

CHAPTER
5

Ancient Greece (1750 B.C.–133 B.C.)

SECTION 1

EARLY PEOPLE OF THE AEGEAN

TEXT SUMMARY

Around 1750 B.C., the Minoans built the first Greek civilization on the island of Crete in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The Minoans were sea traders who traveled to Egypt and Mesopotamia. Through trade, they learned new ideas and technology. The Minoans adapted these new ideas to their own culture.

THE BIG IDEA

The Minoans and Mycenaeans were the first Greek civilizations.

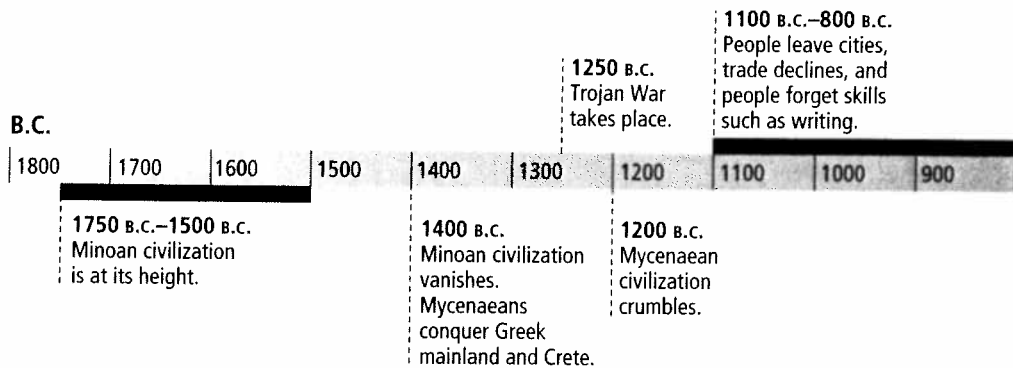
The Mycenaeans conquered Crete around 1400 B.C. and built a new civilization. The Mycenaeans were also sea traders. They traded with Sicily, Italy, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. The Mycenaeans learned many skills, including writing, from the Minoans. They also learned from the

Egyptians and Mesopotamians. They passed on these influences to later Greeks.

The Mycenaeans are best remembered for the Trojan War, which took place around 1250 B.C. In this war, the Mycenaeans defeated the trading city of Troy. Much of what we know about this period comes from reading the **epic** poems of Homer. An epic is a long poem that tells the story of a hero or heroes. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* give us clues about the lives of the ancient Greeks. The poems have influenced writers and artists for almost 3,000 years.

Around 1200 B.C., sea raiders attacked the Mycenaeans. For the next 300 years, Greek civilization slowly declined.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Early Greek Civilizations



Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations learned from Egypt and Mesopotamia.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Name two cultures from whom the Mycenaeans borrowed ideas.
2. **Time Line Skills** When was Minoan civilization at its height?

THE RISE OF GREEK CITY-STATES

TEXT SUMMARY

Greece is made up of many isolated valleys and small islands. This geography prevented the Greeks from building a large empire like that of the Egyptians or Mesopotamians. Instead, the Greeks built small city-states. These city-states frequently fought one another.

Between 750 B.C. and 500 B.C., the Greek city-states tried different types of government. At first, city-states were ruled by kings. This type of government is called a **monarchy**. The landowning nobles won power as time passed. They created an **aristocracy**, or a government ruled by the landholding elite. In some city-states, a middle class of merchants, farmers, and artisans came to

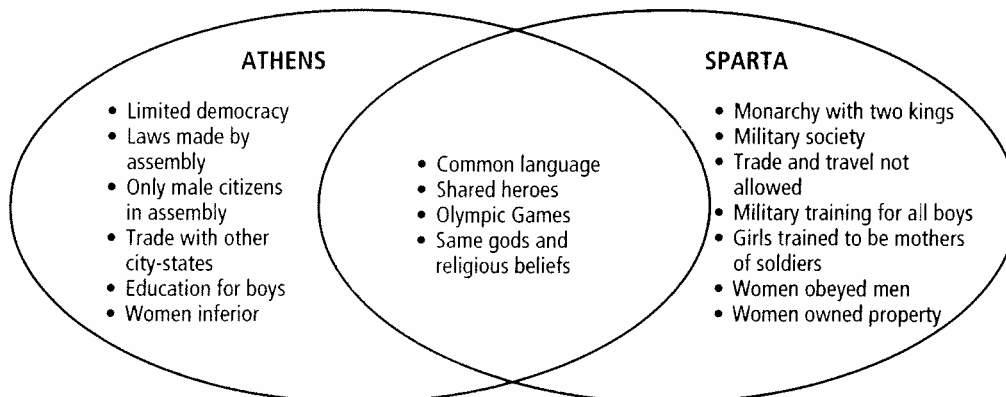
power. This form of government is called an **oligarchy**.

