

Ancient Greece

Nearly four thousand years ago, in the countries that we now know as Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria, the earliest Greek civilisations prospered. Between 2000BC and 146BC, their dominant empire spread throughout most of Europe, as far as France.

The Government

The Greeks developed a new idea for a government- democracy. As a result, Ancient Greece was split into many different states, which were each ruled in their own way. Moreover, each state had its own laws, government and money however they shared the same language and religion. At this time, the two important states in Greece were Athens and Sparta.

Greek Gods

Religion was important to the Greeks because they believed that it would make their lives better while they were living. Furthermore, many Greeks believed that the gods would care for them when they died. The Ancient Greeks believed in a large number of influential gods and goddesses. In fact, they believed that these gods and goddesses controlled everything in their lives and the environment. In addition, there were 12 major gods who ruled Mount Olympus.

These gods were:

- Zeus
- Hera
- Hephaestus
- Athena
- Hermes
- Artemis
- Apollo
- Dionysus
- Ares
- Aphrodite
- Demeter
- Poseidon.

Glossary

States - Territories of land

Zeus - King of the gods

Mount Olympus - Home of the major Greek gods.

Temple - Housed the statues of gods.

Greek Writing

Amazingly, the Ancient Greeks played a vital part in the development of the alphabet we use today because their alphabet was the first with vowels. Did you know that the first two letters of the Greek alphabet 'alpha' and 'beta' gave us the word alphabet? Unlike our alphabet, the Greek alphabet consisted of unusual symbols such as Γ (gamma) and Δ (delta). Interestingly, this alphabet is still used in Greece today.

Greek Buildings

To show the gods how important they were, the Greeks built colossal temples in every town for one god or goddess. The temples were not like modern places of worship- they were homes for statues of god, cared for by priests. As a result, religious ceremonies and festivals were held outside the temples. A few of these temples can still be found today around Greece including The Parthenon (dedicated to the goddess Athena), which can be found in Athens, Greece.

Did you know...

That the Ancient Greeks invented theatre?

They loved to watch plays and most cities had a theatre - some big enough to hold 15,000 people!