

A bronze Corinthian helmet, c. 500s B.C.

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

For the People's Good

Tyrtaeus, a Spartan poet in the 600s B.C., wrote elegies that praised and encouraged bravery and honor on the Spartan battlefields. Here, while championing courage in the phalanx, Tyrtaeus captures the essence of how the Greeks held the city-state, or *polis*, above all else.

“This is the common good, for the *polis* and the whole *demos* [the people], when a man stands firm in the front ranks without flinching and puts disgraceful flight completely from his mind, making his soul and spirit endure and with his words encourages the man stationed next to him.”

Focus Question How did government and culture develop as Greek city-states grew?



Battling soldiers in phalanx formation

The Rise of Greek City-States

Objectives

- Understand how geography influenced the Greek city-states.
- Define the three types of government that developed in the Greek city-states.
- Explain how Sparta and Athens differed.
- Identify the culture and values shared by Greeks.

Terms, People, and Places

<i>polis</i>	phalanx
acropolis	Sparta
citizen	Athens
monarchy	democracy
aristocracy	tyrant
oligarchy	legislature

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Identify Supporting Details

Create an outline to record the main ideas and supporting details described in this section.

- | |
|---|
| I. Geography Shapes Greece |
| A. Landscape defines political boundaries |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| B. Life by the sea |
| 1. |
| 2. |

The Mediterranean and Aegean seas were as central to the development of Greek civilization as the Nile was to the Egyptians. The ancient Greeks absorbed many ideas and beliefs from the older civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. At the same time, they developed their own unique ways. In particular, the Greeks developed new ideas about how best to govern each individual Greek *polis* (POH lis), or city-state.

Geography Shapes Greece

As you have read, the earliest civilizations rose in fertile river valleys. There, strong rulers organized irrigation works that helped farmers produce food surpluses needed to support large cities. A very different set of geographic conditions influenced the rise of Greek civilization.

Landscape Defines Political Boundaries Greece is part of the Balkan peninsula, which extends southward into the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Mountains divide the peninsula into isolated valleys. Beyond the rugged coast, hundreds of rocky islands spread toward the horizon.

The Greeks who farmed the valleys or settled on the scattered islands did not create a large empire such as that of the Egyptians or Persians. Instead, they built many small city-states, cut off from one another by mountains or water. Each included a city and its surrounding countryside. Greeks fiercely defended the independence of their small city-states, and endless rivalry frequently led to war.

Life by the Sea While mountains divided Greeks from one another, the seas provided a vital link to the world outside. With its hundreds of bays, the Greek coastline offered safe harbors for ships. The Greeks became skilled sailors and carried cargoes of olive oil, wine, and marble to parts throughout the eastern Mediterranean. They returned not only with grains and metals but also with ideas, which they adapted to their own needs. For example, the Greeks adapted the Phoenician alphabet to meet their needs. The resulting alphabet in turn became the basis for all later Western alphabets.

By 750 B.C., rapid population growth forced many Greeks to leave their own overcrowded valleys. With fertile land limited, the Greeks expanded overseas. Gradually, a scattering of Greek colonies took root all around the Mediterranean from Spain to Egypt. Wherever they traveled, Greek settlers and traders carried their ideas and culture.

✓ Checkpoint How did the sea contribute to Greek commerce?

Governing the City-States

As their world expanded after 750 B.C., the Greeks evolved a unique version of the city-state, which they called the polis. The polis was made up of a major city or town and its surrounding countryside. Typically, the city itself was built on two levels. On the top of a hill stood the **acropolis** (uh KRAH puh lis), or high city, with its great marble temples dedicated to different gods and goddesses. On flatter ground below lay the walled main city with its marketplace, theater, public buildings, and homes.

The population of each city-state was fairly small, which helped the **citizens**, or free residents, share a sense of responsibility for its triumphs and defeats. In the warm climate of Greece, free men spent much time outdoors in the marketplace, debating issues that affected their lives. The whole community joined in festivals honoring the city's special god or goddess. The rights of citizens were unequal, however; and male landowners held all the political power.



Development of the Alphabet

Phoenician	Greek	Roman
𐤀	Α	A
𐤁	Β	B
𐤂	Δ	D
𐤃	Κ	K
𐤄	Λ	L
𐤅	Ν	N

Chart Skills Our alphabet comes to us from the Phoenicians by way of the Greeks. The word *alphabet* itself comes from the first two Greek letters, *alpha* and *beta*. Describe how the modern letter L has changed over time.