The two most powerful city-states were Sparta and Athens. They developed very different ways of life. Sparta was a monarchy, ruled by two kings. The Spartans created a military society. Spartan boys trained to be soldiers. Spartan girls trained to be mothers of soldiers. Athens, on the other hand, developed a limited **democracy**, or government by the people. However, only male citizens could vote in the assembly. Women could not participate. Unlike Sparta, Athens encouraged the arts, trade, and education.

THE BIG IDEA

Two powerful city-states, Athens and Sparta, arose in Greece.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Two City-States: Athens and Sparta



Although Athens and Sparta were similar in some ways, they developed very different styles of life.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did geography affect early Greek civilization?

2. **Diagram Skills** Which city-state encouraged trade and education?

VICTORY AND DEFEAT IN THE GREEK WORLD

TEXT SUMMARY

In 490 B.C., the Persians attacked the city-state of Athens. Other city-states joined Athens to fight the Persian Wars.

THE BIG IDEA

Competition among Greek city-states led to conflict.

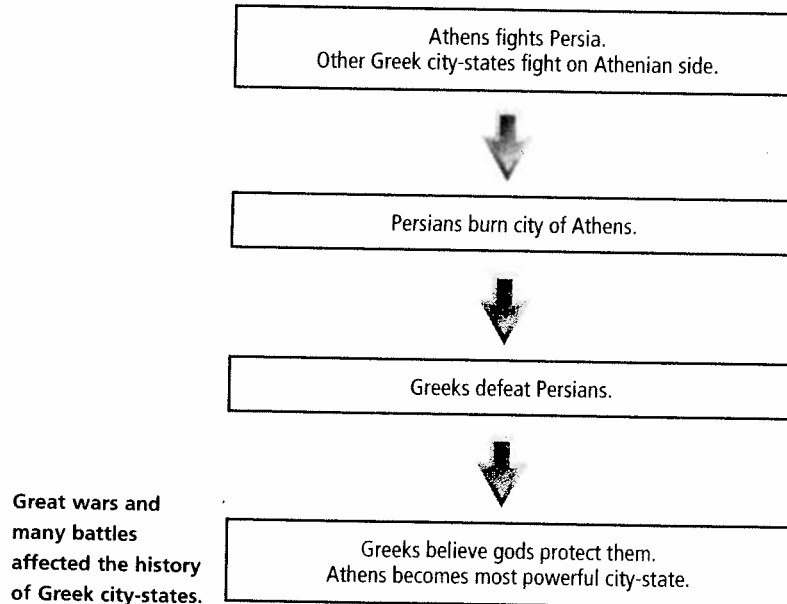
After years of fighting, the Greeks defeated Persia. Athens emerged from the fighting as the most powerful city-state in Greece.

The years after the Persian Wars were a golden age for Athens. A wise leader named Pericles ruled the city-state. This period is often called the Age of Pericles. Athens had a **direct democracy** under Pericles. This meant that male citizens helped to run the government. Pericles pointed out that citizens had a special responsibility

to participate. Athens prospered in the Age of Pericles and became the cultural center of Greece. Many thinkers, writers, and artists came to Athens to take part in the growth of culture.

Sparta and its **allies**, or partners, resented Athenian wealth and power. They formed a league to promote oligarchy. Athens and its allies supported democracy. The Peloponnesian War broke out between the two sides in 431 B.C. After 27 years of fighting, Sparta defeated Athens. Soon after, Sparta fell to Thebes, another Greek city-state. Athenian democracy suffered, and the city declined. Fighting continued among the Greek city-states for almost 50 more years.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Persian Wars, 490 B.C.–479 B.C.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Which city-state became the cultural center of Greece?
2. **Diagram Skills** What was a result of the Persian Wars?

THE GLORY THAT WAS GREECE

TEXT SUMMARY

Greek thinkers tried to understand the reasons why things happened. The Greeks called these thinkers **philosophers**. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were important Greek philosophers. Socrates taught that people should examine their beliefs and ideas. Plato, a student of Socrates, believed in reason. He taught that people could learn to organize an ideal society through the use of reason. Plato wanted a republic ruled by the best men and women. Aristotle felt that people should try to live balanced lives. These ideas have influenced people since ancient times.

