

 This text is adapted from the original text on the BBC Primary History website (www.bbc.co.uk).

Growing Up in Ancient Greece

Sons and daughters

Many Greek parents wanted boy children. A son would look after his parents in old age. A daughter went away when she married and had to take a wedding gift or dowry. This could be expensive, if a family had lots of daughters.

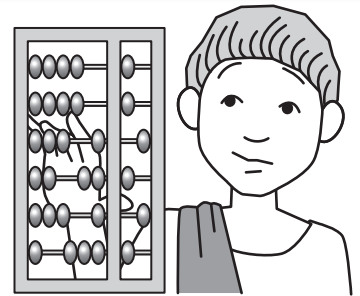
A father could decide whether or not the family kept a new baby. Unwanted or weak babies were sometimes left to die outdoors. Anyone finding an abandoned baby could adopt it and take it home, perhaps to raise it as a slave. If a couple were rich, they might hire a poor neighbour or a slave to nurse a new baby.

Going to school

At the age of three, children were given small jugs - a sign that babyhood was over. Boys started school at the age of seven. Girls were taught at home by their mothers. A few girls learned to read and write, but many did not. Schoolteachers needed payment, so poor boys did not get much education. A wealthy family would send a slave to walk to school with the boys. The slave would stay at school to keep an eye on them during lessons. Most Greek schools had fewer than twenty boys and classes were often held outdoors.

Glossary

archaeologist – someone who finds out about the lives of people from the distant past by finding and studying things they left behind



What did Greek children learn?

Girls learned housework, cooking and skills such as weaving at home. Boys at school learned reading, writing, arithmetic, music and poetry. Part of their lessons included learning stories and poems by heart. They wrote on wooden tablets covered with soft wax, using a pointed stick called a stylus. They used an abacus, with beads strung on wires or wooden rods, to help with maths.

Boys did athletics, to keep fit and prepare them for war as soldiers. They ran, jumped, wrestled and practised throwing a spear and a discus. They trained on a sports ground called a gymnasium.

Children's toys

We know about some Greek toys from pictures on pottery vases and from objects found by **archaeologists**. Children played with small pottery figures and dolls made of rags, wood, wax or clay - some dolls had moveable arms and legs. Other toys were rattles, hoops, yo-yos, and hobby horses (a 'pretend horse' made from a stick).

Children played with balls made from tied-up rags or a blown-up pig's bladder. The anklebones of sheep or goats made 'knucklebones' or five-stones. There are pictures of children with pets, such as dogs, geese and chickens.



This text is from *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, retold by Mary Sebag-Montefiore.

Oliver Twist

Oliver Twist was an orphan. He lived a miserable life in a workhouse before being placed with an undertaker where he was badly treated. He ran away and travelled to London...

At last he reached the city. His sore feet were bleeding and his clothes were worn to shreds. He watched people jostling around market stalls and shops, so busy that no one noticed him.

He collapsed on a cold doorstep, too exhausted to beg. Delicious smells floated by from a bakery. Oliver staggered up to the window, where shelves groaned with piles of freshly-made bread, cakes, buns and pies. He stared at them longingly.

A boy about the same age, with sharp eyes and a swaggering walk, strolled over. 'Hungry?' he asked.

'Very,' gasped Oliver.

To Oliver's astonishment, the boy pulled a wad of money out of his pocket.

'I'll get you something. Wait here.'

The boy returned with a bag crammed with hot meat pies.

'I'm Dodger,' said the boy, as Oliver gobbled the food. 'You?'

'Oliver Twist.'

'Got a bed tonight, Oliver?'

'No.'

'Got any family?'

'No one at all.'

'I know a kind gentleman who'll take you in. He won't want any rent, either.'

'That's generous!' exclaimed Oliver. He followed Dodger down a maze of narrow alleys, where foul smells filled the air and swarms of ragged urchins played in slimy, oozing gutters. Men and women staggered around, cursing loudly.

