


**Greek Dark Age**  
ca. 1200–800 BC

**Greek Archaic Period**  
ca. 800–500 BC

1200 BC

800 BC

ca. 1050 BC:  Phoenician alphabet begins to spread


ca. 1000 BC: Ionians settle in western Anatolia

ca. 800 BC:  Earliest physical evidence of Greek civilization and language

Iron Age ca. 1200–300 BC

Classical Age ca. 500 BC–476 AD

**MEMORY** 

 Don't forget to learn this chapter's song verse(s)! The lyrics can be found in appendix A.

**Unit I: The Greek Classical Period**

**Chapter 1:  
The World of the Greek Polis**

**IMPORTANT WORDS**

| WORD                                  | DEFINITION  |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Polis</i> (plural: <i>poleis</i> ) | The Greek word for a city-state   |
| <i>Agora</i>                          | The wide-open, flat space that was in the center of a Greek city and served as both the marketplace and a meeting place |
| <i>Acropolis</i>                      | The fortified high point of a Greek city and the place where the most important temples were often built                |
| Pantheon                              | The group of gods and goddesses that a polytheistic culture believes in and worships                                    |
| <i>Agoge</i>                          | The Spartan military training program, in which boys took part from age seven to age twenty                             |

**IMPORTANT FIGURES**

| WORD       | DEFINITION   |
|------------|--|
| Polytheist | A person who worships more than one god  |
| Patron god | A god chosen by the people to serve as the special protector or guardian of their city |

**IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS**

| WORD                 | DEFINITION   |
|----------------------|--|
| Greek Archaic Period | The period, ca. 800–500 BC, during which the Greeks started to live in organized city-states, held the first Olympic Games, and began to display their unique culture              |
| Athens               | The most famous of the Greek <i>poleis</i> , known for its remarkable architecture, philosophers, writers, and scientists. The city of Athens is the modern-day capital of Greece. |
| Attica               | The southeastern part of the Greek mainland, just across the Isthmus of Corinth, where Athens is located   |
| Sparta               | The most powerful of the Peloponnesian <i>poleis</i> , known for its excellent army and strict military lifestyle  |
| Laconia              | The region at the eastern part of the Peloponnese “fingers” where Sparta was located   |

**A**



See the *TCH2A Go Deeper* PDF, <http://capress.link/tch2agd>, to explore . . .

- How signs of wear and tear on an ancient Greek woman's skeleton led researchers to discover she had been a master ceramicist
- Various styles, shapes, and colors of Greek pottery
- Some of the archaeological discoveries made at the Agora of Athens
- A collection of Archaic Period artifacts

## The Formation of City-States

Around 800 BC, the Greek people emerged from their Dark Age. Throughout the Dark Age, the Greeks had lived in small villages scattered all around the peninsula. Over time, the villages became larger cities. The cities in turn kept getting bigger, until each one was usually surrounded by a number of smaller villages and areas of farmland. As the villages grew larger, the communities became more prosperous. Soon, the villagers began looking to the larger city as a market to sell their crops and the other goods they produced, as a place of protection, and as a social and religious center.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the Greeks created a number of formal city-states across the peninsula. The Greeks called each city-state a **polis**.<sup>\*</sup> The plural is **poleis**.

The Greek *poleis* formed in several different ways. Sometimes, a few small, independent villages would join together to make their own *polis*. Other times, a small village (or a couple of villages) might willingly join an already established *polis*, because the villagers knew the strong walls of the larger *polis* would offer them safety and protection if the villagers were threatened by invaders. Still other villages were forced to join the nearby *polis*. And in some of the mountainous areas there were no *poleis* at all because the land was not suitable for settling down. Throughout the Greek peninsula, across the islands of the Aegean Sea, and over on the coast of Anatolia, the Greeks founded more and more *poleis*. In fact, at one time there were about 1,500 such Greek city-states!<sup>2</sup>

In addition to building their *poleis*, the Greeks traveled to faraway places, constructed new monuments and temples, expanded their networks of trade, and refined the new writing system they had adopted from the Phoenicians. All of these important cultural changes mark the transition of the Greeks from their Dark Age into their **Archaic Period**, ca. 800 BC to 500 BC, when the Greeks started to live in organized city-states, held the first Olympic Games, and began to display their unique culture.



### To the Source:

English words that come from *polis*: politics, policy, police, metropolitan, cosmopolitan



▲ A terra-cotta head of a woman, most likely from a sphinx statue

▼ A bronze plate decorated with winged horses



▼ A cosmetic vase adorned with painted animals and geometric shapes



1. Kitto, *Greeks*, 68.

2. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 10.

## The World of the Greek *Polis*

Many civilizations in history have built city-states, including the Sumerians and the Phoenicians, but the way the Greeks thought about and organized their *poleis* was different from all the other city-states of the ancient world. Although “city-state” is the best English word we have for the Greek word *polis*, it does not really give us a complete understanding of how the Greeks thought about their *polis*. To the Greeks, the *polis* was not just a city area that governed itself.<sup>3</sup> The Greeks’ *polis* was their entire world! Everything in a Greek person’s life centered around the *polis* where he or she lived. Therefore, to understand the Greeks, we need to understand what a *polis* was and how it was organized. Let’s first take a look at the two most famous city-states, and then explore what a typical Greek *polis* looked like.

As we mentioned, the *polis* usually included not just the main city, but also all of the villages and farmlands around it. A Greek *polis* was not always large, but unlike the Sumerian and Phoenician city-states it usually included more territory than just the city and the area immediately surrounding it. For example, **Athens**, the most famous of the Greek *poleis*, included the city of Athens and its outer limits, as well as the neighboring port town of Piraeus and the whole region of **Attica**, the southeastern part of the Greek mainland just across the Isthmus of Corinth. The entire *polis* of Athens was about as large as a good-sized modern county in the United States. Athens became known for its remarkable architecture, philosophers, writers, and scientists. Today, the city of Athens is the modern capital of Greece and one of the oldest cities in the world!

