

# Weekly Explorer

MAGAZINE



**IMPACT**  
CALIFORNIA  
SOCIAL STUDIES



## World History & Geography

Ancient  
Civilizations



6



## CHAPTER 5

# The Ancient GREEKS



How did Greek culture spread to other parts of the world?

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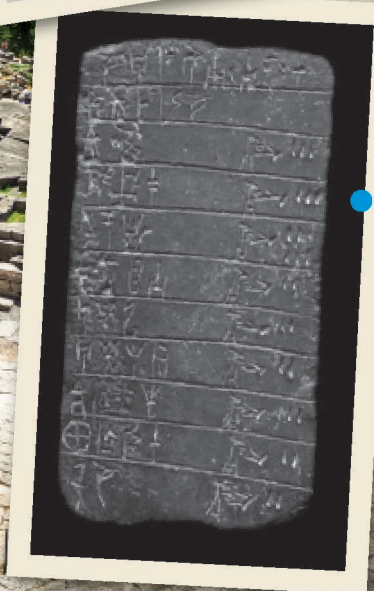
# Long Before ABCs



..... This Minoan artifact is called the Phaistos Disc. It displays Cretan Hieroglyphs, named for the Greek island of Crete on which the Minoans lived. This writing system was not as ancient as that of the Egyptians, but it was probably the first to develop in Europe.



..... This artifact was also found on Crete. It shows another Minoan writing system called Linear A. Linear A symbols do not seem to have represented sounds, so they probably did not form an alphabet. Languages with an alphabet are phonetic, which means they are based on how words are spoken. The language represented by Linear A has never been interpreted.



..... This tablet displays a writing system called Linear B. Linear B is a type of ancient Greek that shares characters with Linear A. Some of its characters represent objects, and some represent sounds. Scholars believe that Linear B evolved directly into the first true alphabet—that of the Phoenicians.

- Which writing system discussed is most like our own? Why?
- Based on these images, what inference can you make about how written language evolved?



# Ancient Greek Mariners

## The Antikythera Mechanism

**ONE DAY**, about two millennia ago, a ship sets sail across the Aegean Sea. The crew's boss is a successful merchant, so the ship carries perfume, pottery, and marble statues—and one or two very special items. Sadly, the ship sinks.

Flash forward about 2,200 years, to C.E. 1901. Archeologists find the remains of a very old ship, just off the Greek island of Antikythera, near Crete. The problem is that archeology is a fairly new science, and the underwater location makes studying the remains even harder.

Flash forward 115 years, to the same place. By 2016, archeology is a well-developed science. Thousands of artifacts from the ship have been brought to the surface and examined. Probably the most remarkable is a treasure called the Antikythera Mechanism. It is an actual mechanical computer! This **innovative** device once had at least thirty moving parts and could track the positions of stars and planets as well as forecast eclipses. Nothing similar from the same time period has ever been found. Astronomical clocks in China and Europe didn't appear until about a thousand years after these ancient Greek mariners set sail. One thing seems certain, though: someone in ancient Antikythera missed out on a pretty amazing purchase!

### WordBlast

Examine the context of the adjective **innovative**, including “thirty moving parts.” What do you think **innovative** means? Look it up in a dictionary to determine if your definition was correct.



This is a piece of the Antikythera Mechanism, found in a 2,300-year-old shipwreck. The Antikythera Mechanism turned out to be an analog, or mechanical, computer.

This amphora, or ancient Greek jar, is from a shipwreck near Turkey.



# The Ulu Burun

**SOMETIMES A SINGLE DISCOVERY** can change the world's understanding of an entire historical period. For example, consider the 1982 discovery of a late Bronze Age shipwreck called the Ulu Burun. It took 10 years to excavate the wreck, located in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of southern Turkey, but it rewrote fourteenth century B.C.E. history.

The ship's 17-ton cargo of weapons, spices, jewelry, precious metals, and more contained artifacts from at least 11 different cultures—from Greece to Cyprus and from central Asia to Egypt. At least one expert considers the discovery of the Ulu Burun more important than that of King Tut's tomb in terms of advancing our knowledge of the time period.

## The Mediterranean Sea, Circa 1000 B.C.E.



### **EXPLORE** the Map

With a partner, look closely at the map.

- Which four major countries could try to claim the Ulu Burun wreck?
- If the ship sailed from Crete's eastern coast, about how many kilometers did it travel to end up where it was found?



This statue of Odysseus, a legendary hero and mariner in Greek mythology, was found in the Antikythera shipwreck.



# THE OLYMPIC GAMES



The earliest Olympic Games were held in Olympia, Greece. The first “official” winners of the Olympic races were publicly honored in 776 B.C.E. Every four years after, in a measurement of time that the Greeks referred to as an Olympiad, Olympia hosted the Games.