The Greeks believed in beauty, balance, and order in the universe. Greek art and architecture reflected those ideas. Greek paintings and statues were lifelike but also **idealistic**, meaning that they showed

individuals in their most perfect form. The most famous Greek building was the Parthenon. Architects today still use ancient Greek ideas in their buildings.

Greek literature began with the epics of Homer. Greek poets wrote about joy and sorrow. Plays had their roots in religious festivals. Actors performed outdoors with few props and little scenery. The characters wore masks that showed that the story was sad or happy. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides wrote **tragedies**, or plays that told stories of human conflict. Others created comedies. The Greeks also were concerned about accurate history.

THE BIG IDEA

Greek thinkers, artists, and writers explored the nature of the universe and the place of people in it.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: *The Greek Philosophers*

SOCRATES	PLATO	ARISTOTLE
Developed Socratic method: learning about beliefs and ideas by asking questions	Believed government should control lives of people	Believed one strong and good leader should rule
Government puts him to death	Divided society into three classes: workers, philosophers, and soldiers	Believed people should try to live balanced lives

Greek philosophers used reason and observation to discover why things happened.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the concern of Greek artists and architects?

2. **Chart Skills** What three social classes did Plato divide people into?

ALEXANDER AND THE HELLENISTIC AGE

TEXT SUMMARY

Macedonia was a mountain kingdom in the north of Greece. In 338 B.C., King Philip of Macedonia dominated all of the city-states to the south. His son, Alexander the Great, conquered the Persian empire and parts of India.

THE BIG IDEA

Alexander the Great created a large empire and spread Greek culture throughout the region.

Alexander spread Greek culture to many parts of the world. The conquered peoples learned Greek ways. The Greeks also learned the ways of the peoples they conquered. A new **Hellenistic** culture arose. It blended parts of Greek, Persian, Egyptian, and Indian life.

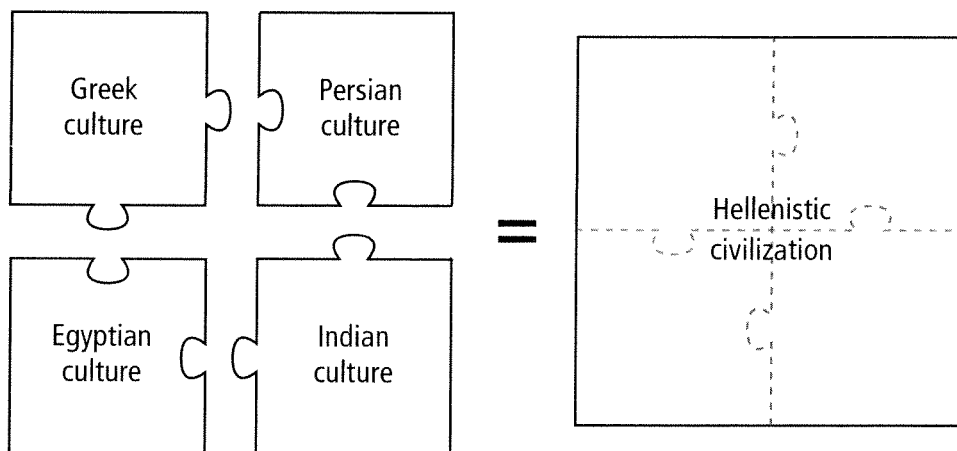
Women gained rights during the Hellenistic period. Alexander's empire fell apart soon after his death.

However, Greek culture had a lasting impact on the regions he had ruled.

The city of Alexandria, Egypt, was at the heart of Hellenistic civilization. Its location made it the major marketplace of the empire. People from many nations met there. Alexandria was also a center of learning, with a museum, libraries, and a zoo. Its 440-foot-tall lighthouse was one of the wonders of the world.

Hellenistic thinkers made great advances in the sciences and in mathematics. Pythagoras developed a formula used to measure the sides of a right triangle. The astronomer Aristarchus discovered that the Earth moves around the sun. Archimedes explored the physical principles of the lever and pulley.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Hellenistic Civilization



Hellenistic civilization was a blend of many cultures.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why was Alexandria an important city?
2. **Diagram Skills** Which four cultures contributed to Hellenistic civilization?