



3: Structures, statues, poems and plays

Art. Theatre. Architecture. We Ancient Greeks are very, very creative. Take me for example. Euripides. I am one of the great Classical Athenian tragedian dramatists. Put simply: I write plays.

The people love going to the theatre for a good story, told well. We have drama competitions that take place every year during the *Festival of Dionysus*, the God of wine. I've won four times by the way.

We write tragedies - more serious plays, often based on epic stories about our gods, goddesses, heroes, kings and queens. And comedies - more light-hearted plays.

One of our very first theatres was called the *Theatre of Dionysus*. It was cut into the cliff face below the Acropolis in Athens.

Our plays are watched by thousands of people, so the theatres have tiered seating, so everyone can see...and the actors wear masks, to show which character they are and to make their voices louder, so that everyone can hear.

Our architects and builders are pretty impressive too and they don't just build theatres. Some of their most amazing buildings are temples built to honour the gods and goddesses. It's always good to keep them happy.

Perhaps our greatest temple is the Parthenon at the centre of the Acropolis, in Athens. Inside was a 12-metre-high gold and ivory statue of the goddess Athena.

All of our important buildings have perfect proportions: symmetry... harmony...and lots of columns!

They're built from vast stone blocks that are carved on site with chisels and hammers. The columns are made in sections and then lifted into place with ropes and pulleys. The workforce is made up of skilled craftsmen and slaves.

And let's not forget the wonders in and around these amazing buildings. Statues and sculptures made of gold, marble, wood and stone - showing gods, goddesses, and the great people from our history.

And friezes - which are pictures carved in stone.

And there are pictures on our wonderful pottery as well. Local clay is used as it has a marvellous reddish-brown colour.

Our potters make all manner of pots: pots for wine, for oil, for perfume, for food. They're often decorated by silhouetted figures showing things like scenes from famous stories, or the daily lives of ordinary people.

Oops...best be on my way...

But it isn't just potters. We have expert metal workers, jewellers, and other artists. We also created a lot of mosaics - the art of using tiny pieces of coloured glass or stone to create pictures on floors or walls. Stunning.

You can find out a lot about Ancient Greece from the buildings, sculptures, and works of art. They show the places we lived and worked and worshipped; and the type of items we used in our daily lives, and how we entertained ourselves.

And, most importantly, how very, very, clever and creative we were.