

Once upon a time in ...

ANCIENT GREECE

1. Everyday life in the city-states
2. Gods, goddesses, myths and magic
3. Structures, statues, poems and plays
4. The Olympic Games (but not as we know them)
5. Theories, thoughts, language and law



About these teaching activities

This series of animated videos and activities will introduce pupils to different aspects of Ancient Greek civilization and help them understand its influence on the western world.

1. Everyday life in the city-states
2. Gods, goddesses, myths and magic
3. Structures, statues, poems and plays
4. The Olympic Games (but not as we know them)
5. Theories, thoughts, language and law

During the series, pupils will:

- compare life in Ancient Greece with life in Stone Age Britain and the present day
- write for a variety of different purposes, including writing a balanced argument, a persuasive text, a playscript, a set of instructions and a recount
- develop their comprehension skills
- practise the art of debate
- understand the concept of democracy
- use a range of art and design techniques
- understand and use symmetry.

Teaching notes

Video 1: Everyday life in the city-states

Introduction

In this video, we are transported to the year 500 BCE to meet the real-life figure of Aspasia of Miletus, one of the most important women in Athens. Aspasia introduces us to the city-states of Ancient Greece and shares facts about the daily life of the citizens of Athens, the most powerful of all the city-states at that time.

Before watching the video

What do we mean by the term 'Ancient' Greece? Take suggestions and then explain that pupils will be exploring life in Greece around 500 BCE. Do they know what BCE stands for? (Before Common Era/Before Current Era). Explain that the Common Era began with the birth of Jesus and ask them to calculate approximately how many years have passed since 500 BCE.

In small groups, invite pupils to share any prior knowledge about Ancient Greece. Give each group a sheet of A3 and some coloured pens. Assign a category to each group, for example, Gods and Goddesses, Myths and Monsters, Heroes and Heroines, Daily life and ask them to jot down any words or phrases they associate with it. These could be used to start a working wall. Pupils could add to the sheets throughout the topic, or they could be used at the end of the topic to compare what they knew at the beginning of the topic and what they know by the end.

After watching the video

- **Putting it into context.** The video talks about life in Greece 2500 years ago. Ask pupils to find out what Britain was like at this time and compare the two using the worksheet provided. (NB: This could be revisited at the end of the teaching sequence to allow the class to add the knowledge they have gained through all five videos and activities.)
- **Let's debate!** The Ancient Greeks loved to debate. In the video, we heard how women were considered less important than men and how girls were not allowed to go to school. Ask pupils to imagine they are living in Ancient Greece. Set up two (mixed!) debating teams and ask them to debate the motion 'Girls should be allowed to attend school.'
- **Letter to the council.** Follow up your debate with a persuasive writing task in which pupils write to the council - one of the governing bodies of Athens - to state their point of view.
- **It's all about the marketing.** The agora (marketplace) was an important place in Athens. Ask pupils to work in pairs or small groups to produce a promotional video to encourage citizens to trade at the market.
- **Problem-solving.** How could pupils help the traders of Ancient Greece to get their fish to market? In groups, challenge pupils to come up with ideas for keeping fish fresh and transporting it as quickly as possible. Invite them to pitch their ideas in 'Dragons' Den' style!
- **Research and writing task.** Ask pupils to carry out independent or paired research to complete a non-chronological report about the goddess Athena. A template is provided for this.

Everyday life in the city-states - comprehension questions

1. Name at least three things that Aspasia says the Ancient Greek civilization is known for.

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2. How were the city-states formed?

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3. Why do you think the video focuses on life in Athens?

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4. Which god/goddess is associated with Athens? What is he/she the god/goddess of?

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5. Why was access to the sea important?

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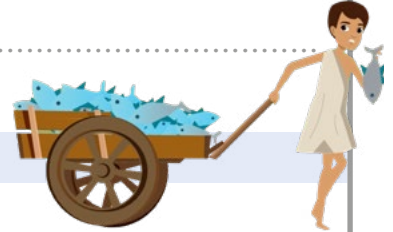


6. What was the problem with transporting fish over long distances?

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7. Why was the life of a farmer hard?



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8. What was olive oil used for?

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9. Other than being the place where many people earned a living, why else might the agorá (marketplace) have been important?

