

Ancient Greeks



As the Learning Team are working from home and don't have access to our actual handling artefacts, we have created a series of learning posts/pages based on our schools Ancients Greeks loans box resources and the objects in our Ancient Lives Gallery. We've also put together a brief Greek history timeline.

As well as the information here there maybe a short video to go with some objects, available on the website and linked to our social media posts and on YouTube.

Our information is short and easy to read - but remember this is about interesting you in the topic, it's not the whole history of the Ancient Greeks!



Miniature Trojan helmet (replica)

This is a model of a Trojan helmet. The helmet was made of bronze and protected the warrior's face. Soldiers would try to jab their spears downwards at their opponent's face and throat, which is why helmets were designed with small openings for the eyes and large plates covered the cheeks, forehead and nose. Some helmets were adorned with a crest made from horsehair and made the soldier appear taller and more fearsome.



Miniature ancient Greek armour set

Hoplites - Greek soldiers, usually had to pay for their armour. For the wealthiest, this consisted of: a metal helmet, breast plate, greaves (leg guards) and strips of metal to protect the thighs. The body armour was called the *linothorax*. Soldiers would have carried a long spear for stabbing (not throwing), a short sword and a heavy, round shield made from metal and wood. The shield was called an *aspis* or *hoplon* and would have been decorated with the soldier's family symbol or city. A tunic would have been worn underneath the armour, decorated with military colours.



Boy's leather sandals

These are replica leather sandals. They have a thick wooden sole; the metal nails help give the sandal better grip when walking on soft, muddy ground and make the sandal more durable. Sometimes, shoemakers arranged the nails so that they spelt out the owner's name. The leather straps are pulled together and tied so that the foot is covered. Most of the time, children would have gone barefoot.



Oil lamp

This is a replica clay oil lamp. Ancient Greeks would use oil lamps to give a continuous source of light when it was dark at night. A short wick, made from linen or plant fibres, would be placed inside the lamp and then it would be filled with vegetable oil. The nozzle at the front of the lamp kept the wick in place and helped to control the flame.



Wooden tablet and stylus

In ancient Greece, children learned how to write using a wooden tablet covered in layers of wax and a wooden pen called a *stylus*. The stylus had a sharp end that they would press into the wax to make marks, and a flat end that could be used to rub out any mistakes. When the wax had been worn away after a lot of use, it could be melted and reapplied.



Baby feeder—clay

This is a clay baby feeder from 800-700BC and is on display in the gallery. It would have been used to feed babies through the narrow spout. The decoration is painted on with black gloss. It would have been filled with milk for a baby to drink from until they learned to drink from a cup.

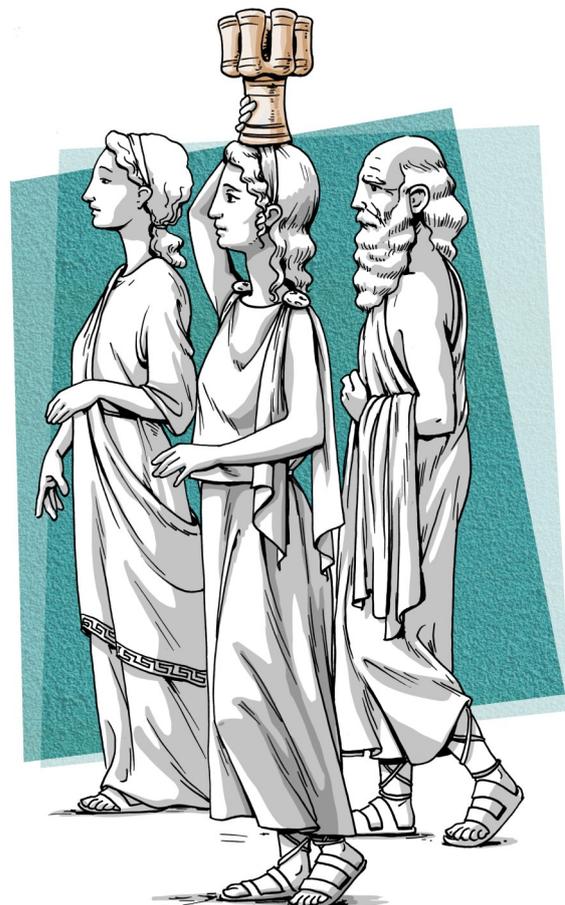


Kernos

This is one of only 22 of this type of kernos in the world, meaning it is rare and unusual. It would have been used in rituals and would contain offerings. Each of the 6 pots would be filled with a different substance, such as honey, grain, oil, wine or wool.

