

Chapter Summary

The Ancient Greeks

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How can geography influence political organization?

How can cultural and political differences lead to conflict and change?

The geography of Greece, which is made up of a mountainous mainland and many islands, influenced its early settlements. The Mycenaean civilization developed on the Greek mainland. The Mycenaeans were great warriors, but they were eventually defeated, giving rise to the Dark Age, during which Homer wrote his epic poems of early Greece. Eventually, Greek communities organized themselves into city-states, each developing its own form of government. These city-states, the most powerful of which were Athens and Sparta, made war with each other and with other empires. Athens rose to the height of its power and cultural accomplishments during the Classical Age in Greece. Likewise, under Pericles, Athens saw the development of direct democracy, which formed the foundation of modern democratic government. Alexander the Great of Macedonia conquered the Greek city-states and combined their forces to move against Persia and expand the Greek empire. After his death, the Hellenistic cities that remained became centers of learning and art across Europe, North Africa, and Asia.

Poets and Heroes

- Greece's mountains contributed to independent communities, but its seas linked ancient Greeks to the rest of the world.
- The Mycenaean civilization was at its height from 1400 B.C. to 1200 B.C.
- During the Dark Age, Greeks colonized various islands and parts of Asia Minor.
- The works of the poet Homer told epic tales of early Greece.

The Greek City-States

- Greek colonization, due to overpopulation and the search for farmland, led to increased trade and industry and to the spread of ideas.
- Greek civilization organized around the polis, or city-state.
- The rule of tyrants in Greece was supported monetarily by the newly rich and militarily by hired soldiers.

- The Greek military city-state of Sparta was an oligarchy, but Athens eventually became a democracy.

Classical Greece

- Sparta, Athens, and other city-states fought Persia in a series of wars.
- Pericles created a direct democracy for the governance of Athens, which became the center of Greek culture.
- Disputes between Athens and Sparta led to the Peloponnesian War, thus ending the Classical Age.

Classical Greek Culture

- Greek religion focused on the will of gods and goddesses.
- Classical Greek architecture embodied ideals of reason, moderation, balance, and harmony; classical Greek sculpture focused on a standard of ideal beauty.

Chapter Summary *Cont.*

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The Ancient Greeks

- The study of history as a system of events began with the Greeks.
- Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle established the foundations of Western philosophy.
- Alexander the Great left a political, economic, and cultural legacy.
- Hellenistic kingdoms succeeded Alexander the Great's empire.
- Hellenistic cities became centers of culture, and advances in the sciences occurred.

Alexander and the Hellenistic Era

- Under Alexander the Great, the Macedonians and Greeks attacked the Persians and then established a large empire.