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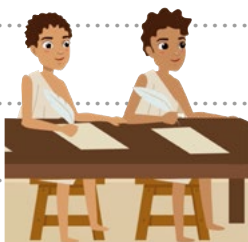
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10. Why do you think boys were taught to debate?

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Answers

1. (brilliant) thinkers, (fierce) warriors, (great) poets, (wonderful) artists, (amazing) athletes, (powerful) gods and stories about extraordinary monsters.
2. The city-states were formed from small rival communities, often cut off from each other by mountains, rivers and the sea.
3. Athens was the most powerful of all the city-states at the time.
4. Athena, goddess of warfare and wisdom.
5. It was hard to keep fish fresh in the hot weather.
6. The sea was very important for trade and travel. Athenians' main form of transport was by boat, and fishing was big business.
7. The life of a farmer was hard because the soil was dusty and the climate hot and dry.
8. Olive oil was used for cooking, lighting and washing.
9. The marketplace was also where people were able to buy everyday essential items and it would have been an important community meeting place.
10. Debate is important because it allows people to exchange views and opinions and come to decisions that take everyone into account.

Compare and contrast: Ancient Greece to Britain in the Stone Age

Look at the categories in the table below. Make notes on each to compare life in Ancient Greece to life in Britain 2500 years ago from what you currently know. The first one has been done for you.



Communities and homes

In Ancient Greece, many people lived in city-states like Athens. These were cities with marketplaces, ports and homes.

In Britain, people tended to live in huts in small rural settlements.

Food and drink



Trade and transport

Clothing and fabrics

Daily life



What do you think were the main differences between Ancient Greece and Britain at the time?

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Where would you have preferred to live and why?

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Athena - a non-chronological report

Goddess of:

Strengths

Family

Significant events



Symbols

Other facts

Picture

Teaching notes

Video 2: Gods, goddesses, myths and magic

Introduction

In this video, we meet Homer, a famous writer from Ancient Greece. Homer's most famous works include the epic poems 'The Iliad' (about the Trojan War) and 'The Odyssey' (about Odysseus' eventful and punishing journey home from the Trojan War). Homer introduces us to the Olympians - twelve of the most important gods and goddesses of Ancient Greece - and explains how the gods and goddesses controlled every aspect of Ancient Greek life.

Before watching the video

Do pupils know the names of any Greek gods or goddesses? Explain that pupils are going to learn a little about the 12 Olympian gods and goddesses and that they will probably have heard some of their names, even if they don't realise who they are! Challenge them to listen carefully during the video and to note down the names of the gods and goddesses they hear in preparation for one of the activities. (They don't need to worry about the spelling at this stage!)

After watching the video

- **It's all in the name.** Which names did pupils hear in the video and which did they recognise? Where do they know them from? (They may know them from stories, or they may know them from brand names or famous projects, for example, the well-known delivery company, Apollo - the space mission.) Ask children to use the sheet, 'Who's who?' to match the gods/goddesses' images to their names. Then put pupils into small groups and invite them to choose one of the gods or goddesses' names and to use it to create a new product or service (in the style of 'The Apprentice'). They should write a product or service description, create a tagline and design an advertisement. They could even create a TV advert on tablets!
- **Playing God.** Pupils should imagine they are a god or goddess. What would their name be? What would they represent? (God/Goddess of) What would their character be like? A template is provided for pupils' notes which they will also need for the next activity.
- **Class elections.** Time to elect a new god or goddess! Pupils take the role of their newly imagined god or goddess and make a case to the class to elect them as Class God/Goddess!
- **I want to live forever ...** Gods and goddesses were immortal. But how desirable is immortality? Task pupils with writing a balanced argument for and against immortality. A template is provided for this.
- **Party time!** The Ancient Greek calendar was full of festivals in honour of the gods and goddesses. Invite pupils to design a flyer for a festival for a god or goddess of their choosing. What will they eat and drink? What sort of entertainment will be provided? Who or what will be sacrificed?

Gods, goddesses, myths and magic - comprehension questions

1. Which two of his 'epic works' does Homer mention?

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2. Who was Ouranos?

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3. What were the Olympians named after?

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4. Which two features made the Olympians different to humans?

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5. Why might Ancient Greeks have been wary of Zeus?