It looks quite heavy but isn't as it was carried on the head in a procession. These processions were like a performance and an important part of religious ceremonies in the Greek world.

The kernos was used mainly by the followers, or cult, of Demeter, the goddess of the harvest and agriculture, and her daughter Persephone. This dates to the same time as the Early Bronze Age, 2500-2000BC.



Toys

These (right) are two terracotta horses, three that have two wheels each. They come from Thessaloniki in Greece and date from the 1st to 3rd Centuries AD. Each horse has a long face tilted downwards, eyes, ears, holes for nostrils, a long thick neck, a wide hollow tubular body and a thick vertical tubular section at the back of the body for a tail. The horse has no legs but instead holes through which wooden tubes could put through for wheels to be attached. The wheels are terracotta and have vertical lines in relief radiating out from the centre like spokes. A string may have been attached through the nostril holes of the horses and used to pull horse along.



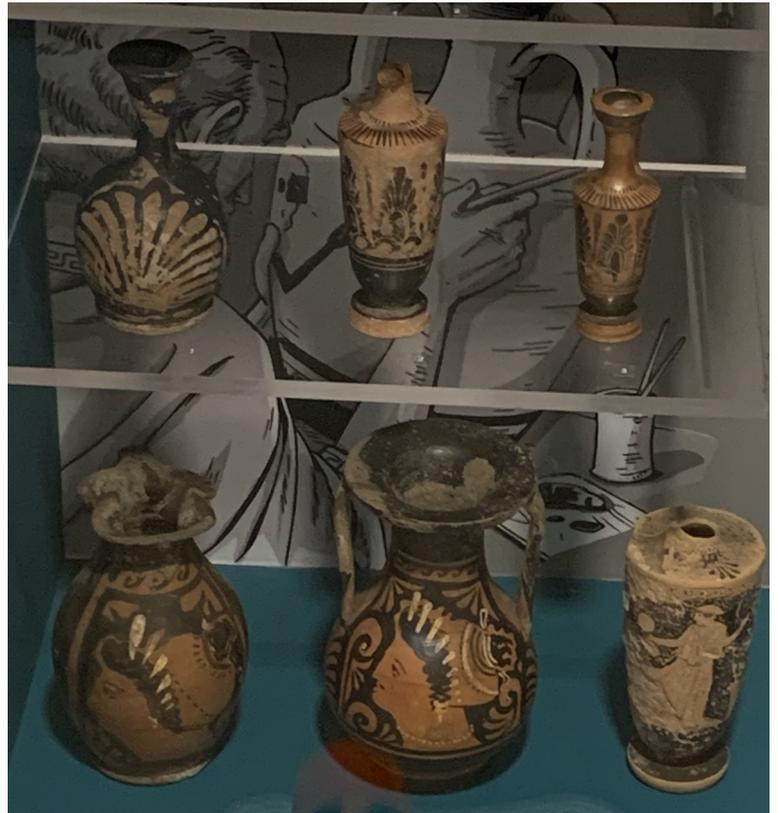
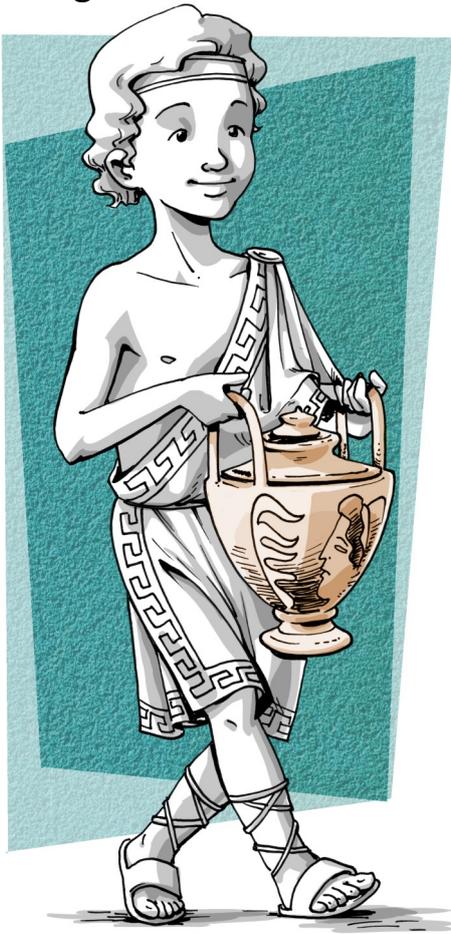
Wheeled horses 1-299AD

