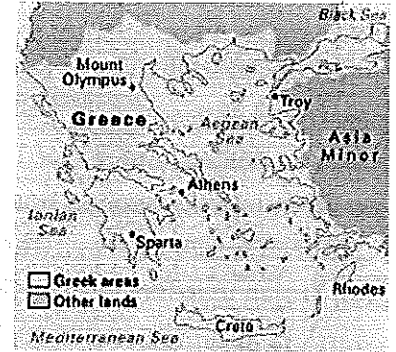


## Classical Greece

**Geography:** When it was first beginning to develop, Greece was not a united country—it was just an area of land where people spoke the Greek language. Greece is on a very mountainous peninsula (in Europe) that goes into the Mediterranean Sea. The area of Greece also contains close to 2,000 islands (some large, some very small!) in the Ionian (eye-oh-nee-uhn) and Aegean (ih-JEE-uhn) Seas. Because they lived near the sea, they developed into skilled sailors and traders. This was necessary—the land of Greece has very few natural resources and almost all of the land is extremely difficult to farm.

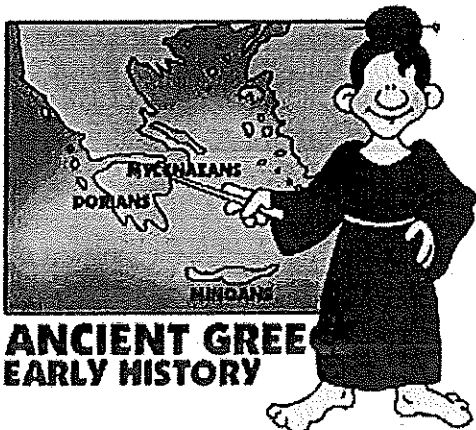


The many mountains of the Greece mainland divide the land into different regions. Due to this, the different areas ruled themselves as city-states, rather than having a united government. Citizens were loyal to their own city-states. In fact, Greek city-states would often fight against one another!

There was very little fresh water in Greece, so they could not hold a large population. This is one reason why, as they grew, they found a need to colonize in different areas in the world. Additionally, the climate in Greece is very mild throughout both the summer and winter. This allowed many people to spend most of their time outdoors, socializing and participating in civic events.

**Minoans** – The Minoans developed a very sophisticated civilization on the large Greek island of Crete. They were very elegant, developing beautiful pottery and artwork. On their island, they developed a writing system based off the Greek language, and their sailors and traders were able to help spread their ideas to other parts of Greece. They came around 3000 B.C.

**Mycenaeans** – Eventually, another group came to Greece, and that was around 2000 B.C. They were the Mycenaean (my-see-nee-an) people, named because they settled on a steep ridge in the city of Mycenae (my-see-nee). As they grew in size, they became more and more powerful, and started controlling surrounding areas such as Athens.

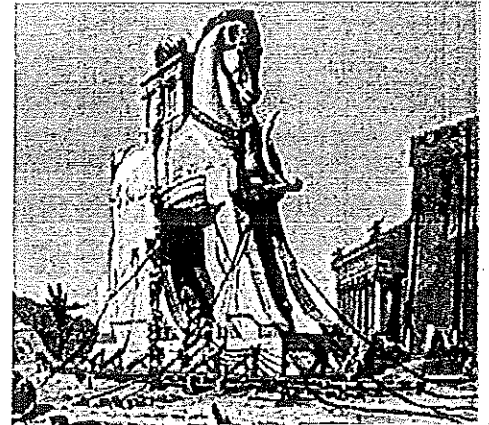


**Cultures Meet** – Around 1500 B.C., the Greek speaking Minoans came into contact with the Greek speaking Mycenaeneans. As this happened, the Mycenaeneans began to see the value of sea trade. Mycenaean traders soon began traveling all throughout the Mediterranean Sea.

Minoans also influenced the Mycenaeneans through: their writing system, pottery, religion, political ideas, art, and literature. Because Greek culture would later spread through most of Europe and the known world (outside of Asia), one could argue that most of the entire western civilization has its roots in these two civilizations of Greece.

**Trojan War:** During the time period around 1200 B.C., the sea faring traders from Mycenae in Greece fought a 10 year war against the Trojan warriors of the city of Troy. Troy was an independent city in Anatolia (present day Turkey; the Hittites were around there). The story goes like this—a Prince from Troy kidnapped Helen, the beautiful wife of a Greek King! Could you imagine that?! Well, of course, the Greek King was pretty ticked off. In response, he sent his Mycenaean army to destroy the city of Troy.

