

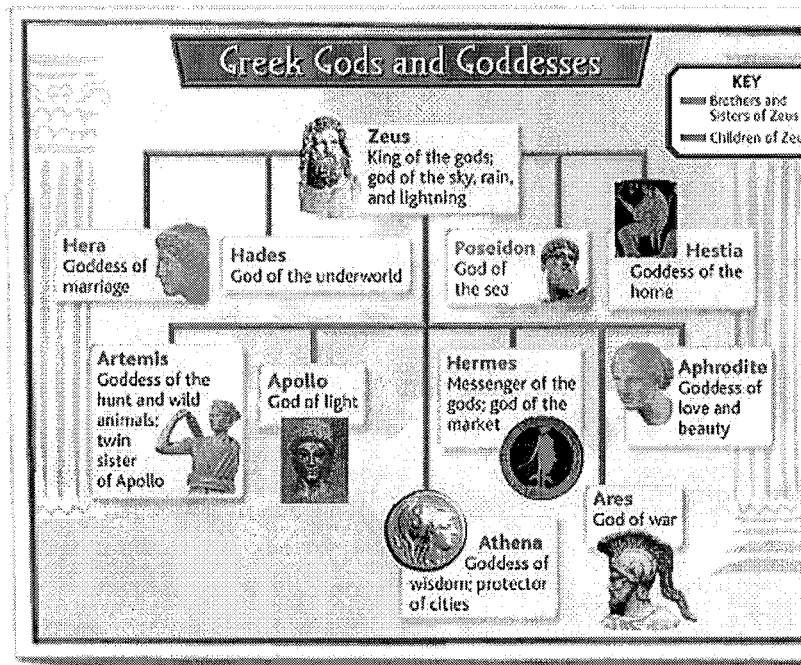
# STATION 1: THE GODS AND MYTHS

To the Greeks, the gods were not distant beings. They became involved in people's lives, and the Greeks loved to tell stories about them. These vivid tales showed that the gods were sometimes cruel and selfish.

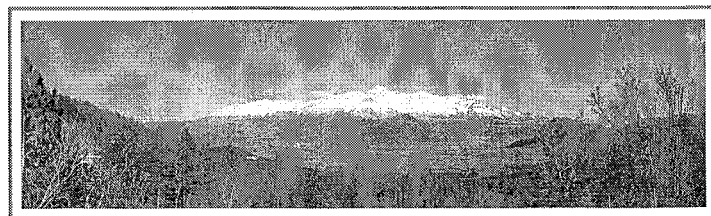
## MYTHS

Myths are stories that people tell to explain beliefs about their world. Myths often begin as oral (spoken) stories, and later they might be written down. The Greeks would use their myths to explain **why things were the way they were** using elaborate stories about the gods and goddesses.

The Greeks created myths to explain such things as the creation of the world and of human beings. Many myths described the gods and goddesses and how they related to one another and to humans. For example, the myth of Prometheus tells how he stole fire from the gods and gave it to humans. Zeus punished him for this by chaining him to a rock. Every day, an eagle ate his liver—which grew back every night. Today, Prometheus is seen as a hero who defied unjust authority.



The Greek Gods had both divine and human qualities. They were, for example, very powerful and could shape human events, yet they also had a wide range of human emotions – including love, anger, and jealousy. The gods and goddesses of Greece constantly competed with one another. **Zeus** was the ruler of the gods. The Greeks believed that he and 11 other major gods and goddesses lived on **Mount Olympus**, the highest mountain in Greece.