Women were not allowed to compete or to watch, on pain of death. The participants had to be free male Greek citizens who promised that they had trained for at least 10 months. During most of the Games’ existence, only those who could prove they were Greek were allowed to participate. The idea was to encourage unity among different city-states.

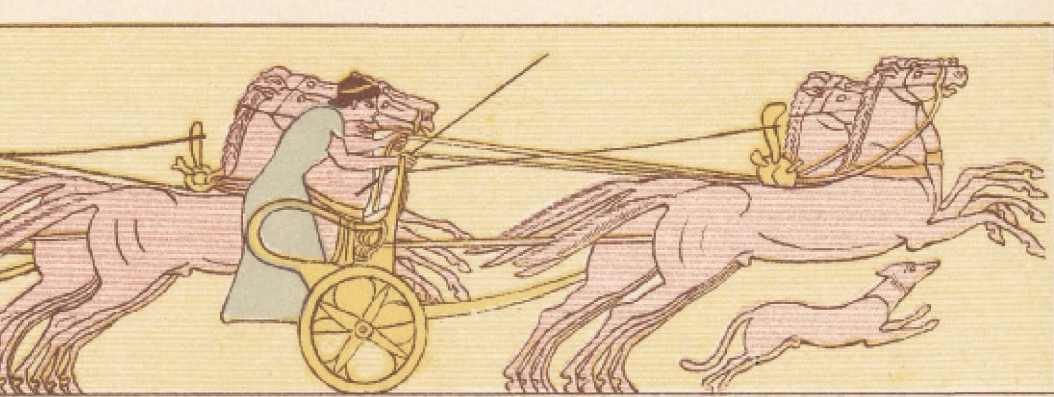
The earliest Olympic Games consisted of a single event, a short footrace called the “stade” (from which we get our word *stadium*). Eventually, longer races were added. Then, in 708 B.C.E., came the *pentathlon*. It consisted of five events: running, wrestling, discus throwing, javelin throwing, and long-jumping. In 680 B.C.E., chariot races appeared. Wrestling and boxing were also eventually added. In 648 B.C.E., the *pankration* was introduced. Combining elements of wrestling and boxing, it permitted kicking, punching, strangling, and even breaking bones. The winner was the one who did not fall unconscious or die.



This is how Olympia, Greece—site of the ancient Greek Olympic Games—looks today.

PHOTO: (t)kvasay/iStock/Getty Images, (b)8grapher/iStock/Getty Images. TEXT: “Ancient Games” by Nancy Barton, Cobblestone July/August 2006, © by Carus Publishing Company. Reproduced with permission. All Cricket Media material is copyrighted by Carus Publishing Company, d/b/a Cricket Media, and/or various authors and illustrators. Any commercial use or distribution of material without permission is strictly prohibited. Please visit <http://www.cricketmedia.com/info/licensing2> for licensing and <http://www.cricketmedia.com> for subscriptions.





THE CHARIOT RACE .

HANNAERT. LITH.

Chariot racing was a popular event in the ancient Olympic Games.

During the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., the Olympic festival drew crowds from as far away as Libya and Egypt. Poets and other writers presented their works. Sculptors worked on their statues. Leaders and politicians delivered flowery speeches.

The beginning of the end of the Games came when Rome conquered Greece in 146 B.C.E. By C.E. 324, Constantine I was the first Christian ruler of the now officially Christian Roman Empire. In C.E. 393, his successor, Theodosius I, ended the Olympic Games, claiming they were unfit for a Christian society.

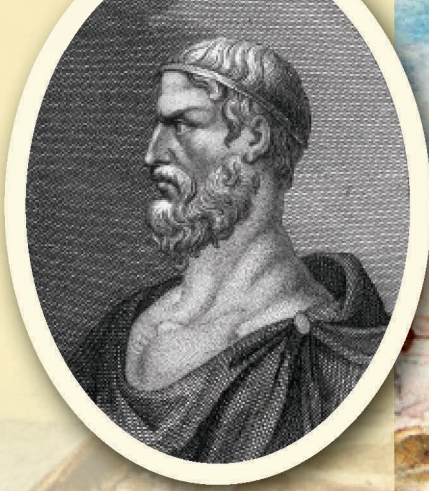
Still, no event in history has had a longer unbroken record than the original Olympic Games, which were held continuously for nearly 12 centuries. The Olympic tradition began again in C.E. 1896, when Baron Pierre de Coubertin organized a competition in Athens, Greece. Since that year, the modern-day Olympic Games have been held every four years in different cities throughout the world. The only exception was during World Wars I and II, when the games were not held three times.