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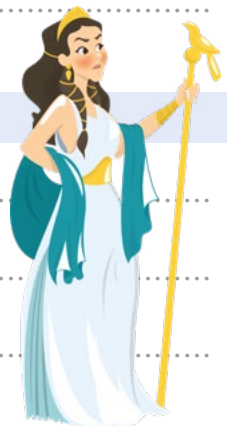
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6. What made Hera angry?

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7. Who would the Ancient Greeks have thanked for healthy crops?

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8. According to Homer, how did Ancient Greeks receive news from Mount Olympus?

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9. What caused the sun to rise and set, according to the Ancient Greeks?

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10. Who did the Ancient Greeks expect to meet on the journey to Elysium or Tartarus and what were their roles?

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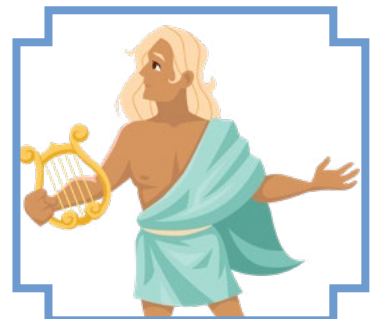


Answers

1. 'The Iliad' and 'The Odyssey'.
2. Ouranos was god of the sky and the stars.
3. Mount Olympus, the highest mountain in Greece.
4. The Olympians were immortal and had magical powers.
5. Zeus throws lightning bolts when he is angry.
6. Hera becomes angry when Zeus falls in love with other goddesses or humans.
7. Demeter, goddess of the harvest.
8. News was delivered by Hermes, the winged messenger.
9. Apollo caused the sun to rise and set by pulling it across the sky behind his chariot.
10. Hermes led spirits to the entrance to the Underworld; Charon rowed spirits across the River Styx; Cerberus guarded the gates and Hades decided where you would spend eternity.

Who's who?

Match the name of these Olympic gods and goddesses to their image.



Apollo
Hera
Ares

Zeus
Hephaestus
Artemis

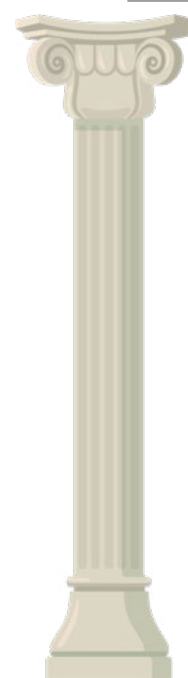
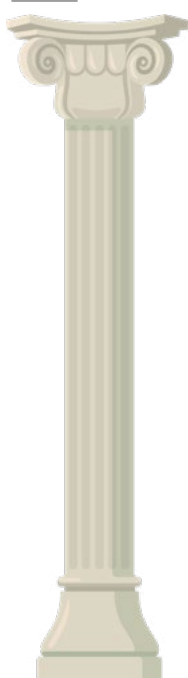
Dionysus
Aphrodite
Poseidon

Athena
Demeter
Hermes

My God / My Goddess

Name:		God/Goddess of:	
Character traits, including strengths and weaknesses:	Special powers:	Weapon/symbol/special item:	

Picture:



I want to live forever!

Planning grid: use the grid to make notes for and against living forever.

<p>Arguments for</p>	<p>Arguments against</p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	



Use the framework below to write your argument for and against living forever.

Introduction: what is the issue?

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Argument 1: for

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Argument 1: against

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Argument 2: for

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Argument 2: against

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Conclusion:

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Balanced argument checklist

Have you ...

- ☐ written an introduction explaining the question/issue?
- ☐ written at least two arguments for and against?
- ☐ used interesting connectives?
- ☐ written a conclusion recapping on the question and summarising the points?

Teaching notes

Video 3: Structures, statues, poems and plays

Introduction

In this video we meet the playwright Euripides. Euripides introduces us to the various forms of art and architecture enjoyed by the Ancient Greeks and explains how their artwork reveals details of how the Ancient Greeks lived.

Before watching the video

Show pupils some images of Ancient Greek pottery. (The British Museum has some excellent examples in their [virtual tour](#).) What do they notice about it? (The pictures that decorate it.) Why might this feature be helpful to historians now?

