



GEOGRAPHY OF ANCIENT GREECE

READING
ACTIVITY

YEARS 4-6



Ancient Greek Geography – Reading Comprehension Activity & Lesson Plan

This reading activity can be used with years 4-6 depending on ability, either as part of an Ancient Greek unit or as a stand alone reading exercise.

It teaches students the basics of geography in Ancient Greece. It could be used toward the beginning of an Ancient Greek unit as it references the government, diet and invasions which may all be covered in more detail later.

Students start by reading through the information sheet which contains everything they will need to know.

They then use dictionaries to look up geographical terms and write or draw definitions.

Finally, they answer questions about the reading. The first answer sheet can be given to everyone and the *Greek Geography Today* sheet can be used as an extension for higher ability students. Instruct students whether or not you want them to answer in full sentences.

An answer key is included but you can assess the answers based on the reading yourself.

Lesson Plan

If you want to extend the activity into a lesson you can have students go to <http://www.carlos.emory.edu/ODYSSEY/GREECE/home.html> and click on Geography.

Discuss as a class the effect that Ancient Greek geography might have had on daily life, warfare and trade/transport.



Geography Information

Background

In ancient times Greece was not one single country. It was a collection of separate cities where Greek-speaking people lived. Ancient Greece consisted mainly of a mountainous peninsula sticking out into the Mediterranean Sea. It also included around 1,400 islands. The geography of Ancient Greece directly influenced the Greek traditions and customs.

The Sea

Greece is surrounded by sea and the Ancient Greeks never travelled more than 85 miles to get to the coast. The sea therefore became an important mode of transport for the Greek people and the Greeks became very good sailors. The Greeks were also able to buy resources from other countries that were not available in Greece and bring them back easily by boat.

The Land

Mountains cover about three quarters of Greece, and in Ancient Greece, these mountains divided the land into different regions. The mountains made it difficult for the ancient Greeks to all be ruled by one government. Greece therefore developed small, independent communities in each valley and its surrounding mountains. These communities made their own rules and had their own government.

The mountains in Greece made land transport difficult and the roads were just dirt paths. For example Sparta was 60 miles from Olympia. In a car today this would take an hour to drive but it took them almost a week to travel this distance.

Most of the land in Greece was stony and only a small amount was suitable for farming. The Ancient Greeks could not therefore provide enough food for a large population and no more than a few million people lived in Ancient Greece. There are over 8 million people living in New York today and Ancient Greece was far larger. The Greeks also had a very simple diet of grains, grapes and olives and some meat, although it was also difficult to keep many animals on this stony land. Possibly because of this lack of farmland, Greeks were always looking for places to invade for their people to live.

The Climate

Greece has a varied climate with high average temperatures in summer and cool temperatures in winter. These moderate temperatures allowed Greeks to have a very outdoor life and they spent much leisure time at outdoor public events and even the government of the cities would meet outside.



Use a dictionary and write definitions of each of the words below.

Peninsula

.....
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Valley

.....
.....

Region

.....
.....

Climate

.....
.....



Draw a picture or use words to show the meaning of each of the words below.

Peninsula

Valley

Region

Climate

Geography Answer Sheet



Why did people in Ancient Greece use boats to transport people and goods?

How did the geography in Greece affect the government?

Why was it so slow and difficult to travel across land in Ancient Greece?

Why did people in Ancient Greece have a very limited diet?

Why were lots of activities in Ancient Greece held outside?

Greek Geography Today



What do you think has changed today that means:

- 1) it is easier to travel across land in Ancient Greece?
- 2) the Greek people have a more varied diet?

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple horizontal dashed lines for text entry.

Geography Answer Sheet



Why did people in Ancient Greece use boats to transport people and goods?

They used boats because the sea was all around them and they could get goods from other countries. Also the mountains made travelling by land difficult.

How did the geography in Greece affect the government?

The land was very mountainous so it was difficult to travel. Communities therefore formed in each valley with their own rules and government.

Why was it so slow and difficult to travel across land in Ancient Greece?

It was slow to travel across land because of the mountains which meant that the roads were just dirt paths.

Why did people in Ancient Greece have a very limited diet?

They had a very limited diet because the ground was stony and so not suitable for farming and growing food. Also the stony ground was not suitable for animals to live.

Why were lots of activities in Ancient Greece held outside?

Events were held outside because of the warm dry climate.

Greek Geography Today



What do you think has changed today that means:

- 1) it is easier to travel across land in Ancient Greece?
- 2) the Greek people have a more varied diet?

Grade these questions for the general quality and sense of the answers.

Suggestions for grading:

1) Award marks for reference to: cars, engines, roads etc.

2) Award marks for reference to: advanced farming, transport of goods from overseas, types of food available.