

# The Ancient Greeks

## Lesson 1 Rise of Greek Civilization

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*How does geography influence the way people live?*

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *How did physical geography influence the lives of the early Greeks?*
2. *How did the civilization of the Minoans develop?*
3. *How did the Mycenaeans gain power in the Mediterranean?*
4. *How did early Greeks spread their culture?*
5. *How did Greek city-states create the idea of citizenship?*

### Where in the world?



### Terms to Know

**peninsula** a piece of land nearly surrounded by water  
**bard** someone who writes or performs epic poems or stories about heroes and their deeds

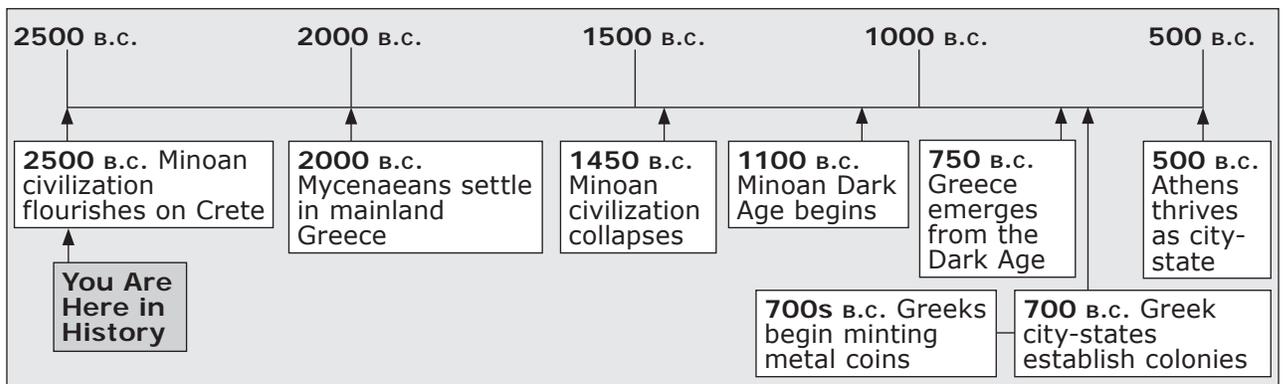
**colony** a group of people living in a new territory with close ties to their homeland; the new territory itself

**polis** a Greek city-state

**agora** a gathering place or marketplace in ancient Greece

**phalanx** a group of armed foot soldiers in ancient Greece arranged close together in rows

### When did it happen?



## The Ancient Greeks

### Lesson 1 Rise of Greek Civilization, *Continued*

#### Mountains and Seas

Greece is a **peninsula**. This means that it is surrounded by water on three sides. There are also many islands that are part of Greece. Ancient people traded among the islands and along the coastline. Many fished for a living. The land on the Greek peninsula has many mountains. On the plains between the mountains, farmers raised crops and sheep and goats. The sea and mountains greatly influenced how ancient Greek culture developed.

#### An Island Civilization

Another civilization developed on one of the islands off the coast of southern Greece. That island is Crete. About 1900 a British archaeologist named Arthur Evans found items from this civilization.

The place he discovered on Crete is called Knossos.

- He dug up remains of an amazing palace.
- The palace had many rooms that stored food.
- Other rooms were workshops where people made jewelry and vases.
- An ancient people called the Minoans built the palace.

Trade was an important economic activity for the Minoans. They traded pottery and vases for ivory and metals in Egypt and Syria. Sometime around 1450 B.C. the Minoan civilization ended. Historians do not know why.

#### A Mainland Civilization

Another early civilization in the area was the Mycenaean civilization. They lived in Greece from about 2000 B.C. to 1100 B.C.

Little was known about the Mycenaeans until the late 1800s. That was when a German archaeologist named Heinrich Schliemann found the remains of a palace. The palace was on the Greek mainland in a place called Mycenae.

In the Mycenaean civilization, each king lived in a palace built on a hill. Nobles lived outside the walls on large farms called estates. Enslaved people and other workers lived in villages on the estates. The palaces were centers of government. Workshops were housed there too. People made clothes and jars for wine and olive oil. Other workers made metal swords and leather shields.