After watching the video

- **Playtime!** As we saw in the video, the Ancient Greeks loved watching plays. Explain that pupils are to think of a scene or chapter from a favourite film or book and turn it into a playscript. Ask them to complete the worksheet provided to remind them of the features of a playscript. Invite pupils to choose classmates to perform their plays to the rest of the class. They could even make masks for the occasion!
- **Meaningful mosaics.** Like the Romans, the Ancient Greeks used mosaics to create pictures. Ask pupils to make a simple drawing (just an outline and a few simple details) of an object or symbol that represents something meaningful in their lives - for example, a football or a musical instrument. Then provide them with plenty of coloured paper (either already cut into small pieces or to be cut up) and glue sticks to complete their mosaic.
- **Perfect symmetry.** As Euripides informed us, a key feature of Greek architecture was its symmetry. Ask pupils to complete the worksheet provided which begins by exploring lines of symmetry. It goes on to ask them to design their own, symmetrical, Greek temple ready for the following activity.
- **Build a temple.** Provide a range of recycled materials and invite pupils to follow their designs to build their own Greek temples. They should remember to include plenty of columns and to make sure their temples are symmetrical! These make for a great display.
- **Frieze!** On long strips of paper or card, pupils should draw or paint a scene or scenes depicting an aspect of their daily life. Alternatively, if you have access to clay, pupils could create a pot, bowl, plate or vase to be decorated with objects, symbols or scenes that represent an aspect of their life.

Structures, statues poems and plays - comprehension questions

1. Which one word does Euripides use to describe exactly what he does for a living?

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2. During which annual festival did the drama competition take place?

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3. Which two types of play were performed in theatres?

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4. Can you think of an adjective to describe each different type of play?

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5. Which two features ensured everyone could see and hear the actors?

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6. What was the purpose of the Greek temples?

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7. Where exactly is the Parthenon?

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8. What was inside the Parthenon? Give as much detail as you can.

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9. Who built the temples?



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10. Why do you think archaeologists and historians get excited when they find an ancient artefact?

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Answers

1. The word Euripides uses is 'dramatist'.
2. The drama competition took place during the festival of Dionysus, god of food and wine.
3. Tragedies and comedies were performed in theatres.
4. Tragedies were sad and comedies were funny.
5. Tiered seating in the theatres ensured everyone could see and the actors wore special masks to ensure everyone could hear.
6. The temples were built to honour the gods and goddesses and to keep them happy.
7. The Parthenon is at the centre of the Acropolis in Athens.
8. A 12m high gold and ivory statue of the goddess Athena was inside the Parthenon.
9. Skilled craftsmen and slaves built the temples.
10. Ancient artefacts provide archaeologists and historians with information about how civilizations used to live.

Features of a playscript - true or false?

Have a look at the following statements about the features of a playscript and mark them as true or false.



	True or false?
A playscript always has a list of characters at the beginning.	
Direct speech is indicated with inverted commas.	
The name of the speaker is shown in brackets after the words they have spoken.	
Stage directions are always shown in brackets.	
A playscript sometimes has a narrator to set the scene.	
Playscripts are broken into chapters.	

Now look at the statements you have marked as false.
Can you correct them to make them true?

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Answers

	True or false?
A playscript always has a list of characters at the beginning.	<i>True</i>
Direct speech is indicated with inverted commas.	<i>False</i>
The name of the speaker is shown in brackets after the words they have spoken.	<i>False</i>
Stage directions are always shown in brackets.	<i>True</i>
A playscript sometimes has a narrator to set the scene.	<i>True</i>
Playscripts are broken into chapters.	<i>False</i>

There are three statements that need correcting to make them true:

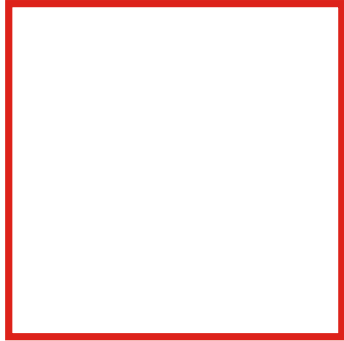
Inverted commas are never used in playscripts to indicate direct speech.

The name of the speaker appears on the left before the words they speak (and is followed by a colon).

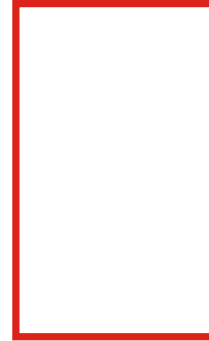
Playscripts are broken into acts and scenes, not chapters.

