four years at Olympia, in the western part of Greece, in honor of the god Zeus. The first Olympics were organized in 776 B.C. According to one legend, the founder of the games was the hero Hercules. The modern Olympics began in 1896 in Athens.

LESSON 2 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. What might a *tyrant* say to citizens who are asking for democracy?

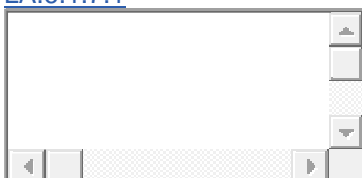
[LA.6.1.6.1](#)



Answer the Guiding Questions

2. **Explaining** Why were the tyrants able to seize control in Athens?

[LA.6.1.7.1](#)



3. **Determining Cause and Effect** Why did the Spartans emphasize military training?

[SS.6.W.3.3](#)

4. Describing How did Athenians feel about the changes Solon put in place?

[SS.6.W.3.2](#)

5. Identifying What was a major accomplishment of Cleisthenes?

[SS.6.W.3.2](#)

6. DESCRIPTIVE WRITING You are a student living in ancient Sparta or Athens. Write a journal entry that describes a day in your life.

[SS.6.W.3.3](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)

LESSON 3

Greece and Persia

Although it was large and powerful, the Persian Empire could not defeat the Greeks.

Persia's Empire

[SS.6.W.2.8](#), [SS.6.G.1.7](#), [SS.6.G.2.2](#), [SS.6.G.5.2](#), [LA.6.1.6.1](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)

How did the Persians rule a vast empire?

About the time that the government in Athens was undergoing political changes, the Persians were building a powerful empire in Southwest Asia. Persia (PUHR • zhuh), the homeland of the Persians, was located in what is today southwestern Iran.

Early Persians were warriors and cattle herders from the grasslands of central Asia. After settling in the highlands of Persia, they came under the control of other peoples. Then a dynasty of kings brought the Persians together into a powerful kingdom. In the 500s B.C., a talented king named Cyrus (SY • ruhs) the Great built a strong Persian army. With that army, he began creating an empire that became the largest in the ancient world.

Creating an Empire

During the 540s B.C., Persian troops swept into neighboring lands. They brought Mesopotamia, Syria, Canaan, and the Greek city-states of the area of Anatolia under Persian rule. King Cyrus held his growing empire together by treating conquered peoples fairly. He allowed them to keep their own languages, religions, and laws. In addition, Cyrus decided that the Jews exiled in Babylon would be allowed to return to their homeland.

After Cyrus, other Persian rulers continued to expand the empire. Their armies took over Egypt, western India, and lands to the northeast of Greece. From west to east, the Persian Empire stretched a distance of some 3,000 miles (4,800 km). This is about the size of the continental United States today.

To link this large territory, the Persians improved the network of roads begun by the Assyrians. The most important route, the Royal Road, ran more than 1,500 miles (2,400 km) from Persia to Anatolia. Travelers could **obtain** food, water, and fresh horses at roadside stations along the route. Using the Royal Road, messengers could travel from Persia to Anatolia in just seven days. That same journey had taken three months before the road was built.

Persian Government

As the Persian Empire expanded, its increasing size made it more difficult to manage. Darius I (duh • RY • uhs), who ruled Persia from 522 to 486 B.C., reorganized the government to make it more efficient. He divided the empire into provinces called **satrapies** (SAY • truh • pee-z). Each satrapy was ruled by a governor called a **satrap** (SAY • trap), which means "defender of the kingdom." The satrap collected taxes, judged legal cases, managed the police, and recruited soldiers for the Persian army.

Persia maintained a full-time, paid, professional army. In comparison, the Greek army consisted of citizens called to serve only during times of war. The best fighters in the Persian army were the 10,000 soldiers who were trained to guard the king. They were known as the Immortals because when a member died, another soldier immediately took his place.

Who Was Zoroaster?

The Persians at first worshipped many gods. Then, sometime in the 600s B.C., a religious teacher named Zoroaster (ZOHR • uh • WAS • tuhr) preached a new monotheistic religion. Most Persians accepted his religion, which was called **Zoroastrianism** (zohr • uh • WAS • tree • uh • nih • zuhm).

