

WORLD HISTORY
GREEKS AND ROMANS
GOLDEN AGE OF GREEK NOTES

GREEK MYTHOLOGY:

1. people believed that religion could explain:
 - Mysteries like thunder, rain, change of season, etc: in other words, the gods made all of this happen if they were pleased or displeased with the Greek people
 - How to make the gods happy so that the Greek people could gain long life, good fortune, abundant harvests, etc.
2. Greek gods were thought to have human characteristics and weaknesses. All gods and goddesses lived on top of Mount Olympus and Zeus was the king of all gods. The Greeks created myths, or traditional stories, about the deeds and misdeeds of the gods and goddesses.
3. Religious practices included:
 - Visits to oracles: these were temples where the gods and goddesses spoke to citizens through priests
 - Olympic Games: athletic contests in honor of the gods and goddesses

GREEK RULERS

1. Nobles: From 700-650 BC, Greece was ruled by nobles. They created city-states and controlled most of the land. People could rent land from them to farm or rent land to become merchants. Nobles encouraged all of discontented people to move to other places. This is how Greece formed colonies. Colonies allowed Greek culture to spread to other parts of the world and they promoted trade. Colonies imported/bought Greek grapes and olives and exported/sold grains and other goods to mainland Greece.
2. Tyrants: 650-500BC. Took power by force and wanted to improve the lives of the common people. Began to establish the idea of democracy (a government in which all people rule themselves).
3. Democratic governments: eventually tyrants lost power and city-states turned to democracy.

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ATHENS AND SPARTA (THE TWO MOST POWERFUL GREEK CITY-STATES)

1. Sparta

- Culture was based on a strong military.
- Citizens were native men, “neighbors” were free people who lived in Sparta but they were not natives of Sparta – they had moved there from other places, helots were slaves in Sparta.
- Ephors (military leaders) led the government of Sparta.
- The government/military regulated the lives of all Spartan citizens.
- Men were to serve in the military and women were to run households and have children. All boys went to begin military training at age 7 and they served in the military until they turned 60.
- As a result of this, Spartans sacrificed individual freedom for the good of the city-state and Sparta created nothing in terms of art, literature, etc.

2. Athens

- A city-state of sea traders.
- Citizens were native men, “metics” were free people who were not originally from Athens – usually they were merchants or artisans, and last Athens had slaves.
- Archons ruled Athens – they were elected by the Athenian people.
- Athens created much in the way of drama, literature, art, architecture, etc.

PERSIAN WARS

In 546BC, Persia attacked Greece and Greece and Persia then fought a series of wars until 479BC. Eventually Greece defeated Persia. This was important because it gave the Greeks a feeling of military superiority, it allowed them to create an empire because they took control of many Persian lands, and it united the Greeks in defense of their lands. Athens also emerged as a great military city-state after these wars because their army performed much better than any others in Greece (including the Spartans!).

DELIAN LEAGUE

140 Greek city-states united to form the Delian League. Their purpose was to stay united in order to ward off another Persian attack. Athens led the Delian League and each city-state contributed money, ships, weapons and soldiers to the Delian League.