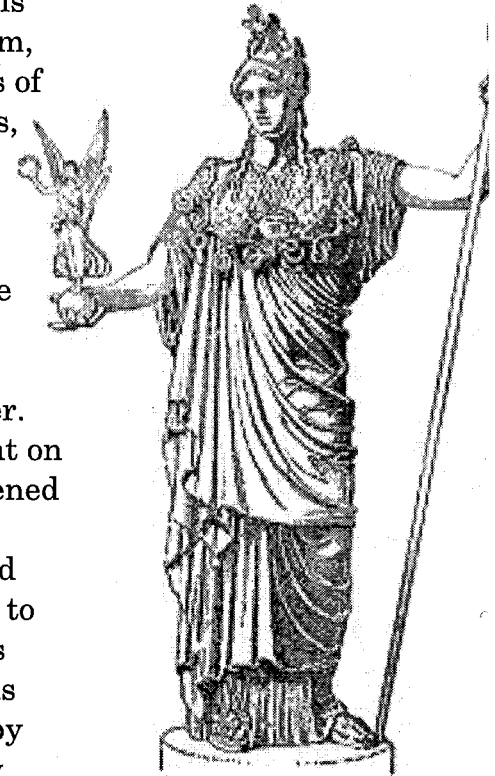
Mount Olympus, Greece's tallest mountain

## STATION 2: CITY-STATES AND THE GODS

**Each city-state had a special god or goddess to protect it. For example, Athena (one of the 12 who lived on Olympus) was the protector of Athens and Sparta. She was the goddess of wisdom, craft-making (especially weaving) and warfare!**

According to legend, Athena sprang fully-grown and fully-armed from the head of her father, Zeus, ruler of the gods on Mount Olympus. It is told that he swallowed his pregnant first wife, *Metis*, meaning wisdom, so that she would not bear a child stronger than he. In some versions of the story, Athena's birth was assisted by the blacksmith, Hephaestus, who opened Zeus's head with a stroke of his axe.

Of particular interest is the story of how Athena came to have the capital city of Greece (Athens) named after her. The people of Greece loved Athena so much they built temples in every city to honor her. Poseidon, her uncle, God of the Seas, wanted the city and challenged Athena over it. Cecrops, the King of Athens, would decide the winner. Moving first, Poseidon demonstrated his power by striking his trident on the rock of the Acropolis. As a result of Poseidon's blow, the rock opened and salt water gushed forth, nearly drowning the city. Next was Athena's move. She quietly knelt and buried something in the ground which in time grew into an olive tree. Athena's olive tree turned out to be a much more useful gift for the people of Athens. The tree's olives provided them with food and oil for lighting and cooking; the tree was also a source of wood for building. Athena's gift was deemed better by far by Cecrops, and he declared her the winner. Athena won the city with her gift of the olive tree.



Much of what we are told about Athena has been passed down to us through word of mouth or celebrated in song, fable, poetry and art - such as paintings on pottery or pieces of sculpture.



Athena's gift of the olive tree to Athens. This gift gave her the right to be the chosen God of the Athens city-state!

## STATION 3: HONORING THE GODS

**The most important festivals honored the 12 Olympian gods. In Greece, games were always part of religious festivals. The largest and most elaborate of these were the Olympics held in the city of Olympia. The Olympics were games held every four years as part of a major festival that honored Zeus. They took place in a stadium where only men competed in these contests. In the same city, one of the ancient wonders of the world was a statue of Zeus, made of gold and ivory by a Greek sculptor Phidias. This was placed inside a temple, although it was a towering 42 feet high.**

**The oldest records of winners at the Olympics date to 776 B.C. But the games might have been going on for centuries before that.**



**The first Olympics included only a foot race. Over time, longer races and other events were added. Events included wrestling, the long jump, the javelin throw, and the discus throw. These games tested skills that were valuable to soldiers. We still do many of these games today in our modern Olympics, but the biggest difference can be seen in the wardrobe. Ancient Greeks competed completely naked.**

**Like other ancient peoples, the Greeks believed it was important to honor the gods.**

**An angry god could cause trouble. The Greeks created statues of the gods and built temples as places for the gods to live. These temples were usually built on the acropolis. They also held special events to honor the gods. Certain days of each month were holy to different gods and goddesses or to aspects of nature. People celebrated holy days with sacrifices and public ceremonies.**

# STATION 4: GREEK LITERATURE

Much of what we know about the early Greeks comes from stories passed down through generations and from long poems that told stories. These long poems are called epic poems. According to tradition, a blind man, Homer, composed the most famous epics.

