Ancient Greece and Western Civilization
What is Western Civilization?

- Life focuses on individuals rather than groups of people or society as a whole
- Views the world as governed by rules which can be understood and controlled (science and defined religious powers like Gods)
- Looks forward to the future rather than dwelling on the glories of the past
- Empowers people rather than rulers
Western Civilization

- The traditions of Ancient Greece are seen as the beginnings of Western Civilization since it is the earliest example of western culture.

- The Greeks were the first to place human beings at the Center of the Universe rather than Gods or Rulers.

- Much of our culture is based on their ideas.
Aegean Basin

- Minoan, Mycenaean, and later Greek Civilization all started in an area called the **Aegean Basin**

- Which included the **Peloponnesian Peninsula** and the surrounding lands and islands of the **Aegean Sea**
Prelude to Greek Civilization

Preceding the Greeks in the Aegean Basin were the **Minoan** and **Mycenaean** civilizations.

- These 2 civilizations helped to shape what we would later recognize as Greek Civilization.
The Minoan civilization was developing on the island of Crete while Egypt and Mesopotamia were flourishing. The civilization was named after the legendary King Minos, who was supposedly a son of Zeus.
Religion

Most Minoan life is revealed through its religious practices and art.

- They were polytheistic with many gods including bulls, snakes, men, and women.

- They may have been a *Matriarchal Society* based around the Mother.
Mother Goddesses
Sophisticated Palace Architecture

- A complete plumbing and drainage system

- Multi-level structure with complex layout of rooms and passageways

- Beautiful friezes (large horizontal paintings often found on walls) and frescoes (paintings done in wet plaster or cement)

- No walls protecting the palaces of Minos
The Labyrinth

- The story is told of a great Labyrinth or maze built beneath the palace at Knossos to house the fearsome Minotaur.
Cultural Beliefs & Influences

- Minoan beliefs influenced Greek thinking, language, social organization and economic pursuits

  - ie: Crete is traditionally believed to be the place where Zeus was born

- The Minoan Culture is where Greek Culture gets its beginnings
Decline of Civilization

- Minoan trade dominated the eastern Mediterranean until about 1380 BCE

- Something happened, maybe a volcanic eruption or other natural disaster

- Some believe that invasions from the Greek mainland were more likely the cause of their decline

- Until Minoan civilization more or less disappears after 1000 BCE
Beginnings: Mycenaean Civilization
1900—1100 BC

Minoan and Mycenaean Civilizations

- Mycenae
- Knossos
- Crete

- Minoan civilization, c. 2000–1400 BC
- Mycenaean civilization, c. 1250 BC
Mycenaean's

- This civilization was named after the fortress city, **Mycenae**.
- It was located in the lower rugged region of the Greek peninsula, also called **The Peloponnesus**.
- Mycenaean's were a war-like people.
- They arrived in Greece about 1900 BC and by 1500 ruled the entire peninsula.
Mycenae
Lion’s Gate
Mycenaean religion

- It was a mixture of Minoan influences and local deities or Gods. There were two types of deities...

  1. Some were nature Gods or spirits.

  2. Others were the predecessors of Olympian gods and goddesses worshipped by later Greeks and many even had the same names.
The Trojan War

- It was the Mycenaeans who tried to topple the City State of Troy.
The Trojan War

- The long siege of Troy weakened Mycenaean Civilization and inspired Homer’s epic poems The *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

- **The Iliad** - The story of Trojan War written hundreds of years after the war supposedly happened

- **The Odyssey** - The sequel to the Iliad where the hero *Odysseus* has many adventures on his way home from the war

- The Mycenaeans were the primary inspiration for much of later Greek Culture
A group of people called the **Dorians** invaded Mycenaean civilization. Then came a 300 year period called the **Greek Dark Ages** in which

- Life became more **agrarian** (relied on farming)

