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# **Ancient Greece**

*Fun Projects for World History*

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# History, Language Arts, Art - ANCIENT GREECE

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# History, Language Arts, Art - ANCIENT GREECE

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

*This collection of nine enrichment activities was designed to complement existing curricula and expand one's understanding of the ancient Greeks. Studies have confirmed that using our hands helps us retain information. So, if you are looking for creative and simple, yet stimulating and exciting projects to spark learning, take the next step toward a highly engaging encounter.*

*There is truly nothing more stimulating than combining a hands-on activity with a subject being studied. Regardless of a learner's age, learning by doing will help maintain their interest, improve retention of information, and foster a desire to learn now and in the future.*

*In this collection, there are a total of nine hands-on projects and writing activities. To enhance the complete learning experience using this collection, character and setting development statements as well as extensive vocabulary lists are provided. A general materials list, detailed instructions, and extensive activity suggestions are provided for the nine projects that focus on the collection theme.*

*As an educator with 18 plus years of teaching and product development experience, it is my personal goal to encourage young people to be creative. Each of the activities included in this collection are based on actual artifacts representative of ancient Greece. A conscious effort was made to develop activities that are constructed from readily available materials, yet result in stunning end products. Although having a wonderful end product is desirable, an essential part of learning is the process of creating something. A young person will gain a greater appreciation for the skills required by the ancient Greeks when they accomplish an activity.*

*It is my heartfelt desire that both teacher and student will find the nine activities in this book a wonderful journey of creativity. Jean Henrich*



# GREEK ATHLETES IN FOCUS



*History*  
Greek Athletes

## GREEK ATHLETES



In ancient Greece, athletes were held in high regard by the general population. Athletics played an important part in ancient Greek culture. The Greeks had public gymnasiums for training. Boys and men participated in sports. Sports became a way to train for warfare and to maintain one's health.

The Greeks took competition seriously and every four years during the summer, they held a grand event that lasted several days. This event was the Olympic Games. The Olympics were held in Olympia which was an ancient Greek City. Historians believe that the games began at the beginning of the ninth-century BC. Olympia was considered a sacred area and was a perfect location to hold the games. Even if a war was taking place between Greek cities, the war stopped, a truce held, and the games occurred.

Every four years, the organizers would send out messengers to inform the various Greek cities when the games would take place. Each city would send their selected athletes to Olympia one month prior to the Olympics to prepare for their chosen events.

Athletes originally wore a loin cloth, but over time they would compete naked. Women were not allowed to participate, and only single women were allowed to be spectators.

The Olympics continued even after Greece became part of the Roman Empire. It was during the rule of Emperor Theodosius I in 391 AD that the last ancient Greek Olympic games were held. Emperor Theodosius had banned all non-Christian practices.



# History, Language Arts, Art - ANCIENT GREECE

## GREEK ATHLETES



The stadium where events took place was 212 meters long and 28 meters wide. An embankment within the stadium allowed upwards of 40,000 plus spectators to view the athletes and events. At the beginning and conclusion of the games, religious ceremonies were conducted. Each day had specific events that took place. The following is a listing of each daily activity:

Day 1. Before any event began, the athletes and judges stood before the Dias's statue and swore a sacred oath to follow the rules of the games. Sacrifices and purification rituals were conducted and offerings given to various gods.

Orators, philosophers, and others provided entertainment. A variety of offerings were presented to the gods. These offerings included disci, strigils, bronze and stone, halters, and miniature tripods.

Day 2. The games began at the hippodrome with the horse and chariot races. The grand event was announced by a herald who shouted the name of the charioteer, his home city, and his father to the spectator. The Pentathlon, a five-sport event including the long jump, wrestling, javelin, discus, and stade race, also took place on the second day. The final event of the day involved a mortuary ritual in honor of Pelops conducted by the athletes. In the evening the athletes celebrated with a great feast.

Day 3. Winners who had been successful on the preceding days would be crowned with an olive wreath. Sacrifices to Zeus were also made by officials and athletes. Younger male athletes between the ages of 17 and 20 competed in various events on day 3.

Day 4. This was the day when the foot races occurred. After the foot races, upright wrestling, boxing, and an unusual sport called the *pankration* took place which was a combination of boxing and wrestling.

Day 5. This was the last day of the Olympic festival and no events took place. Athletes were honored and Zeus's statue was crowned with a golden olive wreath. The athletes who had won their events waved palm branches they had been given by judges dressed in purple robes. At the awards ceremony, athletes were crowned with a wreath of olive leaves while the spectators threw leaves and flowers. Athletes, judges, and important city officials from the different Greek cities would return to the stadium in a grand parade from the hippodrome. Final sacrifices were made to the various gods. Stone slabs were inscribed with the winners' names of the different events, and winners were also given permission and the privilege to have a statue made that was a true replication of their actual body size.