

LESSON 2

1500 B.C.

1000 B.C.

500 B.C.

1250 B.C.
Trojan War
takes place.

about 900 B.C.
Sparta begins
conquering its
neighbors.

500 B.C.
Democracy appears
in Greece.



The Greek City-States

PREVIEW

Focus on the Main Idea

Two very different cultures grew in the city-states of Athens and Sparta.

PLACES

Troy
Mount Olympus
Athens
Sparta

PEOPLE

Homer
Pericles

VOCABULARY

myth
immortal
aristocracy
democracy

TERMS

oral tradition
Assembly
helot

EVENTS

Trojan War
Olympic Games



You Are There

You feel like it's time for a good action-adventure story. Picking up a book of Greek tales, you begin to read.

For a long time, the battle between the god Zeus (Zoos) and the powerful giants has raged. Armed with thunderbolts, mighty Zeus has finally destroyed his enemies. Now, Zeus rules the gods and goddesses.

As time passes, Zeus becomes father to many new gods and goddesses. The goddess Athena is born when Zeus is struck on the head. She springs from his forehead, full grown, in full armor, and with a loud battle cry.

Athena is known as the goddess of wisdom. However, she is also a warrior goddess. Athena aids the Greeks in the most famous of legendary battles, the Trojan War. Will Athena's power be greater than that of the gods who are helping Troy?

You can hardly wait to read what happens next.

► **Athena was the goddess of wisdom. Athens was named for Athena after she won a contest with another god over who would become the patron of the new city.**

Compare and Contrast As you read, think about how Athens and Sparta were different and similar.



▶ **Odysseus had many adventures during his ten-year voyage home. The mythical tale the *Odyssey* includes encounters with monsters, magicians, and giants, such as the one-eyed cyclops.**

The Power of Greek Myths and Legends

In the **Trojan War**, fought between the Greeks and the people of Troy, gods and goddesses helped heroes on both sides of the battle. In ancient Greece, daily life often focused on trying to keep these gods and goddesses happy.

Troy, a city on the western coast of Asia Minor, really existed. However, the story of the war is a blend of legend and myth. Legends are about heroes and their great deeds. **Myths** are traditional stories that may include gods and goddesses and that often try to explain events in nature.

Greece's city-states appear in many myths. Sparta was the home of Helen, who was carried off to Troy. This started the Trojan War. Athens was named for Athena, who helped the Greeks during the war. To end the war, the Greeks built a giant, wooden horse. The Trojans thought it was a gift that showed that the Greeks had surrendered. They pulled the horse into the city. At night, Greek soldiers crept out of the horse and opened the city gates to the Greek army.

According to tradition, a blind poet named **Homer** composed two poems about this war. These poems are the *Iliad* (ILL ee ad) and the *Odyssey* (ODD uh see). The *Iliad* tells about the war itself. One of the heroes in the *Iliad* was Odysseus (oh DIH see uhs). The *Odyssey* tells

of Odysseus, whose ship, while sailing home, was blown off course by gods he had angered.

Before Homer composed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, myths and legends were part of what we call **oral tradition**. That is, they were passed down, by word of mouth, from person to person. Now they are among the world's most famous stories.

REVIEW Why do we remember the poet Homer today? **Draw Conclusions**

Literature and Social Studies

The Aeneid

Another hero of the war was the Trojan Aeneas (ih NEE uhs). He survived the destruction of Troy and later founded the town that became Rome. *The Aeneid*, an epic poem by Virgil, tells Aeneas' story. Here, Aeneas speaks of the war. Are these lines more myth or legend?

.....
*Wearied of the war,
And by ill-fortune crushed, year after year,
The kings of Greece, by Pallas' [Athena]
skill divine,
Build a huge horse, a thing of
mountain size,
With timbered ribs of fir.*

The Gods of Mount Olympus

Like most other ancient peoples, the Greeks worshipped many gods and goddesses. The Greeks developed many myths. Like the Egyptians, the Greeks turned to myths to help them understand the mysteries of nature and life. The myths helped them explain birth, death, disease, storms, and victories and defeats in battle.

The Greeks believed that most gods lived on **Mount Olympus** (oh LIM pus), located in northern Greece. The Greeks believed their gods and goddesses were very much like humans. They looked and acted like humans. They argued, fought, fell in love, and were jealous like humans. But, unlike humans, the gods were **immortal**, or able to live forever. They also had special powers.

The Greeks honored their gods and goddesses in many ways. Every four years, the Greeks held athletic contests to honor Zeus, the king of the gods. Because these contests were held in the city of Olympia, they became known as the



▶ A Greek image of women runners (at left). Below is Joan Benoit Samuelson, winner of the first women's marathon in the modern Olympic Games.



Olympic Games. Boxers, wrestlers, runners, and other athletes came from all parts of Greece to compete in the Olympics. The Greeks began to compete in these games about 3,500 years ago. Our modern Olympics are based on the ancient Greek games.

