

Ancient Greek Archeobox TN v1

Ancient Greece developed as a series of city-states around the Aegean Sea, and later across the Mediterranean, until they were conquered first by Alexander the Great and then by the Romans. Look carefully at the timeline to see where the artefacts fit into the topic of Ancient Greece

This selection of replica artefacts is designed to help you find out more about everyday life in Ancient Greece.

There are four different collections of replica artefacts:

- soldier's helmet from Corinth
- collection of coins
- a discus that would have been used in the Olympic Games
- a pot, or hydra, for serving wine or water

[1] What can you find out about Ancient Greece by looking at a single artefact? You can use just one or all of artefacts to do this.

Typical questions you might ask an artefact:

1. *Look closely at the object.* If possible handle it. Draw it and label it - what are the key parts?
2. *How is it made?* What is it made of? Where was it made? Who made it? Is it big/small? Is it heavy/light? How can you tell?
3. *How old do you think it is?* New/Old/older/very old? How can you tell?
4. *What do you think it is/was used for?* How can you tell?
5. *Who would have used it?* Were they rich or poor? Where was it used? How did it change people's lives [significance]? How can you tell?

I'm sure you and your children will be able to think of many more questions. It is important to keep a list of those questions you *can't* answer and use those questions as the basis for further research into Roman Britain.

[2] What can you tell about the Ancient Greeks from the helmet?

questions to ask might include:

- why is the helmet so heavy?
- what is it made of?
- why is it so shiny?
- what would it be like to wear? to walk 20 miles a day in? to fight in?

Pull it together by making three lists :

[a] what we can definitely tell about Greek soldiers from the helmet

[b] what we can probably tell about Greek soldiers from the helmet

[c] what we still need to find out about Greek soldiers despite examining the helmet

[3] what can you tell about Ancient Greece from a discus? [At this stage best not to tell them what the object is!]

Look very carefully at the object.

- How heavy is it?
- what is it made of?
- What shape is it?
- What might it be used for?
- Where have you seen another one like it?

They will probably recognise the artefact as a discus, from their PE lessons or from watching sport on television. You might bring into the lesson a modern discus from the PE store - how similar and how different are they? You might also go outside and try throwing the discus, and seeing how far they can throw it. Use this comparison as a way in to discussing the Olympic Games and comparing the Games today with those in Ancient Greece. Which sports were part of the Ancient Olympics? [Originally, only running - it was 708BC before discus was added to the Games] Find out which sports were added and when. Compare the 'Ancient Games' list with those at the latest Olympics - how similar are they and how different? You might finish by asking how important they think sport was to the Ancient Greeks, and why it was so important.

[4] What can you tell about domestic life in Ancient Greece from the coins and the hydra?

What can we tell about life in Ancient Greece from the coins?

1. Looking at an individual coin:

Get them to look carefully at just one coin - either as a class on a whiteboard or in small groups. The children could draw or rub their coin, and label it, as a way to encourage them to look closely at the coin.

Useful questions might include:

- when was this coin made?
- how old is it?
- is it new and shiny, or old and worn?
- who or what is commemorated on the coin?
- how much is it worth?
- what could I have bought with this coin?

You might also do some maths with the children at the same time. Finish up by asking two key questions:

- why do we have coins of different values?
- how useful is a coin as evidence? Is it primary evidence, or secondary evidence?

2. For the set of Ancient Greek coins as a whole:

The main thrust of the activity is to get the children to look carefully at the coins and use them as evidence of life in Ancient Greece. The questions will reflect those from the 'starter' activity:

- what are the coins made from?
- what images do they have on them? Are all the images the same?
- are they all the same size/value/colour/from the same period?
- how well used are they?
- can we date them from the coins themselves?
- how do you think they were made?
- where do you think they were found?
- do you think they would be valuable today?

Some of these - and other questions the children might devise for themselves - you will not be able to answer simply from investigating the coins. For example, 'how were they made?' Use these unanswered questions as a basis to research Ancient Greece

Ask the children what they think they could have bought, at the time, with each of the coins. Then carry out some research to find out what each of the coins would really have bought. Compare the results with what coins of similar value might buy today.

What can we tell about life in Ancient Greece from the hydra?

Useful questions might include:

- what is it?
- what might it have been used for? How can you tell?
- what is it made from?
- why is it decorated the way it is? What do the pictures show?
- is it valuable?
- does it have a special meaning?

Finally, using both artefacts - coins and hydra together - what conclusions can you draw about domestic life in Ancient Greece?

- about how well off people were
- about what they ate and drank
- about religion in Ancient Greece - are any of the pieces to do with gods and beliefs?
- how similar and how different were Ancient Greek pots to those people use today?
- how similar and how different were Ancient Greek coins to those we use today?

Again, you might pull this activity together by making three lists :

[a] what we can definitely tell about domestic life from the two artefacts

[b] what we can probably tell about domestic life from the two artefacts

[c] what we still need to find out about domestic life despite examining the two artefacts

[5] Finally, pulling it all together.....

You want the children to begin to draw some conclusions about life in Ancient Greece from what they have discovered - even if their main conclusion is that I need to find out more about life at the time before I can reach any strong conclusions. They should be able to make a list of unanswered questions they want to find the answers to!

Have fun. Alf Wilkinson June 2018, v1