- Educational and technological advances slowed in favor of simply surviving

  *Eventually*

- Bronze gave way to the stronger metal iron

- A new Alphabet was adopted, **The Phoenician alphabet**, which would spread all across the Aegean Basin
Greek Alphabet

Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ
Alpha (αι-φα) Beta (bay-tah) Gamma (gam-ah) Delta (del-ta) Epsilon (ep-si-lon) Zeta (zay-tah)

Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ
Eta (ay-tah) Theta (thay-tah) Iota (eye-o-tah) Kappa (kap-pah) Lambda (lamb-da-h) Mu (mew)

Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ
Nu (nue) Xi (zie) Omicron (om-e-cron) Pi (pie) Rho (roe) Sigma (sig-mah)

Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω
Tau (taw) Upsilon (up-si-lon) Phi (fie) Chi (kie) Psi (sigh) Omega (oh-may-gah)
<table>
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<th>Greek Letter</th>
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The Archaic Greek Age: 800—479 BC

- The Greek culture truly begins as they emerged from the Dark Age with a common
  - language
  - heroic stories
  - myths
  - religious practices
  - trade interests

- This time period is known as Archaic Greece or old Greece
The Archaic Greek Age: 800—479 BC

- The Greeks claimed a common mythical parent, the God Hellen.

- He fathered three sons, who were supposedly the founders of the 4 major Greek tribes.

- Because of this the Greek people call their country and people the Hellas or Hellenistic people.
The Polis

- During the Archaic age in Greece people began moving from small farms to cities.
- These cities became the center of government, trade, and farming for the area making them City-States (cities which rule themselves and surrounding areas).
- They called these City-States the Polis (which literally means “The City”).
The Polis

- The Polis was typically a fortified or walled city built for defensive purposes on top of a hill.

- The buildings at the top of the Polis were called the Acropolis, which means the higher city.

- The Acropolis was usually a fortified or protected area.
Greek Religion

Olympians - The primary Gods of the Greeks, so called because they supposedly lived atop Mount Olympus.
Greek Religion

Zeus - King of the Olympians, God of thunder and the sky
Hera - Queen of the Olympians, goddess of marriage and family
Poseidon - Brother of Zeus, God of the Seas
Hades - Younger Brother of Zeus, God of the Underworld
Ares - Son of Zeus, God of War
Athena - Daughter of Zeus, Goddess of Wisdom
Sparta

Sparta was a powerful polis located on the South Eastern edge of the Peloponnesus.

They were governed by a group of 30 men made up of **2 Kings** (hereditary rulers) and a group of **28 elders** (60 year olds elected by the popular shout of the citizens) who ruled for life.

This type of government is called an **Oligarchy** which means rule by an elite few.
Spartan Citizenship

- There were three classes of people in Sparta
  - **Citizens** - Must be of Spartan descent and have been educated in the Agoge (Spartan military training)
  - **Non-Citizens** - Free Greek people from different polis’
  - **Slaves** - People conquered by the Spartans. The largest group of slaves was called the *Helots*
The Spartans were famous for their military prowess.

Spartan boys left home at 7 to begin their military education.

Life was hard and harsh for them so they would learn to be tough and cunning.
Interesting Differences

- Sparta needed healthy male warriors, so childbearing women were given more freedoms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spartan women</th>
<th>Athenian women</th>
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<tr>
<td>Choral singing</td>
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<td>Dancing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nude athletics w/men</td>
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</table>

Athenian women pursued respectability as an ideal.
Another Powerful, yet very different polis in ancient Greece was called Athens.

It was located on the eastern edge of the Peloponnesus near the Aegean Sea.

The people of Athens would become the most powerful people in all of Greece.
Each Greek Polis had a God or Goddess that was responsible for it or was that cities Patron

The Patron Goddess of Athens was Athena the Goddess of Wisdom.
Athenian Education

Girls stayed at home and were taught to be good wives and mothers.