Zoroaster taught that there was one supreme god. This deity was called Ahura Mazda, or "Wise Lord." Ahura Mazda was the creator of all things and the leader of the forces of good. Zoroaster believed that evil existed in the world. People were free to choose between good and evil, but at the end of time, goodness would be victorious. Zoroastrian teachings, prayers, and hymns (sacred songs) were written down in a holy book. Because of Zoroastrianism, the Persians began to view their monarchy as a sacred institution or role. Persian kings believed that they ruled by the power of Ahura Mazda and were responsible to him alone. Darius I had the following statement carved on a cliff:

"For this reason Ahura Mazda [the Zoroastrian god] bore me aid . . . because I was not an enemy, I was not a deceiver, I was not a wrong-doer, neither I nor my family; according to rectitude [righteousness] I ruled."

— from Darius I, *Behistun Inscription*, column 4, line 4.13

After Darius's rule ended, the Persians continued to practice Zoroastrianism for centuries. The religion has about 200,000 followers today. Most of them live in South Asia.

Explaining How did Persian rulers unite their vast empire?



The Persian Wars

[SS.6.W.3.4](#), [SS.6.W.3.5](#), [SS.6.W.3.6](#)

How did the Greeks defeat the Persians?

As the 400s B.C. began, the Persians were ready to expand into Europe. However, they soon clashed with the Greeks, who had colonies in the Mediterranean area. Persia and Greece were very different civilizations. While the Persians obeyed an all-powerful king, many of the Greeks believed that citizens should choose their own rulers and government.

As a result of the conquests made by Cyrus, the Persians already controlled the Greek cities in Anatolia. In 499 B.C., these Greeks revolted against their Persian rulers. The Athenians sent warships to help the rebels, but the Persians crushed the uprising. The Persian king Darius was angry that the Athenians interfered. He decided to punish the mainland Greeks for meddling in his empire.

How Did the Greeks Win at Marathon?

In 490 B.C., Darius sent a fleet of 600 ships and an army to invade Greece. The Persians landed at Marathon (MAR • uh • thahn), which was a plain about 25 miles (40 km) northeast of Athens. The Persians waited there for several days. They expected the Greeks to come there and fight them. However, the Athenians did not come forward. They had only 10,000 troops compared to the Persians' 20,000 soldiers.

When their enemy refused to fight, the Persians decided to sail directly to Athens and attack it by sea. The Persians began loading their ships with their strongest units—the cavalry. As soon as the Persian horsemen were on the ships, the Athenians charged down the hills and onto the plain of Marathon. The Athenians caught the Persian foot soldiers standing in the water, out of formation. They were without any help from their cavalry.

The Persians suffered a terrible defeat. According to Greek legend, a young messenger raced 25 miles from Marathon to Athens with news of the victory. When the runner reached Athens, he cried out "Victory" and then **collapsed** and died from exhaustion. Today's marathon races are named for that famous run and are just over 26 miles (41.8 km) long.

Land and Sea Battles

After the defeat at Marathon, the Persians vowed revenge against the Athenians. In 480 B.C., a new Persian king named Xerxes (ZUHRK • seez) invaded Greece with about 200,000 troops and thousands of warships and supply vessels. The Greek city-states banded together to fight the Persians. King Leonidas (lee • AH • nuh • duhs) of Sparta supplied the most soldiers. Themistocles (thuh • MIHS • tuh • kleez) of Athens directed the Greek naval forces and devised a battle plan.

Persian ships supplied the invaders with food. Themistocles wanted to attack the Persians' ships and cut off the army's supplies. To do this, the Greeks had to stop the Persian army from reaching Athens. Sparta's King Leonidas led 7,000 soldiers into a battle that lasted for three days. The Spartans' bravery at Thermopylae (thur • MAH • puh • lee) was much celebrated.

The Greeks, however, could not stop the Persians at Thermopylae. A traitor showed the Persians a trail leading around the Greek line, allowing them to attack from behind. Realizing that his Greek army would soon be surrounded, Leonidas dismissed most of the troops. He and 300 Spartans remained and fought to the death. The Greek historian Herodotus (hair • RAH • deh • tuhs) gave this description of the battle:

"They [the Spartans] defended themselves to the last, those who still had swords using them, and the others resisting with their hands and teeth; till the barbarians [Persians], who in part . . . had gone round and now encircled them upon every side, overwhelmed and buried the remnant [remainder] which was left beneath showers of missile weapons."