Another famous *polis* was **Sparta**. Located in **Laconia**, the region at the eastern part of the Peloponnese “fingers,” Sparta became known for its excellent

◀ **Akropolis by Leo von Klenze (oil on canvas, 1846)**

▼ **A modern view of the Acropolis of Athens**



3. Paul Cartledge, “Power and the State,” in Cartledge, *Cambridge Illustrated History*, 139; and Kitto, *Greeks*, 64–65.



army and strict military lifestyle. It was the most powerful of the Peloponnesian *poleis*. Like other Greek city-states, Sparta was made up of a cluster of villages, each of which had grown bigger until they merged and created their own city. However, one of the things that made the *polis* of Sparta unusual is that it never had a wall built around it. Why not? The Greek historian Plutarch described Sparta as a city that was “well fortified [with] a wall of men instead of brick.”<sup>4</sup> The Spartans did not need a city wall for protection because they could rely on the strength of their well-trained soldiers! And indeed, Sparta was not overtaken by an enemy for many hundreds of years—not until long after the Classical Period.

Each *polis* was unique in the way it was laid out, but there was a typical pattern for most of the Greek city-states. With the exception of Sparta, the *polis* usually had a wall around the main city. In the center of the city was the *agora*,<sup>\*</sup> a wide-open, flat space that served as both the marketplace and a meeting place for the people of the *polis*. The *agora*

was sometimes paved with smooth stones and other times simply an area of pounded-down earth. Around all sides of the *agora* were the important government and administrative buildings of the *polis*.



#### To the Source:

*agora* from the Greek *ageirein*, meaning “to gather, assemble”



Ancient Spartan ruins surrounded by olive groves



View of the ancient Agora from the Areopagus, a rock outcropping northwest of the Acropolis

4. Plutarch, “Life of Lycurgus,” in *Parallel Lives*, trans. John Dryden, accessed March 30, 2021, <http://capress.link/tch2a0101>.

The *agora* was especially important because it was where most of daily life happened! The city's people would gather at the *agora* to chat, discuss *polis* business, debate intellectual ideas, hold legal trials, watch live theater performances, enjoy community celebrations, and more.<sup>5</sup>

The city's most important temples were usually found on the *acropolis*,<sup>6</sup> the fortified heart of a Greek city. The *acropolis* was the highest point of land within the city's walls, which made it the easiest spot in the *polis* to defend during an enemy attack. Often, several temples, shrines, and altars were built on the *acropolis*. The most important and impressive temple was usually the one dedicated to the city-state's patron god. (Remember, a patron god is the god chosen by the people to serve as the special protector or guardian of their city.) A huge statue of the patron god or goddess often stood inside the temple on the *acropolis*.

View of the Parthenon and other ancient buildings atop the Acropolis of Athens



Every *polis* in Greece had its own *agora* and *acropolis*. When you see the two words capitalized, it means we are specifically referring to the famous Acropolis and Agora in Athens. You can still visit their ruins today!

The Greeks were polytheists and worshipped a dozen main gods and goddesses (sometimes more), but each city had its own favorite deity. Can you guess which patron deity Athens is named after? In chapter 7, you will learn much more about the fascinating Greek pantheon (the group of gods and goddesses that a polytheist culture believes in and worships), as well as the elaborate temples the Greeks built for their gods!

For the most part, the Greek *poleis* were able to supply everything the people needed for daily life. Each *polis* had an area of fertile land for farming (although, as we have mentioned, areas of good soil were somewhat limited in Greece). The *polis* also usually had areas with natural deposits of good stone for building and clay to make fine pottery. Olive trees provided a source of food, as well as oil that could be used for cooking, making soap, and burning in lamps. The vineyards produced luscious grapes for making good wine.<sup>7</sup>


### The Bible: Paul in Athens

In the first century AD, the apostle Paul visited Athens. While waiting for his friends to meet him there, he spent time every day speaking to people in the local synagogue and in the *agora*, where the Greeks often enjoyed debating intellectual ideas. Sure enough, a few of the Athenian philosophers began to debate with Paul. Acts 17:18 (NIV) tells us: "Some of them asked, 'What is this babbling trying to say?' Others remarked, 'He seems to be advocating foreign gods.' They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection."

### To the Source:

*acropolis* from the Greek *akros*, meaning "highest point," and *polis*

All throughout history, the Greeks have been known as a social people who liked to express their ideas. As the historian Kitto wrote, "Talk was the breath of life to the Greek."<sup>6</sup> -A.D.

 If you purchased *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 2A*, you can read in the Biblical Connections PDF about some of the Athenians' religious traditions and what the apostle Paul had to say about them.

5. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 40–41.

6. Kitto, *Greeks*, 36.

7. Kitto, *Greeks*, 37.

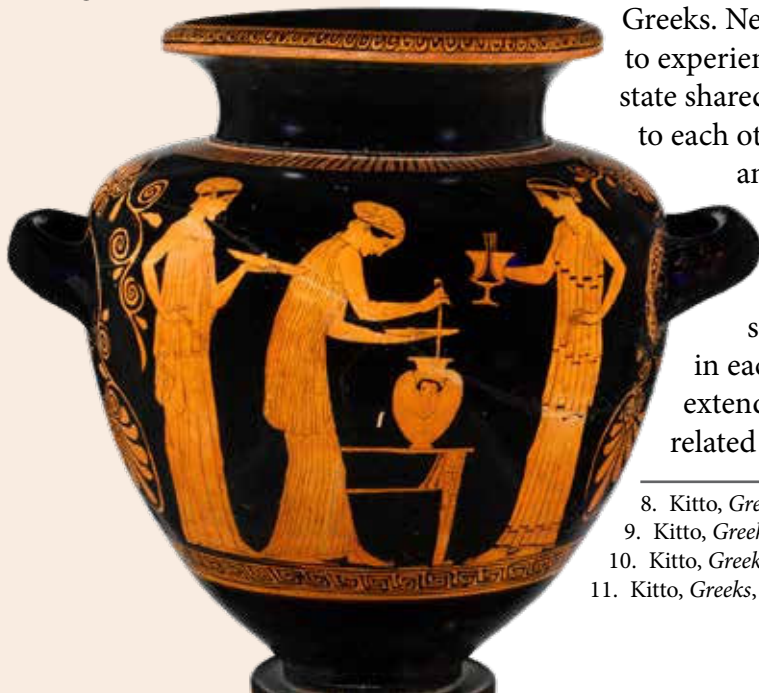


▲ This terra-cotta wine jar shows figures competing in a musical contest.