Homer's epic the *Iliad* is about the Trojan War, which started because a Trojan (a person from the city of Troy) stole a Greek king's wife. In the *Iliad*, the Greeks surrounded the city of Troy for more than nine years, trying to capture it. Finally, the Greeks convinced the Trojans they had left - by building a conciliatory wooden horse that was so large the city walls had to be taken down to have it brought inside. However, many Greek soldiers were waiting inside, and once inside the city walls, the Greeks destroyed the city.

The *Iliad* is famous for its portrayal of heroes - including the warrior Achilles. When Achilles was a baby, his mother dipped him in a river that would make him live forever. When he was grown, however, an arrow wounded Achilles in his one weak spot - the heel his mother held as she lowered him in the water.

For centuries, people thought Homer's story was fiction. Around 1870, archaeologists discovered the ruins of ancient Troy. A real war did take place there, but it did not happen exactly as the *Iliad* portrays it.

Homer's other major epic was the *Odyssey*. It describes the adventures of the Greek hero Odysseus after the Trojan War. The Greek gods decided that Odysseus' trip home should take ten years. During that time, he and his men encountered many dangers. The gods sometimes helped Odysseus and sometimes worked against him.

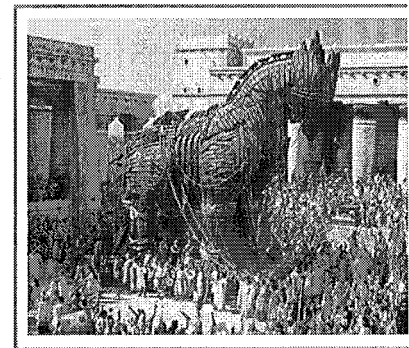
A **fable** is a short story, usually involving animals, that teaches a moral lesson. A storyteller named **Aesop** is credited with writing down many ancient Greek fables.

One of Aesop's best-known fables is "**The Hare and the Tortoise**." In it, a hare (rabbit) makes fun of a tortoise (turtle) for being slow. The tortoise challenges the hare to a race. You know the rest of the tale, but the important part is the moral of the story: slow and steady wins the race. We still use this story today to encourage people to work steadily at a task that seems impossible to accomplish.

► These ancient stories still influence speech and art today.

► For instance, we use the phrase Achilles' heel to refer to a person's weakest area.

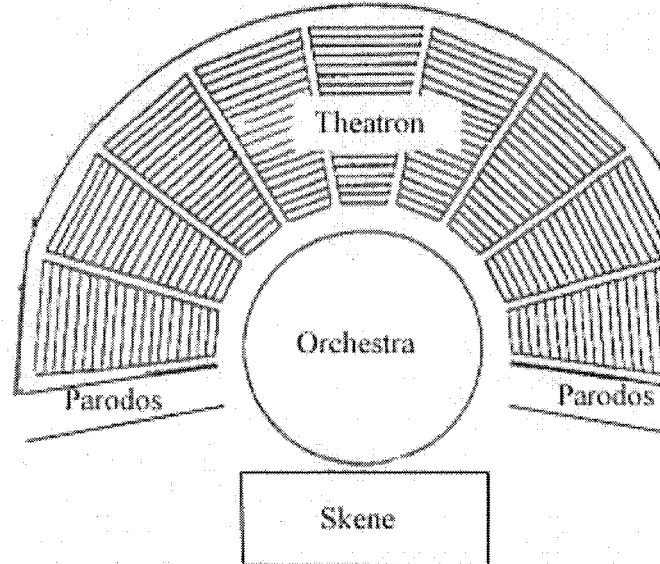
In addition to stories about gods, the Greeks told stories about their ancient heroes.



# STATION 5: THE GREEK THEATER

The Greeks invented drama as an art form. Drama was a written work designed for actors to perform. The Greeks built the first theaters in the western world. Greek drama was a part of every city's religious festivals.

The actors in plays were men, who also played the parts of women. The actors wore colorful costumes and masks to portray their characters. The stage sets were colorful as well. Dancing was important in Greek festivals and plays. Often the plays included a large chorus that danced, sang, and recited poetry.