Small terracotta horses 850-730BC



Greek pottery

Ancient Greek pottery can tell us a lot about the everyday lives of the ancient Greeks. Vases, plates and cups are often decorated with images showing people in their daily activities. Additionally, decorations include scenes from myths, famous battles, gods and goddesses and geometric patterns. Ancient Greek pots come in all different shapes and sizes depending on their purpose. Terracotta (a type of clay) is the most common material used and is what gives the pottery its orange colour.



Greek Pottery—activity

Use the pottery styles on the next page to try and identify these pots. Can you work out which two styles are not in the below examples. These are all pots from our Greek collections, many are on display in the museum.





DRINKING BOWL
(SKYPHOS)



↑
DRINKING CUPS
(KYLIX)



↑
CUPS
(CANTHAROS)



KRATER FOR MIXING
WINE & WATER



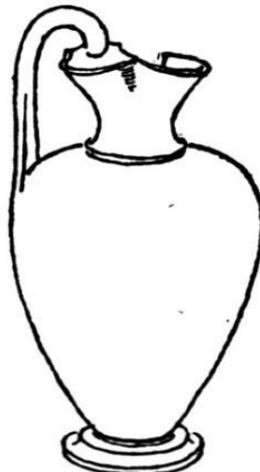
AMPHORA FOR
STORING LIQUIDS



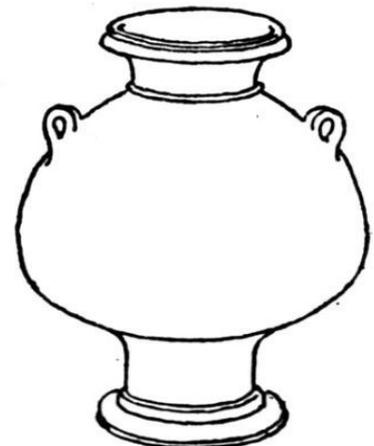
JAR
(STAMNOS)



WATER PITCHER
(HYDRIA)



WINE JUG
(OINOCHOË)



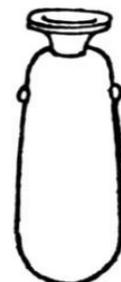
WINE COOLER
(PSYCTER)



OIL JAR
(LEKYTHOS)

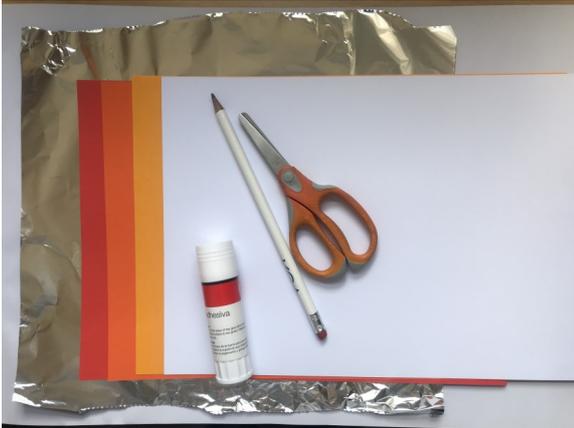


CALDRON
(LEBES)



SCENT BOTTLE
(ALABASTRON)

Make your own Olympic Torch



Step 1. Gather your materials, you will need white card, coloured card for flames, tin foil, glue, scissors and a pencil.



