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The Ancient Greeks

Learning Resource

Teacher Notes

KS2



Overview

The Royal Armouries learning resources have been created for teachers to use in the classroom or for your pupils to access from home with teacher guidance. The Ancient Greeks learning resources pack is specifically designed to support your Key Stage 2 pupils studying:

- Ancient Greece

Our resources focus on Spartan warriors, the weapons and armour they used, oracles and the Ancient Greek myth of Perseus and Medusa. The Ancient Greeks had a huge and lasting influence on the western world. They are excellent inspiration for cross-curricular learning and will help your pupils with:

- Chronological understanding, source knowledge and understanding
- Development of historically valid questions

The Royal Armouries collection is home to incredible Ancient Greek objects, like our Corinthian helmet, available to view in the online Image Bank. This helmet, dating back to 650BC, is one of the most famous types of helmet that ancient Greek warriors wore in battle and is often seen in contemporary artwork.

Below are notes intended to help you use our online resources and collection to bring this topic to life for your pupils.

General information

The Ancient Greeks

The Ancient Greek period spans a huge amount of time, generally accepted to be between 2200 BC and 529 AD. The people of Ancient Greece referred to themselves as 'Hellenes'. They lived on mainland Greece and the Greek islands, but also in colonies across the Mediterranean and North Africa. The Ancient Greek culture is known for its thinkers, artists, warriors, politicians, athletes, architects, religion, writers and actors.

Most of Ancient Greece was divided up into small 'city states', such as Sparta, Olympia, Athens, and Corinth. Each city state had their own laws, governments and armies. One of the most famous city states was Sparta, a warrior society within which all male citizens were full time warriors. At age 7, boys were taken from their families to begin training and served until at least the age of 60. Spartan women were educated to a high standard for the time and were allowed to own property. They were encouraged to exercise, as Spartans believed that healthy women would produce healthy children, who would become strong warriors.

Spartan life and that of the other city states all changed in 4th century BC, when Alexander the Great united all Greeks and ruled over an empire stretching as from Egypt to the Western border of modern-day India. Unfortunately, he could not sustain his rule over such a vast geographical landscape, causing the slow demise of the Ancient Greek civilisation as we understand it today.

Key terminology

Kopis A curved one-handed sword

Curias Body armour made usually from bronze or leather, often decorated to emulate a muscular torso.

Corinthian helmet A bronze helmet that takes its name from the Ancient Greek city state Corinth. Often depicted on contemporary artwork as 'resting' on the back of a warriors head.

Aspis Decorated shield carried by Spartan warriors, with shallow dome shape to deflect enemies blows to the side.

Agoge A training school for Spartan boys that used brutal tactics such as providing little in terms of clothing, heating and food. It was believed this would 'toughen' the boys into true warriors.

Dori A type of spear used by Spartan warriors.

Oracle A priestess who would communicate with the gods on behalf of mortals, providing advice and prophecies.

The resources

Spartan warrior video

This fictional account of a Spartan man's experience is designed to give pupils a first-person account of life as a Spartan warrior. It will assist pupils with:

- Historical knowledge
- Inspire creative writing, composition and drama-based skills

There are only a few first-person accounts about spartan life, mostly from 'outsiders' such as Plutarch and Aristotle. Other information comes from physical sources such as the weaponry at the Royal Armouries Museum, which can be seen in our online Image Bank. This video could be used as a starting point of introducing how to use and interpret historical sources in order to understand the past.

Time Travel Radio: Ancient Greeks

This fictional interview between Catherine Greenwich and the Oracle of Delphi explains how Ancient Greek beliefs affected the decisions of everyday life, with particular reference to warfare and the impact that this would have on society. It will assist pupils with:

- Historical knowledge

- Historical perspective of different cultures, military, political, religious, and social history

This resource can be used as inspiration for creative literacy based tasks that uses historical knowledge as their base.

Photo Bank

The photo bank has been compiled to assist your lessons in any way that you see fit. They are all original photographs or images of items in our collection. Please download them for educational use only. They would be great for increasing historical knowledge, building evidentially supported enquiries and historical source work.

Images will be added and updated on a regular basis.

We have added notes to each image; collections items are hyperlinked in the descriptions to our Collections Online, where you can get more images and technical information; and the asset numbers for our Image Library are given where relevant. If you would like any more information about any image, please contact educate.leeds@armouries.org.uk and we would be happy to assist.