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## Prepare to Read

### Section 2 Religion, Philosophy, and the Arts

#### Objectives

1. Identify the religious beliefs of the ancient Greeks.
2. Explore how the Greeks searched for knowledge about the world.
3. Describe the relationship between democracy and new ideas in Greek city-states.



#### Target Reading Skill

**Recognize Sequence Signal Words** Signal words or phrases give you clues when reading. They help you understand what you are reading and prepare you for what's coming next.

There are different kinds of signal words. Some show time, place, or direction. Signal words point out how ideas or events are related. As you read, look for words like *first*, *during that time*, and *in [date]* that signal order.

#### Vocabulary Strategy

**Use Context to Clarify Meaning** Sometimes you can pick up clues from the words, phrases, and sentences around an unfamiliar word to help you understand it. The underlined words in the passage below give clues to the meaning of the word *oracle*.

The Greeks visited **oracles**. At these shrines, they would ask the gods to give them advice or to reveal the future.

An oracle was a shrine where gods could be asked for advice or to reveal the future.

## Section 2 Summary



### Target Reading Skill

What words signal when philosophy and the arts flourished in Athens?

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### ✓ Reading Check

How did Pericles strengthen democracy?

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### ✓ Reading Check

How did the Greeks honor their gods?

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## The Golden Age of Athens

<sup>1</sup> The Golden Age of Athens lasted from 479 B.C. to 431 B.C. Athens grew rich from trade and silver mined by slaves. Its allies paid **tribute**, which added to the city's wealth.

<sup>5</sup> During that time, philosophy, the arts, and democracy thrived. For about 30 years, Pericles was the most powerful man in Athenian politics. The city began to pay officials a salary, so poor citizens could hold office. ✓

## Ancient Greek Religious Beliefs

Greeks worshiped a family of twelve gods. Each ruled a <sup>10</sup> different area of human life and the natural world. The gods had human characteristics, but were **immortal**.

The gods were led by their king, Zeus. He ruled from Mt. Olympus, Greece's highest mountain. Each city-state honored one of the twelve gods by building a <sup>15</sup> temple to that god. Athena (uh THEE nuh) was the patron goddess of Athens.

The Greeks also honored their gods at festivals. Every four years, the city-states came together to honor Zeus at Olympus. The modern Olympic Games are <sup>20</sup> based on this tradition. ✓

The Greeks visited **oracles** to ask the gods for advice or to see into the future.

## The Search for Knowledge

During the Golden Age, several important **philosophers** taught in Athens. One of them was Socrates <sup>25</sup> (SAHK ruh teez). He asked questions that made people think about their beliefs.

### Key Terms

**tribute** (TRIB yoot) *n.* payment made by a less powerful state or nation to a more powerful one

**immortal** (ih MAWR tul) *n.* someone or something that lives forever

**oracle** (OR uh kul) *n.* a sacred site used to consult a god or goddess; any priest or priestess who spoke for the gods

**philosopher** (fih LAHS uh fur) *n.* someone who used reason to understand the world; in Greece the earliest philosophers used reason to explain natural events

Socrates was put on trial and accused of dishonoring the gods and leading young people astray. He was sentenced to death. ✓

30 Plato (PLAY toh) was a friend of Socrates who wrote *The Republic*. It describes an ideal society.

## Visual and Dramatic Arts

The Greeks used architecture and sculpture to honor their gods. The Acropolis was the religious center of Athens, but was destroyed during a war. Pericles  
35 rebuilt it.

With the new Acropolis, Greek architecture reached its peak. The greatest building was a temple to the goddess Athena. Its sculptures are arranged to show balance and order. The goal of Greek art was to show  
40 images of perfection.

Athenians were the first to write plays. Tragedies told of people who were destroyed when they were forced to make impossible choices. Between scenes, a chorus sang poems. The chorus often gave background information,  
45 commented on events, or praised the gods. ✓

Poets also wrote comedies. They made fun of well-known citizens and jokes about the customs of the day.

## Many City-States, One People

The Greeks valued free thinking. They developed new ideas in philosophy, religion, government, and the arts.  
50 The spread of education and wealth from trade allowed them to explore new ideas. ✓

The city-states competed against each other, but their citizens spoke the same language.

## Review Questions

1. What was the Golden Age of Athens?

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2. What characteristic did people in city-states throughout Greece share?

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### Key Term

**tragedy** (TRAJ uh dee) *n.* a serious drama that ends in disaster

## ✓ Reading Check

Why was Socrates put on trial?

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## Vocabulary Strategy

Look at the word *Tragedies* in the underlined sentence. Although it is defined below, there are clues to what it means. Circle the words or phrases that help you learn its meaning.



## ✓ Reading Check

What three things did the chorus in a Greek drama do?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## ✓ Reading Check

What areas did ancient Greeks spend time thinking about?

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