

Greek Facts

The Five Themes of Geography

1. Location

Exact location: What is the latitude and longitude?

Relative location: "It is north of such and such."

2. Place

What's it like in this place? Describe the characteristics!

Physical features: Natural (land, rivers, mountains, vegetation, climate).

Cultural features: Human (everything that is man-made!)

3. Interaction

How people interact with the environment = land, rivers, sea, climate.

How people adapt to, modify, and depend upon the environment.

Interactions: Grow crops, dig canals, mine for minerals, wear thin clothing for hot climate.

4. Movement

People move in and out. Who? Why? By what means?

Goods move in and out. What? Why? By what means?

Ideas move in and out. What? Why? By what means?

As a result of all this movement, this place is connected to other places.

What places?

5. Region

A region is a territory or area that has common physical or human features.

The Aegean Sea is a region with common physical features (coastline, climate) and cultural features (farming, language, culture, history).

The Location of Greece

1. Greece lies on the Aegean Sea.
2. Greece lies in the region of the Mediterranean Sea.
3. Greece lies on the border of Europe and the Middle East.
4. To the east lies Persia.
5. To the west lies Rome, Italy.
6. To the south lies Egypt.
7. Greece has three regions: The mainland, the peninsula, and lots of islands.
8. Crete is the biggest island.

The Peninsula

9. Most of Greek history took place on the peninsula.
10. The Greek peninsula is shaped like a hand.
11. The Greek peninsula is called the *Peloponnesus*.
12. The Greek peninsula is where history was made.
13. The peninsula was the home of the dominant city of Sparta.

The Natural Setting

14. Greece is a land of rocky hills.
15. About 90% of the land is hilly with poor soil.
16. There was little rainfall.
17. There were no rivers for irrigation.
18. The best soil lies in a few valleys and along the coast.
The farms (and then the cities) arose in those valleys and along the coast.
20. Greece has a Mediterranean climate - like southern California.
21. Greece has mild winters and hot, dry summers.

Farming

22. Farmers raised dry crops - wheat, barley, grapes, and olives.
23. The typical farm had vineyards and olive groves.
24. On the hilly land, people raised olive trees.
25. On the hilly land, people grazed goats and sheep.
26. They raised goats for milk and lamb for meat.
27. Farmers raised goats - and turned goat's milk into feta cheese!

A Seafaring People

28. The shortage of good farmland pushed the Greeks out to sea.
29. Those who could not (or would not) be farmers, became fishermen and sailors.
30. Folks who live on peninsulas and islands tend to become seafaring people.
31. No place in Greece is more than 85 miles from the sea.
32. Greek legends were often about sea voyages.
33. Homer was a blind poet who lived during the Dark Age.
34. Homer wrote two stories - the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* - about long sea voyages.
35. Ulysses was the hero of the *Odyssey*.
36. According to Homer, Odysseus was born in Ithaca, an island in the Ionian Sea.
37. The Ionian Sea lies west of Greece.

The Cities

38. The first cities were city-states.
39. A city-state was a region: One city and its surrounding farms.
40. The two biggest city-states were Athens and Sparta.
41. Athens was the largest city in ancient Greece.
42. Every Greek city was built on a fortified hill.
43. Athens was built on a fortified hill called the Acropolis.
44. An open-air market (the *agora*) lay at the center of the city.
45. The Parthenon was the most famous building in Athens.
46. The Parthenon was built during the Golden Age of Greece.
47. Most of the buildings in Athens, including the Parthenon, are made of marble.
48. The Greeks mined marble in the mountains, not far from Athens.
49. Unlike the Romans, the Greeks did not have roads. The land was too hilly and rocky.

Organized Religion

50. The Greeks believed that their gods and goddesses lived on Mount Olympus.
51. The gods controlled the forces of nature. More important: The gods controlled the fate and destiny of every person in Greece!
52. Greek gods were powerful and immortal (lived forever).
53. Greek gods had human emotions - love, anger, envy.
54. The Olympic games began as a religious festival dedicated to the god Zeus.

Organized Government

55. Athens was the birthplace of democracy.
56. The Athenians created the world's first democratic government.
57. In Athens, each individual* was considered to be important.
58. Each citizen was important; after all, he helped to make laws.
59. Public speaking was important because citizens debated laws.
60. Women and slaves were not allowed to be citizens.

Greek Culture

- 61. Athens was the "Birthplace of Western Civilization."
- 62. Greek philosophers used logic (not gods) to explain the world.
- 63. Greek mathematicians used logic (not gods) to explain math.
- 64. The Greeks invented drama.
- 65. In a Greek play, the main character's life was always shaped by two things - Fate and the character's fatal flaw. His life often ended in tragedy.
- 66. The Greeks built amphitheaters to watch plays.
- 67. An amphitheater is an open-air theater carved into a hillside.
- 68. The climate of Greece (it rarely rained) was perfect for open-air theater.

The Class System

- 69. About 10% of the Greeks were wealthy. Most were landowners.
- 70. About 30% were middle class. Most were farmers and merchants.
- 71. About 60% were poor. The poor were farmers, sailors, and slaves.
- 72. To be a citizen, you had to be male, own land, and be born in Greece.

Language & Writing

- 73. The language was Greek. Writing began around 1400 B.C.
- 74. The Greek alphabet shaped the Roman alphabet, which is our alphabet.
- 75. Many words in English originally came from Greek.
- 76. The oldest Greek literary works are Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.
- 77. From 300 B.C. until 400 A.D., Greek was the language of educated people in Europe.
- 78. The New Testament was first written in Greek.

Technology

- 79. The Greeks were into the humanities - philosophy, literature, and the arts.
- 80. The Greeks dealt in theoretical math and science. Euclid, for example, created theories and principles of geometry.
- 81. The Greeks were not famous for practical inventions.

Trade

- 82. The Greeks sailed to other places to trade for things they lacked.
- 83. The Greeks exported wine, olive oil and wool.
- 84. The Greeks imported food, timber, metal, and slaves.
- 85. Each city-state traded with the *other* city-states.
- 86. The Greeks also traded with Egypt and Sicily.

Many Wars

- 87. The Persian Empire invaded Greece twice; twice the Greeks defeated them.
- 88. Athens went to war against Sparta; this ended the Golden Age of Greece.
- 89. Alexander the Great ruled Greece; he spread Greek culture all the way to India.