It looked so dirty, Oliver almost wished he hadn't come, but he had nowhere else to go. Finally, they reached a crumbling house. Dodger led him up a rickety staircase to a dark room.

Through a cloud of sizzling fumes, Oliver spied a gnarled old man. He was wearing a grubby blue coat and frying sausages over a fire.

Behind him, a group of boys danced and dodged, playing a game. The old man's coat had lots of pockets, stuffed with hankies, wallets and pens and the boys were trying to pull them out without him noticing.

'Hey, Fagin,' yelled Dodger. 'This is Oliver.'

'Hello, Oliver.' Fagin bared his teeth in a leering grin. 'Want to play?'

'Yes sir,' said Oliver politely. He waited until Fagin bent over the frying pan, crept up ... and delicately drew out a hanky.

'You're a natural!' chuckled Fagin. 'Come near the fire. Have a sausage!'



Name:	Class:	Date:
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Growing Up in Ancient Greece

1 Give **one** reason why many Greek parents wanted sons rather than daughters.

	AF2
1 mark	

2 In Ancient Greece which member of the family could decide whether to keep a new baby?

	AF2
1 mark	

3 Who was most likely to go to school in Ancient Greece? Tick the **best** answer.

- boys and girls aged seven and over
- boys and girls whose parents were rich
- boys whose parents were not poor
- girls whose parents were not poor

	AF3
1 mark	

4 Why do you think classes in Ancient Greek schools were often held outdoors? Tick the **best** answer.

- So that anyone could join in.
- Because schools didn't have enough money to build classrooms.
- Because the weather was warm and dry.
- Because classes were so large they needed lots of space.

	AF3
1 mark	

5 How do we know what sorts of toys children in Ancient Greece played with?

	AF2
1 mark	

	/ 5
Total for this page	

6 The writer has used subheadings. These are *Sons and daughters*, *Going to school*, *What did Greek children learn?* and *Children's toys*.

Why do you think the writer chose to use subheadings?

AF4
1 mark

7 Look at the section headed: *What did Greek children learn?*
What points is the writer trying to make about what children learned in Ancient Greece? Tick **three**.

Boys started school at the age of seven.

Many school subjects from Ancient Greece are still studied in schools today.

Girls learned different things to boys.

Ancient Greek children needed help with maths.

Some of the equipment used in Ancient Greek schools is no longer used in schools today.

AF6
1 mark

8 Where would you expect to find this text? Tick the **best** answer.

in a travel brochure

in a newspaper

in a magazine

in a history book

AF7
1 mark

9 Girls in Ancient Greece had a better life than boys.

Explain whether you think this is **true** or **not true**, using the text to support your answer.

AF3
2 marks

/ 10
Total for this test

Name:	Class:	Date:
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Oliver Twist

1 At the beginning of the passage Oliver is tired and hungry.

a) How can you tell he is tired? Give **one** way.

	AF2
1 mark	

b) How can you tell he is hungry? Give **one** way.

	AF2
1 mark	

2 Oliver and Dodger are about the same age. What is **different** about them?
Describe **two** things.

	AF3
1 mark	

3 Look at the paragraph beginning: *'That's generous!' exclaimed Oliver.*
Find and **copy a phrase** that means the same as 'children wearing tattered clothes'.

	AF2
1 mark	

	/ 4
Total for this page	

4 *Fagin bared his teeth in a leering grin.*

What impression does this sentence give of Fagin? Tick **one**.

He is friendly.

He is happy.

He is angry.

He is sly.

AF5
1 mark

5 Look at the last three lines of the text, from 'Yes sir,' to the end.
What do you find out about Oliver? Write **two** things.

1 _____

2 _____

AF2
1 mark

6 How might Oliver feel at the end of the passage? Why?

AF3
1 mark

7 What genre does this text belong to? Explain how you know, using the text to help you answer.

AF7
2 marks

8 The story is set in London in the 19th century. Think about the whole passage.
What impression of 19th century London is the writer trying to create?

AF6
1 mark

/ 10
Total for this test