



5: Theories, thoughts, language and law

Welcome to Ancient Greece!

Now I'm not going to blow our trumpet too much but...well, actually I am! We are a pretty impressive civilisation!

Just look at some of the details on these wonderful buildings. Timeless!

The architectural style we created for our buildings is still used by you for many of your buildings. So, we must be getting something right!

So many of the things we do in our time are still relevant to you in your time. It's our legacy you might say.

My name is Arete of Cyrene. I study and teach philosophy. I am a philosopher.

And, wow, there are a lot of us in Ancient Greece. We spend our time thinking about what it means to live a good life...

Perhaps our most famous philosopher is Socrates. He never writes anything down. A bit lazy maybe, eh, Socrates? Or maybe too busy thinking...

To be fair he does spend hours discussing everything with his students, helping them learn by asking open-ended questions. Sound familiar? Thought so! His *Socratic* methods are still used by teachers and many others in your time.

Luckily some of his students - me included - do write things down, so all our hard work and brainy thoughts can be read by you lot.

And writing is something else we're great at. We have famous writers - like Herodotus - who record historical events, like wars. So, if you love history you can thank us for being the first to write about it.

And if you don't like history you can thank us for...well, being the first to write about it!

And many of our words are still used in your time, either exactly the same, or very similar. 'Galaxy', 'Europe', 'Democracy', even 'Acrobat' - they're all based on Ancient Greek words. There are thousands of others!

It's worth looking up a few more, if only to understand quite how linguistically brilliant we are!

'Alpha', 'Beta', 'Gamma', 'Delta' - you've probably heard of a few of our letters. They're so great you still use them in your time to name stuff, or as symbols in maths and science. For example, 'Pi' is used for that number that never ever ends...you know the one: 3.14159265359... I could go on...

Which leads me neatly onto science. Yep, we're rubbish at that. Ha! Just kidding! We're great at that too!

You probably take for granted that the earth revolves around the sun and that the moon is lit up by the sun. But our astronomers are the ones who said it first.

Then there's Pythagoras and mathematical concepts like infinity. A few of us have been grappling with that one. But don't think about it for too long or you may never stop... Get it?

A few centuries ago, we used to believe that illness was caused by the gods and you could just pray it away. Then my good friend Hippocrates changed all that. He realised that illness has natural causes and that patients should be treated by studying their symptoms.





Many doctors in your time take the 'Hippocratic Oath', which means they promise to look after all people well.

People. The word 'democracy' comes from two of our words that mean 'people' and 'power': 'people power'.

It's the form of government that allows people to vote on who gets to be in charge. Only...not all. Slaves can't vote. And as a woman I can't vote either. But that's something you'll put right with your own form of democracy.

I may be wrong...as I live here...not there with you... But am I really alive at the moment? Or am I just on the screen? Oops. Sorry. There I go philosophising again!