REVIEW Why might both the Egyptians and Greeks have developed myths? **Draw Conclusions**

FACT FILE

The Greeks believed in many gods and goddesses. The most important, they believed, lived on Mount Olympus. Here are some of them:



Zeus (zoos), king of the gods and ruler of Mount Olympus



Hera (HE rah), wife of Zeus, protector of families, children, and the home



Ares (AIR ees), god of war



Athena (ah THEEN uh), goddess of wisdom



Apollo (uh POHL oh), god of truth, intelligence, music, and poetry



Poseidon (poh SIE dun), god of the sea



Aphrodite (af roh DIE tee), goddess of love and beauty



Hermes (her MEES), god of good luck and wealth

Democracy Begins in Greece

The city-states of Greece developed many different forms of government. In some, a king ruled. In others, the government was controlled by members of wealthy, privileged families. This form of government is known as an **aristocracy**. Around 500 B.C., a new form of government developed in some city-states. This new government became known as a **democracy**, or government by the people.


Demos is a Greek word that means "common people." *Kratos* is a Greek word that means "rule." The Greeks believed that people could think and act for themselves. They proposed that people could rule themselves better than any king could. Democracy arose from these beliefs.

The city-state of **Athens** was the best example of a Greek democracy. At first, Athens was governed by all citizens older than 18. This gathering of citizens was called the **Assembly**. The Assembly soon became so large that it was hard to get anything done. Then, 500 citizens were selected to serve on a council for one year. These citizens were picked by choosing lots, or sticks with numbers on them. Actions of the council had to be approved by the Assembly of all citizens.

Democracy had a very different meaning to the ancient Greeks than it does today. Democracy was limited to citizens. Slaves, women, and workers born outside Athens were not citizens. They did not have the right to vote, own property, or testify in court.

REVIEW What details show that Athens developed a system of democracy?

 **Main Idea and Details**

 The *dromos* was a running place or race course. The *dromos* in Sparta, shown here, was a place where young people could come and exercise.



Rivals: Athens and Sparta

In return for their rights, citizens of Athens had major responsibilities. They were expected to defend the city in times of conflict. They also had to take part in government by serving on juries and participating in political debates on important issues. One of the greatest leaders in Athens, **Pericles** (PEH ruh kleez), described the responsibilities of citizenship:

"We do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no business here at all."

7

In many ways, **Sparta**, a city-state located in the southern part of Greece, was the opposite of Athens. The Spartans lived in a strictly ruled military state. Sparta invaded neighboring city-states, taking over farmlands and forcing the local people to become **helots**, or slaves.

Life in Sparta centered on the army. Government officials examined newborn infants to see if they were healthy. Only healthy infants were allowed to live. When Spartan boys turned seven, they were sent to military camps to begin training for a lifetime in the army. Their training was brutal. They were given little food or clothing. They were expected to survive by stealing whatever they needed.

REVIEW What details show that Sparta was governed differently than Athens?

 **Main Idea and Details**

Women in Sparta

The state also expected Spartan women to be strong and responsible. They ran, wrestled, and played other active sports. When Spartan women sent their sons off to war, it was with this advice:

“Return home with your shield or on it.”

Spartan men spent so much time with the army that their wives did not see them very often. Spartan women spent most of their time with each other. They had more

▶ **A girl is shown exercising in this sculpture made in or near Sparta. Greeks outside of Sparta were usually horrified by the short skirts worn by Spartan women.**



personal rights than women in other Greek city-states. They could own property and express opinions on important issues. They managed family estates while men were away at war. However, like the women of Athens, Spartan women could not take part in governing the city-state.

REVIEW Why did the state expect Spartan women to train hard and play active sports?

Draw Conclusions

Summarize the Lesson

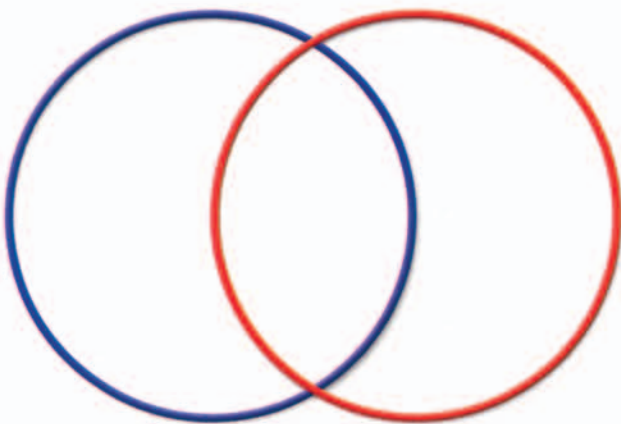
- **1250 B.C.** Troy and ancient Greece fought a long war.
- **about 900 B.C.** Sparta began conquering its neighbors.
- **500 B.C.** Democracy began developing in some Greek city-states.

British Museum

LESSON 2 REVIEW

Check Facts and Main Ideas

1. Compare and Contrast On a separate piece of paper, copy the diagram below. Compare and contrast Athens and Sparta.



2. Where did the Greeks believe that most gods lived?

3. What is an **aristocracy**?

4. What does the story about the Trojan War tell us about the Greek attitudes toward their gods and goddesses?

5. Critical Thinking: Evaluate Information If you had the choice, would you rather grow up in Athens or in Sparta? Why?

Link to Reading

Use a Dictionary You have learned how we got the word **democracy** from Greek words meaning “common people rule.” Look in a dictionary to find out what Greek words are used to make the word *aristocracy*.