Perfect symmetry

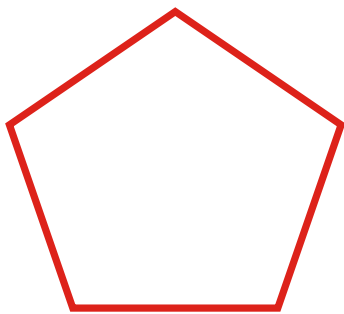
Symmetry was an important feature of Ancient Greek architecture. How many lines of symmetry can you find in these shapes?



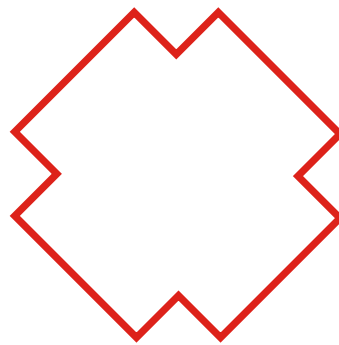
I have lines of symmetry



I have lines of symmetry



I have lines of symmetry



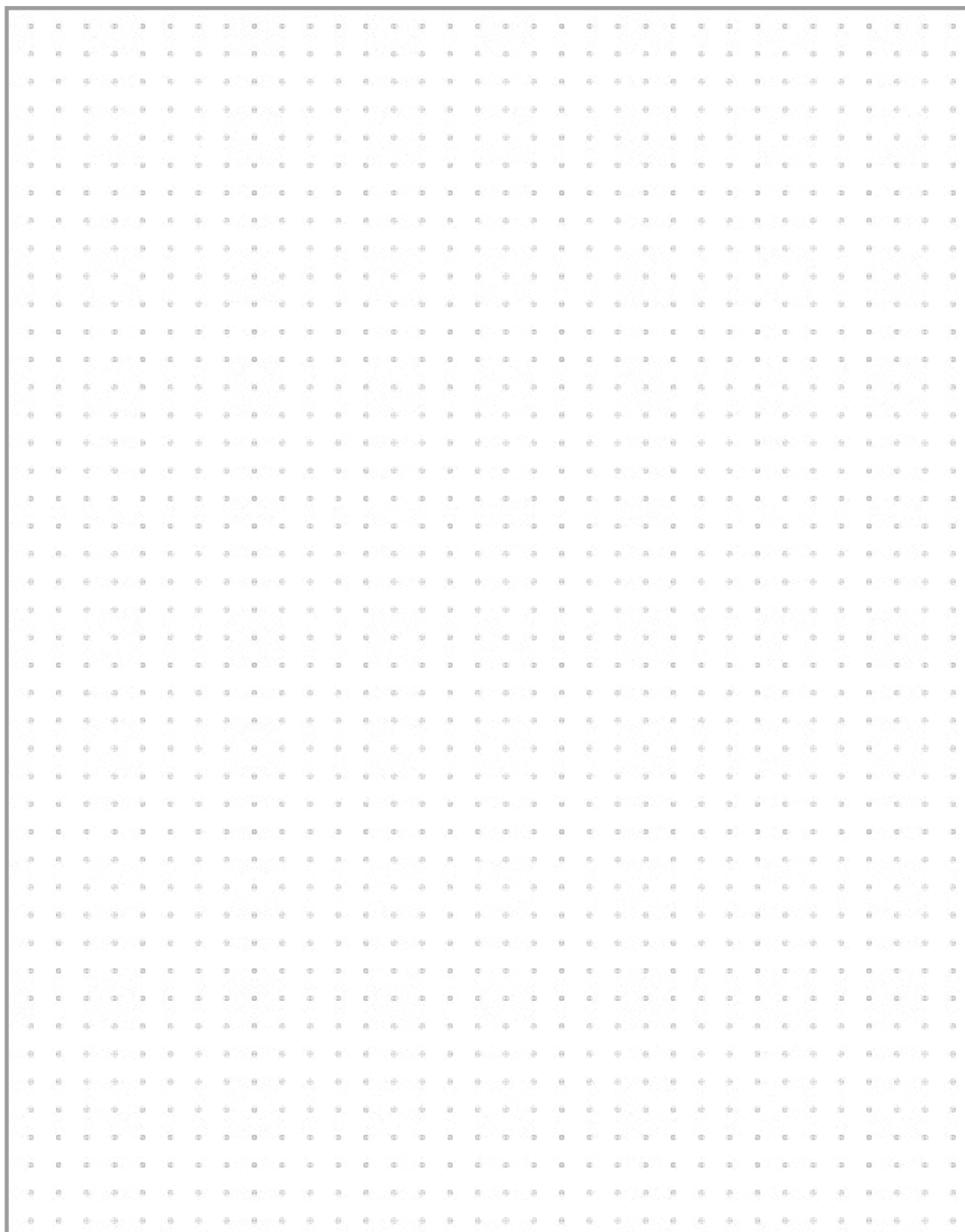
I have lines of symmetry

Can you find any lines of symmetry in this shape?



Now it's your turn!

Time to design your own Greek temple. Be as creative as you like but do remember to include columns and to ensure your temple is symmetrical.



Teaching notes

Video 4: The Olympic Games (but not as we know them)

Introduction

This video introduces us to the real-life figure of Leonidas of Rhodes, hero of the original Olympic Games. Leonidas talks of his own achievements and tells us all about the Games: we learn when and why they happened and which events were featured. He also throws in a few interesting and amusing facts along the way!

Before watching the video

Show the class an image of the Olympic rings. Do pupils recognise them? Do they know what the rings represent? Why only five rings and not seven, do they think? Invite them to share some knowledge about the modern-day Olympics and explain that they are going to find out more about how they began.

After watching the video

- **Then and now.** As the title of the video suggests, the Olympic Games are not quite the same now as they were. Ask pupils to complete the worksheet provided, which gives statements about the Games and asks pupil to write a sentence explaining the difference either then or now.
- **Create an Olympic event!** Invite pupils to make up their own Olympic event and to write a set of instructions for it. They should remember to include all the features of instructional texts, including numbering and command words.
- **Design a poster.** Explain that you are going to hold your own class Olympics (possibly featuring some of the pupils' new events!) and that the pupils need to advertise it. They should design an eye-catching poster giving all the information required and enticing people to attend.
- **Class Olympics!** Hold your Olympics in the playground, the hall or on the school field. Where possible, recreate the original events such as discus and javelin (with plastic cones and sponge javelins). You could even try a form of chariot racing if pupils are willing to race on all fours!