Another legend involves how the Greek Mycenaeans were able to capture the city of Troy. The legend states that the Greeks presented the Trojan warriors with a gift—a gigantic wooden horse. When the Troy warriors accepted and brought it in, they found out that it was filled with Greek warriors ready to fight! The Greeks (Mycenaeans) won the battle, and gained control of the waterways nearby, allowing them access into the Black Sea.

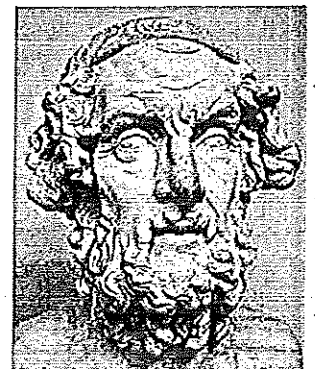


**The Dorians:** Soon after the Trojan war, another Greek speaking group burned and took over the Mycenaean cities. These people were the Dorians. This group was far less sophisticated than the Mycenaeans, but also far meaner! Unfortunately, they didn't know how to write, so during the 400 year period in which they took over (between 1150 B.C. and 750 B.C.), there was no written records of what happened in Greece! Darn, those Dorians!

**Homer:** This guy was the man! Now, is he the one on the left or on the right? Writing did not exist during the Dorian time period of Greece. Instead, history was passed on through story telling. Homer was the greatest story teller of all. Although we do not know much about his personal life (I believe he was married to a lady named Marge, with three children—Bart, Lisa, and Maggie—but that may not be true),



we do know that he left behind the epics that he composed around 750 B.C. (Epic – long narrative poems celebrating legends). His greatest epic, the Iliad, is based around the Trojan War. The two heroes of the Iliad are the fierce Greek warrior Achilles and the courageous and noble Hector of Troy. The values shown by the heroes of his epic tales—courage, fierceness, dedication, virtue, excellence—were later seen in Greek culture, both on the battlefield, and in the Olympic Games. Homer's stories had a huge impact on later Greek life.



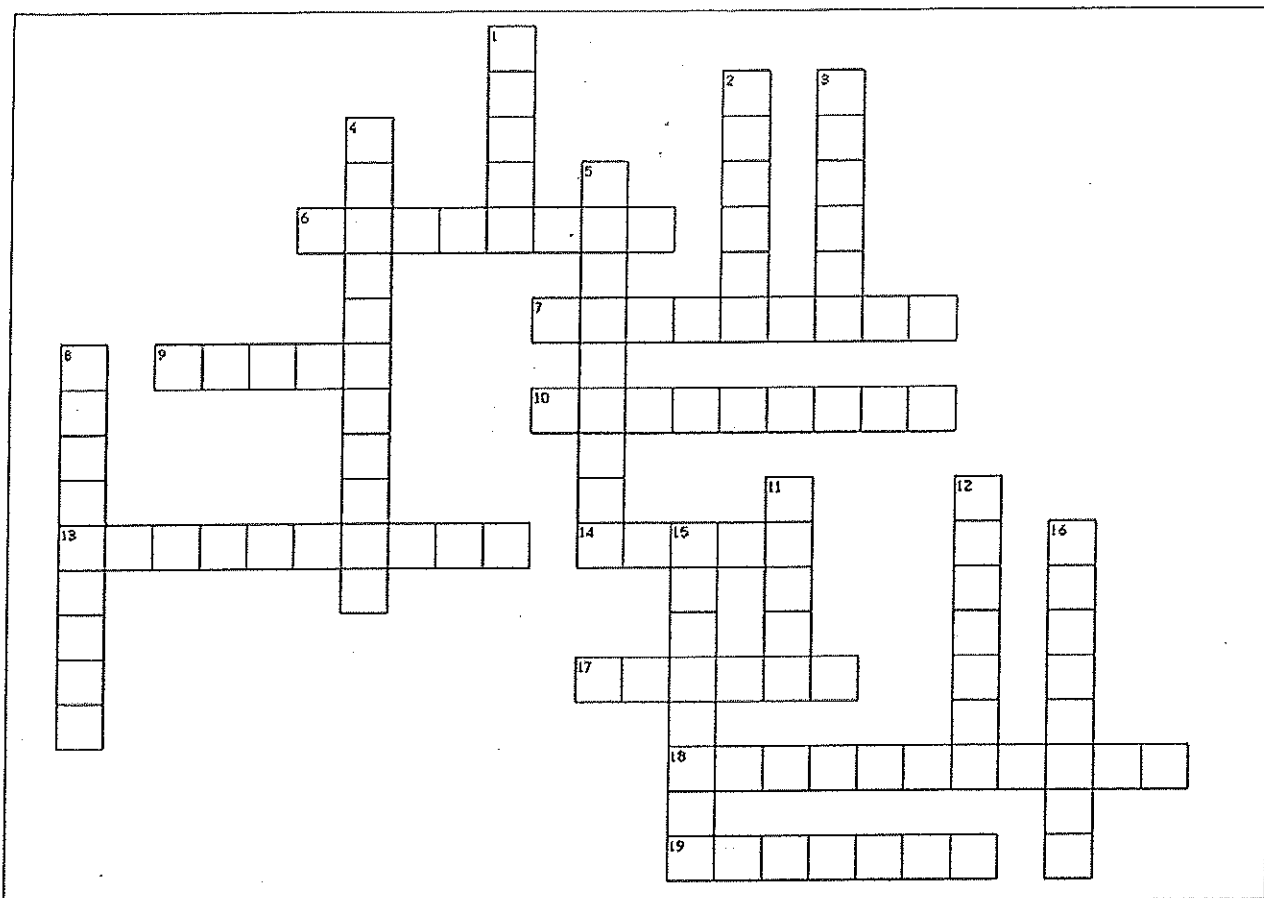
**Greek Myths:** Homer and the Greeks also developed sets of myths, or traditional stories, about their gods. The myths created by the Greeks explain so many mysteries of nature and of human values. These myths explain how there are gods for the seasons changing; gods for natural disasters; gods for love, hate, jealousy, wisdom. The god of all gods was Zeus, and he lived on the hill of Mount Olympus! Zeus's wife, Hera, was tired of his relationships with other women, and she became the Goddess of women and marriage. His favorite daughter, Athena, became the Goddess of wisdom, and the guardian of cities—specifically Athens, which was named after her.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Classical Greece Questions!**

