

Chapter Summary

The Ancient Greeks

Lesson 1 *Rise of Greek Civilization*

- Greek civilization began on a mountainous peninsula surrounded by seas with many islands. As a result, Greek communities were often isolated. The Greeks created many independent city-states. This lack of unity weakened Greece, making it easier to be conquered.
- The Minoan civilization began on the island of Crete and influenced the Mycenaean civilization that arose on the Greek mainland. The Mycenaeans outlasted the Minoans and may have conquered them.
- Wars and earthquakes helped cause the fall of the Mycenaean civilization around 1100 B.C., followed by a “dark age.” During that time, the Dorians, a people known for making iron weapons and tools, invaded and drove the Greeks off the mainland. The Greeks also adopted the Phoenician alphabet.
- Greeks returned to the mainland and the “dark age” ended. The Greek population grew. This led the Greeks to establish colonies around the Mediterranean Sea, in places such as Italy, North Africa, and western Asia. The colonies increased trade and spread Greek culture.
- The Greeks developed the modern concept of citizenship. Each city-state was called a polis. Free, land-owning men could become citizens. Citizens could vote, hold public office, and defend themselves in court. Citizens were also responsible for serving in the government and defending the polis by serving as hoplites, or soldiers, in the army of the city-state.

Lesson 2 *Sparta and Athens: City-State Rivals*

- In the 600s B.C., there were many political changes in Greece. Farmers, merchants, and artisans wanted reforms. The unrest led to the rise of rulers with total power, called tyrants.
- Although many tyrants were fair rulers, by the 500s B.C. most city-states had replaced them with either an oligarchy or a democracy. An oligarchy is a government in which a few wealthy people hold power over the larger group of

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citizens. In a democracy, all citizens share in running the government.

- The city-state of Sparta created a military oligarchy with a very strong army. Spartans boys trained for war from an early age. Sparta's economy was based on farming and the Spartans had many slaves.
- The Spartan government resisted change. Citizens were prevented from traveling and there was little trade. Spartan women did have more rights than other Greek women, such as the right to own property.
- Athens developed from a city-state ruled by fair tyrants to a democracy. In the 500s B.C., the tyrants Solon, Peisistratus, and Cleisthenes made reforms that gave citizenship to all free men and helped the poor.
- An assembly of all male citizens became the main governing body of Athens. The assembly was aided by a council of 500 citizens, who introduced laws and helped run the daily affairs of the city-state.

Lesson 3 *Greece and Persia*

- The Persians built a powerful empire in Southwest Asia. This empire was so large that its rulers divided it into provinces called satrapies. Persia had a large, permanent army and a vast network of roads. Persians believed that their kings ruled by the power of the god Ahura Mazda.
- In the 400s B.C., Persia tried to expand into Europe and took control of some Greek colonies in the Mediterranean area. This led to war between Athens and Persia.
- Persia invaded Greece, but the Athenians defeated a much larger Persian army at the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C. The Persian king Xerxes led another invasion in 480 B.C. and won a costly victory over the Greeks at Thermopylae. Later in 480 B.C., the Greeks destroyed a huge Persian fleet at the Battle of Salamis.
- The Persians lost a final battle at Plataea in 479 B.C. against a combined army of Greeks from many city-states. After this defeat, the Persian Empire weakened and became defenseless against outside attacks.

Chapter Summary *Cont.*

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Lesson 4 *Glory, War, and Decline*

- After the Persian wars, Athens entered a golden age of prosperity and achievement led by Pericles. He rebuilt Athens and formed a group of city-states called the Delian League. Pericles also expanded democratic government and encouraged trade.
- Athens was a direct democracy. All citizens met to debate and vote on government issues. This worked in Athens because the city-state did not have many citizens. Women had no political rights and there were many enslaved people in Athens who helped build its prosperous economy.
- Sparta did not join the Delian League. Instead, it became the leader of a group of city-states opposed to Athens. When Athens tried to interfere with Spartan alliances, war broke out in 431 B.C. Historians called the war the Peloponnesian War because Sparta was located in the Peloponnesus.
- Sparta had a stronger army, while Athens had a stronger navy. Sparta surrounded Athens but could not capture it. Then the Spartans joined with the Persians and built a navy. They conquered Athens in 404 B.C.
- Sparta ruled its newly acquired empire much as Athens had ruled its empire before. For 30 years, city-states rebelled unsuccessfully. Then, in 371 B.C. the city-state of Thebes overthrew the Spartan empire. The Greeks were so busy fighting each other that they failed to notice the growth of the powerful Macedonians to the north.