—from *The Histories* by Herodotus

The Spartans' heroic stand gave Themistocles time to carry out his plan to attack Persia's ships. The Athenian fleet of ships lured the Persian fleet into the strait of Salamis (SA • luh • muhs), near Athens. A strait is a narrow **channel** of water between two pieces of land. The Greeks hoped this move would give them an advantage in battle. Themistocles believed that the heavy Persian ships would crowd together in the strait, making them difficult to move. His assumption proved to be correct. Vigorous fighting took place between the two navies. The Greeks had fewer ships, but their boats were smaller and faster, and could outmaneuver the Persian ships. The plan worked. The Greeks sank about 300 Persian ships and lost only about 40 ships of their own. The Persian fleet was almost entirely destroyed. Still, the Persian foot soldiers marched on to Athens. Finding the city almost deserted, the Persians set it on fire.

The combined forces of the Greek city-states in 479 B.C. formed their largest army yet. They had improved their fighting forces with better armor and weapons. At Plataea (pluh • TEE • uh), northwest of Athens, the Greek army again faced the Persians. In numbers, the two sides were evenly matched. Each fielded a force of about 100,000 men. This time, however, the Greeks defeated the Persian army. Fighting continued as the Greeks went on the defensive to free the city-states in Anatolia from Persian rule. Peace between the Greek allies and the Persians did not come until 449 B.C.

Decline of Persia

After its losses in Greece, Persia faced many challenges. The Persian army was no longer strong enough to defend the entire empire. Also, the Persian people grew unhappy with their government. The kings taxed the people heavily to pay for magnificent palaces and other luxuries. Members of the royal family disagreed about who should rule.

As Persia weakened, it became open to outside attacks. In the 300s B.C., Persia could not resist the invasion of an army led by a young and powerful ruler named Alexander. The Persian Empire ended, and a new Greek empire emerged that extended beyond even Persia's boundaries.

Explaining After the losses in Greece, why did the Persians grow unhappy with their government?



Connections to **TODAY**

Marathons

The first marathon runner is said to have been a Greek soldier. He is thought to have run from Athens to Sparta. The first Olympic marathon—which took its name from that battle—was held when the modern games began in 1896. In 1924, the Olympic marathon distance was set at 26 miles and 385 yards (42.195 km).

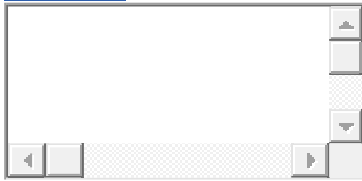
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LESSON 3 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. What were the responsibilities of the *satrap*?

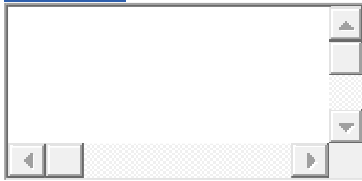
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Answer the Guiding Questions

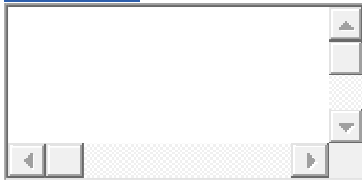
2. **Explaining** Why did Darius I create satrapies?

[LA.6.1.7.1](#)



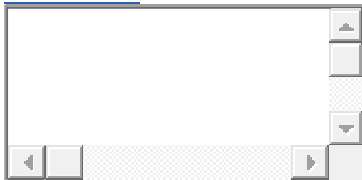
3. **Determining Cause and Effect** What brought Sparta and Athens together as allies?

[SS.6.W.3.4](#)



4. **Analyzing** Why did Persia invade Greece?

[SS.6.W.3.4](#)



5. **Differentiating** Which Persian leader do you think made the biggest contribution? Why?

[SS.6.W.2.8](#)



6. PERSUASIVE WRITING You are an officer in the Athenian army. The Persians have just landed at Marathon to invade Greece. Write a letter to a friend explaining why the Athenian army did not go out to fight the Persians when they arrived at Marathon.