Map Skills Ancient Greek civilization was shaped by rugged mountainous terrain and the surrounding seas. These geographic features worked as both a barrier and a link.

- Locate** (a) Greece (b) Crete (c) Mycenae (d) Athens (e) Sparta (f) Aegean Sea (g) Peloponnesus
- Region** How did the geography of Greece present obstacles to unity?
- Analyze Information** How did the geography of Greece differ from that of other ancient civilizations?



Spartan Education

An Athenian historian explains the system of education set up by Lycurgus, the Spartan lawgiver:

Primary Source

“Instead of softening the boys’ feet with sandals, he required them to harden their feet by going without shoes. He believed that if this habit were cultivated, it would enable them to climb hills more easily and descend steep inclines with less danger, and that a youth who had accustomed himself to go barefoot would leap and jump and run more nimbly than a boy in sandals. And instead of letting them be pampered in the matter of clothing, he introduced the custom of wearing one garment throughout the year, believing that they would thus be better prepared to face changes of heat and cold.”

—Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*

Describe the Spartan student dress code. What was its purpose?



Types of Government Evolve Between 750 B.C. and 500 B.C., different forms of government evolved in Greece. At first, the ruler of the polis, like those in the river valley empires, was a king. A government in which a hereditary ruler exercises central power is a **monarchy**. Slowly, however, power shifted to a class of noble landowners. Because only they could afford bronze weapons and chariots, these nobles were also the military defenders of the city-states. At first these landowners defended the king. In time, however, they won power for themselves. The result was an **aristocracy**, or rule by a hereditary landholding elite.

As trade expanded, a new middle class of wealthy merchants, farmers, and artisans emerged in some cities. They challenged the landowning nobles for power and came to dominate some city-states. The result was a form of government called an **oligarchy**. In an oligarchy, power is in the hands of a small, wealthy elite.

New Warfare Methods Shape Greece Changes in military technology increased the power of the middle class. By about 650 B.C., iron weapons replaced bronze ones. Since iron was cheaper, ordinary citizens could afford iron helmets, shields, and swords. Meanwhile, a new method of fighting emerged—the **phalanx**, a massive tactical formation of heavily armed foot soldiers. It required long hours of drill to master. Shared training created a strong sense of unity among the citizen-soldiers.

By putting the defense of the city-state in the hands of ordinary citizens, the phalanx reduced class differences. The new type of warfare, however, led the two most influential city-states—Athens and Sparta—to develop very different ways of life. While Sparta stressed military virtues and stern discipline, Athens glorified the individual and extended political rights to more citizens.

✓ **Checkpoint** How was a city-state shaped by its citizenry?

Sparta: A Warrior Society

Dorian invaders from the north conquered Laconia, in the southern part of the Peloponnese (pel uh puh NEE sus). The Dorians settled here and built the city-state of **Sparta**. The invaders turned the conquered people into state-owned slaves, called helots, and made them work the land. Because the helots greatly outnumbered their rulers, the Spartans set up a brutal system of strict control.

The Spartan government included two kings and a council of elders who advised the monarchs. An assembly made up of all citizens approved major decisions. Citizens were male, native-born Spartans over the age of 30. The assembly also elected five ephors, or officials, who ran day-to-day affairs.

Daily Life Ruled by Discipline From childhood, a Spartan prepared to be part of a military state. Officials examined every newborn, and sickly children were abandoned to die. Spartans wanted future soldiers and the future mothers of soldiers to be healthy.

At the age of seven, boys began training for a lifetime in the military. They moved into barracks, where they were toughened by a coarse diet, hard exercise, and rigid discipline. This strict and harsh discipline made Spartan youths excellent soldiers. To develop cunning and supplement their diet, boys were even encouraged to steal food. If caught, though, they were beaten severely.

At the age of 20, a man could marry, but he continued to live in the barracks for another 10 years and to eat there for another 40 years. At the age of 30, after further training, he took his place in the assembly.

Women of Sparta Girls, too, had a rigorous upbringing. As part of a warrior society, they were expected to produce healthy sons for the army. They therefore were required to exercise and strengthen their bodies.

Like other Greek women, Spartan women had to obey their fathers or husbands. Yet under Spartan law, they had the right to inherit property. Because men were occupied with war, some women took on responsibilities such as running the family's estate.

Sparta Stands Alone The Spartans isolated themselves from other Greeks. They looked down on trade and wealth, forbade their own citizens to travel, and had little use for new ideas or the arts. While other Greeks admired the Spartans' military skills, no other city-state imitated their rigorous way of life. "Spartans are willing to die for their city," some suggested, "because they have no reason to live."

