Geography of GREEK CIVILIZATION
Topics

- **Historical Periods**: Neolithic Era, First Civilization on Crete, Archaic Period on Greek Mainland with warrior Mycenaeans dominating, Greek Dark Ages, Classical Period, Hellenistic Age of Alexander’s Empire

- **Direct Democracy in Athens**

- **Greek Women**

- **Greek Philosophy**

- **Greek Contributions to Humankind**
NEOLITHIC PERIOD IN GREECE
Neolithic people on Mainland

- **Sesklo village settlements** of farmers raising wheat and barley, keeping sheep, goats, and pigs, and making pottery, textiles, and many fertility figurines
- **Pelasgians** (mentioned by Homer as living in Thrace and being good spearsmen; mentioned by Hesiod as living in Thessaly north of Athens)
- **Hellenes** (had Indo-European influences)
Minoan Civilization on Crete
2200-1150 BC
Signs of Early Civilization of Crete

- Cities
- Monarchy
- Complex manufacturing using metals
- Complex trade
- Complex religious beliefs
- Monumental architecture
- Social classes
- No sign of patriarchy, warfare, military, or slavery
Two written languages of early civilization of Crete, Linear A and Linear B. A has not been deciphered, B was taken by Mycenaens who wrote their oral language down in it, so it became the earliest written language of Greece.
Fall of Minoan Civilization

• From 2,000-1645 BCE Crete was a major center of east-west trade as well as a manufacturing center. As far away as European and Baltic regions were connected to Eastern Mediterranean trade. With wealth from trade, Crete’s people built paved roads, aqueducts, sewers and irrigation systems.

• This success was formerly thought to have ended with invasions of Mycenaeans from the mainland, but now scholars think it ended with one of the largest volcanic eruptions in recorded history on the island of Santorini (Thera) north of Crete in 1645 BCE.
Migrations and invasions of two waves of Indo-Europeans to the Greek mainland

Mycenaeans (Achaens) 2,000 BCE
Dorians and Ionians 1,000 BCE
Greek Dark Ages -1100-800 BCE

Greek sources say Dorians (later Spartans) invaded with iron weapons and tools causing great devastation. Other scholars say earthquakes may have caused Dark Ages.

In either case, cities were destroyed, trade interrupted, art and writing forgotten and lost, and people reverted to living on subsistence farming.
Recovery from Dark Ages
800-500 BCE

- Greeks rebuilt with a clean slate
- City States (polis) arose
- Return of Linear B now with Phoenician alphabet and Greeks added letters for vowel sounds
- Homer and Hesiod wrote during this period, however their stories described the Mycenaean period
HOMER’S ILIAD AND ODYSSEY

Homer wrote using metaphors and literary conventions from oral traditions which preceded him. His works are full of “the pity of war”. The first line of the Iliad is as follows: “The wrath of Achilles is my theme, that fatal wrath which, in fulfillment of the will of Zeus, brought the Achaeans so much suffering and sent the gallant souls of many noblemen to their deaths, leaving their bodies as carrion for the dogs and passing birds. “

Hector, Prince of Troy, fights, not because he’s a fool rushing into battle, but because he is a prince bound by a code of honor which to warrior aristocrats meant more than life itself. The Homeric warrior has a passionate desire to assert himself, to demonstrate his excellence and worth, and because he is bound by a code of honor.

In the last line of the Iliad the god Apollo condemns Achilles for dragging Hector’s dead body around the camp at the back of his chariot. “For look he is outraging the mute earth in his fury.” Homer is citing a Greek belief that in death people no longer belong to their city or to their family, they belong to the earth. In not relinquishing Hector to the earth, Achilles goes beyond the warrior code to commit an outrage which was violence. Thus Achilles is violating the prevailing war code and will destroy the very value system on which he himself depends for the meaning of his own life and honor. In the end, violence begets more violence and Apollo says “For Achilles himself cannot but lose by doing this.”
Plaque showing the return of Odysseus
“Few men can keep alive through surf, to crawl on kindly beaches in joy knowing the abyss behind. So they came into that bed so steadfast opening glad arms to one another”

Odysseus’ Return
Odyssey
CLASSICAL PERIOD
500 – 300 BC

Began with Persian invasions of Greece.