- **Sports reports.** After the class Olympics, ask pupils to write a recount of one of the events you held. A worksheet is provided to support their thinking.

The Olympic Games - comprehension questions

1. How did the Olympic Games get their name?

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2. Why did the Ancient Greeks hold the Olympic Games?

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3. What happened on the third day of the Games and why?

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4. What was the purpose of the truce between the city-states?

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5. Approximately how many metres was the diaulos?

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6. What made the hoplitodromos so hard?

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7. How did long jumpers gain momentum?

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8. What strange custom was supposed to help long jumpers find a rhythm?

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9. What inspired women all over Greece to start taking part in the equestrian events?

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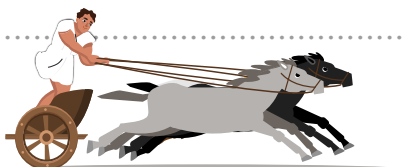
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10. Why do you think Leonidas of Rhodes was chosen to narrate this video?

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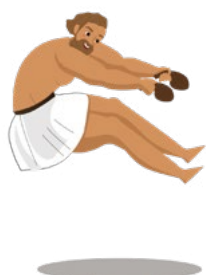
Answers

1. The Olympics were named after Olympia, the site of the original Games.
2. The Ancient Greeks held the Games to honour Zeus.
3. One hundred oxen were sacrificed to honour Zeus on the third day of the Games.
4. The truce enabled athletes from all the city-states to travel safely to and from Olympia.
5. The diaulos was approximately 370m long (two lengths of the track).
6. Athletes had to run the hoplitodromos in full military armour in 40-degree heat.
7. Long jumpers carried weights in their hands to gain momentum.
8. A man playing a flute was supposed to help long jumpers find a rhythm.
9. The victories of Cynisca of Sparta inspired women to take part in equestrian events.
10. Leonidas of Rhodes was a hero of the Ancient Olympics, winning the running events at four consecutive Games. He was described as having 'the speed of a god'.