▼ Ancient Greeks used olive oil as fuel for terra-cotta oil lamps such as this one.



▼ This jar was used for storing liquids. Can you spot the woman ladling wine?



When the crops did not produce a good harvest, or when a particular *polis* needed something that its region did not have, the *poleis* would trade with each other. For example, a *polis* with an extra-large crop of olives might trade with another *polis* for vegetables or grain. Because the Greeks were surrounded on three sides by water, they became good sailors. There was constant back-and-forth business among the *poleis* on both sides of the Aegean Sea and with the islands in between. The Greeks also traded with the neighboring kingdoms and civilizations around them.<sup>8</sup>

Look back at the map on page 38 and picture the Greek peninsula and the island of Crete as making a C shape, with the Aegean Sea and its many islands in the middle of the C. You could say the land of the Greeks is “looking” (or “pointing”) toward the Near East. Can you recall where the other important civilizations at this time in history were located? The seafaring Phoenicians, the kingdoms of Egypt and the Levant, and the great empires of Mesopotamia were all to the east of Greece! It was as though many of the Greek *poleis* were facing the rest of the kingdoms of the ancient world. The Greeks had numerous opportunities to explore and trade far beyond the horizons of the Aegean.<sup>9</sup>

## Greek Social and Political Life

The *polis* also was the center of the Greeks’ social life. On important festival days, all sorts of community activities took place, including athletic competitions, theatrical productions, and certainly lots of feasting! The ancient Greeks were very social. They liked being around other people and spent as much time together as possible.

Throughout history, many people have chosen to live in the countryside or on the outskirts of a city, and only go into town when they need to for errands, appointments, or events. The opposite was true of the ancient Greeks! Most Greek farmers chose to live in the *polis* and walk out to their fields each day to tend to the crops. In the evenings, they returned home to the city to enjoy visiting with friends and taking a stroll through the square.<sup>10</sup>

As you can see, community life was important to the ancient Greeks. Nearly everyone wanted to be a part of the *polis* in order to experience the sense of belonging that the people of each city-state shared. The people in each *polis* had a certain connection to each other, almost like a “*polis* personality.” If you lived in ancient Greece, you might say to a traveler, “You must be from Athens,” or “You must be from Corinth!” The personality of one *polis* could be very different from that of another *polis*, but all of the people were still Greek and shared a common culture. The people in each individual *polis* were their own community, like an extended family, even though not everyone in the *polis* was related by blood.<sup>11</sup>

8. Kitto, *Greeks*, 30–31.


9. Kitto, *Greeks*, 31.

10. Kitto, *Greeks*, 68.

11. Kitto, *Greeks*, 78.

## The Spartan Way of Life

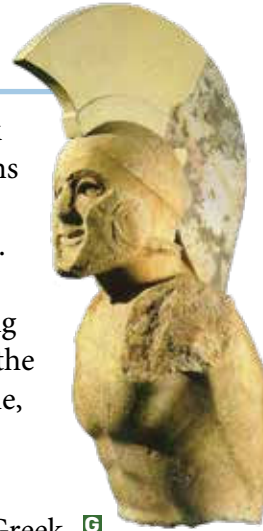
The *polis* of Sparta is an excellent example of how each Greek city-state developed its own individual personality. The Spartans thought differently about the military, family, and work than other Greeks did. True Spartans were not farmers or craftsmen. Instead, Spartan society was centered around its warriors.<sup>12</sup> Every Spartan man had to be a professional soldier. The farming was mostly left to the Spartan slaves. Everyone in Sparta, even the children, had to have a strong sense of obedience, self-discipline, courage, and endurance—all qualities that make good soldiers.

The Spartan way of life was strict and difficult. From a young age, Spartan children were taught to be strong and brave. The Greek  historian Plutarch wrote, “Spartan nurses taught Spartan babies to avoid any fussiness in their diet, not to be afraid of the dark, not to cry or scream, and not to throw any other kind of tantrum.”<sup>13</sup> All Spartan boys lived at home with their mothers until they were seven years old. Then they were taken away to be educated in the *agoge*, the Spartan military training program, until they reached the age of twenty. Once a boy left to train at the *agoge*, he never lived with his family again. Although girls were not taken from their families, they too were trained to be physically strong. Needless to say, Spartan children did not have what we would consider a normal family life!

Life in the *agoge* was very difficult. Each boy was given one piece of clothing that he wore every day, in summer and winter, no matter how cold, rainy, or hot the weather was. He was being trained to be strong and to endure, whatever the weather conditions. A *Spartan* boy wore no shoes. Instead, he went barefoot, even when climbing mountains or walking over rough ground. This was to make his feet hard so that he would be able to march anywhere, even if he had no sandals. And a Spartan boy was always a little bit hungry. He was never given enough to fill his stomach, so that he would learn how to do his duties as a soldier even if he was hungry. If a boy got too hungry, he was allowed to steal food . . . as long as he did not get caught! If he were caught, he would be severely punished. But the punishment was not for the act of stealing. It was for not being clever enough to steal without being seen!<sup>14</sup>

Every day, the teachers or leaders of the *agoge* would inspect the boys and their living quarters. The boys had to be fit and healthy, and their living quarters neat and tidy. Everything had to be perfect. Every ten days, the students would be tested on what they had learned. There was no room for sloppiness or laziness among Spartan boys!

