

### Follow-up Activities

- In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Lord Thomas Elgin, the British Ambassador to Constantinople, ordered removed many ancient sculptures from Athens, including marble sculptures from the Parthenon. Since then, there has been an ongoing international debate about whether these pieces should be returned to Greece, with many believing that the "Elgin marbles" are a central symbol of Greece's identity and only make sense when they are together in the context of the Parthenon. Ask students to debate where they believe these great works of art belong. Who owns these great works of art? Do monuments such as the Parthenon belong to the whole world? Ample background information on the case of the Elgin marbles may be found at this web site:

[www.american.edu/TED/monument.htm](http://www.american.edu/TED/monument.htm)

- The battle of Marathon in 490 BCE during the Persian Wars is considered one of the most important battles in world history. Ask students to research this battle between the city-state of Athens and the Persian Empire, which many historians point to as a landmark and a starting point in the history of western civilization. Students may write biographical profiles and analyze the strategies of leaders associated with this conflict, such as Darius I and Miltiades, as well as summarize the long-range impact of the Athenian victory on world history. An account of the battle of Marathon from the Persian Wars by the ancient historian Herodotus may be found at the following web site:

[www.historyguide.org/ancient/marathon.html](http://www.historyguide.org/ancient/marathon.html)

- Pericles, a gifted Athenian politician, infused Athens with a fresh democratic spirit and was widely respected and trusted by Athenian citizens. Ask groups of students to read, analyze and appraise Pericles' "Funeral Oration" which is considered the classic description of Athenian ideology, capturing to a strong degree the patriotic sentiment felt by most Athenians. Groups should summarize the values that Pericles believed made Athens great as compared to its great rival Sparta and analyze how these Athenian ideals compare with modern political realities. The full text of Pericles' "Funeral Oration" from the *History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides may be found at this web site:

[www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/pericles-funeralspeech.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/pericles-funeralspeech.html)

- The ancient Greeks are famous for building temples and altars to honor their favorite gods. Ask students to research the temples that remain standing in the Mediterranean region, like the Acropolis in Athens and the Agrigento in Sicily. Using these as a reference, each student can design a temple to honor a particular god or goddess. As a follow-up, students may "sculpt" statues representing the symbolic qualities of significant Greek gods.

### Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [darkwing.uoregon.edu/~joelja/odyssey.html](http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~joelja/odyssey.html)  
The University of Oregon offers the full text of Homer's *The Odyssey*.
- <http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/GREECE/GREECE.HTM>  
Washington State University provides a wealth of information on the history of ancient Greece.
- [www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/greeks/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/greeks/)  
The BBC has an extensive site on ancient Greek history.

### Suggested Print Resources

- Beard, Mary. *Parthenon*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA; 2003.
- Martin, Thomas R. *Ancient Greece: From Prehistoric to Hellenistic Times*. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT; 2000.
- Nardo, Don. *The Decline and Fall of Ancient Greece*. Greenhaven Press, San Diego, CA; 2001.

#### TEACHER'S GUIDE

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# Wonders of the ANCIENT WORLD™

## ANCIENT GREECE

### Grades 7 & up

**W**onders of the Ancient World transports viewers to ancient civilizations of the Americas, Asia, Africa and Europe and provides a firsthand look at the magnificent achievements and contributions of a wide range of cultures. Through the study of ancient peoples, students will understand the diversity of the human experience—the contrasts between settled and nomadic lifestyles, the characteristics of different religions and belief systems and the development of large cities and powerful empires—which provides a solid basis for the understanding of civilization today.



## Program Overview

The ancient Greek period stretches from approximately 1200 BCE to 30 BCE—from the Dark Age that followed the destruction of Troy to the founding of the Greek city-states and to the Hellenistic period following the death of Alexander the Great. Greek achievements over the centuries in the areas of democracy, philosophy, art and science have shaped and formed the foundation of the Western world. Religion was an integral part of life in ancient Greece and is evident in Greek art, architecture, mythology and literature. While the surviving historical evidence of life in ancient Greece is thin, Greek myths and stories provide valuable insight into this fascinating time period in world history.

## Episode 1: Acropolis

The Acropolis is a flat-topped plateau in the heart of Athens where ancient Greek sculptors created beautiful statues and temples from white marble more than 2,000 years ago. Following the destruction of the Acropolis by the Persians in 480 BCE, the famed Athenian statesman Pericles contributed to its restoration. The project resulted in the creation of the Parthenon, the great Doric temple of Athena, which features many relief carvings, an elaborately decorated frieze and a magnificent gold and ivory statue of Athena. Over the centuries, Byzantines converted the temple to a Christian church and conquering Turks used it as a Muslim mosque. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, years after an explosion destroyed the Parthenon, British Lord Elgin stripped the monument of many of its sculptures and carvings, which are now on display at the British Museum. While some fallen pillars have been restored in the Parthenon over the years, this sacred icon of the Greek nation remains empty and roofless.

