



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.

### Greek Theatre

The Ancient Greeks invented theatre and it began in the 6th century BC in Athens with the performance of tragedy plays at religious festivals. These, in turn, inspired the genre of Greek comedy plays. Greek drama would be hugely popular and performances spread around the Mediterranean. The works of Greek tragedians Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides formed the foundation upon which all modern theatre is based and their work is still revered. Greeks loved to watch plays and most cities had a theatre – some big enough to hold 15,000 people!

### First Olympics 776 BC

In ancient Greece different city-states often fought one another in deadly battles. But every four years the Greeks set aside their differences to honour the gods and compete peacefully in the Olympic Games.

### 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 symbols such as Γ (gamma) and Δ (delta). Interestingly, this alphabet is still used in Greece today.

### 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, believing that these gods and goddesses controlled everything in their lives and the environment. In addition, there were 12 major gods who ruled Mount Olympus.

### Ancient Greek themed fiction books

**Who Let the Gods Out?** Maz Evans

**Beasts of Olympus: Beast Keeper** Lucy Coats

**Hopeless Heroes: Here Comes Hercules!** Stella Tarakson & Nick Roberts

**Fleeced!** Julia Wills

**Myth-O-Mania series** Kate McCullan

### Key Vocabulary

**Greek Mythology** – these were originally told by the ancient Greeks and a genre of Ancient Greek folklore.

**City States** – each city-state was a powerful city and they ruled the lands and area around it. Sometimes it also ruled smaller less-powerful cities. The Greek name for a city-state was "polis".

**Acropolis** – a fortified citadel within a larger city. It was usually located on top of a hill and at the centre of the city. The most famous acropolis is the Acropolis of Athens.

**Zeus** – King of the gods

**Mount Olympus** – Home of the major Greek gods.

**Mathematics** – Greek civilization has played a major role in the development of mathematics and a number of Greek mathematicians are renowned for their influence on mathematics.

**Olympia** – The home of the original Olympic Games, situated in the north-eastern area of Greece.

**Education** - In all the Greek city-states the purpose of education was to produce good citizens. Children were trained in music, art, literature, science, math, and politics.

**Titans** - The Titans were the first Greek gods. They were overthrown by their children, the Olympians.

**Archaic Period**  
(800 BC – 480 BC)

**Classical Period**  
(480 BC – 323 BC)

**Hellenistic Period**  
(323 BC – 146 BC)