Once a young man turned twenty, he was allowed to marry, but he still had to live away from his family in a community men’s house. All Spartan men received formal military training until they were thirty years old. At thirty, a young man




### Signs of Community

You could tell where a person lived in ancient Greece because the *polis* personality showed in the way he or she talked or acted. The same is true of people today! You might say to someone, “You must live in Texas,” or “You must be from New York.” What are some ways people show the “personality” of the place where they live? **TE**➤

**◀** A marble statue of a Spartan warrior wearing a Corinthian helmet

### To the Source:

*agoge* a Greek word meaning “the act of carrying away,” from the verb *agein*, meaning “to lead”

 If you purchased *The Curious Historian’s Archive: Extra Resources for Level 1B*, you can read in the Biblical Connections PDF about some of the religious traditions of the Spartans and how they compared with the Bible’s instructions for worship.

### To the Source:

Today, the adjective *spartan* is often used to describe something, such as a room or a way of life, that is extremely simple, with no comforts or luxuries.

We know quite a bit about the ancient Spartans because of what other Greeks wrote about them. Since the Spartans emphasized all things military, they did not leave behind much in the way of their own written records, literature, or architecture. Just think how much more we would know about Spartan culture and daily life if they had!

—A.D.

12. Kitto, *Greeks*, 91; and Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 127.

13. Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, 16.3, as cited in Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 126.

14. Gómez, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece*, 126.



▲ This cup used for wine features a male athlete with a javelin (a throwing spear).

▼ A tall jug used for storing olive oil



▼ A Spartan Woman Giving a Shield to Her Son by Jean-Jacques-François Le Barbier (oil on panel, 1805)




could finally become a full Spartan citizen and live at home with his wife and children . . . at least, until he was called away to battle.<sup>15</sup>

Spartan girls, too, had strict training while growing up. They learned the arts of singing and dancing, but they were also trained in physical activities such as running, wrestling, and throwing the javelin (a long, lightweight spear) and discus (a round disk, about the size of a dinner plate, made of wood or metal). Giving girls such rigorous physical training was very unusual among the ancient Greeks, but the Spartans thought it was important because girls needed to be healthy and strong in order to give birth to babies who would grow up to become great warriors. Spartan women also had more time to do physical exercise than other Greek women because the Spartans had slaves who did the housework and cooking for them.<sup>16</sup>

Women in Sparta were given greater freedom and honor than women elsewhere in the Greek world. Because so many Spartan men died in battle or were frequently off on military campaigns, Spartan women were allowed to own property and were more involved with the business of their city-state. In most of the other *poleis*, only the men had such privileges.<sup>17</sup>

The Spartans also had great respect for women because they were the mothers of the mighty Spartan warriors. In ancient times, giving birth to a child was dangerous, and many complications could happen. Because the people did not have all of the medical knowledge that we have today, it was common for a woman and her baby to die during the birth process. To a Spartan, if a woman died in childbirth, it was considered as heroic as a soldier dying in battle, and she was given a tombstone with her name inscribed on it. Only warriors who died in battle and women who died in childbirth were given that honor in Sparta.<sup>18</sup>

The Spartans were both admired and feared by their fellow Greeks who came from freer, less strict city-states. The Greeks in the other *poleis* highly respected the Spartans for their self-discipline, courage, and military skills. And as you will see in later chapters, the Spartan warriors would play an important role in the larger picture of Greek history!

 The Spartan poet Tyrtaeus wrote the following verses about the mighty army of his *polis*:

Go forth, children of citizens of Sparta,  
the land of brave men.

With left hand

the shield put forward firmly,

The spear raised with your right

Go forth and show your courage

without fearing for your life

Because fear for one's own life

does not become a Spartan.<sup>19</sup>

15. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 128.

16. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 129; Marilyn A. Katz, "Women, Children and Men," in Cartledge, *Cambridge Illustrated History*, 128; and Gómez, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece*, 285–286.

17. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 129–130.

18. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Everyday Life*, 125.

19. Cline, *Greeks: An Illustrated History*, 132.



In order to look especially fearsome to their enemies, the Spartans dyed their cloaks and tunics crimson (a very deep shade of red) to hide any bloodstains. Under their helmets, the Spartans wore their hair long. Letting their hair fly out behind them as they ran into battle was a sure way to intimidate the enemy! Each Spartan carried a sturdy dagger that was sixteen inches long, with a blade three inches wide. The daggers were actually a little shorter than a typical Greek sword. According to the historian Plutarch, an unknown Spartan warrior claimed their blades were shorter so that the Spartans could get closer to the enemy!<sup>20</sup>

The Greek shields were large enough to serve as stretchers for the dead and wounded. Plutarch also wrote that when a Spartan mother handed her son his shield for the first time, she would tell him,

“Come back with your shield—or on it.” In other words, her warrior-son should either return victorious, or come back dead. But he should never lose his shield in battle, or drop his weapons and flee from the enemy! A Spartan warrior was fierce indeed.<sup>21</sup>

—A.D.

▼ A Spartan warrior with his red cloak



◀ This cup was used for drinking wine and portrays a boy holding a spear and shield for a young soldier preparing for battle.

## The Polis as a Form of Government

In addition to being the center of community life for the Greeks, the *polis* was also the center of government for the Greek civilization. Like many of the early Near Eastern city-states, each *polis* governed itself. In other words, the Greek *poleis* were not united under one main government that made the decisions and laws for all of them. The Greeks knew that other civilizations had larger forms of government, and they respected and admired the might and achievements of the mighty barbarian kingdoms and empires around them. Yet the Greeks believed that a man could only be truly free if the government respected his rights as a citizen and allowed him to have a voice in decisions that would affect his *polis*.

Of course, there were requirements for a person to be a citizen, and not everyone was allowed to have a say in how things worked. In the next chapter, you will learn about the requirements for a Greek person to be a citizen, but generally only adult men were considered citizens. Women and slaves could never be full citizens of a *polis*.