[SS.6.W.3.4](#)



Save

LESSON 4 Glory, War, and Decline

The Peloponnesian War had a decisive effect on Greece. Greek culture declined after the Athenian loss to Sparta.

The Rule of Pericles

[SS.6.W.3.2](#), [SS.6.W.3.4](#), [SS.6.W.3.5](#), [SS.6.W.3.6](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)

How did Pericles influence government and culture in Athens?

As the Persian Wars ended, Athens became a powerful and self-confident city-state. From 461 B.C. to 429 B.C., the Athenians, under their new leader Pericles (PEHR • uh • kleez), enjoyed a golden age of prosperity and achievement. Their city-state became the economic and cultural center of Greece. Athens also practiced democratic government.

Democracy in Athens

Athenians took great pride in their democratic system. The form of government practiced by the Athenians is called **direct democracy** (dih • MAH • kruh • see). In a direct democracy, all citizens meet to debate and vote on government matters. In a **representative democracy**, such as the one we have in the United States today, citizens elect a smaller group of people. This group represents them, makes laws, and governs on their behalf.

In ancient Athens, direct democracy worked because of its relatively small number of citizens. The assembly consisted of some 43,000 male citizens over the age of 18. Often, however, fewer than 6,000 participated in the meetings, which were held every 10 days. At those meetings, participating citizens

passed laws, elected officials, and made policy on war and foreign affairs. The ten top officials, elected each year, were known as generals.

Pericles in Charge

After the Persian Wars, the most important general in Athenian government was Pericles. His wise rule guided the city-state for more than 30 years.

Pericles made Athens a more democratic city-state. He appointed people to positions because of their abilities, not because they were members of a certain social class. Pericles brought more ordinary Athenians into government. As a result, even shopkeepers and laborers could, for the first time, share in the government along with nobles and farmers.

Under Pericles's rule, Athens became a center of learning and the arts. The Persians had burned much of the city during the Persian Wars. Under Pericles, Athens was rebuilt. He erected new temples, monuments, and statues throughout the city.

Pericles also supported writers, artists, teachers, sculptors, and architects. **Philosophers** (fuh • LAH • suh • fuhrs) also flourished during the rule of Pericles. Philosophers are thinkers who reflect on the meaning of life. Athens became a great center for knowledge. Pericles called the city "the school of Greece."

Explaining How was Athens able to become a direct democracy?



Florida Connection

Presidential Election of 2000

In presidential elections, a candidate needs to receive a majority of the Electoral College, or 270 electoral votes, to win. In the very close election of 2000, Florida, with its 25 electoral votes, held the key to the victory of George W. Bush over Al Gore.

Save

Athenian Life

[SS.6.W.3.6](#), [SS.6.E.3.3](#), [SS.6.E.3.4](#)

What was life like for Athenians under the rule of Pericles?

At its height in the 400s B.C., Athens was the largest Greek citystate. Its population numbered about 285,000. Of this number, about 150,000 were citizens. Only 43,000 of these citizens, however, were males who had political rights. Athens was home to about 35,000 foreigners and 100,000 enslaved people.

Athenian Men and Women

Athenian men worked as farmers, artisans, and merchants. They often finished their daily work in the morning. They spent afternoons exercising at the gymnasium. In the evening, upperclass men enjoyed all-male gatherings where they ate, drank, and discussed philosophy or politics.

Athenian women focused on their homes and families. Girls married at a young age, often in their mid-teens. Their duties centered on having children and taking care of their households. Women of poor families helped with the farm work or sold goods in the local marketplace. Most upper-class women rarely left their houses except to attend funerals and festivals. Even then, they had to be **accompanied** by a male relative. Upper-class women generally supervised the servants and spun, dyed, or wove cloth.

Athenian women could not attend school, but many learned to read and to play music. However, Athenian society did not consider educated women as equal to men. Women could not participate in political activities or own property. Greek women were always under the care of a male family member. Husbands were responsible for their wives and unmarried daughters. Sons looked after their widowed mothers.

