WHO WERE THE ANCIENT GREEKS?
The Ancient Greeks

- The Ancient Greeks were people who lived in Greece from around 3,500 BC.
- They also lived in the north and east in lands that we now call Bulgaria and Turkey.
- Some lived in small rocky islands in the Aegean Sea.
This timeline shows some key events that happened in Ancient Greece.

- **508 BC**: Democracy in Athens begins. ‘Democracy’ is said to be one of the Ancient Greeks’ greatest ideas.
- **450 BC**: Athens becomes a very powerful city and controls an empire!
- **432 BC**: The Parthenon in Athens is finished being built.
- **404 BC**: Sparta defeats Athens.
- **146 BC**: Romans conquer Greece. End of Greek empire.
- **455 AD**: End of Roman empire.
- **2020 AD**: Present day.

- **776 BC**: The first Olympic games.
- **490 BC**: Greeks defeat Persian invaders at the battle of Marathon.
- **440’s BC**: Greek theatre thrives in Athens. Many of the most famous Greek plays are written.
- **431 BC – 404 BC**: War between Athens and Sparta.
- **0 AD**: Jesus Christ was born.
- **1896 AD**: Modern Olympic games begin.
• By 500 BC the Greek world was large, rich and powerful.

• It stretched from France to Turkey.
• The Greeks were very talented people.
• They had good laws and strong armies.

How am I different from a soldier today?
• The Greeks built beautiful temples and theatres.

• They were great thinkers, artists and athletes.

The ruins of a historical Greek temple.
Greek Life

- Ancient Greece had a warm, dry climate, as Greece does today.

- People lived by farming, fishing, and trade. Some were soldiers.

- Many Greeks were poor. Life was hard because farmland, water and timber for building were all scarce.

- Most wealthy Greek households had slaves.

- The slaves did all the hard work—building, farming, housework and childcare.

Think about all of the different jobs we have today compared to the Ancient Greeks.
GREEK BUILDINGS

- Greeks built temples in honour of their Gods.
- They made the buildings as magnificent as possible, using the finest materials and craftsmen.

I AM ZEUS-KING OF THE GODS!
• Elegant statues, tall columns and paintings decorated the outside of the buildings.
• Inside, the rooms were filled with treasures.
• Ancient Greece was not a single country like it is today.

• It was made up of different states which were cut off from each other by high mountains, deep valleys and the sea.

• Only one man was able to rule Greece. This was Alexander the Great during the 300s BC. He was very powerful.
GREEK CITY-STATES

• Because Greece is made up of many islands, and has many tall mountains, the Greeks began to build city-states instead of one country.

• A city-state is a city with its own laws, rulers, and money.

• City-states were cities that acted like countries.
• The states each had their own laws and army and often argued with each other.

• Athens was the biggest city state.

• Sparta was a city state in southern Greece.

• It was ruled by two kings from two royal families, who were helped by a council of wise old men.

*The ruins of the theatre at the ancient capital of Sparta.*
Athens and Sparta were probably the two most famous and powerful city states in Ancient Greece. However, they were both very different.
ATHENS V SPARTA

• The city of Athens is built below the acropolis which stands on a hill high above all of Athens. It is on the coast.

• Sparta is surrounded by mountains, which makes it difficult for it to be invaded.
• Athens’ Government ruled as a democracy. They were the first to ever do this. What do we mean by the word democracy?

• The city of Sparta was strictly ruled by the king. He made all of the decisions in Sparta.
SPARTA

• Sparta was a Greek city-state.
• Sparta was very powerful and had its own army.
• Sparta conquered other city-states to gain wealth and power.
• There were three classes of people in Sparta.
• Citizens, non-citizens, and slaves.
SPARTA’S CLASSES

- Only men born in Sparta were citizens.
- Women were not allowed to become citizens, however, women were allowed to own land and businesses, which gave them more freedom than other Greek city-states.
- The second class in Sparta was people who came from other city-states or other countries. They could own businesses but not become citizens.
- The third class was slaves.
Sparta

- Sparta was very focused on obedience and war, and the people did not have any luxuries.
- Boys did not have to work or be educated, but trained to be warriors from a very young age.
- Boys had to join the Spartan army.
SPARTA WARRIORS

• Learning to read and write in Sparta was not very important but Training to become a good soldier was important.
• Young boys were taken from their parents and trained to be soldiers as well as good in sports such as running.
• Girls were also trained to be good in sports and were to grow up to be the mothers of warriors.
• Although they were not allowed to fight, girls took part in all the training because fit ladies produced fit babies, who would fight!
Athens

- Athens was another important Greek city-state.
- The people of Athens wanted to rule themselves and not have a king or queen.
- Athens became the world’s first democracy around 508 B.C.
- A democracy is a government in which all citizens can vote and have equal say in what happens.
DEMOCRACY IN ATHENS

• Athens was a democracy because all citizens could vote, but only half the people in Athens were citizens.

• Women, people born outside of Athens, and slaves could not vote.
ATHENS

• Athens was a very creative city state.
• They believed in a good education. (for boys).
• You could go into the army or navy if you wanted to (if you were a boy).
Pericles

- Pericles was the leader of creating democracy in Athens.
- He had many buildings constructed.
- Pericles had the Parthenon and the Acropolis built.
PARTHENON AND ACROPOLIS
The Acropolis

• This is a high rocky hill in the centre of Athens.

• There are beautiful buildings all around, including the Parthenon.

• The Parthenon was built for the Goddess Athene between 447 BC and 432 BC.
EDUCATION IN ATHENS

• Education was very important in Athens.
• Boys went to school to learn to read and write. They also learned many sports.
• Girls were not allowed to go to school or learn to play sports.
ATHENS

• GIRLS WERE NOT REGARDED AS IMPORTANT BY THE ATHENIANS.
• GIRLS COULD BE TAUGHT AT HOME (IF THEY HAD RICH PARENTS).
• GIRLS WERE NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE PART IN ANYTHING TO DO WITH WAR, BUSINESS OR EDUCATION.
ATHENS V SPARTA

• Athens and Sparta had very different ways of living their lives.
• The governors of Athens wanted to control as much land as possible and this led to much war between Greek lands.
• Sparta, although more powerful kept itself to itself unless their army was needed.
TODAY’S CHALLENGE

• Read the information about Athens and Sparta, thinking carefully about any similarities and differences. On the sheet in your pack, record the differences between the Athenians and Spartans.

• You may wish to think about their location, warfare, attitudes to education, attitudes to girls and boys and any other significant information.

• Going Deeper: Explain whether you would have preferred to have lived in Athens or Sparta and why.