Ancient Greece ~part 1
Describe the characteristics of Ancient Greece’s geography:
1. **Sea:** heavy influence on physical environment of Greece (Aegean Sea, Ionian Sea)

2. **Mountains** (with narrow valleys): cover more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of Greece’s surface area

3. **Islands:** more than 2000 islands (Crete being the largest)

4. **Climate:** winter = mild climate; summer = hot climate with rainfall from October to March = long growing season
Effects of Geography

- **Seafaring tradition**: reliance on navy and fleets for power and protection
- **Trade & Cultural Links**: sea provided link to trade and cultural exchange with Mediterranean communities
- **Isolationism**: protection but lack of effective communication
- **Polis (independent city states)**: Greece was organized into separated by seas and rugged mountains
- **Emergence of dominant city states** (Athens, Sparta)
RESOURCES

- grain
- fine cheese made of goat’s milk
- timber
- wild game
- wool of sheep = cloth

MOST IMPORTANT CROPS

- olives = oil
- grapes = wine
- grain
- clay = pottery
3 Major Periods of Ancient Greek Civilization

1. **Early Civilizations**
   Minoans (Crete) and Mycenae (mi se ne)

2. **Classical Greece**
   Flourishing of arts, literature, philosophy; domination by Sparta and Athens

3. **Hellenistic Age**
   Macedonia Empire and Alexander the Great
Early Greeks: The Minoans
c. 3200 -1100 BCE

- Lived on island of Crete
- Great navigators and farmers
- Developed Linear A
- Palace led political, social and economic organization at Knossos
- Artistic expressions and grand construction
- Advancements in bronze
- Built sanctuaries
- Minoan Myth of King Minos at Knossos (minotaur)
Palace of Minos at Knossos (K-NOSS-oss)

- Knossos—most powerful monarch for Minoans
- Palaces controlled all agricultural goods and products by storing in large storerooms
- Palaces became the centres of exchange for Minoan economy
- Palaces had dozens of interconnecting rectangular rooms on two or more storeys which were grouped around a large open courtyard (administrative and religious)
Art work (drawings, murals or frescoes) at Knossos shows dangerous sports such as leaping over the backs of charging bulls as well as dancing, athletics and festivals.
THEORIES FOR DECLINE OF MINOANS

- 1750 BCE - earthquake destroys Minoan palaces
- 1628 BCE - volcano erupts at Thera
- 1400 BCE - War between Minoans and Myceaneans led to decline of power
1490 BCE- Minoan palaces had been rebuilt however all were destroyed except at Knossos by Mycenaean warriors

Mycenaeans took control of Crete at Knossos by 1500 BCE

Myceneans controlled mainland Greece = main political centre was Mycenae

More interested in war as pottery and grave sites reflect hunting, weapons, armour and war as well as fortified palace walls

Developed Linear B

Slowly Minoan culture and traditions disappeared
THEORIES FOR DECLINE OF MYCEANEANS

- Shift in climate leading to drought forcing Myceanans to migrate to more fertile lands
- Tribe of nomadic warriors from north of Greece (Dorians) destroyed Mycenaeans
Was the Trojan War a real historical event or merely a legend in Mycenaean history?
Trojan War
Click here for a link to the story

- Two epic poems by Homer “Iliad” and “Odyssey” describe the Trojan War
- Approximately 1194-1184 BCE
- Greeks vs Troy
- Helen of Sparta + Paris of Troy “the face that launched a thousand ships”
- Achilles, Odysseus, Hector, Agamemnon and the Trojan Horse

- Archaeologist- Heinrich Schliemann (claims that he found Troy and the early Greek civilization of Myceaneans)
Significant events
1) national literature (Homer)
2) resurgence of trade
3) colonization of Sicily and Italy
4) **Olympic Games** -776 BCE
5) stone sculptures of human figure
6) rise of city states (polis)
Dating back to 1400 BC, the Oracle of Delphi was the most important shrine in all Greece as the sanctuary of Apollo. Built around a sacred spring, Delphi was considered to be the center (literally navel) of the world. Questions about the future were answered by the Pythia, the priestess of Apollo. Answers, usually cryptic or ambiguous. Arguments over the correct interpretation of an oracle were common, but the oracle was always happy to give another prophecy if more gold was provided. It is believed that pythias were high on hallucinative gases.
Greek Myths

FUNCTIONS

• Explained the world
• Means of Exploration
• Provided authority and legitimacy
• Entertainment