Some things have changed. Women are included, new events have been added, and team sports have been incorporated. Yet the purpose of today's Games remains what it was in 776 B.C.E.: to provide a safe arena in which athletes can compete in fellowship and peace.



The opening ceremonies of the modern Olympic Games are a major spectacle.





The role Draco played in writing down laws helped shaped Greek democracy.

This painting shows the meeting place of the Athenian Council as it appeared in c.E. 1900, with the Acropolis in the background.

# The Birth of Democracy

**M**any modern countries have a form of **democratic** government, including the United States. But did you know that democracy first started in ancient Greece? Tradition says that in 621 B.C.E., the people of Athens tasked the lawgiver Draco with writing down their laws. Doing so weakened the power of the wealthy ruling class, since it no longer had the only knowledge of laws.

In 594 B.C.E., a statesman named Solon revised Draco's laws. He freed all who had been enslaved for not paying their debts. He also set up a People's Court made up of citizen jurors. Citizens could appeal, or challenge, judgments made against them. And he established the Council of Four Hundred, made up of 100 representatives from each of the four main Athenian tribes, to draft laws.

In 507 B.C.E, the Athenian statesman Cleisthenes came to power. His changes to the laws mark the true beginning of democracy in Athens. He reorganized the people into 10 tribes, with citizenship determined by tribe and membership, into a *deme*, or suburb. He also reorganized the Council of Four Hundred to include 500 members, with 50 from each tribe. That Council worked with the Assembly, an institution of at least 6,000 citizens that voted on laws, and with the People's Court to carry out Athenian democracy.

## WordBlast

The Greek word root *demos* means "people." How does the meaning of the root, as well as context clues, help you understand what a **democratic** government is?

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In this painting, Solon appears at a banquet attended by six other famous philosophers and lawmakers.

## Citizenship Requirements



### Ancient Athens

Only males could be citizens.

A citizen had to be at least 20 years old.

A citizen had to serve in the Athenian military.

Both of a citizen's parents had to be Athenian.



### United States Today

Both males and females can be citizens.

If a person is born in the United States, he is or she is a citizen.

Military service is not a requirement of citizenship.

A citizen's parents do not have to be American.

In the decades that followed, Athens became a direct democracy. In this system, every citizen has a direct voice in the daily workings of the government. The Assembly discussed matters put forward by the Council. Every member had the right to speak and offer opinions. Voting was done by a show of hands.

The Council's 500 citizens were chosen at random. Their duties included discussing and preparing bills for the Assembly, prosecuting charges of treason, organizing religious festivals, and managing public buildings.

The courts were manned by 6,000 jurors. A jury consisted of 201, 401, or 501 jurors, depending on the type of case. All citizens had the right to a trial by jury.

In the 2,500 years since the birth of democracy in Athens, leaders wishing to establish governments ruled by the people have looked to—and continue to look to—the laws and lawgivers of ancient Athens for inspiration and guidance.



# Sappho's Verses

The poet Sappho lived in the town of Mytilene, on the Greek island of Lesbos. She was a master of lyric poetry—verses meant to be accompanied by music. There is little known about her for certain. Her work survived for centuries after she lived, only for most of it to be lost during the Middle Ages. One lone poem, that is 28 lines long, has survived completely. Apart from that, only bits and pieces of her verse remain. The verses below are from a poem about Greek ships taking to sea.



Sappho (610 B.C.E.–570 B.C.E.) was a Greek lyric poet. Much of her work is lost today, but what survives is some of the most beautiful poetry ever written.

## CONNECT THROUGH LITERATURE

### from **Poem XCVI from Sappho: One Hundred Lyrics**

by Bliss Carman

At the harbor mouth a sail  
**Glimmers** in the morning sun,  
And the ripples at her prow  
Whiten into crumbling foam,  
  
As she forges outward bound  
For the teeming foreign ports.  
Through the open window now,  
Hear the sailors lift a song!



## WordBlast

The word **glimmer** means “to shine faintly or unsteadily.”  
What is something that glimmers? Why?



# Take Action!

## More to Explore

What else would you like to learn about ancient Greece? Here are some questions that you can research and discuss.

What were some of the characteristics of early writing systems? Compare and contrast two different systems.

Why were the ancient Greek Olympics politically and culturally important?

Sappho was a female poet in ancient Greece. Research women's roles during this time period. Were there many female poets, or was Sappho unique?

### WordBlast

- What are some alternatives to a **democratic** form of government?
- In what way do the stars in the night sky **glimmer**?
- What is something **innovative** that has been invented in your lifetime?



### Reflect

How did Greek culture spread to other parts of the world?