✓ **Checkpoint** Why was discipline important to Spartans?



Spartan Fitness

The Spartans put great emphasis on the strength and agility of the human body. The sculpture above shows a Spartan woman exercising, a task rarely expected of other Greek women.

Athens Evolves Into a Democracy

Athens was located in Attica, just north of the Peloponnese. As in many Greek city-states, Athenian government evolved from a monarchy into an aristocracy. By 700 B.C., landowners held power. They chose the chief officials, judged major court cases, and dominated the assembly.

Demands for Change Under the aristocracy, Athenian wealth and power grew. Yet discontent spread among ordinary people. Merchants and soldiers resented the power of the nobles. They argued that their service to Athens entitled them to more rights. Foreign artisans, who produced many of the goods that Athens traded abroad, were resentful that foreigners were barred from becoming citizens. Farmers, too, demanded change. During hard times, many farmers were forced to sell their land to nobles. A growing number even sold themselves and their families into slavery to pay their debts.

As discontent spread, Athens moved slowly toward **democracy**, or government by the people. As you will see, the term had a different meaning for the ancient Greeks than it has for us today.

Solon Reforms Government Solon, a wise and trusted leader, was appointed archon (AHR kahn), or chief official, in 594 B.C. Athenians gave Solon a free hand to make needed reforms. He outlawed debt slavery and freed those who had already been sold into slavery for debt. He opened high offices to more citizens, granted citizenship to some foreigners, and gave the Athenian assembly more say in important decisions.

Solon introduced economic reforms as well. He encouraged the export of wine and olive oil. This policy helped merchants and farmers by increasing demand for their products.

Despite Solon's reforms, citizenship remained limited, and many positions were open only to the wealthy. Continued and widespread unrest

Vocabulary Builder

imposing—(im POHZ ing) *vt.* placing or setting something compulsory upon

led to the rise of **tyrants**, or people who gained power by force. Tyrants often won support from the merchant class and the poor by **imposing** reforms to help these groups. Although Greek tyrants often governed well, the word *tyrant* has come to mean a vicious and brutal ruler.

Citizens Share Power and Wealth The Athenian tyrant Pisistratus (py SIS truh tus) seized power in 546 B.C. He helped farmers by giving them loans and land taken from nobles. New building projects gave jobs to the poor. By giving poor citizens a greater voice, he further weakened the aristocracy.

In 507 B.C., another reformer, Cleisthenes (KLYS thuh neez), broadened the role of ordinary citizens in government. He set up the Council of 500, whose members were chosen by lot from among all citizens over the age of 30. The council prepared laws considered by the assembly and supervised the day-to-day work of government. Cleisthenes made the assembly a genuine **legislature**, or lawmaking body, that debated laws before deciding to approve or reject them. All male citizens were members of the assembly and were expected to participate.

A Limited Democracy By modern standards, Athenian democracy was quite limited. Only citizens could participate in government, and citizenship was restricted to landowning men. Women were excluded along with merchants and people whose parents were not citizens. So were the tens of thousands of Athenian slaves who lacked political rights as well as personal freedom, although it was their labor that gave citizens the time to participate in government. Still, Athens gave more people a say in decision making than any other ancient civilization.

Women in Athens As in other Greek city-states, women in Athens had no share in political life. According to Aristotle, “the man is by nature fitter for command than the female just as an older person is superior to a younger, more immature person.” Although some men disagreed, most Greeks accepted the view that women must be guided by men.

Women played their most significant public role in religion. Their participation in sacred processions and ceremonies was considered essential for the city’s well-being. In well-to-do Athenian homes, women managed the entire household. They spun and wove, cared for their children, and prepared food, but lived a secluded existence and were rarely seen in public. Their slaves or children were sent to buy food and to fetch water from the public well. Poorer women worked outside the home, tending sheep or working as spinners, weavers, or potters.

Educating the Youth Unlike girls, who received little or no formal education, boys attended school if their families could afford it. Besides learning to read and write, they studied music, memorized poetry, and studied public speaking because, as citizens in a democracy, they would have to voice their views. Although they received military training and participated in athletic contests, unlike Sparta, which put military training above all else, Athens encouraged young men to explore many areas of knowledge.