Step 2. Cut a semi-circle shape out of the white card, see picture.



Step 3. Roll the semi-circle into a cone shape, see picture.



Step 4. Wrap the cone in the tin foil. Make sure to fold all of the edges inside the cone. See picture.

Make your own Olympic Torch



Step 5. Cut some flame shapes out of the coloured card.



Step 6. Stick the flames into the top of the cone, see picture. Use sticky tape if the glue doesn't work.



Step 7. You have finished your Olympic Torch.

**Don't forget to share what you have created with us
#SpikeDinosAdventures**



Make your own Laurel Leaf Crown



Step 1. Gather your materials you will need a paper plate, glue, scissors, a pencil and some green paper (we've used old envelopes and gift bags).



Step 2. Cut the middle out of the paper plate so you are left with a ring. Then cut a triangle out of the ring, see picture.



Step 3. Draw leaf shapes on your green paper and cut them out. You will need quite a few.



Step 4. Stick the leaves around your crown.



Step 5. You have finished your crown. Don't forget to share with us what you have created
#SpikeDinosAdventures

Ancient Greeks—Brief History

There are many sources to look at for the history of Ancient Greece. This is some of the most relevant information.

People have been living in Greece for over 40,000 years. The country we know today as Greece, is small compared to ancient Greece. In ancient times, Greece was made up of many islands and a mountainous mainland spread over a vast area around the Ionian, Mediterranean and Aegean seas. The landscape influenced the way the ancient Greeks organised their society, for most of its long history, there was no capital city and no single government. Instead, ancient Greece was divided up into 'city states' - independent Greek communities who ruled themselves. They had their own governments, laws and army.

Early Ancient Greek History

Minoan Civilization c. 3,200 - 1,200 BC

The first great civilization of the Aegean world was the Minoan, based on the island of Crete, between 2,200 and 1,450 BC. The Minoans, as named after their King, Minos, whose palace was at Knossos, seem to have been a fairly peaceful civilization. Its wealth came from farming on Crete and from trade with Syria, Egypt and the Greek mainland.

Mycenaen Kingdoms c. 1,600 - 1,100 BC

In around 1,450 BC Crete was invaded by the Mycenaeans who came from the Peloponnese part of the Greek mainland. During the period 1,600 to 1,150 BC ancient Greece was probably made up of several independent kingdoms and these are known as the Mycenaean Kingdoms. Mycenae, a little inland in the north-east, and Pylos, on the coast in the south-west, were ideally located for trading with other lands, and this accounts for much of their wealth and perhaps, their more aggressive nature—they fought the Battle of Troy. The Mycenaeans were superb craftsmen and built many fine palaces.

Dark Age c. 1,100 - 800 BC

The Mycenaen Age ended in about 1,100 BC. It is not clear who its enemies were and not much is known about this period of time. It is called the Dark Age because much of the art and writing from this time disappeared. However, the ancient Greeks did remember some details and retold these as adventure stories. These later became known as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, ancient Greek myths written in the 8th century BC by a very famous ancient Greek poet called, Homer.

Archaic Period c. 800 - 479 BC

After the Dark Age, from the 8th century BC onwards (300 years after the Dark Age) ancient Greek civilization slowly came back to life. They started trading again with far off lands and settlements began to spread. The independent communities were often ruled by wealthy men. When they died, their sons continued to rule. The Greeks called these people *aristoi*, meaning ‘the best’, and this is the origin of the word aristocrat. The *aristoi* were king-like figures and were very powerful.

