

# Life in Ancient Greece

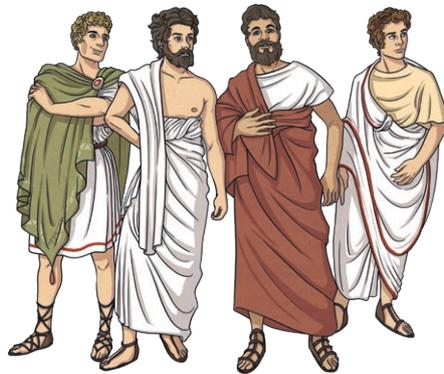
The ancient Greeks lived over 3000 years ago. Many of their ideas and inventions still influence how we live today.

## Society

There was not one country called 'ancient Greece'. Instead, Greece was made up of 'city states', each with its own government, army and laws. A city state included the city at the centre of it as well as the surrounding villages and countryside.



Important and powerful city states of ancient Greece included Athens, Sparta and Corinth. These city states often fought against each other.



## Education

From the ages of seven to fifteen, boys in most ancient Greek city states went to school, where they learnt to read and write. In school, boys mostly wrote using a **stylus** on a tablet. This was a wooden frame filled with beeswax. When they wanted to start again, they held the wax near to the fire so it melted away what they had written. They were also taught music, maths and physical skills, like using a bow and arrow and a sling, wrestling and swimming.



tablet and stylus

In most city states, girls did not attend school. Some were taught to read and write at home. In many cases, girls were only taught the skills they would need for looking after a family, such as cooking and making clothes.



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## The Olympic Games

The first recorded Games were in 776 BC, in the Greek city of Olympia, as part of a festival to honour the Greek god, Zeus. Events included boxing, wrestling, running, jumping, throwing and chariot



racing. The toughest running race was the 'hoplitodromos', in which competitors wore armour and carried a shield. Winners of the events were given a **wreath** of leaves and a hero's welcome back home.



## Did You Know...?

- Just before each Olympics, a **truce** was called to stop the city states fighting so that people could travel to the Games safely.
- Married women were not allowed to compete or even attend the Games.



theatre mask

## Greek Theatre

Going to the theatre was very popular in ancient Greek times. Theatres were generally built into a hillside with rows of stone benches in a semicircle, one above the other, and the stage at the bottom of the hill. Some theatres in large cities could hold more than 10 000 people! All of the actors were men and they wore costumes and masks to play different characters.

## Glossary

**stylus** – Rod made from wood or metal which was scraped into the wax of a tablet.

**truce** – Agreement between enemies to stop fighting or arguing for a while.

**wreath** – Arrangement of flowers or leaves in the shape of a ring.



