



**CALIFORNIA CONTENT
STANDARD 6.4**

Ancient Greece

Overall Objective: Analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilization of Ancient Greece.

Read the summary below to answer questions on the next page.

Geography of Ancient Greece

- Rocky land divided by high mountains and deep valleys.
- The geography led to the rise of separate **city-states** rather than one united country.
- Aegean and Ionian Seas were links that united ancient Greeks for trade.

Greek City-States (700 B.C.–338 B.C.)

- City-states shared language and beliefs but had different forms of government.
- By 700 B.C., many were ruled by an **aristocracy**, or group of nobles, rather than by a single monarch.
- Some were controlled by **oligarchies**, in which a group of powerful people ruled.
- Strong individuals called **tyrants** sometimes seized control, supported by common people.

Athens—A Limited Democracy

- **Solon** outlawed debt slavery and opened the assembly to all Athenian citizens.
- **Cleisthenes** allowed all citizens to submit laws to the assembly for debate.
- **Pericles** paid public officials so that both rich and poor men could take the positions if elected.
- Limited democracy was established in which all free adult male landowners were citizens.
- All citizens participated directly in the government rather than electing representatives.

Sparta—A Military State

- Boys trained to be soldiers. Male citizens entered the army at age 20 and served until they were 60.
- Enslaved people did labor to allow male citizens to be full-time soldiers.
- Two kings ruled.
- All citizens were part of the assembly.

Persian Wars, 480 B.C.

Sparta, Athens, and other city-states united against a common foe—the Persians.

Peloponnesian War, 431 B.C.

Under Pericles, Athens began to take over neighboring city-states. Sparta declared war on Athens. Athens surrendered 27 years later.

Age of Alexander (338 B.C.–330 B.C.)

- Philip of Macedon conquered the Greek city-states.
- Philip's son, Alexander, expanded conquests east as far away as India and Egypt.
- Alexander's armies spread Greek culture wherever they went.
- Greek culture blended with those of Persia, Egypt, and India to form the Hellenistic culture.

Literature of Ancient Greece

- Greek **mythology** explained the world around them and told stories about Greek gods and goddesses.
- Greeks composed **epic poems**, such as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, about their heroes.
- **Aesop** and others wrote fables, stories involving animals that teach a moral lesson.

