

## Lesson 3: Ancient Greece (800 – 146 BCE)

Have you ever wondered?  
Grandpa's History Lessons that Matter



# Ancient Greece (800 – 146 BCE)

## INTRODUCTION:

- *Ancient Greek civilization was a period of political, philosophical, artistic, and scientific achievements that formed a legacy with unparalleled influence on Western civilization. The Greeks were made up of a number of city-states such as Sparta and Athens. Typically, these city-states fought each other, but they united to fight against the Persians.*
- *The history of Ancient Greece can be divided into different periods. The three main periods we will cover here are the Archaic Period, the Classical Period, and the Hellenistic Period.*
- *During the Archaic Period the Greek government began to form with the rise of the city-states such as Athens and Sparta. This was also when the Greeks began to explore philosophy and theatre.*
- *The Classical Period began with the introduction of democracy in Athens. Athens also rose to new heights in art and philosophy. It was during this period that Athens and Sparta fought in the Peloponnesian Wars. Near the end of the Classical Period Alexander the Great rose to power conquering much of Europe and Western Asia.*
- *The death of Alexander the Great ushered in the Hellenistic Period. During this period, Greece slowly declined in power until it was finally conquered by Rome.*

*“It happens in humans, too. Some behaviors that seem harsh to us now ensured the survival of early man in whatever swamp he was in at the time. Without them, we wouldn’t be here. We still store those instincts in our genes, and they express themselves when certain circumstances prevail. Some parts of us will always be what we were, what we had to be to survive – way back yonder.” – From Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens*

*“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” — Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom*

# Ancient Greece (800 – 146 BCE)

## *Unparalleled Influence on Western Civilization*





# Ancient Greece (800 – 146 BCE)

## Unparalleled Influence on Western Civilization

The ancient Olympic Games were a sporting event held every four years at the sacred site of Olympia, in honour of the Greek god Zeus. Involving participants and spectators from all over Greece and even beyond, the Games were the most important cultural event in ancient Greece and were held from 776 BCE to 393 CE. So important were the Games in the ancient world that they were even used as a basis for the calendar.

### First Olympic Games

776 BCE

750 BCE

### Homer

Homer begins to write the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. These epic poems become two of the most famous literary works in Greek literature.

Hailed among historians as the father of ancient Greek philosophy, Aristotle points to Thales as the first person to have investigated basic principles such as the origin of matter. Thales is also said to be the founder of the school of natural philosophy.

### Thales of Miletus (620–546 BCE)

620 BCE

### Pythagoras

Makes major advances in science, math, and philosophy, founding a philosophical school that tried to find a mutual harmony between real life and the practical aspects of philosophy. We still use the Pythagorean Theorem today to help with geometry.

570 BCE

About 550 BCE, Cyrus I, emperor of Persia, conquered the territory of Ionia (the west coast of Modern Turkey). For all of their advances in science and mathematics, these well-established city-states seemed the most prominent in Greece.

### At War with Persia

550 BCE

508 BCE

### Democracy

Democracy is introduced in Athens by Cleisthenes. He establishes a constitution and is often called the "Father of Athenian Democracy". This is one of the great accomplishments of the Greek culture.

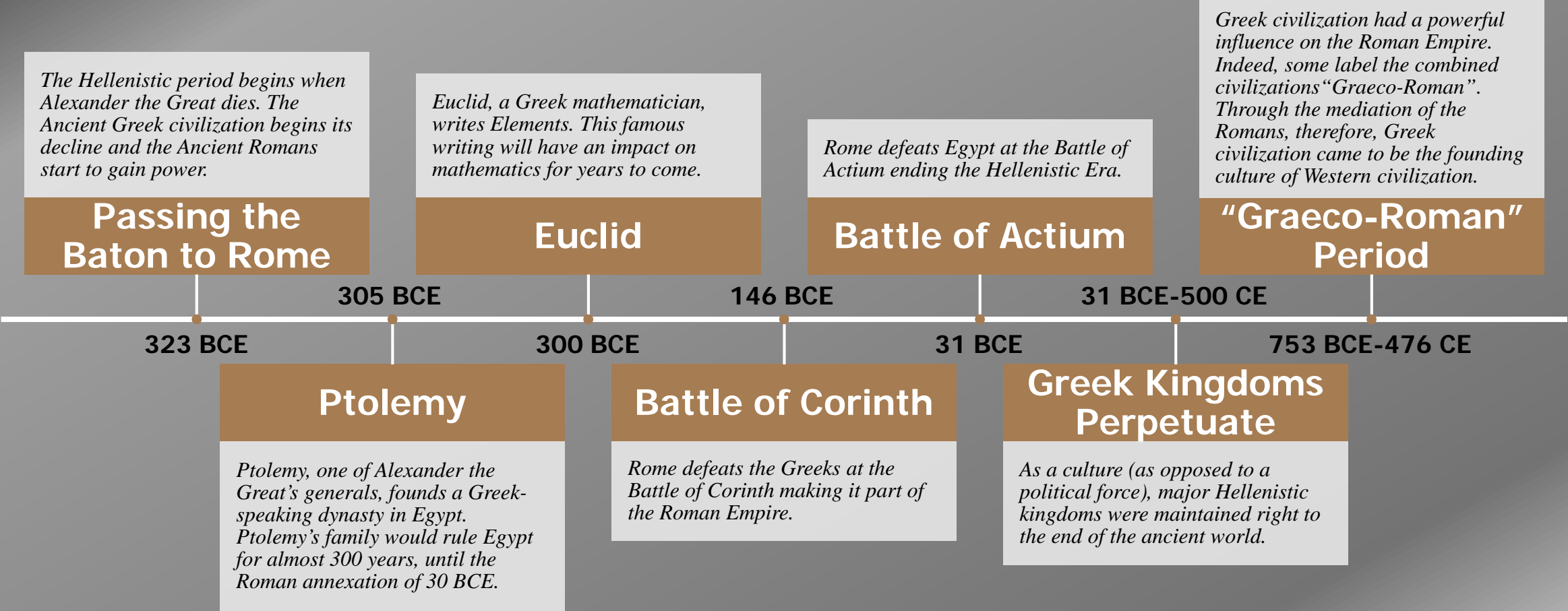
# Ancient Greece (800 – 146 BCE)

