

# Greece: History and Wars (2000 B.C.E.-300 B.C.E)

## You Mean that the Greeks Fought Multiple Wars?

### Before the Greeks

There were several civilizations that lived in Greece before the Greeks did. The **Mycenaeans** settled in what is now Greece and had many of the early elements of Greek culture. Through sea trade, the Mycenaeans came into contact with the **Minoans** of Crete who showed the Mycenaeans the value of travel by sea. After the fall of the Mycenaeans, the Dorians moved into the region. The **Dorians** had an oral tradition focusing on stories about Greek gods and goddesses.

### The Persian Wars (499 B.C.E.-449 B.C.E.)

As Greek civilization began to expand across the Aegean Sea, they (specifically Athens) started to clash with the Persian Empire. This started a series of wars that lasted for 50 years and included several famous battles like Marathon, Thermopylae, and Salamis. Victories in these battles gave the Greeks control over the Aegean Sea. The Greeks also united under the Delian League and Athens became the center of Greek culture, starting the **Golden Age** of Greece.



Persian (left) and Greek (right) soldiers fighting in the Persian War.  
Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Greek-Persian\\_duel.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Greek-Persian_duel.jpg)

### The Golden Age of Athens (449 B.C.E.-431 B.C.E.)

During the rule of **Pericles**, Athens experienced a “Golden Age” in which many areas of math, science, and art became more advanced. With much of Athens destroyed during the Persian Wars, Pericles used money from the Delian League to rebuild Athens. This action would cause the other city-states to become upset with Athens’ use of their money.



Defeat of the Athenian army by the Spartans

Source: “Defeat of Athenian Army at Syracuse.”

Image. Ridpath, John Clark, *Ridpath’s History of the World*, 1901. *World History: Ancient and Medieval Eras*. ABC-CLIO, 2013. Web. 16 July 2013

### The Peloponnesian War (431 B.C.E.-404 B.C.E.)

As Athens became more and more influential, many city-states became angry with Athens because of its control of the Delian League. This anger was especially true with Sparta, who formed a competing **Peloponnesian League** and went to war with Athens. Because of an outbreak of disease in Athens, and the strength of the Peloponnesian League, Athens eventually was defeated. This end to the Greek Golden Age for Athens slowed its cultural development, and it lost most of its political power.

### Alexander the Great

Because the Greek defenses were weakened by the Peloponnesian War, King Philip II of Macedonia (an area north of Greece) was able to conquer most of Greece. Philip’s son, Alexander the Great expanded the empire into Africa and Asia by defeating the Persian Empire. Alexander’s victory over the Persians was significant as it spread Greek culture beyond the Mediterranean Sea. Alexander made it as far east as India and as far south as Egypt.



## The Spread of Hellenistic Culture

As Alexander the Great continued to expand his empire, he spread Greek culture with him. Along the way it was mixed with Egyptian, Persian, and Indian cultures. This mix of cultures is called the Hellenistic culture. This spread would influence many later world cultures. This mix of cultures is called the **Hellenistic** culture. This spread would influence many later world cultures

### The Spread of Alexander the Great's Empire

Source: <http://go.grolier.com/atlas?id=mh00072>

### Key Vocabulary

**Mycenaeans:** an ancient people who lived in what is now Greece

**Minoans:** an ancient people that lived in what is now Crete

**Dorians:** an ancient people that lived in what is now Greece

**Golden Age:** a time period that is considered to be very successful or the highest point of a civilization

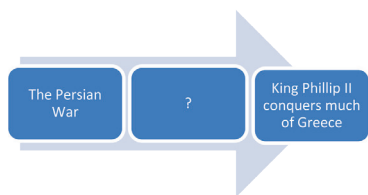
**Pericles:** an Athenian general and leader during the Greek Golden Age

**Peloponnesian League:** Sparta and its allies during the Peloponnesian War

**Hellenistic:** A mix of Greek, Persian, Egyptian, and Indian cultures

### Quick Review

1. Which event best completes the graphic located below?



- A. Alexander the Great conquers the Persian Empire.
- B. The Dorians succeed the Mycenaeans.
- C. The Trojan War.
- D. The Peloponnesian War.

2. What war does the map (below) represent?



- A. The Trojan War
- B. The Persian War
- C. The Peloponnesian War
- D. The Conquests of Philip II

Source: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_Greco-Persian\\_Wars-en.svg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_Greco-Persian_Wars-en.svg)

3. Who of the following was NOT involved in the Peloponnesian War?

- A. Sparta
- B. The Persian Empire
- C. Athens
- D. The Peloponnesian League

4. Explain how Alexander the Great was able to spread Greek culture.

### Connection to Today

We see many elements of Greek culture in our society today because of the spread of Hellenistic culture. Try to name 2-4 stories or movies that you know which involve Greek gods or goddesses.

### Resources

Learn 360

- Famous People, Incredible Lives: Alexander the Great (<http://goo.gl/mhhtr>)
- Peloponnesian War (<http://goo.gl/pjnbT>)