



The ancient Greek civilization was located in southwestern Europe, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Its physical features, such as mountains, seas and islands formed natural barriers between the Greek city states and forced the Greeks to settle along the coast. Ancient Greece is important historically because many things in culture today have been influenced by the ideas of the ancient Greek civilisation. The sculptures, architecture, philosophy, arts, politics and the scientific and mathematical ideas of ancient Greece are just some of the things that have had a significant impact on culture today. These things can be referred to as 'legacies' of ancient Greece.



civilisation	In this context, the word 'civilisation' is used to describe a human society with well-developed rules and government, often where technology and the arts are considered important.
democracy	Democracy is a system where the citizens of the country or state are involved in the way it is run.
culture	Culture refers to how people of a certain society 'do things'. This can include food, language, clothing, tools, music, arts, customs, beliefs, celebrations and religion.
empire	Empire is a term used to describe a group of territories ruled by one single ruler or state. Empires are built by countries that wish to control lands outside of their borders. Those lands can be close by or even thousands of miles away.
legacy	Legacies are things that live on after someone dies or after a civilisation or event ends.
primary source	A primary source is information and objects that come from the time being studied.
secondary source	A secondary source is an interpretation of information and objects which are produced after the time being studied.

Government

Any group of people living together in a country, state or local community has to live by certain rules. The system of rules and the people who make and administer them is known as a government.

- ◇ Democracy—a government ruled by the people. Officials and leaders were elected and all citizens had a say.
- ◇ Monarchy—a single ruler, like a king. In Athens, this ruler was called a Tyrant.
- ◇ Oligarchy—the government is ruled by a small group.

Over time, some city states, like Athens, changed governments.

Athenian Democracy

Around 508 BC, democracy was introduced to ancient Athens. Listening to the opinions of others and debating issues was an important part of the system. Athenians would then vote.

Significant Figure—Alexander the Great

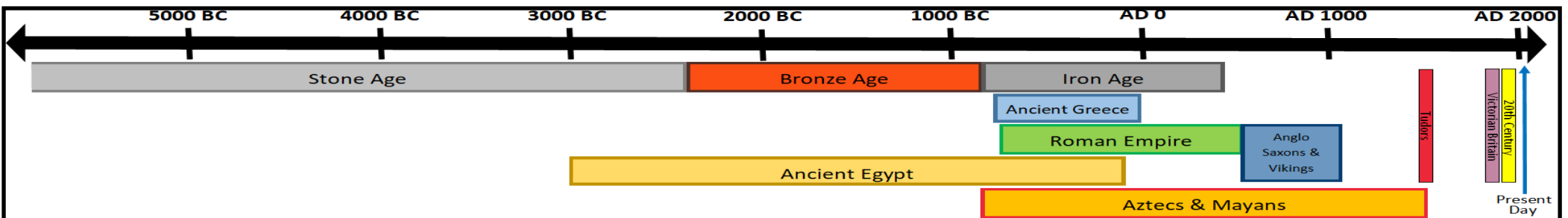


Alexander the Great, an ancient Greek king, conquered vast lands from Greece to India around 300 BCE. He spread Greek culture, ideas and ways of life throughout his empire. After his death, his empire split into smaller kingdoms ruled by his generals, known as the Hellenistic kingdoms. These kingdoms continued Alexander's legacy, blending Greek and local customs. The influence of Alexander's conquests and his policy of Hellenization shaped the ancient world for centuries.

Language

Ancient Greek and Latin are the most important ancient languages for speakers of English today. This is because a very large number of English words come from Greek and Latin.

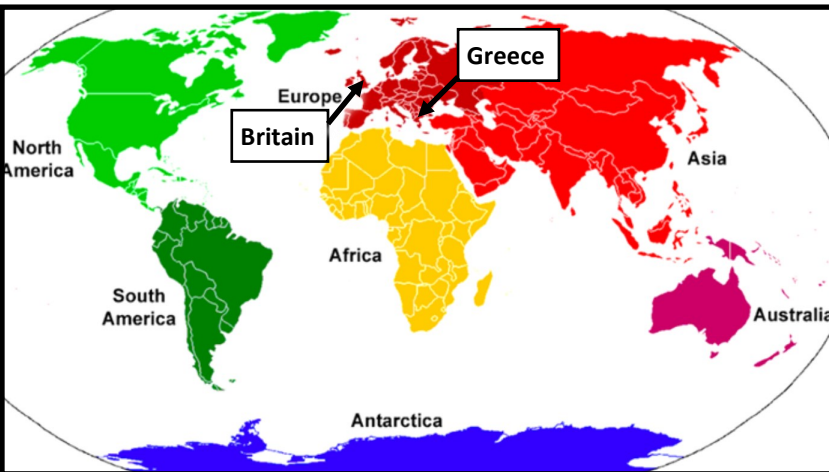
Because the Greeks became very powerful in the countries around the Mediterranean Sea, their language spread quickly. Alexander the Great even took it into Asia. Later, in the Roman world, children were taught Greek as a second language.





Trade

The ancient Greeks were active seafarers seeking opportunities for trade. Trading stations played an important role as the furthest outposts of Greek culture. Here, Greek goods, such as bronzes, silver and gold vessels, olive oil and textiles, were exchanged. The export of such classics as wine, olives and pottery helped to spread Greek culture to the wider world. Luxury items and exotic raw materials were imported and used by Greek craftsmen.



trade	the action of buying and selling goods and services
export	goods or services sold abroad
import	goods or services brought in from abroad



Ancient Greece - City States

Ancient Greece was not a country. Instead, it consisted of city states. Important city states of ancient Greece included Athens, Corinth and Sparta. Each city state (or polis), developed its own government, laws and customs. These city states existed for most of the ancient Greek period. However, near the end of this period, King Philip II of Macedonia ruled over all of ancient Greece. Later, his son—Alexander the Great—took over the empire along with other lands that he conquered.

Athenians and Spartans

The Athenians were skilled sailors and intellectuals, valuing democracy and culture. Their army focused on naval power and citizen-soldiers, known as hoplites. Spartans, on the other hand, prioritised physical fighting, training their citizens from childhood. Their army was known for discipline and dominance in land battles, with the iconic Spartan hoplites forming the backbone. While Athenians emphasized creativity and change. Spartans were passionate about tradition and the reputation of their army.

The Olympic Games

The Olympic Games originated in ancient Greece around the 8th century BCE as a celebration dedicated to the gods. Held in Olympia, they honored Zeus every four years and included athletic competitions, religious rituals and cultural events. These games aimed to promote physical strength and peace amongst Greek city-states. Over time, they evolved into a global sporting event, representing international togetherness and excellence.