## *Greek Classical Period (480 - 323 BCE)*



# Ancient Greece (800 – 146 BCE)

## Greek Hellenistic Period (323 - 31 BCE)



**MORE FUN, MORE FACTS  
ABOUT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT  
PEOPLE AND EVENTS  
IN ANCIENT GREECE**

# Zeus

## Greek God of the Sky and Thunder, King of the Gods

- *Zeus was the king of the Greek gods who lived on Mount Olympus. He was the god of the sky and thunder. His symbols include the lightning bolt, the eagle, the bull, and the oak tree. He was married to the goddess Hera.*

*What powers did Zeus have?*

- *Zeus was the most powerful of the Greek gods and had a number of powers. His most famous power is the ability to throw lightning bolts. His winged horse Pegasus carried his lightning bolts and he trained an eagle to retrieve them. He could also control the weather causing rain and huge storms.*
- *Zeus also had other powers. He could mimic people's voices to sound like anyone. He could also shape shift so that he looked like an animal or a person. If people made him angry, sometimes he would turn them into animals as punishment.*





# Democracy in Ancient Greece

- The ancient Greeks were the first to create a democracy. The word “democracy” comes from two Greek words that mean people (*demos*) and rule (*kratos*). Democracy is the idea that the citizens of a country should take an active role in the government of their country and manage it directly or through elected representatives. In addition, it supports the idea that the people can replace their government through peaceful transfers of power rather than violent uprising or revolution. Thus, a key part of democracy is that the people have a voice.
- The first known democracy in the world was in Athens. Athenian democracy developed around the fifth century B.C.E. The Greek idea of democracy was different from present-day democracy because, in Athens, all adult citizens were required to take an active part in the government. If they did not fulfill their duty they would be fined and sometimes marked with red paint. The Athenian definition of “citizens” was also different from modern-day citizens: only free men were considered citizens in Athens. Women, children, and slaves were not considered citizens and therefore could not vote.







Battle of Marathon



Battle of Thermopylae



Battle of Salamis

# Greek/Persian Wars (490-480 BCE)

## Three Famous Battles

- **490 BCE** – The Ionians decide to revolt and ask Athens and other Greek cities for help. The other Greek cities sent ships and weapons but were quickly defeated. The Persians didn't like this and **Darius I, King of Persia**, decided he wanted to conquer the Greeks. The first of three battles, the **Battle of Marathon** (490 BCE), was won by the Greeks. After the battle, Pheidippides of the Athenian army ran the 25 miles back to Athens in order to prevent the Persians from attacking the city -- thus the **origin of the Marathon running race**.
- **480 BCE** - Ten years later, **the son of Darius I, King Xerxes**, decided to get his revenge on the Greeks. The Greeks put together a small force, led by the **Spartan King Leonidas I** and 300 Spartans. They decided to meet the Persians at a narrow pass in the mountains called Thermopylae (**Battle of Thermopylae**). The Greeks held off the Persians killing thousands, until the Persians found a way around the mountains and got behind the Greeks. King Leonidas told most of his troops to flee but stayed behind with a small force including his 300 Spartans in order to allow the rest of the Greek army to escape. The Spartans fought to the death, killing as many Persians as they could.
- The Persian army continued to march on Greece. When they arrived at the city of Athens, they found it deserted. The people of Athens had fled. The Persians burned the Acropolis. The Athenian fleet, however, was waiting off the coast by the island of Salamis. The much larger Persian fleet attacked the small Athenian ships (**Battle of Salamis**). They were sure of victory. However, the Athenian ships, called triremes, were fast and maneuverable. They rammed into the sides of the large Persian ships and sunk them. They soundly defeated the Persians causing Xerxes to retreat to Persia.