#### Reading Check

1. How did seas influence the way many ancient Greeks lived?

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#### Marking the Text

2. Circle the word that means "the system in a country that includes making, buying and selling goods."

#### Reading Check

3. What did the discovery at Knossos reveal about the Minoans?

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#### Explaining

4. Why were the Mycenaean palaces important places?

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# The Ancient Greeks

## Lesson 1 Rise of Greek Civilization, *Continued*

### Identifying

5. Name two things the Mycenaeans learned from the Minoans.

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### Listing

6. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover the flow chart titled *What Mycenaeans Adopted from Minoans*. Write the question *What do excavations reveal?* on the anchor tab. Label the two tabs—*Mainland Civilization* and *Island Civilization*. Use both sides of the Foldable to list words and short phrases to answer the question for each.

### Reading Check

7. How did the Dorian invasion help spread Greek culture?

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

By the mid-1400s B.C., the Mycenaeans grew wealthy. They built a strong military and fought in the Trojan War. The Mycenaeans conquered the Minoans and controlled the entire Aegean Sea region. Later the many Mycenaean kings fought one another. Earthquakes destroyed their palaces. By 1100 B.C. the civilization had crumbled.

////////////////////, Glue Foldable here //////////////////////,

#### What Mycenaeans Adopted from Minoans

- Built ships
- Used sun and stars to navigate seas
- Worked with bronze
- Worshiped Earth Mother as chief god

A group called the Dorians invaded the Greek mainland. Historians call the following 300 years a Dark Age. Trade slowed down. People made fewer things to sell. Farmers grew enough food only for their families. As the Dorians continued to push into Greece, people fled to other areas. They took Greek culture with them.

Finally, by 750 B.C., the difficult time started to end. Small communities formed on the Greek mainland. They were independent and ruled by kings. The people of these communities called themselves Greeks.

Greek farmers grew more food than they could use. Trade increased, so the Greeks needed a system of writing to record their trade. They adopted or used an alphabet from the Phoenicians.

The Greek alphabet made reading and writing easier for the Greeks. Soon **bards**, or storytellers, were writing down old stories. Until then, the stories had been told out loud.

## Colonies and Trade

The population increased in Greece when the Dark Age ended. By 700 B.C. farmers could not grow enough food for all of the people. Greek communities started to send people outside the area to form **colonies**. A colony is a settlement in a new territory with close ties to its homeland. Greek people started colonies along the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea.

The colonies shipped grains, metals, timber, and enslaved people to "parent" cities in Greece. In return, the cities shipped wine, olive oil, and pottery to the colonies.

## The Ancient Greeks

### Lesson 1 Rise of Greek Civilization, *Continued*

In the 700s B.C., the Greeks started to make coins from metals to make trading easier. A coin is small and can be traded for many different types of goods. This makes it convenient to carry and use. Trade increased and made the Greek colonies wealthier.

### The Greek City-State

The **polis**, or city-state, was the basic political unit in early Greece. At the center of each polis was a fort built on a hilltop. This fort was called an acropolis. The open area outside the acropolis was called the **agora**. This space was used as a marketplace. People gathered in the agora and debated issues, passed laws, and chose officials.

Each polis was governed by its own citizens. The Greeks developed the modern idea of citizenship. In early Greece, only males who had been born in the polis and owned land were citizens. They had the right to vote, hold public office, and defend themselves in court. Their responsibilities included serving in government and fighting to defend their polis. Women and children, however, had no political rights.

Citizens fought to defend their city-state. These citizen soldiers were called hoplites. They fought on foot. Each was armed with a round shield, a short sword, and a spear. When fighting, the hoplites would march shoulder to shoulder into battle. This formation was called a **phalanx**.

The polis gave Greek citizens a sense of belonging. However, strong loyalty to their individual city-states also divided Greece. This lack of unity weakened Greece and made it easier for outsiders to conquer Greece.

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#### Check for Understanding

List three ways Greek city-states created the idea of citizenship.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

How did loyalty to the city-states divide Greece?

4. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Reading Check

8. How did the colonies affect trade and industry in the Greek world?

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#### Explaining

9. Why were coins invented?

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#### Reading Check

10. What were the rights and responsibilities of Greek citizens?

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11. Cover the Check for Understanding with a one-tab Foldable. Write *City-State* on the anchor tab. On the front, draw and label a diagram of a typical city-state. On the reverse side, describe a city-state.