The Olympic Games then and now

Look at the statements below which all give information about an aspect of either the original Olympic Games or the modern Olympics. Decide whether each statement refers to the Olympics then or now and then write a sentence to explain how it differed or differs.

Statement	Then or now?	Comparison
Athletes from all over the world take part for their countries.		
The Games take place over four days.		
Athletes compete naked and covered in olive oil.		
All races take place on a straight track 185m long.		
Javelin spears are made of steel or aluminium.		
One of the events is a mixture of boxing and wrestling.		
Both men and women compete in a range of different events.		
Event winners win medals.		



Answers

Statement	Then or now?	Comparison
Athletes from all over the world take part for their countries.	<i>Now</i>	<i>Athletes from all the Greek city-states took part.</i>
The Games take place over four days.	<i>Then</i>	<i>The Olympic Games take place over 16 days and are followed by the Paralympic Games which take place over 9 to 12 days.</i>
Athletes compete naked and covered in olive oil.	<i>Then</i>	<i>Athletes wear appropriate clothing!</i>
All races take place on a straight track 185m long.	<i>Then</i>	<i>Sprint races take place on a 400m track.</i>
Javelin spears are made of steel or aluminium.	<i>Now</i>	<i>Javelin spears were made of wood.</i>
One of the events is a mixture of boxing and wrestling.	<i>Then</i>	<i>There is no such event now!</i>
Both men and women compete in a range of different events.	<i>Now</i>	<i>Only men competed. Women were only allowed to train the horses.</i>
Event winners win medals.	<i>Now</i>	<i>Event winners won a wreath of leaves.</i>

Write an Olympic sports report

Use the template below to make notes on one of the events at your class Olympics or that you have seen recently. Then use your notes to write up an informative and interesting report.

<p>Create your headline.</p> <p>(Reporters use alliteration and puns to create catchy headlines.)</p>	
<p>When did the event take place?</p>	
<p>Where did the event take place?</p> <p>Is there anything special or unusual about the location?</p>	
<p>Who was taking part?</p> <p>How old are they? Where do they come from? Is there anything surprising about them you can tell your readers?</p>	
<p>What was the outcome of the event?</p> <p>Who won? Was it a surprising result?</p>	
<p>Include a quote.</p> <p>(What did the sportsperson say about their event?)</p>	

Teaching notes

Video 5: Theories, thoughts, language and law

Introduction

Here we meet the female philosopher Arete of Cyrene, who explains how so many aspects of Ancient Greek civilization are still relevant to us today.

Before watching the video

Over the course of the last few sessions, pupils have been introduced to different aspects of Ancient Greek life. Which of them are still relevant? Are there any other elements of our way of life that they think may have come from Ancient Greece?

After watching the video

- **Junior philosophers.** Stage a class discussion entitled 'What does it mean to live a good life?' What makes pupils feel content? Note down ideas and create a class action plan to help pupils lead a happy and fulfilled life. This could take the form of a list of tips or a weekly calendar of actions such as reading to younger children every Monday.
- **Democracy in action.** As we know, the Ancient Greeks invented democracy (albeit in a more restricted form than democracy as we know it today), a form of government that allows people to vote on who should be in charge. Hold a class election in which pupils can put themselves forward for a particular role. This could be a role relevant to your school or, for example, a Happy Life Leader who decides on a weekly action to help everyone lead a better life (see the previous activity). Candidates should prepare a speech and then each pupil has a ballot slip on which to cast their vote. A template is provided for this.
- **Do you speak Greek?** In the video, we heard how many of the words we use today come from Ancient Greek. Using the cards provided, ask pairs to sort the words into those that come from Greek and those that don't. (Note the only words that do not come from Greek are 'medicine', 'play', 'dance', 'lizard' and 'honey'.) Then play a game in groups, in which pupils have 30 seconds to describe one of the words on the list without using it and the others must guess which it is.
- **Learn the alphabet!** The Greek alphabet looks quite different to our own. Give pupils a copy of the Greek alphabet provided. Then give each pupil one of the 30 sentences provided to write in Greek. They must then swap their sentence with a friend to translate. (Sentences vary in length to allow for different attainment levels.) Who will translate their message first?
- **Time for a quiz!** Pupils will have learned a lot about Ancient Greek civilization from this set of videos and activities and it's time to put that new knowledge to the test. However, it's up to the pupils to test one another. Challenge each pupil to write a question for a class quiz. Sort the class into teams and invite each team to read out their questions to the other teams. (You may wish to elect a spokesperson in each team to avoid lots of shouting out!) Teams win a point for a correct answer but if nobody answers correctly, the team posing the question wins the point. The team with the highest number of points wins.

