Introduction to Ancient Greece

Learning Intentions

2. Describe some key events in the history of Ancient Greece.

3. Explain how Geography affected the development of Greek cities

4. Understand the rivalry between Athens and Sparta
Geography of Greece

- Greece is surrounded by the Mediterranean, Ionian and Aegean seas.
- It is a mountainous country.
- Small mountain ranges kept villages separated.
- A lot of Greek villages are isolated on the coasts, making the sea an important means of transport.
The impact of geography

• The brown areas are mountainous.

Write down the advantages and disadvantages of living in coastal settlements in a mountainous land.
The impact of geography

Advantages
• Encouraged the development of independent cities.
• Barrier for invaders.

Disadvantages
• Physically isolated communities?
Greek City-States – The Polis

• Known as a POLIS.
• Usually had significant locations (such as temples) built on a high rocky hill. The fortress was known as the ACROPOLIS (High Polis).
• The acropolis overlooked a town, farmlands and the marketplace in the open space below (agora).
• Poleis had very different cultures but agreed on one thing – all non-Greeks were Barbarians.

Thinking – can you think of any words which might have their origins in the Greek words POLIS and AGORA?
Shopping = Democracy?

• One of the purposes of the AGORA was to provide an open marketplace.
• Some historians argue that along with the exchange of olives and bread people also exchanged ideas.
• This may have helped democracy develop.
Athens – Birthplace of Democracy
Culture of the Athenian Polis

- First true democracy (Demos = People, Cracy = Rule).
- Accepting and welcoming of foreigners.
- Men expected to participate in politics.
- Rich cultural life.
- Female citizens had very little freedom.
Sparta – Famous for warrior culture.
Culture of the Spartan Polis

• Oligarchy – Rule by the few.
• Disciplined life with few luxuries.
• From the age of 7 males moved into military barracks.
• Suspicious of outsiders, did not like to be away from home.
• Strongest army in Ancient Greece.
Timeline of Greek history: Minoans

- Minoans
  - Arrived on the island of Crete in 2000 B.C.
  - Built a great civilization
  - Volcanic eruptions cause tidal waves

→ Destroys settlements and weakens Minoan civilization

Would this rock painting of a Minoan settlement be a primary or secondary source?

How could we find out for sure?

What PRIMARY sources could you locate to investigate the impact of the tidal waves?
Mycenaeans

- Warriors from the city of Mycenae conquered the rest of Greece in 1400 B.C.
  - Warlike people
  - Advanced civilisation for the time
  - Earthquakes and warfare destroyed many cities by 1200 B.C.
1200BC: The Dorians arrive

- The next wave of invaders were the Dorians.
- They originally came from the mountainous region in the north of Greece.
- They swept through Ancient Greece and eventually settled the city which would become known as Sparta.
Can anybody name this empire that rivalled Ancient Greece?

Clues.
2. The empire was to the east of Greece.
3. It was based roughly where modern day Iran is.
4. The empire shares a name with a relatively common household item.
5. The empire’s name begins with ‘P’.
6. It rhymes with TERSIAN!
Ancient Persia

• The Persian Empire was the largest and most powerful in the Ancient World.

• It was a monarchy with a large number of skilled officials who helped run the empire.

• The most famous cities in the empire were Persepolis and Babylon.

• The cities had modern irrigation systems, well-constructed roads and a postal service.
Persia: The Rival of Ancient Greece
Tensions in the region – why did Persia and Greece go to war?

1. Greeks travelled widely throughout the region and established colonies.
2. Several of these colonies were conquered by the Persians.
3. The Greeks who lived there resented being ruled by Persia.
4. They enlisted the help of mainland Greeks to stage a series of revolts.
5. The Persian emperors resented Greek interference and decided to teach the Greeks a lesson....
Persia versus Ancient Greece

Between 490BC and 479BC a Persian Army of approximately 300,000 men attempted to conquer the Greeks.

A union of Greek cities (led by Sparta and Athens) defeated the Persians at the battle of Thermopylae.

The Greeks numbered around 7000 soldiers.

The movie 300 is set in this war.

Do you know how the Greeks managed to stop the Persian’s advance? (the Greeks were vastly outnumbered).
And the winner is...Ancient Greece (with a little help from the landscape and weather)

To get to central Greece the Persians needed to pass through a narrow canyon. The canyon was at a place called Thermopylae. The Spartan King Leonidas placed 300 Spartans at the mouth of the canyon and delayed the Persian advance. Meanwhile, the Athenian navy destroyed the Persian fleet (with help from a storm)
The Rise of Athens

- After the defeat of Persia the city of Athens rose to dominate Greece.
- Its powerful navy allowed it to defend and extend its empire.
- It became considerably wealthier and more populated than Sparta.
- It became famous for being the home of Democracy and the philosopher Socrates.
Sparta: Military City-State

- Sparta began to fear the rising power of its rival city.
- 16 years after the defeat of the Persians Sparta experienced a devastating earthquake that killed 20,000 people.
- Sparta's concerns about the growing strength of Athens fuelled tensions that led to war!
Peloponnesian War

• The rivalry between Athens and Sparta led to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431BC (named after a mountain range).

• The naval might of Athens clashed with the formidable Spartan Army.
Immovable object, Irresistible force

- The Spartans sent an army to occupy the farmland around Athens.
- The Athenians used their navy to get supplies from their empire.
- The Spartan army could not be defeated on land by the Athenians.
- The Spartans had no navy to challenge the Athenians.
- The Athenians lacked an army to directly attack Sparta.
- The Spartans couldn’t keep their army permanently around Athens because they feared a slave revolt.
PELOPONNESIAN WAR
Walls Protecting the City and Port, 431 B.C.

SCALE OF MILES

0 1 2 3

Athens

North Long Wall

South Long Wall

Piraeus

Phalerum
Plague and defeat for Athens

• In 430BC a lethal plague spread through Athens. Its victims had a high fever and some resorted to diving into water supplies to cool down – spreading the plague further.

• After a lengthy siege Athens surrendered to the Spartan army in 404BC
Your tasks

• Follow the instructions on the **outline map** and label the places that are listed.
• Colour in the landscape and seas in an appropriate colour.
• Paste the map into your book.
• Underneath the map write 2-3 sentences explaining how the landscape affected the development of Greek city-states.

**Success Criteria = Use FACKTS!**