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# Ancient Greece

*Mr. Donn and Maxie's Always Something You Can Use  
Series*

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## ANCIENT GREECE

### Introduction

**Subject:** Ancient Greece

**Level/Length:** This unit was written with sixth graders in mind, but can easily be adapted for grades 5-9. The unit is presented in twenty-one sections including the final activity; some sections are mini-units and will take longer than one class period to complete. Lessons are based on a 55-minute class period or they can be adjusted to fit any time frame. As written, the time frame needed to complete this unit is 8 weeks.

**Unit description:** This unit covers the Minoans, Mycenaeans, early and classical Greece, the Trojan, Persian, and Peloponnesian Wars, the city-states of Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Megara, Argos, Olympia, and Thebes, government, myths and legends, great Greeks, gods and goddesses, the Greek alphabet, art and architecture, inventions, professions, Aesop's fables, and daily life, plus four mini-units—Trial of Socrates, WZUS/KZUS, the Greek Olympics, and Beware of Greeks Bearing Gifts. Activities are varied and include classifying, abstracting, map work, writing, reading, speaking, researching, interpreting, presenting, and other higher level thinking activities. Because of the number and variety of assessments we use throughout this unit, we feel that a final unit exam for ancient Greece is unnecessary. Thus, this unit does not include a lesson for test review.

**Rationale:** In view of the latest government guidelines on education with “no child left behind”, this unit was developed to meet standards applicable in most states. Lessons are designed to address various learning styles and can be adapted for *all* students' abilities.

## ANCIENT GREECE

### Setting up the Room

With this unit, there is little need to set up much of the room in advance. Travel posters or maps will brighten the room until student work is posted. Throughout the unit, the students will be creating several things to post on the classroom walls or bulletin boards including Minoan Murals, the Achilles Rap, the Adventures of Odysseus (Homer), and The Zeus Family Tree.

#### WORD WALL

*Design:* This is consistent for all units, but each has its own look. We suggest an outside border using the Greek alphabet. Place new words as you discover them in the

unit on your word wall. Once a week, have the students pick a word, any word, then define it, and use it in a sentence. Use the word wall to fill in short periods of time throughout the unit.

**DOOR INTO THE CLASSROOM:** On the hallway side of the door into your classroom, use construction paper to frame your doorway, creating an entrance to ancient Greece. We suggest the use of a pair of columns.

**AESOP'S FABLES:** Close class each day with an Aesop Fable. Each fable has a moral. Have the students figure out the moral. (Don't be too specific. If they provide a good moral, accept it.) Morals can also be used to reinforce good behavior and to discuss poor behavior, so choose your fable accordingly.

**MAKE A GREEK CHITON:**

At any time in this unit, should you decide to have your students dress the part, it's easy to make a Greek Chiton. This simple costume was an everyday dress for men, women and children. It's made by folding a single piece of material in a certain way. You don't cut the material—you just fold it! That means you can use a single bed sheet to make a Greek Chiton.

- Fold it over, until it's about the length from your shoulders to your knees
- Then fold it in half
- Use two safety pins to hold it at the shoulders
- Drop it over your head (with your head sticking out the hole between the two safety pins)
- Belts are optional. Let it drop, or tie a rope around the waist. Change the length by closing it out at the waist (pulling it up a bit so it drops over the rope belt.)

## SECTION ONE: Greece Geography

Time frame: 1 class period (55 minutes)

Content: Introduction, Map, Geography, and Fables

### Preparation:

- Daily Question. Use overhead or write question on the chalkboard.
- Overheads:
  - Map of the Ancient Greek World* (outline and/or labeled versions)
  - Geography Comparison Chart: Egypt and Greece* (blank)
- Reproducibles:
  - Map of The Ancient Greek World* (outline)
  - Map of the Ancient Greek World* (labeled)
  - Geography Comparison Chart: Egypt and Greece*

**Daily Question: What is a city-state?**

**Open Class:** Introduction

Ask students if they have ever heard of the “Spartans” or “Trojans” (College football teams). Inform students that these are only two of the things we have used from the ancient Greek culture.

Create a K-W-L chart about ancient Greece.

Inform students that the ancient Greek civilization can be broken down into several areas of study. We will look at 4 different areas. The Minoan, The Mycenaean, The Classical, and the Hellenic (Alexander the Great.)

### Activity: Map Work

Say, “Unlike the other ancient civilizations we have studied, Greece was never unified (until Alexander the Great) but remained a collection of city-states. Sometimes these city-states cooperated, sometimes they fought each other, but they never unified into one country. However, much of what we call western Civilization began in ancient Greece. We will begin our study with a look at Grecian geography.”

- Hand out outline *Map of the Ancient Greek World* (one per student.)
- Locate on the map Ionian Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Adriatic Sea, Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Peloponnesian Peninsula, Crete and Turkey.
- Color in the map.



Say: Let's look at our maps.

Put the labeled *Map of the Ancient Greek World* on the overhead.

Say: You will notice that Greece is a peninsula. That means it is surrounded on three sides by water. You can also notice that this peninsula has many smaller peninsulas sticking out from it. Greece is also covered with mountains. Now these aren't huge mountains, but if you are trying to go from place to place they are a great hindrance. It was very difficult to get from place to place in Greece by walking.

Ask: What do you think was the easiest way to get around Greece? (Answer: By ship.)

Answer daily question: What is a city-state? Ask: Where do you think many of the city-states were located?

Say: The Greeks became known as great sailors. They explored much of the Mediterranean Sea. They founded colonies everywhere they could, on the coast of Turkey, in Italy, on the coast of Africa, on the coast of France. They couldn't colonize Egypt because the Egyptians wouldn't let them. But just about everywhere else in the Mediterranean area the Greeks put down colonies.