Athenian Education

This drinking cup from 480 B.C. illustrates some of the subjects studied by Athenian boys, including instruction in speech and playing the lyre. *How does this image demonstrate the differences between the Athenian and Spartan systems of education?*



 **Checkpoint** How was democracy limited in Athens?

Forces for Unity

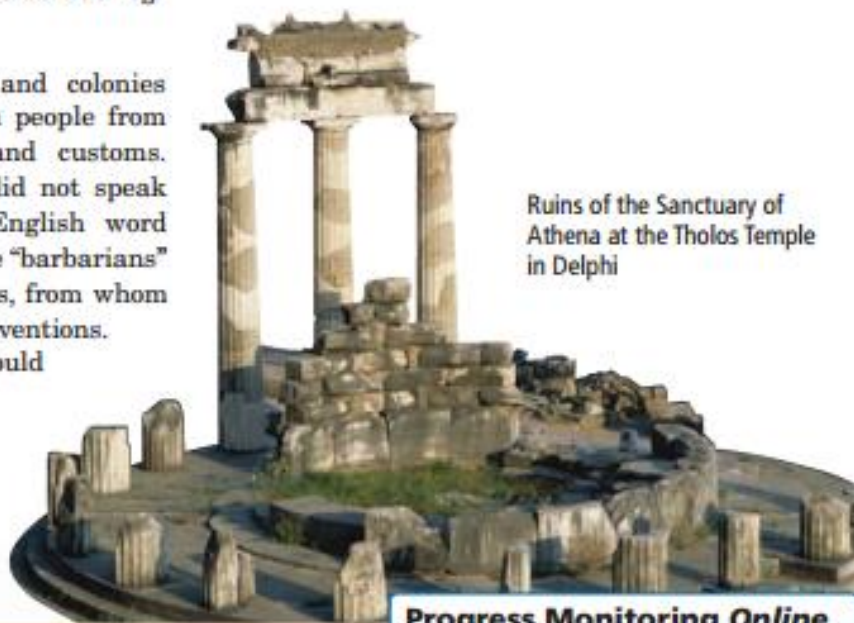
Strong local identification, an independent spirit, and economic rivalry led to fighting among the Greek city-states. Despite these divisions, Greeks shared a common culture. They spoke the same language, honored the same ancient heroes, participated in common festivals, and prayed to the same gods.

Mythology and Religion Like most other ancient people, the Greeks were polytheistic, believing in more than one deity. According to their myths, or traditional stories that explain the ways of nature or the gods, the gods lived on Mount Olympus in northern Greece. In Greek myths, the most powerful Olympian was Zeus (zoos), who presided over the affairs of gods and humans. His children included Ares (EHR eez), god of war, and Aphrodite (af ruh DY tee), goddess of love. His daughter Athena (uh THEE nuh), goddess of wisdom, gave her name to Athens.

Greeks honored their gods with temples and festivals, which included processions, sacrifices, feasts, plays, choral singing, and athletic competitions. Greeks consulted oracles, who were priests or priestesses through whom the gods were thought to speak. However, some Greek thinkers came to believe that the universe was regulated not by the gods but by natural laws.

Greek View of Foreigners As trade and colonies expanded, the Greeks came in contact with people from foreign lands with different languages and customs. Greeks called them *barbaroi*, people who did not speak Greek, and felt superior to them. The English word *barbarian* comes from this Greek term. These “barbarians” even included the Phoenicians and Egyptians, from whom the Greeks borrowed important ideas and inventions. This sense of uniqueness and superiority would help the Greeks when they were threatened by the mightiest power in the Mediterranean world—the Persian empire.

✓ **Checkpoint** What factors united the city-states of Greece?



Ruins of the Sanctuary of Athena at the Tholos Temple in Delphi

SECTION 2 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-0421

Terms, People, and Places

1. What do each of the key terms listed at the beginning of the section have in common? Explain.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Identify Supporting Details** Use your completed outline to answer the Focus Question: How did government and culture develop as Greek city-states grew?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Summarize** How did geography influence the development of Greece?
4. **Synthesize Information** Why do you think the three different forms of government evolved over time?
5. **Draw Conclusions** (a) In what ways was Athenian democracy limited? (b) Despite such limits, Athens is still admired as an early model of democracy. Why do you think this is the case?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Choose a Topic A persuasive essay supports an opinion or position. Suppose you are given the assignment to write a persuasive essay about ancient Greece. Review this section and select three possible topics for your essay. Your topics might be about democracy, the rights of citizens, or political systems. Then write a brief summary for each topic and describe what arguments you could make to support it in a persuasive essay.