### Vocabulary

**Parthenon** — The classic Greek temple built on the Acropolis in Athens to honor the goddess Athena.

**Pericles** — The leader of Athens and statesman at the height of the city-state's power in the fifth century BCE. He introduced democratic reforms and built the Parthenon on the Acropolis.

**Phidias** — A famed Athenian sculptor and the artistic director for the building of the Parthenon in ancient Greece.

**Elgin marbles** — Ancient sculptures taken from the Parthenon to England by Lord Elgin in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Athena** — The favorite daughter of Zeus and the goddess of wisdom, justice, battle and crafts.

**Poseidon** — God of the sea and brother to Zeus and Hades. Sometimes violent, he causes great storms and earthquakes with his trident. Known as Neptune in Roman mythology.

**Zeus** — God of the sky and ruler of Olympus.

**Propylaea** — The ancient gateway to the Acropolis.

**Nike** — The Greek goddess of victory.

## Episode 2: Delphi

Founded in Mycenaean times, the sanctuary of the oracle at Delphi, said to be founded by Apollo, came to be regarded in ancient times as the center of the world. Included in the complex of buildings at the sacred site is the Temple of Apollo, where the Pythia, the priestess of Apollo, sat and foretold the future for men from all over the world. The oracle was given rich gifts to deliver prophecies on such matters as when to plant crops or when to declare war. Interpretations of the oracle's pronouncements were often discussed and the site became a meeting place and center of intellectual inquiry. The power of the oracle diminished in the fourth century CE with the rise of Christianity as the dominant religion in the region. Today, the visible ruins at Delphi belong to the last temple, which dates to the fourth century BCE.

### Vocabulary

**Apollo** — God of truth, music, light and medicine; son of Zeus and twin brother to Artemis.

**Pythia** — The priestess of Apollo's oracle in Delphi.

**oracle** — A prophet inspired by spiritual forces. Both Olympian gods and mortals used their help to learn human fate and destiny.

**Marathon** — A Greek town where the Athenians defeated the Persians in a battle that took place in 490 BCE.

## Episode 3: Delos

Delos is a largely uninhabited island in the Aegean Sea that was an ancient center of religious, political and commercial life, famous from the references to it in Homer's *Odyssey*. According to mythology, Delos was the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis and attracted pilgrims from all over Greece. In its time, Delos was also a prosperous trading port and commercial center. The island is considered to have the most varied collection of ruins in Greece, with its many temples and sanctuaries dedicated to gods such as Apollo, Artemis and Dionysus. Considered one of the most famous sites of ancient times, Delos has been a focus of archaeological excavation and study since 1873.

### Vocabulary

**Hera** — Wife and sister of Zeus and the most powerful goddess on Olympus.

**Artemis** — Goddess of animals, hunters, childbirth and the moon; Apollo's twin.

**Delian League** — A confederation of Greek states headquartered at Delos under the leadership of Athens beginning in 478 BCE.

**Dionysus** — The Greek god of wine and fertility.

**Hellenistic** — Of or related to Greek style and culture.

**Isis** — The ancient Egyptian goddess of fertility.

**Eros** — In Greek mythology, the god of love and son of Aphrodite.

## Episode 4: Epidaurus

The sanctuary at Epidaurus, dedicated to Asclepius, the god of medicine, was the most celebrated healing center of the ancient world. As a city-state, Epidaurus was strategically located and flourished as a port. It prospered from maintaining and providing medical services to the many pilgrims and patients who sought relief from various ailments. Epidaurus is also noted for its well-preserved 14,000-seat theater which today features an annual festival of ancient Greek dramas.

### Vocabulary

**Asclepius** — A Greek hero who was the son of Apollo and Coronis and who later became the Greek god of medicine and healing.

**abaton** — The place where ailing people slept and gods would administer medical treatment in ancient Greece.

**tholos** — A general term for a circular structure in ancient Greece.

## Follow-up Discussion Questions

- What statesman was instrumental in building the Parthenon? Analyze his motivations and speculate about the effects the development of this monument had on Athenian citizens.
- What is the "Propylae"? Evaluate and describe why this is considered one of the best architectural examples of the time period.
- Apollo was revered as a civilized god. How is Apollo depicted? What does he represent? Provide evidence to support the beliefs of the priests at Delphi about Apollo.
- Discuss the myth surrounding the birth of Apollo. Why was the land itself afraid to provide a shelter for Leto?
- What was the therapeutic role of the theater at Epidaurus? Describe how stage productions were intended to aid in the healing process.