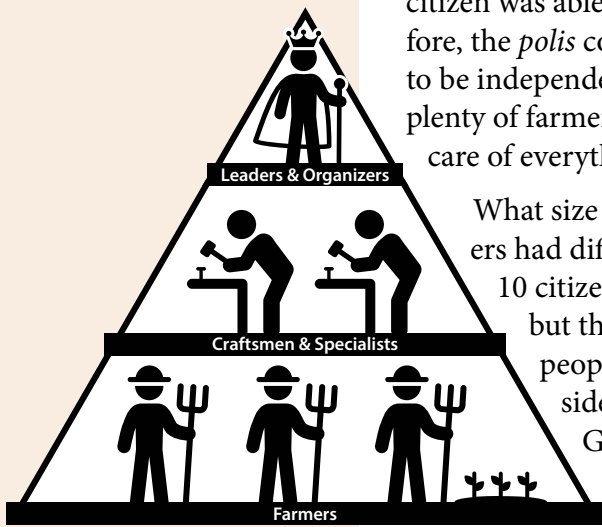
## Judaism: The Jews and the Spartans

A document called 1 Maccabees records the words that the Spartan king Areus (309–265 BC) wrote to the Jewish high priest Onias I and gives us a clue about a possible connection between the Spartans and the Jews. In his letter, King Areus seeks an alliance with the Jews and refers to writings he found that discuss how the two peoples shared a common ancestor in Abraham. Scholars are not certain if the records are true or just a tale, and there is no evidence that Jews officially settled in Sparta. However, a number of Jews were living in the Peloponnese by the first century AD.<sup>22</sup>


20. Peter Chrisp, Joe Fullman, Susan Kennedy, and Philip Parker, *History Year by Year: The History of the World, from the Stone Age to the Digital Age* (New York: DK Publishing, 2013), 46, 48.

21. Cline, *Greeks: An Illustrated History*, 121.

22. Jewish Virtual Library, “Sparta,” accessed April 13, 2021, <http://capress.link/tch2a0104>.



Because every citizen was expected to have a say in the business and government of his *polis*, the Greeks were careful to never let a *polis* grow too large! One Greek philosopher, Aristotle, described the ideal *polis* as one in which every citizen was able to recognize most of the other citizens in his city-state.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the *polis* could not be too big. On the other hand, the *polis* was supposed to be independent and not rely on any other *polis*. Therefore, the *polis* needed plenty of farmers, craftspeople, merchants, soldiers, and other specialists to take care of everything, which meant the population could not be too small.

What size was “too big” or “too small” for a *polis*? The ancient Greek writers had different opinions! Aristotle said that a *polis* had to be larger than 10 citizens, or else it would be impossible for the city to provide for itself, but that a population of 100,000 citizens would be far too large for the people to govern themselves. Plato, another Greek philosopher, considered the ideal size of a *polis* to be 5,000 citizens, but many of the Greek city-states had smaller populations. Throughout the history of Greece, the sizes of the *poleis* varied. Only Athens and two other *poleis* ever had more than 20,000 citizens.<sup>24</sup> 

### Problems with the *Poleis*

So far, we have talked about many positive reasons why the Greeks formed *poleis*. Does this mean the system of Greek city-states was perfect? Of course not! In fact, the idea of the Greek *polis* had a couple of big problems. First, the *poleis* would often fight against each other. Although there was a sense of unity within the individual *polis* communities, there was not the same sense of unity shared among all of the Greek city-states. Greece was not a unified kingdom. Conflicts between *poleis* would start over land, natural resources, and other such reasons. Second, because the *poleis* were not united, it was harder for the Greeks to work together to defend their land when they were attacked by outsiders. In later chapters, you will see examples of how some *poleis*, such as Athens and Sparta, were bitter rivals, and how other times the *poleis* had to find ways to join together to defend their land from a shared enemy, such as the Persian Empire.

Overall, though, the *polis* system worked well for the Greeks. It gave the people a sense of who they were and where they belonged. Each *polis* had its own identity, and the people clung fast to it. And for the most part, the *polis* allowed the citizens to have a voice in their government and to be a part of the decision-making process.

In the next chapter, we will learn what the government of the *polis* typically looked like. How could everyone have a say in what happened in the *polis*? And do we really mean *everyone* had a say in the government? You’ll find out!

To read about the life of slaves in ancient Greece, see the Profiles and Legends PDF in *The Curious Historian’s Archive: Extra Resources for Level 2A*.

### ? Near Eastern versus Greek City-States

We already mentioned that one of the main differences between the Greek and Near Eastern city-states was the physical size of the Greek *poleis*. What are some other differences you can think of? Are there any ways the Greek *poleis* were similar to the Near Eastern city-states? **TE>**

23. Kitto, *Greeks*, 65.

24. Kitto, *Greeks*, 65–66.

**Talk It Over**

Imagine that you and your classmates (or your family) are farmers in ancient Greece. Discuss whether or not you think your small village should join with the larger city and become part of the *polis* that is forming in the area. What would be the advantages of joining the *polis*? What are some of the disadvantages? **TE**

**Practice the Facts**

On the line provided, write the number of the correct vocabulary word beside each definition.

- |                         |           |  |
|-------------------------|-----------|--|
| 1. Patron god           | <u>5</u>  | A. The Spartan military training program, in which boys took part from age seven to age twenty   |
| 2. Attica               | <u>9</u>  | B. The Greek word for a city-state   |
| 3. Greek Archaic Period | <u>11</u> | C. The group of gods and goddesses that a polytheistic culture believes in and worships  |
| 4. Sparta               | <u>2</u>  | D. The southeastern part of the Greek mainland, just across the Isthmus of Corinth, where Athens is located  |
| 5. <i>Agoge</i>         | <u>1</u>  | E. A god chosen by the people to serve as the special protector or guardian of their city  |
| 6. Athens               | <u>4</u>  | F. The most powerful of the Peloponnesian <i>poleis</i> , known for its excellent army and strict military lifestyle   |
| 7. <i>Acropolis</i>     | <u>3</u>  | G. The period, ca. 800–500 BC, during which the Greeks started to live in organized city-states, held the first Olympic Games, and began to display their unique culture |
| 8. Laconia              | <u>10</u> | H. The wide-open, flat space that was in the center of a Greek city and served as both the marketplace and a meeting place   |
| 9. <i>Polis</i>         | <u>8</u>  | I. The region at the eastern part of the Peloponnese “fingers” where Sparta was located  |
| 10. <i>Agora</i>        | <u>6</u>  | J. The most famous of the Greek <i>poleis</i> , known for its remarkable architecture, philosophers, writers, and scientists   |
| 11. Pantheon            | <u>7</u>  | K. The fortified high point of a Greek city and the place where the most important temples were often built  |

**Time Check**

This exercise is optional.

