

ANCIENT GREECE – GEOGRAPHY INTRODUCTION

Part 1:

READING DIRECTIONS: Read the paragraph below INDEPENDENTLY, highlighting important details as you read. Then, answer the questions using what you learned from the reading

PENINSULAS & ISLANDS

Unlike many of these other civilizations, the Greek civilization did not develop in a river valley, but it was bordered by water. Ancient Greece had the Mediterranean Sea to the south, the Ionian Sea to the west, and the Aegean Sea to the east. Greece is actually a series of islands—pieces of land surrounded completely by water—and peninsulas, or pieces of land surrounded on three sides by water. But the Greek peninsula is very irregular. It's one big peninsula made up of a series of smaller peninsulas. These islands and peninsulas were covered with high mountains, making travel across the land very difficult. As a result, the ancient Greek people mostly traveled by water. Because Greece's mountains, islands, and peninsulas separated the Greek people from each other and made communication difficult, Greek civilization developed into independent city-states, or cities that governed themselves and the land that surrounded them.

In your mind, picture those peninsulas and islands covered by mountains that stretch almost to the sea. Just a few small valleys and coastal plains provide flat land for farming and villages. Now you have an image of Greece, a land where one of the world's greatest civilizations developed.

MOUNTAINS AND SETTLEMENTS

Because mountains cover much of Greece, there are few flat and fertile areas for farmland available to the Greeks. The steep mountains of the Greek countryside affected the crops and animals that farmers raised in the region. People settled in those flat areas along the coast and in river valleys. They lived in villages and towns separated by mountains and seas. Travel across the mountains and seas was difficult so communities were isolated from one another. As a result, the people created their own governments and ways of life.

This shortage of farmland meant the Greeks needed to look elsewhere for resources they lacked, such as sufficient grain and metals. This prompted the Greeks to conquer other areas. They also established colonies along the Mediterranean, in areas where farmland was more plentiful, such as Southern Italy, Northern Africa, Turkey, and the southern coast of France. In addition to military conquests and the establishment of colonies, trade became an important aspect of Greek life.

SEAS AND SHIPS

Since travel on the peninsula of Greece was so difficult due to the mountains, the early Greeks used the seas as a source of food and as a way of trading with other communities. The Greeks also became skilled shipbuilders and sailors. Their ships sailed to Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), to Egypt and to the islands of the Mediterranean and Aegean seas. As they traveled around these seas, they found sources of food and other products they needed. They also exchanged ideas with other cultures.

Questions for Part 1

1. Where did the Greeks live?	
2. What type of landform is Greece?	
3. What covers the peninsulas and islands?	
4. What does the small amount of flat land allow the Greeks to do?	
5. Why was travel difficult for the Greeks?	
6. How did the early Greeks use the seas?	
7. Who did they exchange ideas with?	
CHALLENGE: List all the physical features listed.	

PART 2: How Did The Physical Features Affect Ancient Greece?

Directions: Read each statement and decide if it represents an effect of the Mountains or Seas on Greece.
Write Below: Mountain Sea Both

STATEMENT	ANSWER MOUNTAINS, SEAS, OR BOTH?!
1. There was little farmland.	
2. These were a source of food.	
3. These separated villages and towns from each other.	
4. These was a way to trade with other civilizations	
5. These made travel difficult	
6. These helped transportation	
7. These allowed for little contact between towns	
8. These helped the Greeks exchange ideas with other cultures.	

PART #3: LABELING THE MAP

Directions: Use the steps below to color code the map of Ancient Greece. You will need RED, GREEN, BLUE, ORANGE, BROWN, and PURPLE crayons or colored pencils.

- **CHECK OFF THE TASK AS YOU COMPLETE EACH STEP.**

- Step #1:** Trace the PENINSULA OF GREECE → [RED]
- Step #2:** Color the PELOPONNESUS PENINSULA → [GREEN]
- Step #3:** Trace around the IONIAN, MEDITERRANEAN, & AEGEAN SEAS → [BLUE]
- Step #4:** Circle the names of the famous city states ATHENS & SPARTA → [ORANGE]
- Step #5:** Draw a triangle on MOUNT OLYMPUS → [BROWN]
- Step #6:** Draw mini mountains [TRIANGLES] all over the inside of GREECE → [BROWN]
- Step #7:** Circle the ISLANDS around the outside of GREECE → [PURPLE]