Boys from 7-18 attended school

- they memorized poetry
- learned to play the lyre.
- They learned drama, public speaking, reading, writing, math

At 18, they were required to attend two years of military school.
Democracy

- The citizens of Athens all took part in governing the Polis which made Athens the World’s First Democracy

Demos = People

Cracy = Government or Rule
Democracy

- A **democracy** is when every citizen takes part in the governing of the state.

- There are 2 types of democracy:
  - **Direct Democracy** - the people are directly involved with making every decision.
  - **Representative Democracy** - the people elect representatives to make decisions for them also known as a Republic.

- Athens used a Direct Democracy. Every Citizen was involved in governing the city state.
The traditions of Athens form the basis for much of later Western Civilization

- Self-Government
- Used philosophy to explain the world
- Viewed common men as the center of the Universe

The development of these traditions was thanks, in part, to Pericles.

- An important Athenian statesman
- He helped moved Athens away from a monarchy and aristocracy and towards democracy
Greek Golden Age

- The common threat of Persian invasion caused the Greek people to unite

- As a result, they created a league of nations called the **Delian League**

- Athens was the center of this league which allowed them to establish an “**Athenian Empire**” of influence in Greece
Greek Philosophy

- Philosophy is thinking about thinking. It’s studying the world and everything in it to explain why we believe what we believe.

- The word philosophy means “Love of Wisdom” in Greek.

- Much of western philosophy comes from the Ancient Greek Philosophers.
Greek Philosophy

- Athens was the center of Greek Philosophy.
- People came from all over the world to learn and teach in Athens.
- The Ancient Greeks were the first to think of normal men as the center of the universe rather than gods or kings.
Socrates

- The most famous Athenian Philosopher was Socrates.

- He answered questions about life by using the Socratic Method of questioning.
Socratic Method

Teaching through step-by-step questions that are designed to lead the student to the “truth”

Socrates was a Greek philosopher who wanted people to question and think for themselves.

Athenians were threatened by his ideas, so he was tried and put to death for corrupting the youth.
Plato

- Socrates best student was **Plato**
- He popularized the ideas Socrates taught him and opened the first institute of higher learning in the Western World
What do you think the cave is a representation of?

What do you suppose Plato is trying to say with this allegory?
Aristotle

- **Aristotle** was the student of Plato
- He created the scientific method, an organized way of figuring things out that is still used today.
  - Ask a question
  - Research answers
  - Form a hypothesis
  - Test your hypothesis
  - Form a conclusion
Aristotle was in turn the teacher of another famous Greek, Alexander of Macedonia later to be known as Alexander the Great.
Alexander the Great

356-323 B.C.E.
Phillip of Macedonia

- The father of Alexander the Great, Philip II of Macedonia united nearly all of Greece under his rule in 336 B.C.E.

- He was planning to conquer Persia in retribution for the Persian invasions but was assassinated before he could
Alexander’s Conquest

- Alexander picks up right where his father left off and Conquered all of Persia, Egypt, and even large areas of the Indian Sub Continent.
Greek Military Strategy

Alexander and the Greeks were so successful because no one could defeat their fighting style known as the Phalanx.

In the **Phalanx** a mass of soldiers heavily armored and caring shields and 18 ft spears would march at and overwhelm their opponents.
The Macedonian phalanx, here shown in its fighting formation of 256 men, the syntagma.
Hellenization

The areas under Alexander’s control began adopting Greek ideas, and customs as Greek people and goods spread throughout. This led to a general Hellenization of much of the old world, meaning they were becoming more like the Hellenistic people in Greece.

As a result, we refer to this time period as the Hellenistic era.
The Breakup of Alexander’s Empire

Division of Alexander's Empire, 303 B.C.

- Kingdom of Lysimachus
- Kingdom of Cassander
- Kingdom of Antigonus
- Kingdom of Ptolemy
- Kingdom of Seleucus

Map showing the division of Alexander's empire into various kingdoms.