Parts of a Greek Theater

**Drama had two forms: tragedy and comedy.**

The first form, **tragedy**, was a serious drama that presented the downfall of an important character, such as a king. Common themes for tragedy included love, war, and hate.

The second form of drama, called **comedy**, was a less serious dramatic work. Comedies often made fun of politics, important people, and ideas of the time. Comedies usually ended happily.

**One example of a classic Greek tragedy is the play Oedipus Rex by Sophocles.**

## ***Oedipus: In a Nutshell***

King Laius is willing to order his son, Oedipus, to be killed when a prophet tells him that his son will be his murderer. Oedipus's mother is unwilling to kill her son, so she secretly gives him away to what will become Oedipus's foster parents. These foster parents never tell Oedipus that he is not really their son, so when Oedipus runs into the same prophet who tells him he will kill his father, he decides to run away.

On the road, Oedipus runs into plenty of things including a Sphinx (a winged monster, having a woman's head, a lion's body, the wings of an eagle, and a serpent-headed tail) that is terrorizing a city. To beat the Sphinx, Oedipus must answer a riddle correctly. If he gets the riddle wrong he will die. The riddle of the Sphinx was:

**"What goes on four legs in the morning, on two legs at noon, and on three legs in the evening?"**

Oedipus was able to solve the riddle, so the Sphinx killed herself.

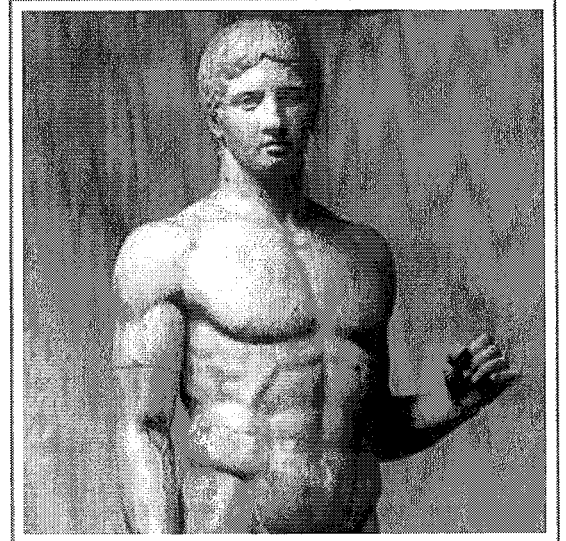
Next Oedipus came across an unknown traveler on the same road. Insults were exchanged between the two, but in the end Oedipus killed the unknown traveler to protect his honor. Soon, Oedipus found out the unknown traveler was, in fact, a King. This meant Oedipus would take over the kingdom and the Queen would now become his wife. Things were really starting to look up for Oedipus, until the prophet came back. The prophet informed Oedipus he had, in fact, killed his biological father King Laius on the road and ended up marrying and sleeping with his mother the Queen.

Oedipus could not handle the news, so he decided he would scoop out his eyeballs and walk the Earth for the rest of eternity blind and poor. The extremely sad ending for the hero of the story, Oedipus, is what makes this play a perfect example of a tragedy.

