THE GEOGRAPHY AND CITY-STATES OF ANCIENT GREECE
After the river valley era, a number of classical civilizations developed in the *Mediterranean* and in *Asia*

The first major classical civilization was ancient *Greece*

Classic cultures created high levels of achievement in *art, science, and technology* that impacted *future* ages
Impact of Geography on Greece:
How might Greece being located on the Mediterranean Sea impact Greek culture?
Impact of Geography on Greece: How might Greece’s mountainous terrain affect Greek culture?
Greece’s lack of natural resources and **location** on the Mediterranean Sea encouraged Greek **trade** with neighboring societies.

The Greeks were **skilled sailors**, which linked the various Greek states with neighboring countries.
Mountains covered about 75% of Greece; these barriers *divided* the Greek people into separate mountain valleys and made unifying Greece nearly impossible.
The Greek people were divided into independent city-states (called *polis*) within each valley and its surrounding mountains.
Greek Culture

Despite their lack of *unity*, the Greeks shared some common characteristics:

– Greeks shared the same *language*

– Greek *writing* was influenced by the Phoenician alphabet and later became the basis for Latin
Greeks were polytheistic and believed that the **gods** were immortal, but also that they had **human qualities**; religion became the basis for Greek mythology.

- **Zeus**
  - King of the gods
- **Athena**
  - Goddess of wisdom
- **Aphrodite**
  - Goddess of love
- **Apollo**
  - God of sun & music
- **Ares**
  - God of war
- **Hades**
  - God of underworld
- **Hera**
  - Goddess of family
- **Poseidon**
  - God of the seas
Greek city-states had an **agora** (a massive marketplace) that was the center for trade and government.

City-states had an **acropolis**, a temple on a hill dedicated to one of the sacred gods or goddesses.
Despite similar language and religion, the Greek polis were very different from each other, especially in how they were governed.
Differences Among Greek City-States

Some polis had a **monarchy**, a government ruled by a **king**

**Monarchy**
- State ruled by a king
- Rule is hereditary
- Some rulers claim divine right
- Practiced in Mycenae by 2000 B.C.
Differences Among Greek City-States

Some polis had an **aristocracy**, a government ruled by **elite nobles**

- State ruled by nobility
- Rule is hereditary and based on family ties, social rank, wealth
- Social status and wealth support rulers’ authority
- Practiced in Corinth
Some polis like Sparta had an **oligarchy**, a government ruled by a small group of **citizens**.

**Oligarchy**
- State ruled by a small group of citizens
- Rule is based on wealth or ability
- Ruling group controls military
- Practiced in Sparta by 500 B.C.
Some polis like Athens had a **direct democracy**, a government ruled by **citizens** who vote on decisions.

**Direct Democracy**

- State ruled by its citizens
- Rule is based on citizenship
- Majority rule decides vote
- Practiced in Athens by about 500 B.C.
The powerful Greek city-states **Athens** and **Sparta** represented the greatest **differences** among polis.

Athenian society focused on wealth and **culture**: – Athens had a direct democracy in which both **rich** and **poor** citizens could vote and hold public office.
Athenian society focused on wealth & culture

Architects built the **Parthenon** to honor the goddess Athena; the Greeks were known for beautiful buildings whose style can be seen in many modern buildings in several countries.
Athenian society focused on wealth & culture

Artists created realistic sculptures

Theater had both comedies and tragedies
Philosophers - Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle questioned assumptions, quested for knowledge, and used logic to find answers to questions.
The Greek cultural contributions (especially from Athens) to philosophy, art, *entertainment*, literature, *architecture*, science, education, and *democracy* formed the foundation of *Western civilization*.
The society of Sparta focused on **military strength**, not freedom, art, and learning (like Athens).
Spartan boys left the home at age 7 and lived in an army barracks.

Until the age of 30, they trained, exercised, and fought.

Spartan men stayed involved with the military until age 60.
This system produced **tough, skilled soldiers**; the Spartans were taught to put military service above everything, even family.
Spartan women ran the family estates while the men were training or fighting. This was different from other Greek city-states, where women had little role in society.

The women were also taught to value service to Sparta above family; they would often say to sons and husbands before they went off to war: “Come back WITH your shield... or ON it.”
The Spartans showed their strength during the wars with Persia.
King Darius’ army was defeated by several Greek city-states when some *Greeks* living in the Persian Empire’s territory *revolted*

Persia’s next king, *Xerxes*, never forgot this defeat and decided to teach Greece a lesson; he led his massive forces in an *invasion* of Greece.
In the Battle of Thermopylae, a small Spartan force of only 300 soldiers (supported by some soldiers from other states) managed to hold off the Persian invaders and inflict terrible losses. Even though the 300 soldiers were all killed, their actions inspired the various Greek city-states to work together and defeat Xerxes.
Athens and Sparta worked well together against Persia, but after that war, they competed for influence in Greece. This rivalry would lead to conflict.
The war between Sparta and Athens was called the **Peloponnesian War** (named after the southern part of Greece, where Sparta was located). Sparta won, but the war left all of Greece weakened.
The Peloponnesian War left the weakened Greece open to be conquered, which is what happened when Macedonia invaded.
Closure Activity

Where would you rather live: Athens or Sparta? Why?