Look at a map of the Mediterranean Sea and look at how far the Greeks spread. This spread of Greek civilization brought the Greeks into contact with and conflict with various other civilizations around the Mediterranean.

While you still have your maps open in front of you, we will now compare the geography of Egypt (which we just studied) to the geography of Greece.

Hand out: *Geography Comparison Chart: Egypt and Greece*. Use the overhead. Together, fill in the chart on the overhead, encouraging students to also fill in their handout.

Fill in chart:

	<b>Egypt</b>	<b>Greece</b>
<b>Topography</b>	Flat	Mountainous
<b>Coastline</b>	One coast, Mediterranean	Surrounded by seas, many inlets, bays, and peninsulas.
<b>Internal Barriers</b>	None	Mountains, rivers
<b>Fertile land</b>	Along the Nile only	Many fertile valleys
<b>Climate</b>	Hot and Dry	Rainy, hot summers cool wet winters
<b>Government</b>	Pharaoh	Various

Say: Please put away your maps and your comparison charts.

Transition: The ancient Greeks were really good at making up stories. They made up some of the best stories in the history of mankind. Their stories were so great that we're still reading them today. They also made up a whole bunch of really clever fables.

**Activity: What is a Fable?**

Ask: What is a fable? (Get some answers.)

Say: A fable is a tale that ends with a lesson to be learned. Once upon a time, a long time ago, there really did live an ancient Greek called Aesop. Aesop is famous because he took the time to collect a great many of the most popular fables and wrote them all down. That book is called *Aesop's Fables*. As part of our Greek Unit, we are going to end each day with a fable, one of Aesop's fables. The first one is called "The Man and the Lion."

Say: Please close your eyes (and your mouths) and imagine it's 2500 years ago.

A man and a lion were traveling together through the forest. They began to argue about who was stronger – the man or the lion. In the midst of their quarrel, they passed a stone statue, which showed a man strangling a lion.

"There!" said the man pointing to the statue. "See how strong man is. Does this not prove that I am right?"

The Lion chuckled. "Ah," he said wisely. "But this statue was made by a man. If we lions knew how to build statues, you would see the man under the paw of the lion.

*How a story ends often depends on the storyteller.*

**Filler:** If time permits, have your students quickly draw one picture that illustrates the caption: "How a story ends often depends on the storyteller."

**Close Class:** That's it for today.



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_  
PERIOD: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**GEOGRAPHY COMPARISON CHART**  
Egypt and Greece

Fill in chart:

	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>Greece</i>
Topography		
Coastline		
Internal Barriers		
Fertile land		
Climate		
Government		

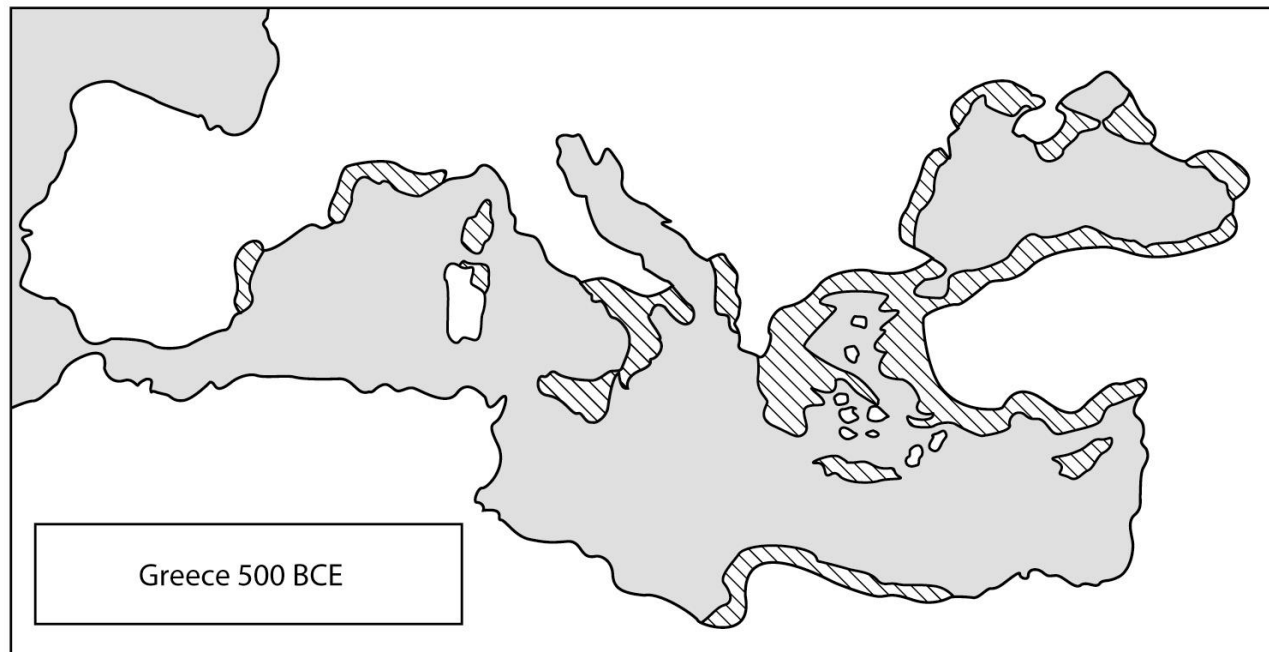


NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_  
PERIOD: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Outline Map of Ancient Greece

Label these places on your map:  
Ionian Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Adriatic Sea, Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Peloponnesian Peninsula, Crete and Turkey



### Labeled Map of the Ancient Greek World

