

Using sources

Historians (people who study the past) use sources like detectives. Sources are clues about the past. They put together all the clues they can find to build up a picture of the past.

Something to do

Here are two primary sources from Ancient Greece. The first is the poet Tyrtaeus explaining to foot soldiers how to fight:

Keep close to your own soldiers and get right up close to the enemy. Hit out with your spear or sword. Stand toe to toe, shield touching shield, helmet touching helmet.

The second is a picture of Greek footsoldiers fighting:



Look carefully at the two sources and answer these questions:

1 What sort of armour did Greek soldiers wear?

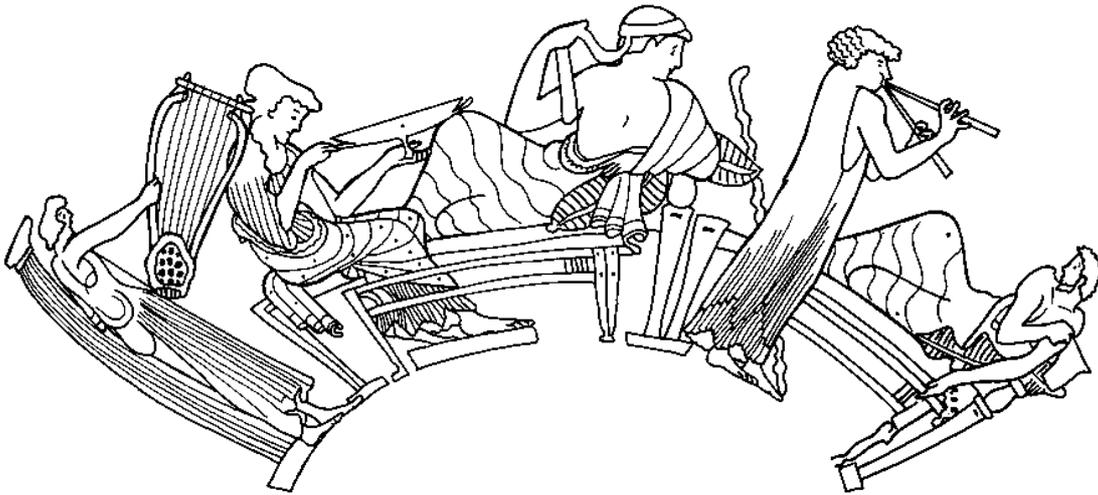
2 What sort of weapons did they carry? _____

3 On a separate piece of paper, draw your own picture of the Battle of Marathon and explain why you think the Greeks won.

Meal times

The diet (what they ate) of the Ancient Greeks was healthier than ours. Because they had no tin cans or refrigerators, their food was normally fresh. They did not eat much meat, but plenty of bread, fruit, eggs, cheese and vegetables. Those who could afford it drank a lot of wine.

A special drinking party, where men lay on couches and drank long into the night, was called a symposium.



Greek men being entertained by women at a symposium

What can you remember?

Put a tick (✓) in the box if the sentence is correct:

- 1 Greek civilisation did not change much for 500 years.
- 2 Owl coins came from Sparta.
- 3 The Ancient Greeks always used money.
- 4 Greek bricks were made from mud.
- 5 The God Symposion looked after the household.
- 6 The Greeks did not use soap.
- 7 Greek men and women spent a lot of time together.
- 8 Greek men did not worry very much about being seen naked.
- 9 The Classical period of civilisation lasted c 500 BC to c 400 BC.
- 10 The Greeks drank beer, not wine.

Gods and Goddesses



Mount Olympus

The Greeks did not believe in one god, but in many gods and goddesses. They thought most of them lived on top of a mountain, Mount Olympus!

These gods and goddesses were a strange lot, not at all like the modern idea of what a god should be. Except for Pan, who was half goat and half man, they looked and behaved like ordinary men and women. They got hungry, had quarrels, fell in love, went to sleep and so on.

There were many myths (stories) about the adventures of the gods and goddesses.

The Pantheon

The whole collection of gods and goddesses was known as the Pantheon. Here are some of the better known ones.



Zeus, the king of the gods and god of the weather. As a child, his mother saved him from being eaten by his father.

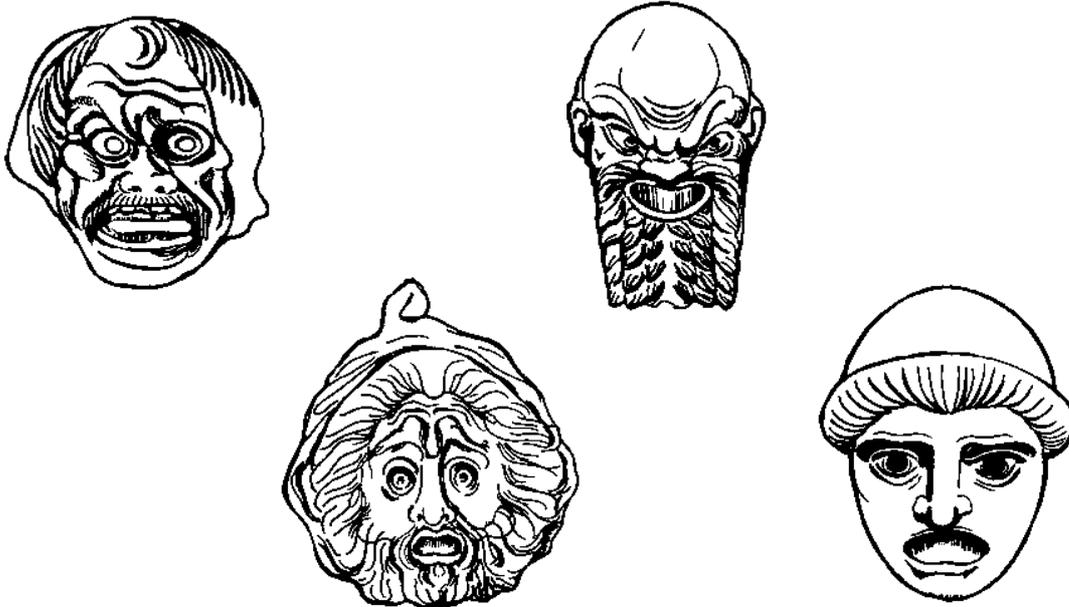
Hera, the wife and sister of Zeus, who protected married women and children.

Dionysus, a son of Zeus, the god of wine and the good life. Hera killed his mother and made him mad.

Apollo, a son of Zeus, the god of the sun and protector of truth, music, medicine and prophecy.

Tragedy and comedy

Only men acted in Greek dramas. They always wore masks, and sometimes funny padded clothes as well. The masks had wide mouth holes, so that they could speak clearly.



Actors' masks

Most later Greek plays were either comedies or tragedies.

Comedies were light-hearted, making fun of well-known people or traditions. Tragedies often re-told famous legends about the gods and people's struggle with fate. They were usually unhappy tales, full of violence and misery.

What can you remember?

Fill in the gaps in these sentences with the right words from the following list:

alpha omega orchestra chorus tragedies masks

- 1 In a Greek play the _____ commented on what was happening.
- 2 All actors wore _____.
- 3 The first letter in the Greek alphabet is _____.
- 4 The area in front of the stage was known as the _____.
- 5 The last letter in the Greek alphabet is _____.
- 6 _____ were serious plays about people's struggles with fate and the gods.