**Answer all of the following in complete sentences!!!!**

1. What impact did the geography of Greece have on them becoming sea-faring traders rather than farmers?
2. Why was Greece divided into city-states rather than united as one single country?
3. As the Minoans and Mycenaeans began to meet, how did the Minoans influence the Mycenaean culture?
4. According to legend, why were the Greek Mycenaeans fighting against Troy?
5. What impact did the wooden horse have on the battle?
6. Why was history lost during the Dorian period?
7. What impact did Homer's epics have on later Greek culture?
8. What battle was the Iliad based on?
9. What traits were seen in the heroes of Homer's epics?
10. What are myths, and give three examples of myths for Greek gods.



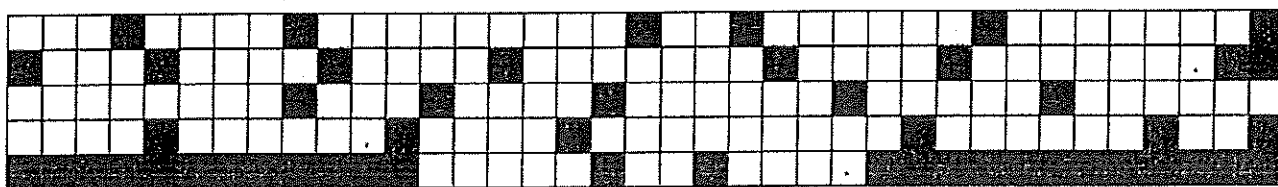
## Ancient Greece Crossword! hint: 18 is 'ballfighting'

**Across**

- 6. first govt of Athens
- 7. type of cities in Greece
- 9. starts democracy
- 10. non-elected govt of Sparta
- 13. Homer's story of army's return
- 14. writes Athens' first laws
- 17. city of trade and arts
- 18. Minoan sport
- 19. another name for dictatorship

**Down**

- 1. famous Greek storyteller
- 2. worked the farms, had no rights
- 3. military city
- 4. the "gift" left for Troy
- 5. Homer's story of Troy
- 8. 3/4 of Greece is this kind of land
- 11. had no rights without husband
- 12. all adult males of Athens were
- 15. Greece had a simple \_\_\_\_
- 16. technology of lost Minoans



O I O R

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# Greek & Roman Mythology

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