

# What was the greatest achievement of the Ancient Greeks?

## Achievement 1: Successful City-states

There was never one country called 'Ancient Greece'. Instead, Greece was divided up into small **city-states**, like Athens, Sparta, Corinth and Olympia.

Each city-state ruled itself. They had their own governments, laws and army. So, Ancient Greeks living in Sparta considered themselves Spartan first, and Greek second.

Famously, the city-states didn't get on very well and often fought each other. However, sometimes they joined together to fight against a bigger enemy, like the **Persian Empire**.



## Achievement 2: Democracy – a fairer system of ruling

In the city of Athens, citizens would gather together on a dusty hill called the **Pyx**. Here, they would decide the **city's laws** and who should sit on its ruling council. This was **democracy** or 'rule by the people'.

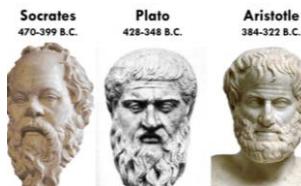
All 30,000 **citizens** were men. Women and enslaved people didn't get a say. A citizen could speak for the time it took water to run from one jar into another. When this water clock ran out, it was someone else's turn.

A jury of 500 citizens decided if someone was guilty of law-breaking. **Punishments** included death. Citizens could also vote to get rid of people they disliked. Each man wrote a name on a broken bit of pottery called an '**ostracism**'. Anyone named more than 600 times got kicked out of the city.

Today, we also live in a **democracy**. Unlike in Ancient Greece, women get to vote, too. Juries of 12 people decide if someone is guilty of a crime!

Life in Ancient Greece was different for men, women, and slaves.

## Achievement 4: The world's greatest thinkers!



**Greek philosophers** were "seekers and lovers of wisdom". They studied and analysed the world around them using **logic and reason**.



- **Athens and Sparta** were the two main city states that ruled much of Ancient Greece.
- They were often rivals and fought each other in the Peloponnesian Wars.
- At other times, they united together in order to protect the Greek lands from invaders (such as the **Persians**).
- The cultures of the two cities were very different: **Sparta** was almost entirely focused on war and how to fight- they lived a tough life high in the mountains
- **Athens** focused on the arts and learning and was situated by the coast where they built astonishing boats- trading and exploring.

## Achievement 3: Entertainment and sport

Exciting stories we remember today

- **Theseus and the Minotaur**
- **Heracles and the Nemean lion**

Sporting events we do today started very differently

- The **Olympics** were a religious festival for Zeus
- Men took part naked!
- There were different events and different groups of people took part

We know about these because of **archaeology** – Greek pots, things people have written down and other artefacts.

Timeline of the achievements we are studying						
Minoan peoples on Crete	First Olympic Games	Battle of Marathon	Greek Philosophers	Parthenon built	Alexander the Great	Greece is conquered by Rome
3500-1100 BC	776 BC	490 BC	470-322BC	447 BC	333 BC	31 BC

**Achievement 5:** A system of worship that tried to explain the world around them.

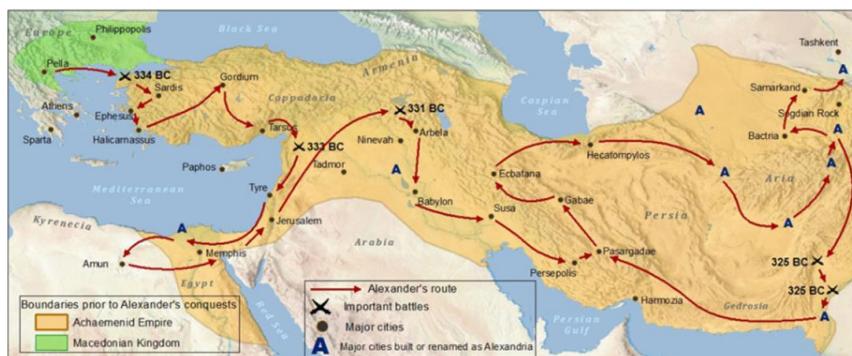


**Achievement 6: Architecture**

Many Greek buildings are still standing today.  
The Parthenon which is built on the Acropolis is perhaps the most famous.  
This style of architecture has influenced many buildings over the last 2500 years.



**Achievement 7.** Alexander the Great was an ancient Macedonian ruler and one of history's greatest minds, who established the largest Empire the world had ever seen.



Vocabulary	
<b>Crete</b>	Where the myth of the Minotaur and Greek culture began
<b>Myth</b>	A story which may or may not have truth in it.
<b>Minotaur</b>	A mythical creature enslaved in a maze
<b>City State</b>	How a Greek city was organised inside a walled area.
<b>Athens</b>	An important trading city by the coast.
<b>Sparta</b>	An important military city in the mountains
<b>Persian Empire</b>	A powerful conquering country at war with Greece
<b>Democracy</b>	A system of government where some people vote
<b>Ostracon</b>	The word "ostracon" is derived from the Greek "ostrakon" (meaning a piece of pottery used as a voting ballot).
<b>Slavery</b>	A system where people are forced to work with no rights
<b>Olympic games</b>	A sporting event in honour of Zeus
<b>Archaeology</b>	The process of finding objects about the past.
<b>Mount Olympus</b>	The place where the Gods were meant to live
<b>Titans</b>	The parents of the Olympic gods
<b>Gods of Olympus</b>	The gods worshipped by the Ancient Greeks
<b>Parthenon</b>	A temple in Athens devoted to Athens
<b>Alexander the Great</b>	A mighty leader who destroyed the Persians and started to create a united Greece.
<b>Empire</b>	An area of land with a variety of cultures controlled by a single country
<b>Greek philosopher</b>	An intelligent person who finds new ideas about the world