A few women had more freedom, especially foreigners, who were regarded differently than Athenian-born women. One well regarded woman was Aspasia (as • PAY • zhuh). She was known for her intelligence and charm. Aspasia taught public speaking, and her ideas were popular among Athenians. Both Plato (PLAY • toh), the Greek philosopher, and Pericles were influenced by her.

What Was the Role of Slavery in Athens?

Slavery was common in ancient civilizations. It was often considered to be a normal part of life, even by enslaved people themselves. Even in a democracy like Athens, slavery was common. Most Athenian households had at least one enslaved person. Wealthy Athenian families often had several.

Many enslaved people were prisoners who had been captured in battle. These included both Greeks and non-Greeks. Enslaved men worked on farms, in the shops of artisans, or at hard labor. Enslaved women were cooks and servants in wealthy homes and sometimes taught upper-class children. The treatment of enslaved people varied. Those who labored in mines often died very young. Slaves who worked as craftspeople had easier lives. Sometimes, enslaved people could earn money and, in rare cases, buy their freedom. Slavery might have helped Athens develop its prosperous economy.

The Athenian Economy

Farming was a common occupation among Athenians. Local farmers grew grains, vegetables, and fruits, including grapes and olives to make wine and olive oil for shipment to foreign markets.

Athenian farms lacked **sufficient** land to grow enough food to support the city-state. Although Athenians grew some grain, they had to import more from other places. Athens built a large fleet of ships to trade with colonies and other city-states in the Mediterranean world. During the 400s B.C., Athens led the Greek world in trade. Important goods made and traded in Athens included pottery and leather products.

Comparing and Contrasting How did the roles of Athenian men and women differ?



War Between Athens and Sparta

[SS.6.W.3.4](#), [SS.6.W.3.6](#)

How did the Peloponnesian War affect the Greek city-states?

As time passed, the Greek city-states learned that their survival depended on cooperation. Even after the Persian Wars ended, the Persian threat against Greece remained. In 478 B.C., Athens joined with other city-states to form a defensive league, or protective group, to defend its members against the Persians. Because the league at first had its headquarters on the island of Delos (DEE • LAHS), it became known as the Delian League.

Athens provided the Delian League with most of its sailors and soldiers, while the other city-states supplied money and ships. During the next several **decades**, the league drove Persia out of the remaining Greek territories in Anatolia. Free of Persian domination, Greece grew richer through increased overseas trade.

The Athenian Empire

In spite of its successes, the Delian League failed. Athens was the strongest city-state, and the league's officials and commanders and most of the troops were Athenian. Over time, Athens began to use its

influence to control the other member city-states. The league was no longer an alliance of equal city-states fighting Persia. It had become a group of city-states controlled by Athens.

Pericles's leadership helped Athens dominate the Delian League. He treated the other city-states like subjects, demanding strict loyalty and regular payments from them. He even insisted that they use Athenian coins and measures. In 454 B.C., the Athenians moved the Delian League's treasury from Delos to Athens. They also sent troops to other Greek city-states to help the common people rebel against the nobles in power.

War Breaks Out

As the economic and political power of Athens grew, other city-states, especially Sparta, became alarmed. Politically and socially, Sparta and Athens were quite different. Neither trusted the other. Both wanted to be the major power in the Greek world.

Sparta became the leader of an alliance of city-states opposed to Athens. In 433 B.C., Athens began interfering with some of Sparta's allies. These allies pressured Sparta to attack Athens. War broke out in 431 B.C. and continued until 404 B.C. The possibility of future cooperation among the Greek city-states disappeared as a result of this war. Historians call this **conflict** the Peloponnesian War because Sparta was located in the Peloponnesus.

Pericles's Funeral Oration

During the war's first winter, Athens held a public funeral to honor soldiers who had died in battle. Afterward, the Athenian families gathered to mourn their losses. In a famous speech, called the *Funeral Oration*, Pericles talked about the greatness of Athens and reminded the people that they made their government strong. He reminded them that citizens had to obey the rules in their constitution—their framework of government. They accepted certain duties, such as paying taxes and defending the city. They were also awarded certain rights, such as the ability to vote and run for office.

"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. . . ."

—Pericles, *Funeral Oration*, quoted in *History of the Peloponnesian War*

In his speech, Pericles **emphasized** that the democratic way of life is worth protecting. He urged his listeners to have the courage to continue fighting. The ideas Pericles expressed are still valued by citizens of democratic countries today.