Persian Emperors Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes tried to extend the Persian Empire
Persian Empire

- A strong, centralized, well-run empire
- Magnificent capital at Persepolis
- 1,700 miles of roads by 400 BC
- Canal linked Nile River to Red Sea
- Imperial spies were “eyes and ears of the king”
- Of Persian messengers, Herodotus wrote, “Neither snow, nor rain, heat or darkness of night prevents them from accomplishing their task”
• Followed Zoroastrian religion with Ahura Mazda as their God of Light
• Trade flourished
• Empire founded and conquered by Cyrus the Great who started the Achaemenid Dynasty
• Cyrus desired to conquer Europe because “its trees were so fine only a king should possess them” and because he wanted tribute from subject lands.
Persian Wars against Greeks

- Darius I invaded Greece with a Persian fleet of 600 ships and 20,000 soldiers but was defeated by 10,000 Greek hoplite infantry soldiers at Marathon
- Darius’ son Xerxes resumed attacks on Greece, he burned and captured Athens, but Athenians defeated Persians at sea
- Xerxes defeated the Spartans under Leonidas at Thermopylae
• Two Greek victories at Salamis (sea) and Plataea (land) drove Persians out.

• Herodotus, writing about the Persian wars, said “These researches were set down that the deeds of men may not be forgotten and that the great and noble actions of Greeks and Asiatics may not lose their fame, especially the causes of war between them.”
CLASSICAL PERIOD
500-300 BC

Periclean Athens, Democracy, Philosophy, Drama, Architecture, Art, Delian League, Peloponnesian Wars
Pericles
Sophocles

Aeschylus

Euripides
Quotes by Greek Philosophers

• Know Thyself. Socrates

• Self Conquest is the greatest of victories. Plato

• A sound mind in a sound body. Plato

• States are as men are, they arise out of human character. Plato

• The life unexamined is not worth living. Socrates

• I am not a citizen of Athens, nor of Greece, but of the whole world. Socrates
Socrates’ Values

• Courage consists of overcoming fears
• We need not fear poverty, sickness, suffering or even death, these will not make us morally worse
• The only thing we need to fear is moral evil
• Moral evil consists of doing injustice to others
• People are naturally virtuous and virtue makes the soul healthy. If the soul is healthy, the person is happy. Vice is a sign of ignorance.
• Socrates believed a leader could not get by on eloquence alone; it would be the force of truth that would have meaning and sway people.

• Socrates made enemies talking about justice and goodness.

• He also questioned the Athenians’ belief that the strong will dominate the weak and might makes right.

• He ended up making certain Athenian leaders look bad because they were ignorant and prone to vice.
Trial of Socrates

- Jurors had to be 30 years or older
- Each year in Athens, 6,000 men became jurors
- In sensational trials hundreds, even thousands, of jurors showed up
- Jurors voted twice, on guilt and on the sentence. Jurors were paid for voting.
- In Socrates trial in 399 BCE, 500 jurors voted, 280-220 voted him guilty, 360 voted for a sentence of death, 140 for a fine
Ballot disks
Ruins of jail where Socrates was imprisoned
Socrates’ Death
**Parthenon.** The greatest monument of antiquity, dedicated to the goddess Athena, took ten years to build and was finished at 438 BC.

It took *Pheidias* another five years to complete the sculptures and the relieves of pediments and metopes (432 BC).

Made totally from pentelic marble, by *Iktinous* and *Kallikrates* at the command of Perikles, the temple is 227 feet long, 101 wide and has 65 feet height.
The East pediment was representing the birth of the goddess Athena from the head of Zeus.
"... Wait a moment while I fetch you some mellow wine, so that you may first make a libation to Zeus and the other immortals and then, if you like, enjoy a drink yourself. Wine is a great comfort to a weary man ..." [Hecabe 1 to Hector 1. Homer, Iliad 6.260]

"O Cyclops, son of the sea-god, come see what kind of divine drink this is that Greece provides from its vines, the gleaming cup of Dionysus." [Odysseus to Polyphemus 2. Euripides, Cyclops 415]

Polyphemus 2: Who is this Dionysus? Is he worshipped as a god?
Odysseus: Yes, the best source of joy in life for mortals.
[Euripides, Cyclops 521]

"This is the effect of your wine—for wine is a crazy thing. It sets the wisest man singing and giggling like a girl; it lures him on to dance and it makes him blurt out what were better left unsaid." [Odysseus to Eumaeus 1. Homer, Odyssey 14.464]
DIONYSOS AND MAENADS
Greek Olympics
HELLENISTIC PERIOD
Greek Contributions to Humankind
MATHEMATICS
Ptolemy, Cartographer and Astronomer of Alexandria, 87-165 AD, Geocentric view of heavens
To Anaktoria, A Soldier’s Wife in Lydia

Some say cavalry and some would claim
infantry or a fleet of long oars
is the supreme sight on the black earth
I say it is

the girl you love. And easily proved.
Did not Helen, who was queen of mortal beauty
become the scourge of Trojan honor? Haunted by love
She forgot kinsmen, her own dear child and
wandered off, oh weak and fitful

Women bending before any man:
so Anaktoria, although you are far,
Do not forget your loving friends,
I for one

Would rather listen to your soft step
and see your radiant face – than watch
all the dazzling horsemen and armored
hoplites of Lydia