

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Test Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Greece

### *Facts to Know*

The country of Greece is actually a peninsula – a large piece of land sticking out and almost surrounded by water. Greece is mostly a rocky, dry land with many hills and mountains.

Greece is located near the Mediterranean Sea or the Aegean Sea. The island of Crete was famous for sea trade.

The first Olympic Games were held in Greece over 2,500 years ago. Instead of medals, the winners were crowned with a wreath of wild olive leaves.

Many large communities in ancient Greece, such as Athens and Sparta, formed “city-states”, where each area ruled itself. Athens is known as The Birthplace of Democracy, which is a very important concept to our country and the world today. Sparta developed a military-state.

Democracy means “ruled by the people” or “people power”.

Boys in Sparta began to train to be warriors when they were only 7 years old. Even girls in Sparta were trained to be strong and tough.

Ancient Greece had many wars with the Persians. The battles of Marathon and Thermopylae became legends with stories of great heroes retold for thousands of years.

The word marathon honors an ancient Greek runner who courageously ran for 26 miles, without stopping, to deliver an important message to his commander, and then immediately died because of it.

In Athens, a beautiful temple called the Parthenon was built in honor of the goddess Athena. Many wonderful plays and debates were held there.

Many great thinkers lived and taught others in Athens. Three of the most famous are Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Plato started a famous school called The Academy.

Ancient Greeks worshipped many gods and goddesses, who were said to live on Mt. Olympus. Some of them are:

- Zeus: the ruler of all gods
- Hera: wife of Zeus/goddess of marriage
- Apollo: god of light
- Artemis: goddess of hunting
- Poseidon: god of the sea
- Aphrodite: goddess of love
- Ares: god of war
- Athena: goddess of wisdom
- Hephaestus: god of fire
- Hades: god of the underworld
- Hermes: winged messenger of the gods
- Dionysus: god of wine

The famous Greek myths tell stories about these gods and try to explain about the mysteries of life and nature.

Alexander the Great conquered a huge empire for Greece and spread important Greek ideas and learning wherever he went.

## Vocabulary Greece

Aegean Sea: the sea to the east of Greece

Alexander the Great: a ruler who spread the influence of Greece to a large area of the world

Aristotle: a famous Greek thinker and student of Plato

Athens: a Greek city-state; The Birthplace of Democracy

Crete: a Greek island famous for shipping

Democracy: a form of government where the citizens help create the laws and govern themselves

Marathon: a battle site of the Persian Wars

Mediterranean Sea: one of the seas surrounding Greece

Olympic Games: athletic competitions which began in the Greek city-states

Plato: a famous Greek thinker and student of Socrates

Socrates: a famous Greek thinker

Sparta: an ancient Greek city-state that developed into a military state with very fierce warriors.

Thermopylae: a battle site of the Persian Wars where the Spartans fought and died.