In 776 BC the first Olympic games were held in Olympia. It was very common for disagreements between city states, but every four years these were dropped and the people would come together to compete in the games. Persia was a vast empire to the east of ancient Greece. In 490 BC Persian soldiers landed at Marathon, near Athens, but they were defeated and this became known as the battle of Marathon. A runner, who brought news of the victory from Marathon to Athens, is said to be the originator of the first marathon run—a distance of about 50km.

Classical Greece c. 510 - 323 BC

A golden period of time for ancient Greece, 480—330 BC. This was the time when scientific thinking and important ideas in art and culture, which we still hold today, first came about. Athens, was the most famous democracy, many Greek plays were written and performed and the Parthenon—a temple to Athena, the patron goddess of the city was built, much of which still survives today.

In 480 BC, Persia again, attempted to invade the Greek mainland but was defeated at Salamis by the joint forces of Sparta and Athens. The remaining Persian army was crushed at Plataia in 479 BC. Although they had defeated the Persians, the Greeks were worried that they might face another invasion at a later time. Athens had a great naval fleet, perfect for attacking the coast of Persia. From 477 BC, Athens and other Greek states created the Delian League to fight Persia and c. 469 BC they successfully crushed the Persian navy at Eurymedon in south-east Asia Minor.

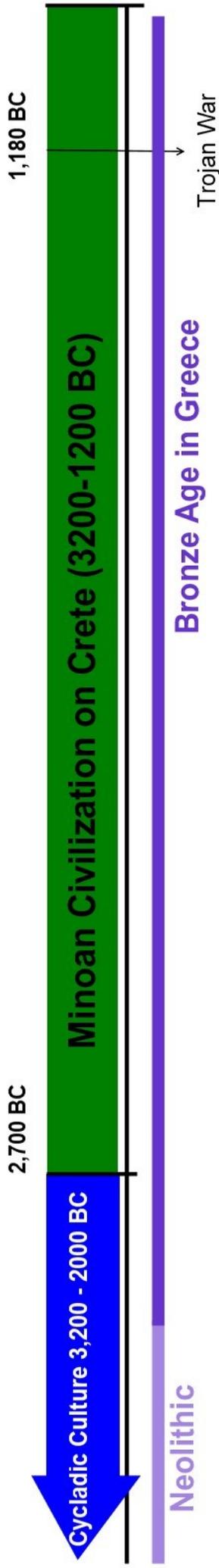
During this period, Sparta grew nervous of Athens' strength and feared they would soon attack. Bursts of fighting between Sparta and Athens broke out from 465 BC to 405 BC, known as the Peloponnesian wars, until finally Athens was defeated by Sparta in 404 BC. Sparta took over the Athenian empire and ruled for a further 30 years from 404 BC to 371 BC until Thebes defeated Sparta's army at Leuktra.

Weary from all these wars, the great powers of ancient Greece became weaker and slowly declined. Macedon (Macedonia) a partly Greek kingdom to the north-east of the Greek mainland, was ruled by King Philip II. King Philip II was hugely ambitious and very powerful. Taking advantage of the weakened states, he conquered the Greek mainland in 338 BC. His triumph is often seen as the end of Greek independence.

King Philip II was murdered in 336 BC and his son, Alexander the Great, succeeded the throne and took control. In the late 4th century BC, Alexander the Great conquered land from Asia Minor and Egypt in the west to India in the east.