# STATION 6: GREEK ART

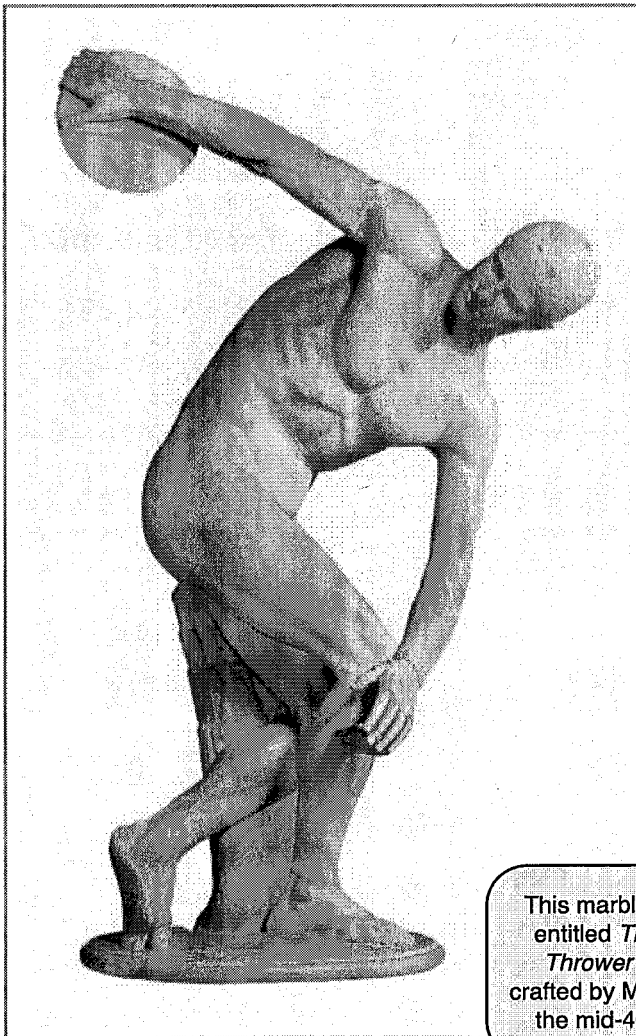
Greek art reflected the Greeks' views of themselves and their world. First, Greek art glorified human beings. Greek painters and sculptors **idealized** their human subjects. In other words, the faces and figures of men and women represented the Greek ideal of beauty. The statues also suggested other traits admired by the Greeks, such as strength, intelligence, pride, grace, and courage.

Greek art symbolized Greek pride in their city states. Art was meant for public enjoyment, and the architecture of public buildings was meant to be a monument to the power and glory of the "polis", or "city" in Greek. Through art, Greeks tried to win the favor of the gods.



Many Greek sculptures portrayed the gods, and these sculptures were placed inside temples, thus honoring the gods they portrayed. The Greeks used many different types of materials in their sculptures, including stone, marble and limestone as these were abundant in Greece. One of the most famous statues was created to honor the goddess Athena. Pericles appointed the sculptor Phidias to direct the building of the Parthenon as a house for Athena. Phidias also created a statue of Athena for the Parthenon's interior. He made the statue of gold and ivory; when finished, Phidias' creation stood more than thirty feet tall.

Very few Greek painted pictures have survived the 2500 years since they were painted. Therefore, most of what we know about Greek art comes from the pictures they painted on fancy **pottery**. Pottery, even if it gets broken, can be put back together, and a good deal of it has even survived whole, mostly in Etruscan tombs. Greek painted pottery changed a good deal over time, from the Stone Age to the Hellenistic period.



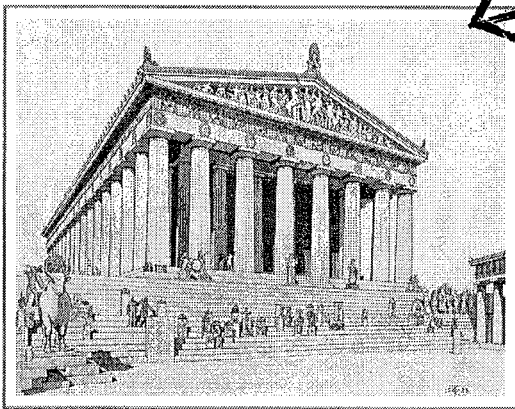
This marble statue is entitled *The Discus Thrower* and was crafted by Myron during the mid-400s BCE.



# STATION 7: GREEK ARCHITECTURE

Greek architects designed temples, theaters, meeting places, and wealthy citizens' homes. Like the sculptors, the architects worked to create beautiful buildings with graceful proportions. Several distinct elements appeared in architectural works. One element was a column. Often a series of columns, called a colonnade, was placed around the outside of a building.