Theories, thoughts, language and law - comprehension questions

1. What does it mean to 'blow your own trumpet'?

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2. Name the three column styles featured in the video.

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3. According to Arete of Cyrene, what do philosophers spend their time doing?

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4. What do we learn about Socrates, Ancient Greece's most famous philosopher?

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5. What 'Socratic method' is still used by teachers today?

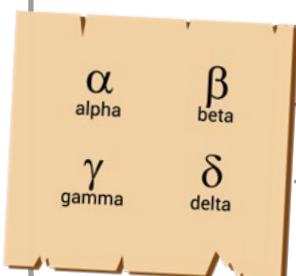
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6. Where might we see Ancient Greek letters today?

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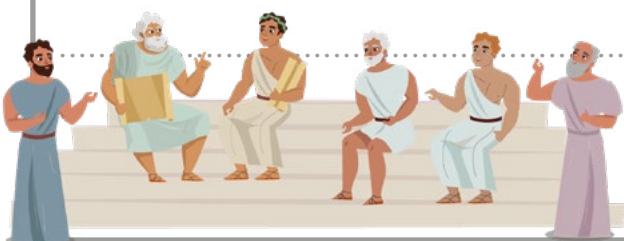
7. Which mathematical concept interested Pythagoras?



8. What did Hippocrates discover that was so significant?

9. What does 'democracy' mean? Can you describe it in your own words?

10. Do you think the Ancient Greeks were truly 'democratic'? Why or why not?



Answers

1. To 'blow your own trumpet' means to proudly tell people about how well you have done or how good you are at something. (To boast.)
2. The three column styles featured are Doric, Corinthian and Ionic.
3. According to Arete of Cyrene, philosophers think about what it means to live a good life.
4. Socrates never wrote anything down.
5. Teachers still use the Socratic method of open-ended questioning today.
6. We might see Ancient Greek letters in maths as some are used as mathematical symbols.
7. Pythagoras was interested in the concept of infinity.
8. Hippocrates discovered that illness comes from natural causes and was not caused by the gods.
9. Answers should include the fact that democracy means 'people power' and describes the form of government in which people vote for who leads them.
10. Answers should suggest that the Ancient Greeks were not truly democratic as they did not allow lots of groups to vote, including women and slaves.

Place a cross in the box next to the candidate of your choice. You have ONE vote.

Candidates	
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Place a cross in the box next to the candidate of your choice. You have ONE vote.

Candidates	
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Many of the words we use today come from Greek. Cut out the cards and sort them into words you think come from Greek and words that don't.

cemetery

acrobat

democracy

idiot

medicine

marathon

dinosaur

music

marmalade

honey

dance

lizard

panic

planet

geography

play



α a	β b	γ g	δ d
ε e	ζ z	η h	θ th
ι i	κ k	λ l	μ m
ν n	ξ x	ο o	π p
ρ r	ς s	τ t	υ u
φ ph	χ ch	ψ ps	ω o

This is going to be fun.

I will be quicker than you.

I am hungry.

I am good at Greek.

The Greek alphabet is hard to learn.

When is playtime?

Greek women should have had the vote.

The Ancient Greeks were very civilized.

Here is a sentence in Greek.

Can you read this question?

We have a lot to thank the Ancient Greeks for.

I hope I win this game.

I prefer writing in English.

This is tricky.

I have enjoyed this topic.

What is the time?

I wonder what is for lunch.

Do not anger the gods.

The Greeks taught us a lot.

Shall we have a chariot race?

It is time to do some thinking.

This is a message to you.

How quickly will you decode this?

Red lorry yellow lorry.

Tell me a joke.

I hope it is warm outside.

I would like to go to Greece.

Easy peasy.

Would you like to learn Greek?

A message from me to you.