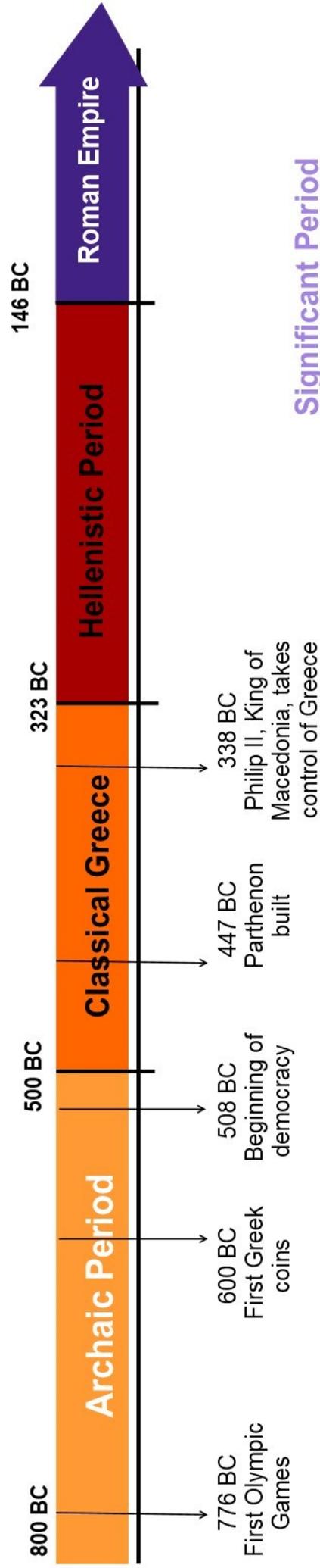
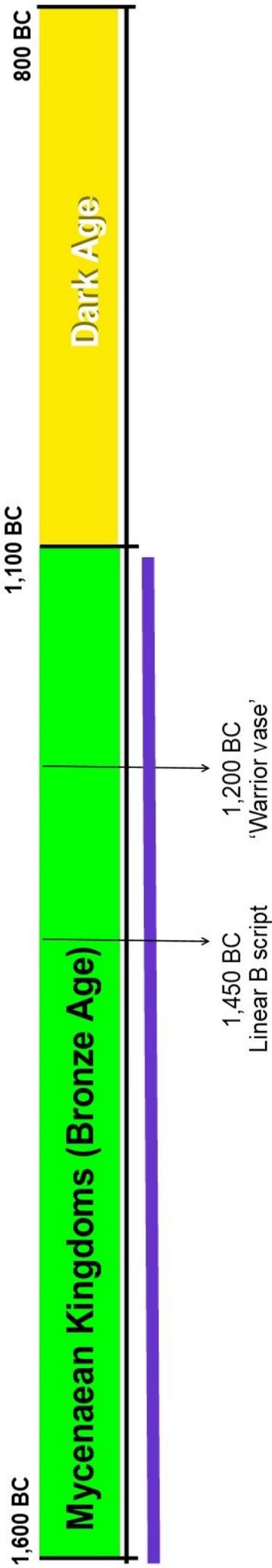
Hellenistic Period c. 323 - 31 BC

The final period of time in ancient Greek history is known as the Hellenistic period and lasted from 323BC to 30BC. In 146 BC the Romans conquered Greece and it became part of the Roman empire. The Romans valued the Greek's thinking and way of life and incorporated much of it into their society and culture.



Timeline of Ancient Greece

© Maidstone Museum 2017



Significant Period

Online Resources

Websites we have found useful, for kids:

British Museum:

<http://britishmuseum.org>

BBC Bitesize, KS2 World History - Ancient Greece pages:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/z87tn39>

National Geographic Kids:

<https://www.natgeokids.com>

Primary Homework Help:

<http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/Greece.html>

DK Find Out!

<https://www.dkfindout.com/uk/history/ancient-greece/>

Mr Donn's History website, Ancient Greece for Kids:

<http://greece.mrdonn.org/index.html>

Teacher Resources:

(Some areas of these sites require users to register and sign up for membership)

The Historical Association:

<https://www.history.org.uk>

Key Stage History:

<https://www.keystagehistory.co.uk/>



For more information, help with school questions, to book school visits, or just to say hello, please contact us at museumeducation@maidstone.gov.uk.

Thanks for reading, downloading or dipping into our resource.

Roz and Vicky

Maidstone Museum Learning Team

Visit Maidstone Museum at
St Faiths Street
Maidstone
ME14 1LH

Follow us at;
Facebook; @MaidstoneMuseum
Twitter; @MaidstoneMuseum
Insta: @maidstonemuseum

Supported using public funding by



Department
for Education



**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**