## THE PARTHENON: THE BEST EXAMPLE OF GREEK ARCHITECTURE!



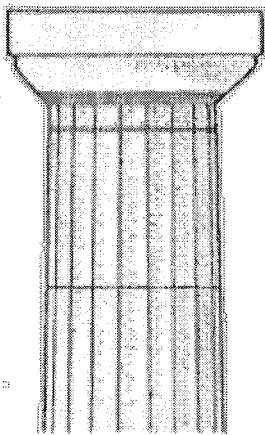
THEN  
&  
NOW



*The Parthenon displayed the temple form that was most often used. It had a four-sided colonnade around a room built to house the statue of the goddess Athena. Sculptural designs that portrayed scenes in Athena's life were put in the pediments of the Parthenon.*

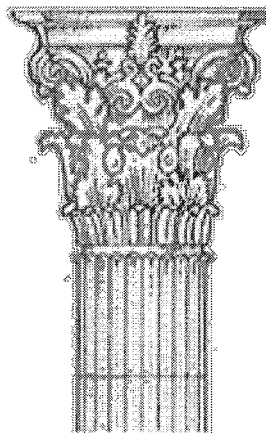
**The Greeks developed three architectural systems and columns, called orders, each with the own distinctive proportions and detailing. The Greek orders are: Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian**

### Doric



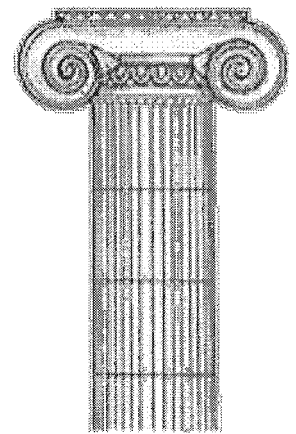
The Doric style is rather sturdy and its top (the capital), is plain. This style was used in mainland Greece and the colonies in southern Italy and Sicily.

### Corinthian



The Corinthian style is seldom used in the Greek world but often seen on Roman temples. Its capital is very elaborate and decorated with acanthus leaves.

### IONIC

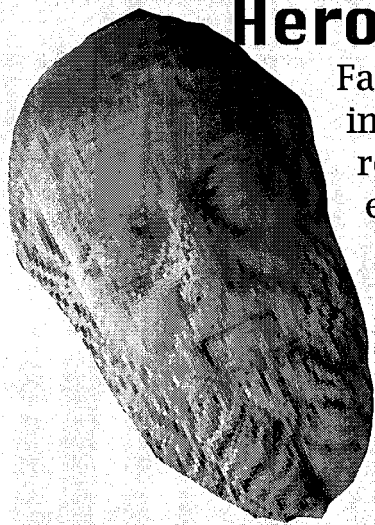


The Ionic style is thinner and more elegant. Its capital is decorated with a scroll-like design (a volute). This style was found in eastern Greece and the islands.

# STATION 8: HISTORY

**THE GREEKS WERE  
AMONG THE FIRST  
CIVILIZATIONS TO WRITE  
DOWN THEIR HISTORY.**

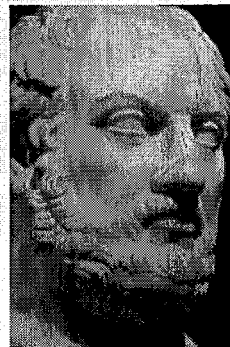
**THEY DID NOT JUST  
TELL STORIES ABOUT  
THEIR PAST. THEY  
EXAMINED THE PAST  
TO TRY TO DETERMINE  
THE FACTS AND  
SIGNIFICANCE OF A  
HISTORICAL EVENT.**



**Herodotus** has been called the Father of History. He was interested in learning and recording the stories about events. Herodotus was born in 484 B.C. and it is obvious from his writings that he was a seasoned traveller and regularly visited many places and cities. It would be fair to say that Herodotus was the first person of his time to actively travel around the world to report his accounts. He is famous for writing an account of the Persian Wars called *History* where he details the massive and deadly wars between the Greeks and Persians.

**VARIOUS THINGS  
WERE USED TO  
RECORD HISTORY  
INCLUDING AN  
INSTRUMENT CALLED  
A STYLUS, PAPYRUS,  
CHISELS, STONE,  
POTTERY, ETC.**

Another Greek historian, **Thucydides**, wrote a history of the Peloponnesian War (fought between Sparta and Athens). To make sure he was accurate, he used documents and eyewitness accounts to create his work. This approach set a standard for the writing of history using primary resources to back up your findings.