How much can you remember about what was happening in the Near East and Far East during the Greek Dark Age and Archaic Period? Circle the correct answer for each of the following questions. (*Hint:* If you need help completing this exercise, you can use the time lines in appendix E and the kingdom charts in appendix F.)

- The Greek Dark Age (ca. 1200–800 BC) overlaps with which two periods in ancient Egyptian history?  
 Old Kingdom and First Intermediate      **New Kingdom and Third Intermediate**
- Which dynasty ruled China ca. 1050–256 BC, during the Greek Dark Age and the Greek Archaic Period?  
**Zhou dynasty**      Xia dynasty
- Which two Near Eastern empires ruled Mesopotamia during the Greek Archaic Period (ca. 800–500 BC)?  
**Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires**      Egyptian and Persian Empires
- Which period in ancient India, ca. 1600–500 BC, overlaps with the Greek Archaic Period?  
 Harappan Period      **Vedic Period**

### Write It Down

Based on what you learned in the book introductions and in this chapter, write three sentences describing the Greek “personality.” (Be sure to use complete sentences!) **TE>**

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

### Draw a Picture

This exercise is optional.

On a separate sheet of paper, draw a picture of what you think a Greek *agora* or *acropolis* might have looked like. Look back at some of the pictures in this chapter if you need inspiration!

### What If...

Complete each of the following sentences by filling in the blank with the correct vocabulary word. Use the words in the word bank to help you. (Hint: Some of the vocabulary words are from the book introductions and the unit I introduction.)

Hellene • Sparta • polis • dialect • barbarian • Archaic Period • Athens

1. If I were a Greek who lived in an independent city-state that ruled itself, I would be a member of a polis.
2. If I were a non-Greek living in the Near East, the Greeks would call me a barbarian.
3. If I attended the *agoge* for most of my life and was trained to be a mighty warrior, I would be a citizen of Sparta.
4. If I lived during the time when the Greeks started to form organized city-states, held the first Olympic Games, and began to display their unique culture, I would be living in the Greek Archaic Period.
5. If I spoke the Greek language and was born in the land of Greece, I would call myself a Hellene.
6. If I lived in the most famous Greek *polis*, my home would be in Athens.
7. If I spoke a version of Greek that is noticeably different from other versions of Greek but still understandable by other Greek speakers, I would be speaking a dialect.

### True or False

If the sentence is true, circle *T*. If the sentence is false, circle *F*.

1. The Spartans had a strong sense of family, and the family members lived together until the children were grown up and married. T **(F)**
2. Both young boys and girls in Sparta had rigorous physical training. **(T)** F
3. A Spartan woman who died in childbirth was considered a hero and given the honor of a tombstone carved with her name. **(T)** F

4. A Spartan man was not allowed to get married until he was thirty years old.
5. The Spartan way of life emphasized obedience, strength, and endurance.
6. The Spartan polis had high, thick walls all around the city.

- T  F
- T  F
- T  F

**Find It on the Map**

Label the following on the map. In the unit I chapters, we will give you a few hints for the locations that might be harder to remember, but in the unit review you will have to label them *without* the hints!

1. Ionian Sea
2. Aegean Sea
3. Mediterranean Sea
4. The Peloponnese
5. Athens
6. Attica (*the territory where Athens was located*)
7. Sparta
8. Laconia (*the territory where Sparta was located*)



**Think About It**

The Spartan *agoge* was a very strict military training program that emphasized physical fitness. Would you like to go to such a school? Why or why not? Write down some of your thoughts. (Be sure to use complete sentences!) **TE**

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## Make It Yourself

In this chapter, you learned about how the Greek city-states were built. Each *polis* had a wall around the city and an *agora* in the center where merchants would sell their goods and the people would gather to talk or debate, watch theater performances, and hold trials. The temples were built on the *acropolis*, the highest point  in the city. Can you picture all of this in your mind? Now, try constructing your own 3D model of a *polis*!

1. Begin by using modeling clay to form the topography (land structure) of your *polis*. Consider whether your *polis* will have farmland (represented by green clay) and access to the sea (represented by blue clay). Remember, you will need a high hill for the *acropolis*, and a flat space near the center for the *agora* (both represented by brown clay).
2. Using twigs or Popsicle sticks, construct a wall around the entire *polis*. Remember, the wall would need to be high enough to offer protection for the people living inside the city!
3. Near the center of the hill (but not at the highest point), use smooth stones to construct the *agora*.
4. At the highest point in your *polis*, use tan or white clay to shape at least one temple to stand on the *acropolis*. Remember to make your temple as elaborate as possible since it is dedicated to the patron god of the *polis*!
5. Consider adding other touches to your *polis*, such as roads, smaller buildings, or plants and trees. 

**A***Virtue*: Respect (For the optional virtue-related discussion question and answer prompts, see page D of the Teacher's Notes for this chapter.)

*Optional Readings:*

- To learn about the life of slaves in ancient Greece, see the Profiles and Legends PDF in *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 2A*.
- If you are using *Writing & Rhetoric Book 2: Narrative I*, lesson 5 features a retelling of the Greek myth of Athena and Poseidon, which tells the story of the creation of the olive tree and how Athena became the patron goddess of Athens.
- "Life in Sparta" section from chapter 22, "Sparta and Athens," in *Story of the World*.

