



Year 4

Ancient Greece Reading Booklet (Autumn 2)

Lesson Series:

1. Greek Gods
2. Mythology
3. Arts and Architecture
4. Ancient Olympic Games
5. The Legacy of Ancient Greece

Name: _____

Class: _____

Lesson 1 - Greek Gods

The Ancient Greeks held polytheistic beliefs, meaning they worshipped many gods. The Ancient Greeks believed that their gods lived in a palace of clouds above the highest mountain in Greece, Mount Olympus.

The Greek Gods were powerful and controlled different aspects of life, including the weather, the sea, the sun, love, wisdom and the afterlife. Many of the Greek Gods feature in Greek mythology. Zeus was the King of the Greek Gods. He was the god of the sky, and he controlled the weather. When he was angry, he could throw lightning bolts. He was known for punishing people who lied or broke promises.



Lesson 2 - Mythology

The Ancient Greeks told many stories of adventurers, monsters, bravery and triumph of good over evil. These stories, or myths, were a way for the Ancient Greeks to explain the world around them, to understand the passing seasons, to explain where life had come from and where one goes after death.

Myths also gave moral advice on the best way to live. There is no single source for the Greek myths, they were passed on through an oral tradition, and it was only after many years that some were written down. The Greek Gods are central to many Greek myths, but the stories also contain human heroes too. Greek myths also feature creatures who are half-human, half-animal; centaurs (half man-half horse), sphinx (half woman-half lion), and harpies (half bird-half woman). Mythical monsters include: the Minotaur, cyclops, Gorgons (Medusa was a well-known Gorgon) and dragons.



Lesson 3 - Greek Arts and Architecture

Ancient Greek architecture has a unique style that is still copied today. Due to the warm climate in Greece, many of the buildings the Greeks made were designed for outdoor activities, for example, the open-air theatres. Temples were built at the highest point in cities, at the Acropolis.

The most well-known Greek temple is the Parthenon (a building) that was built on the Acropolis (the area) in Athens and is dedicated to the goddess Athena. The Parthenon is the largest and most lavish temple from Ancient Greek times. The Parthenon is made of white marble with a limestone base. The Parthenon has a rectangular base, and columns support its roof.

Written records show that there were many talented painters in Ancient Greece, however many of the paintings completed at this time were on wooden panels that have not survived. Art that has survived includes paintings on pottery and ceramics.



Lesson 4 - Ancient Olympic Games

The Olympic Games began around 2,700 years ago in Olympia as part of a religious festival to honour the God Zeus. The best Athletes from different city-states would gather to run, jump, throw weapons and race chariots. In addition to this, Greeks held contests in music and poetry. Only male athletes were able to compete. It was an opportunity for men from different city states to come together in peace and compete, rather than fight as enemies. The legacy of the Ancient Greek Olympic Games is evident today in our modern Olympics and Paralympics.



Lesson 5 - The Legacy of Ancient Greece

The legacy of Ancient Greece is woven through, and present in many areas of modern life around the world. The Ancient Romans took many ideas from the Ancient Greeks and spread them around their empire. Many Greek words are present in languages around the world. In many countries around the world, a form of democracy exists, first practised in Athens.

Democratic systems allow citizens to vote for their leaders. In modern times, an Olympic Games is held every four years, many sports included in these games are the same as, or linked to, the original Ancient Olympic Games. Javelin, running, discus, long jump, shot put, boxing and equestrian events were all part of the Ancient Olympic Games.

Artistic techniques used by the Ancient Greeks are still used today. The Ancient Greeks built huge outdoor theatres and began telling stories through drama performances. Comedy and tragedy are two types of Ancient Greek theatrical composition, and these are the basis for many films, tv shows and theatre performances today.