Why Did Athens Lose the War?

In a battle soon after the war started, Sparta and its allies surrounded Athens. They knew that, in an open battle, they could easily defeat the Athenian army. Pericles understood the weakness of the Athenian troops. He chose to keep his army and the people within the walls of the surrounded city. The powerful Athenian navy would bring supplies to the city from its colonies and allies. Sparta lacked a navy and could not stop the Athenian ships.

For almost two years, Athens remained safe. Then a deadly disease broke out within the overcrowded city's population. More than a third of the people died, including Pericles. During the next 25 years, each side won some victories but was unable to defeat its opponent.

Finally, Sparta made a deal with the Persian Empire. The Spartans agreed to give the Persians some Greek territory in Anatolia. In return, Sparta received enough Persian gold to build its own navy.

As the war dragged on, Athens fell into a state of unrest. The democracy had been overthrown. The government that replaced it was then overthrown. By the end of 411 B.C., democracy had been restored. The war, however, continued. In 405 B.C., Sparta's newly built navy destroyed the Athenian fleet. Sparta then placed a blockade around Athens, preventing food and other supplies from entering the city. Starving, the Athenians finally surrendered a year later. The Spartans and their allies then knocked down the city walls. The Athenian empire collapsed.

The Effects of the War

The Peloponnesian War brought disaster to the Greek city-states. The governments were left divided and weak. Many people had died in battle or from disease. Fighting had destroyed farms and left many people with no way to earn a living. As a result, thousands of young Greeks left Greece to join the Persian army.

After the conflict, Sparta ruled its newly acquired empire, much as Athens had ruled its empire before. This harsh treatment angered Sparta's former allies. An uneasy political situation developed. During the next 30 years, Sparta tried to put down rebellions and fought Persia again. Finally, in 371 B.C., the city-state of Thebes seized Sparta and ended the Spartan empire. About 10 years later, Thebes also collapsed.

As the city-states fought, they failed to notice the growing threat from the kingdom of Macedonia to the north. Macedonia's strength and desire for expansion would eventually cost the Greek city-states their independence.

Explaining Why was Sparta's deal with Persia so important in the war against Athens?



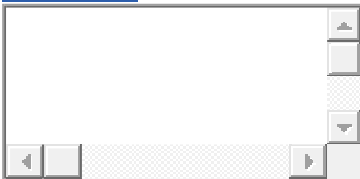
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LESSON 4 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. Explain why a group taking a vote on something is an example of *direct democracy*.

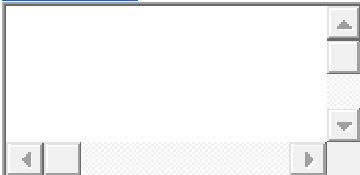
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Answer the Guiding Questions

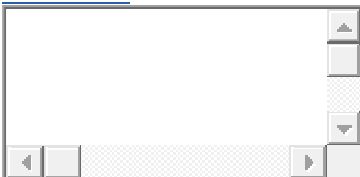
2. **Describing** How did Pericles choose people for positions in the government in Athens?

[SS.6.W.3.6](#)



3. **Explaining** What jobs did Athenian slaves do?

[SS.6.E.3.3](#)



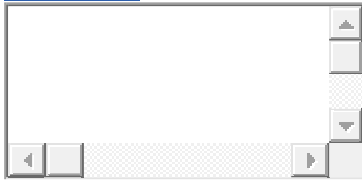
4. Determining Cause and Effect Why did the Delian League break apart?

[SS.6.E.3.4](#)



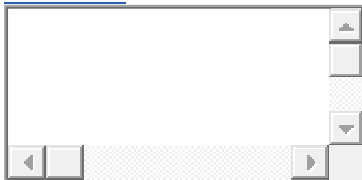
5. Identifying What was the most important accomplishment of Pericles?

[SS.6.W.3.6](#)



6. EXPOSITORY WRITING Ancient Athens was a direct democracy. The United States Constitution provides for a representative democracy. Do you think the United States should change to a direct democracy? Why or why not?

[LA.6.1.7.1](#)



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