# STATION 9: GREEK PHILOSOPHY

**philosophy** |fə'läsəfē|

noun (pl. **philosophies**)

the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, esp. when considered as an academic discipline.

In the search to find answers, the Greeks developed philosophy, or the study of basic truths and ideas about the universe. Greek philosophers had two basic ideas about the universe. First, they assumed that the universe is put together in an orderly way. They believed that laws of nature control the universe. Second, the philosophers assumed that people could understand these laws. The philosophers used these two ideas when they sought the truth.

Over a period of time, Greece had many famous philosophers. One of them was Socrates, who lived from 470 to 399 B.C. He encouraged his young students to examine their beliefs by asking them a series of questions. This question-and-answer style of teaching is called the Socratic method.

Young people liked the teaching of Socrates, but his enemies accused him of causing young people to rebel. They brought him to trial. Socrates told the court that he was teaching young people to think about their values and actions. The jury did not agree with his actions and sentenced him to death. Socrates died by drinking a poison called hemlock.



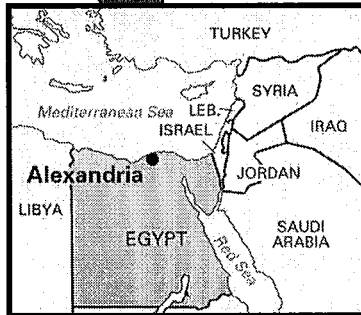
One of Socrates' best students was Plato. He was born around 427 B.C. Plato wrote about an ideal government in a book titled *The Republic*. He did not describe a democracy. Instead, he believed that a philosopher-king should rule. This king would be wise, calm, and reasonable—like a philosopher. Plato started an important school of higher learning called the Academy.

The Academy stayed open for about 900 years. Aristotle was Plato's brightest student. Aristotle lived from 384 to 322 B.C. He invented a method of debating that followed rules of logic. Later, the rules of logic were applied to studies in science. Aristotle opened his own school in Athens called the Lyceum. In addition to this great philosophical work, Aristotle also spent 3 years tutoring Alexander the Great.

# STATION 10: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

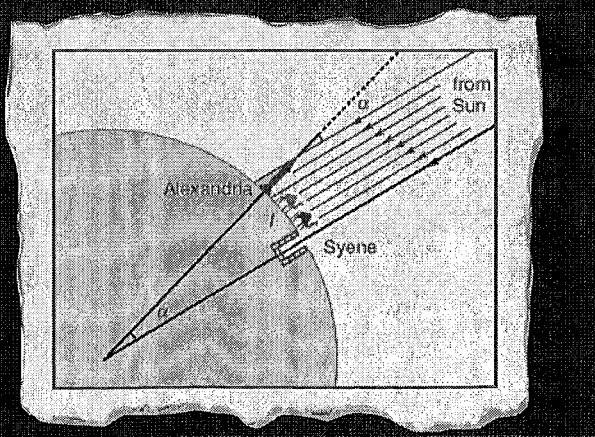
## ASTRONOMY

Some important discoveries about the planets and the stars came from scientists studying at Alexandria, Egypt. For instance, Eratosthenes found a way to estimate the circumference, or distance around Earth.



The scientist Ptolemy studied the universe. Unfortunately for the world of science, Ptolemy placed the Earth at the center of the universe. This incorrect view persisted for 1,400 years!

Another scientist at Alexandria, Aristarchus, studied the relationships of the sun, moon, and Earth to each other. He also estimated the size of the sun.



## Math & Physics

The first noted female mathematician, Hypatia, taught at Alexandria. Hypatia was also an astronomer, wrote about the works of Ptolemy and geometry, and was also the leader of a philosophical movement based on the works of Plato.

