



Geography Information

Background

In ancient times Greece was not one single country. It was a collection of separate cities where Greek-speaking people lived.

Ancient Greece consisted mainly of a mountainous **peninsula** sticking out into the Mediterranean Sea. It also included around 1,400 islands.

The geography of Ancient Greece directly influenced the Greek traditions and customs.

The Sea

Greece is surrounded by sea and the Ancient Greeks never travelled more than 85 miles to get to the coast. The sea therefore became an important mode of transport for the Greek people and the Greeks became very good sailors. The Greeks were also able to buy resources from other countries that were not available in Greece and bring them back easily by boat.

The Land

Mountains cover about three quarters of Greece, and in Ancient Greece, these mountains divided the land into different **regions**. The mountains made it difficult for the ancient Greeks to all be ruled by one government. Greece therefore developed small, independent communities in each **valley** and its surrounding mountains. These communities made their own rules and had their own government.

The mountains in Greece made land transport difficult and the roads were just dirt paths. For example Sparta was 60 miles from Olympia. In a car today this would take an hour to drive but it took them almost a week to travel this distance.

Most of the land in Greece was stony and only a small amount was suitable for farming. The Ancient Greeks could not therefore provide enough food for a large population and no more than a few million people lived in Ancient Greece. There are over 8 million people living in New York today and Ancient Greece was far larger. The Greeks also had a very simple diet of grains, grapes and olives and some meat, although it was also difficult to keep many animals on this stony land. Possibly because of this lack of farmland, Greeks were always looking for places to invade for their people to live.

The Climate

Greece has a varied **climate** with high average temperatures in summer and cool temperatures in winter. These moderate temperatures allowed Greeks to have a very outdoor life and they spent much leisure time at outdoor public events and even the government of the cities would meet outside.



Use a dictionary and write definitions of each of the words below.

Peninsula _____

Valley _____

Region _____

Climate _____

Geography Answer Sheet



Why did people in Ancient Greece use boats to transport people and goods?

How did the geography in Greece affect the government?

Why was it so slow and difficult to travel across land in Ancient Greece?

Why did people in Ancient Greece have a very limited diet?

Why were lots of activities in Ancient Greece held outside?