**B**Throughout unit I, you may wish to prompt students to narrate the events of the chapter lesson back to you. Having students retell the story of history in their own words can be helpful for ensuring comprehension and also gives them practice summarizing a story or sequence of events.

**C**Some scholars propose that a closer English translation of *polis* might be "citizen-state." (See Cartledge, "Power and the State," 64.)

**D**Students may enjoy seeing a modern Google Earth view of the *Agora* in Athens: <http://capress.link/tch2a0102>. You can also explore digital 3D renderings of the *Agora*, *Acropolis*, and parts of the *polis* walls at <http://capress.link/tch2a0103>. The site includes recreations of Athens in the Mycenaean, Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods.

**E**To read a retelling of the Greek myth of Athena and Poseidon, which tells the story of the creation of the olive tree and how Athena became the patron goddess of Athens, see the Profiles and Legends PDF in *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 2A*.

**F**With its main mountain range running along the western border of the peninsula, Greece's "back" was to the west. Kitto states that the opposite was true of Rome: Since the main mountain range on the Italian peninsula runs down the eastern coastline, the people of Rome "looked" west, to where there was little civilization, instead of east to the rest of the known world. According to Kitto, Greece's "facing" east made it possible for the Greeks to be a great influence in the ancient world sooner than the Romans could be. (See Kitto, *Greeks*, 31.)

From  **Signs of Community** on page 41.

Answers will vary. The following are some examples. What others can you and your students think of?

1. Often, regional communities are recognizable by their dialect or by how they pronounce certain words. For example, people from Pittsburgh use the word "pop" when they want a soda, or the word "cupboard" when referring to what others call a closet. People from New England have a distinctive way of pronouncing certain phrases, such as "Park the car," and almost everyone is familiar with the southern drawl of people from Georgia or South Carolina.
2. The kind of food we eat is also a clue as to our local community. For instance, you can tell someone is from Philadelphia if they remark that a cheesesteak from anywhere else in the country simply isn't the "real thing"! Southerners will typically ask for sweet tea and sweet potato pie. And whatever you do, don't start singing the praises of Carolina barbeque in Texas or Texas barbeque in the Carolinas, unless you're looking for an argument!
3. School communities—especially colleges and universities—have their own personalities. For instance, a college may have a small-town feel or a large, bustling university atmosphere. Institutes of higher education such as Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, and Yale are known for their antiquity and prestige. Whether it is a K–12 school, a college, or a university, the sense of "school spirit" frequently ripples into the local community, particularly when it comes to rooting for the home sports teams!
4. Many small communities also have their own unique personalities. If you live in a housing development or a small town, the residents often create a sense of community by holding regular picnics, holiday celebrations

(such as a Halloween parade or an Easter egg hunt), garage sales, or neighborhood sports events. The purpose of these endeavors is to help give the residents the sense that where they live is more than just a house or apartment; it is also a place to belong.

**G**If a Spartan baby was born weak in some way, the infant was killed.

**H**The other two exceptionally large *poleis* were Syracuse and Acragas, both on the island of Sicily. It is important to note because only Greek adult males were considered citizens, the true population of a *polis*—including all of its women, children, slaves, and any foreigners—could be substantially larger than the number of citizens recorded.

From **?** **Near Eastern Versus Greek City-States** on page 44.

Answers will vary. The Greek *poleis* were similar to the ancient Near Eastern city-states in that they each worshipped one main pantheon, from which the individual cities chose a patron god or goddess to be the favored deity. Additionally, in most cases both the Greek *poleis* and the Near Eastern city-states were surrounded by a high, sturdy wall for protection. And although the *poleis* had their own unique personalities, they all spoke the same Greek language, just as the Sumerian city-states spoke the Sumerian language.

The Greek *poleis* were different in that, generally speaking, the citizens were permitted to have a say in the government and business of the *poleis*, whereas most of the Near Eastern city-states were under the rule of a king or emperor (who sometimes delegated power to one or more local governors). Additionally, each *polis* and its unique personality was an integral part of a Greek person's everyday life; this was not the case for many of the Near Eastern city-states, particularly the regions in Mesopotamia that adopted pieces of a variety of cultures as they became part of one kingdom or empire after another.

From **Talk It Over** on page 45.

Answers will vary. The following are examples of the advantages of being part of a *polis*.

1. Since the *polis* would be significantly larger than a small village, it could provide protection from invaders who might try to steal or destroy your crops. You would also benefit from having the army of your *polis* to protect you. You could take shelter within the strong city walls, and retreat to the high ground of the *acropolis* if the situation became especially dangerous and the enemy made it through the outer walls of the city.
2. It would be much easier for you to take part in the decisions and laws being made and to become a leader in your community. You would be able to more fully enjoy the rights and privileges of being a citizen.
3. If your own crops failed because of drought or bad weather, you could share in the harvest gathered from other fields within the *polis*. Since you and your fellow farmers would all be members of the same *polis*, you would not have to trade or barter for the food you needed. The *polis* system would ensure that every citizen received his or her share of food.
4. Living in a *polis* would provide opportunities to socialize with a large group of people with whom you could also conduct business, enjoy the weather, and celebrate special days and festivals.
5. If you were a specialist, you would have more opportunities. For instance, if you were a weaver, you could easily purchase the supplies you needed and then sell the finished bolts of cloth to the people of the *polis*. There would also be plenty of merchants to carry your finished goods to sell or trade in the neighboring *poleis* and beyond.
6. Living in a *polis* would give you a sense of identity and belonging. Even if you had lost your family to disease, illness, or war, you would be surrounded by your fellow citizens and neighbors, who would feel like family to you.
7. Although you might have to pay *polis* taxes, you would be able to enjoy the benefits, such as protection, that the taxes brought to the community.

The following are some examples of disadvantages of joining the *polis*.

1. The leaders of the *polis* might grow demanding and begin telling you what to do. A bad leader could become corrupt and abuse his power, or become greedy and take more than his share of the community's wealth. Living under a tyrant could end up being worse than having no ruler at all.