Archimedes explained the law of the lever. As an inventor, he developed the compound pulley. He is also believed to have created a device to lift water. He intended his water-lifting device to be used for the irrigation of fields. The ideas of Archimedes were used to build pumps and eventually to create a steam engine.

Known as the "Father of Geometry," the mathematician Euclid created a geometry textbook complete with theories, proofs, and methods, that was still used in many classrooms until the early 20th century. The work of Euclid is still the basis for geometry.

# Culture and Legacy of Ancient Greece Stations: Student Investigation Sheet

## **Station 1: The Gods and Myths**

1. Describe the Greek religion:

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2. What are the purposes of myths in the Greek culture?

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3. Why is the story of Prometheus an example of a myth?

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## **Station 2: City-States and the Gods**

4. What does every city-state in Ancient Greece have?

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5. What is the connection between Athens and Athena?

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6. How do we know what we do about the culture and gods in Ancient Greece?

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7. Draw below how the Goddess Athena was born:

**Station 3: Honoring the Gods**

8. What are some of the ways the Ancient Greeks would honor the Gods?

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9. Why did the Ancient Greeks spend so much time honoring the Gods?

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10. How were the original Ancient Greek Olympics different than our present-day Olympics?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

11. The original Olympics had games that tested what kinds of skills? Why do you think they would focus on those skills back then, and what skills do you think we focus on now?

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**Station 4: Greek Literature**

12. How would I know if I was reading a fable?

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13. What is an epic poem?

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14. What famous writers were there in Ancient Greece, and what did each write?

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15. What connection do we see with Ancient Greek literature and present day?

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\*The *Odyssey* is an epic poem all about how hard of a time the main character had trying to get home after he fought in a war. Can you think of a movie with a similar story where the main character has a really tough time getting home?

**Station 5: Greek Theater and Drama**

16. What two types of drama were invented by the Greeks? Define each.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. What kinds of things might I see or hear if I went to see Ancient Greek drama at the Theater?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. What makes the story of Oedipus an example of Greek tragedy?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*Can you answer the riddle of the Sphinx?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Station 6: Greek Art**

19. What do the Greeks consider to be the best form of art or sculpture?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. Why do we study Ancient Greek pottery so much rather than other art?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

21. What can we learn from studying Ancient Greek artwork?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22. Who is Phidias, and why is he important to Greek artwork?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*Greek style statues have been copied, enjoyed, and thought of as some of the best works of art for thousands of years by people all around the world. What do you think will be the thing that everyone remembers from your generation in America thousands of years down the road?

**Station 7: Greek Architecture**

23. What type of architecture do the Ancient Greeks develop?

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24. What is special about the building The Parthenon?

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25. How was architecture like art in Ancient Greece?

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26. Which column style do the Romans borrow most often?

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27. Which column style is used all over Greece because of how sturdy it is?

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\*Can you think of any buildings you've seen that have columns?

**Station 8: History**

28. In 25 words or less tell me everything I need to know about Herodotus:

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29. Why did Thucydides use primary resources to write about history?

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30. Which wars do we learn detailed information about because of the two Ancient Greek historians?

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31. The Greeks weren't the first civilization that ever existed. Why do you think it took so long before people started writing stuff down and actually keeping track of history like the Greeks?

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**Station 9: Philosophy**

32. What is philosophy?

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33. What two things do all Greek philosophers agree on?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

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b. \_\_\_\_\_

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34. In 25 words or less tell me everything I need to know about Socrates:

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35. After Socrates, which two philosophers emerge, and what do they do to become famous?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

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b. \_\_\_\_\_

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\*Socrates taught his students by constantly asking them questions that they would have to debate and answer. Try having a conversation with your partner using only questions to talk.

Ex.

Student 1: What do you mean I should only talk in questions?

Student 2: What don't you understand about only asking questions?

Student 1: Why should I have to only talk in questions?

Student 2: Didn't you know that Socrates asked lots of questions?

Student 1: Who wouldn't know that?

**Station 10: Science and Tech**

36. Six astronomers and mathematicians are listed on this station. Name all of them and describe what they did to change the world:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- f. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

37. Why are you learning about scientists and mathematicians in social studies class?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_