# The Parthenon (432 BCE)

## An Epic Monument

---

When you travel to Athens, this monument on the Acropolis, is a “must see”!



# Famous Greek Philosophers (470-322 BCE) Big Ideas

- **470-399 BCE - Socrates' Big Ideas**

- Argued that Athenians were wrong-headed in their emphasis on families, career and politics at the expense of the welfare of their souls;
- Is sometimes attributed the statement “I know that I know nothing,” to denote an awareness of his ignorance, and in general, the limitations of human knowledge;
- Believed misdeeds were a consequence of ignorance, that those who engaged in non-virtuous behavior did so because they didn't know any better.

- **427-347 BCE - Plato's Big Ideas**

- Founds the first institution of higher learning in the western world. It's called the Academy.
- Expressed the view, often referred to as Platonism, that those whose beliefs are limited only to perception are failing to achieve a higher level of perception, one available only to those who can see beyond the material world;
- Articulated the theory of forms, the belief that the material world is an apparent and constantly changing world but that another, invisible world provides unchanging causality for all that we do see;
- Held the foundational epistemological view of “justified true belief,” that for one to know that a proposition is true, one must have justification for the relevant true proposition.

- **384–322 BCE - Aristotle's Big Ideas**

- Asserted the use of logic as a method of argument and offered the basic methodological template for analytical discourse;
- Espoused the understanding that knowledge is built from the study of things that happen in the world, and that some knowledge is universal — a prevailing set of ideas throughout Western Civilization thereafter;
- Defined metaphysics as “the knowledge of immaterial being,” and used this framework to examine the relationship between substance (a combination of matter and form) and essence, from which he devises that man is comprised from a unity of the two.

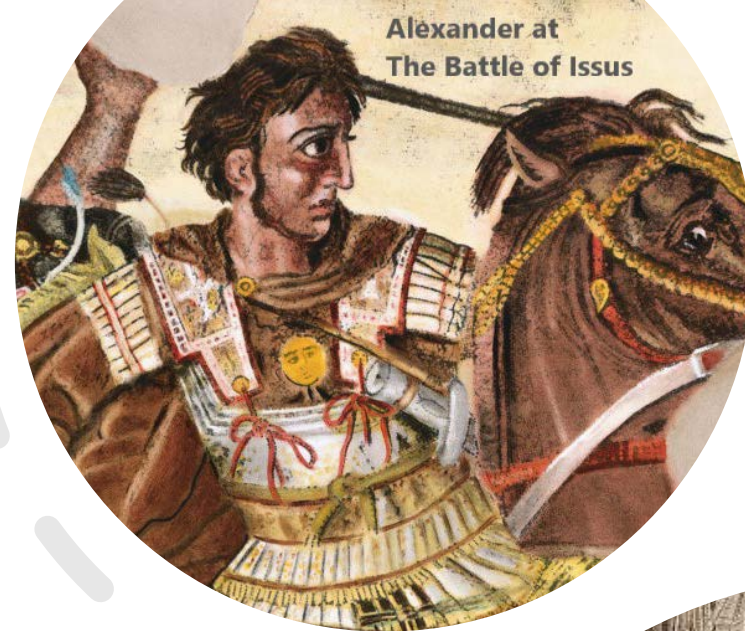




# Alexander the Great

## "Great", but not as great as Cyrus!

- **342 BCE** - The great philosopher, scientist, and mathematician, **Aristotle**, begins to tutor Alexander (later to be called Alexander the Great).
- **336 BCE** - Alexander the Great (356 BCE – 323 BCE) becomes king when **his father, Philip of Macedon is assassinated**.
- **333 BCE** – Alexander, an avid admirer of Cyrus the Great, conquered Egypt, establishing the new capital of Egypt at Alexandria. Over the next several years Alexander would greatly expand his empire, defeating Darius III of Persia and conquering much of the Achaemenid Empire on the way to India, annexing it to Macedon (northern Greece where Alexander was born and raised) and earning himself the epithet 'the Great'. When Alexander died in 323 BCE, Greek power and influence was at its zenith. Upon Alexander's death, most of the empire's former territory fell under the rule of the Ptolemaic Kingdom and Seleucid Empire, in addition to other minor territories which gained independence at that time. The Iranian elites of the central plateau reclaimed power by the second century BCE under the Parthian Empire.
- British historian Charles Freeman suggests that "In scope and extent his achievements [Cyrus] ranked far above that of the Macedonian king, Alexander, who was to demolish the Achaemenid Empire in the 320s but fail to provide any stable alternative."



# Macedonian Empire (323 BCE)

## *From Macedonia to India*