2. If a rival *polis* or other enemy threatened to invade, you might have to go to war to protect your *polis*.
3. If you had a good crop but other farmers had a bad harvest, you might need to share your crops with the other families in the *polis*, even if it meant that your family did not have quite enough food.
4. You might lose some of the freedom you had enjoyed when you lived on your own independent farm. You might be expected to perform tasks for the benefit of the *polis*, such as maintaining/repairing the city wall; constructing buildings, bridges, irrigation canals, or roads; serving on government councils, etc., which would mean you would have less time to work on your own farm or business or to spend with your own family.
5. Living in the *polis* would probably mean you would have to pay some type of taxes for the services and protection that the *polis* would provide, and the taxes could become excessive.

From **Write It Down** on page 46.

Answers will vary. The following are the most common aspects of the Greek “personality”:

- They were very social people.
- They liked doing things outside since their land generally had good weather.
- They divided the world into two kinds of people: Greeks (Hellenes) and barbarians (non-Greeks), or “us and them.”
- They thought a man was not free unless the government respected his rights as a citizen and he was allowed to have a say in his own government.
- They had a special connection to the other people in their *polis*, as though they were all members of an extended family.

### **Be Creative**

If you are using *Writing & Rhetoric Book 2: Narrative I*, lesson 5 features a retelling of the Greek myth of Athena and Poseidon, which tells the story of the creation of the olive tree and how Athena became the patron goddess of Athens. You could have students read the myth and then complete the Tell It Back, Talk About It, and/or Amplification exercises as written exercises or as in-class discussion.

From **Think About It** on page 47.

Answers will vary. Life in an *agoge* was generally difficult. You would be separated from your family at an early age and taken away to live among strangers. Instead of studying a variety of subjects, your lessons would be mostly focused on physical training, fighting skills, and building endurance. You would generally not be given enough food to eat, and you might not care for the food that was given to you. In order to truly fill your belly, you would have to commit the crime of stealing—and do so without being caught! You would only have one outfit to wear, no matter the weather, and have to go everywhere barefoot. Since your teachers would inspect and test you frequently, you would feel a great pressure to be “perfect” all the time, rather than being given the opportunity to practice, make mistakes, and learn from your errors. You would also often feel the need to compete with your fellow students.

On the other hand, although living in an *agoge* was demanding and physically exhausting to be sure, it would be an opportunity for you to learn the discipline of fighting and to fulfill a sense of duty to protect your homeland. Many students who choose to attend military schools today appreciate the level of rigor, focused training, and discipline that is instilled at such academies. Additionally, if you had an unpleasant home life (for instance, if your parents were poor or had died), you might appreciate the stability of knowing you had a place to sleep and at least some food to eat while being educated in a profession. And once you had finished with training, you would have a clear and valued place in society, along with a sense of real accomplishment. The *agoge* was a tough place to be, but it was a great place to be *from*!

**J**This exercise is an optional way to visualize the structure of the Greek *poleis*. Encourage students to research and find illustrations of an *agora* and/or an *acropolis* before beginning to make their model.

✎ To make a 3D model of a *polis*, students will need the following supplies:

- A sturdy material, such as cardboard, Styrofoam, or plywood, for the base. It may be helpful to have each student create his or her model in an unused pizza box or in the lid of a printer paper box so that students have a sturdy workspace, with raised edges, that will also be easy to carry.
- Modeling clay in multiple colors: green for grass, brown for dirt, blue for water, tan or white for buildings, etc.
- Twigs or Popsicle sticks to form the city walls
- Smooth stones to “pave” the *agora*

↳ You can find the chapter 1 quiz in appendix B.

## Spotlight on Virtue: Respect

*Discussion Question:* Respect is admiration, regard, and honor for others. We respect others when we treat them with dignity simply because they are human beings. Others might disagree with us, come from a different culture than we do, or not be as fortunate as we are, but we should act toward them with the same kindness that we would give to anyone else. In fact, showing honor and respect to others is an expression of another virtue: justice. Justice is giving to each person what he or she deserves or is due, and every human being deserves our honor and respect.

Whom should we respect? Of course, we should show respect to everyone, but specifically we should honor those who are older (and therefore more experienced and wiser) than we are and those who have authority over and responsibility for us. For example, parents, teachers, policemen, pastors, and older people who live in our neighborhoods fit into this category. We should also act kindly toward those who have limitations and handicaps. Even though someone may not be as intelligent, athletic, or as socially capable as we are, that person has his or her own important qualities, gifts, and talents. If we look for these qualities and appreciate them, we will see the person in a very different way and will be able to show him or her respect. And we should honor those who have lived in the past by remembering who they were and how they contributed to our family (grandparents, great-grandparents, and other relatives), our country (veterans who gave their lives for our nation), and our community (important local leaders) through their lives and their service. Can you think of specific ways in which the Greeks showed respect and honor to others? Can you think of some ways in which the Greeks failed to do this? How can you respect and honor other people in your life?

Answers will vary. The Greeks carried on the customs and practices that were handed down to them by previous generations. By doing so, the Greeks showed respect for their ancestors. They also shared the beliefs of the Greeks who had lived before them and admired their virtues. They taught their children to have that same honor and respect for the people who lived before them. And they kept many of the laws that were passed down to them because they believed the lawmakers who had created the laws did so out of wisdom and a desire to do what was best for the *poleis*.

One way in which the Greeks failed to show respect was in their treatment of slaves and women, whom they did not believe were worthy of having rights. By depriving slaves and women of political rights, the Greeks were treating these people as less than human.

There are many ways that we can respect people in our world. We should speak to our parents and other elders in honorable and respectful ways. We should obey those in authority over us with a cheerful spirit, not grudgingly. When we disagree with a teacher or another person of authority, we should always present our response or argument in an appropriate manner. We should look out for those who are physically or mentally weaker than we are. These people are often mistreated, and it is our responsibility to defend them from bullies. It is important to remember that all of our strengths and talents were given to us at birth, so there is no reason for us to belittle others who don't have these same gifts. Instead, we should look for ways to use our strengths and talents to help and benefit others.