

Unit 15 How do we use ancient Greek ideas today?

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children use their own experience, particularly of being at school, as a springboard to find out about the influence that the ancient Greeks continue to have on our lives. Children use a wide range of sources, including archaeology, to find out about the ancient Greeks and compare a past society with society today.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on others that have focused on archaeological evidence (Units 6A, 6B, 6C) and complements Unit 14 'Who were the ancient Greeks?' It provides opportunities for making comparisons with other ancient civilisations, eg the Indus Valley civilisation, (Unit 16), and ancient Egypt, (Unit 10), and to consider why the Greek civilisation has had an impact on our lives.

ADAPTING THE UNIT FOR A DIFFERENT AGE GROUP

Year 3 and 4 children could:

- be given lists of words with Greek origins and use simple dictionaries to find other words with similar beginnings and endings
- practise writing the letters of the Greek alphabet by writing their names and those of friends
- use structured enquiry sheets that focus on the use of individual sources to find out about school life in ancient Greece
- be given more guidance on which sources to use to find out about the scholars
- produce work on the modern and ancient Olympic games separately and complete a guided and structured comparison
- give only a limited range of comparisons and fewer reasons for the differences in the games
- briefly describe and illustrate what the ancient Greeks gave us

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if the children have:

- learnt about the way of life of people from different cultures who lived in the distant past
- considered some of the attitudes and values of people living in the distant past, their motives and the results of their actions
- used artefacts, buildings and pictures of Greece as sources of information
- compared the way of life today with that of people living a long time ago

VOCABULARY

In this unit, children will have opportunities to use:

- words associated with the study of ancient Greece, eg *legacy, civilisation*
- words derived from the Greek language, eg *alphabet, technology, history, geography, telephone*
- words associated with the passing of time, eg *ancient, BC, AD*
- words associated with Greek architecture, eg *sculpture, column, frieze, capital*
- the meaning and spelling of prefixes and suffixes derived from Greek

RESOURCES

- a dictionary that includes descriptions of the origins of words
- a copy of the Greek alphabet for every child
- pictures of Greek coins, inscriptions on buildings, memorials, vases and sculptures
- a range of written and picture sources about school life and famous Greek scholars, eg *Pythagoras, Euclid, Herodotus, Archimedes, Hippocrates*
- postcards or pictures of remains of ancient Greek buildings and of famous local or national buildings in classical style
- video or printed material about the modern Olympic games
- a classroom display including a labelled plan of the excavated remains of ancient Olympia

EXPECTATIONS

at the end of this unit

most children will:

know the ways the ancient Greeks influenced their own and others' lives today; give reasons why the way of life in ancient Greece and life today are different in some ways; select and combine information from a range of sources to answer specific questions about the past; interpret an aspect of the lives of the ancient Greeks in order to recreate it; produce a summary of what they have found out, as a structured, extended piece of writing

some children will not have made so much progress and will:

know about the way of life of the ancient Greeks; select information from individual sources to answer questions about the past; know that the ancient Greeks have influenced school life today; produce a structured summary of what they have learnt

some children will have progressed further and will:

give reasons why we use ideas from ancient Greece today; compare and contrast the ancient and modern versions of the Olympic games; work independently to produce a structured account of the Greek legacy using dates and terms as appropriate

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- that many English words have Greek origins
- to identify some of the words and prefixes, suffixes and letter strings that indicate that a word has Greek origins

- that the ancient Greeks had their own written alphabet and language
- to recognise the similarities and differences between the English and Greek alphabets

- to develop a range of questions to ask about school life in past times
- to deduce from a range of sources what life at school was like in ancient Greece
- to consider why school life was different for children living in ancient Greece than school life today

- that Greek architectural and mathematical ideas directly and indirectly influence buildings around us

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Which Greek words do we use today and why?

Ask the children *What does the word history mean?* Record their suggestions and ask how they can find out the meaning of words.

Give children dictionaries with definitions that include references to the origins of words. Once the children have discovered that the word 'history' has Greek origins, ask them to think about other school subjects and repeat the search.

Discuss with the children what it tells them about ancient Greeks if mathematics, geography and technology were originally Greek words. Ask them whether there are other words with similar prefixes and suffixes with Greek origins, eg *geo-*, *-ology*, *photo-*, *phon-*, *tech-*, *-phobia*.

Ask the children to find as many Greek words as they can and to produce a word bank or IT database with their findings. Set children the challenge of adding as many 'Greek' words as possible over the time they are working on the unit.

Is the Greek alphabet like ours?

Give the children pictures showing inscriptions on Greek coins, buildings, memorials, vases and sculptures. Ask them to look carefully at the writing and copy as many words or letters as they can. Ask them whether they think the evidence shows the ancient Greeks had a written language. *Did they use the same alphabet as we use? What is similar? What is different? What does the word 'alphabet' mean?*

Give the children copies of the Greek alphabet showing the names of the letters and their sounds. Ask the children to discover which letters are the same and which are different from those used in English. Encourage them to try to pronounce the words they have copied from the inscriptions.

What similarities are there between ancient Greek schools and our school?

Ask the children to draw on their own experiences of school to work out the questions they need to ask to find out about the school life of children in ancient Greece. Discuss the children's ideas and agree a set of suitable questions, eg *Did all children go to school? How old were children when they started and left school? What subjects did they learn at school? What games did they play? What equipment did they have?* List the questions on a large sheet of paper for reference.

Discuss with the children the types of sources of information that may have survived that can be used to help find the answers. Ask the children to decide which questions can be answered with the help of pictures and written descriptions of objects discovered by archaeologists. Ask the children to use available sources, eg *texts, pictures and objects*, to find answers to their questions, noting the sources used beside each question.

Ask the children to answer, in a paragraph, *How was school in ancient Greece similar to and different from school today?*

Discuss with the children why school life would have been different for ancient Greek children. Ask them to add another paragraph explaining the reasons for the differences.

How have the ancient Greeks influenced our buildings?

Introduce the children to Greek architectural features.

Ask the children to use a range of sources to make a collection of local and national buildings that show some 'classical' features. Ask the children to identify decorative features, eg *column, capitals*, and investigate the use of proportion and the Golden Rectangle. Discuss why this style of architecture has been used so widely, eg *the messages Victorian builders were giving by using this style*.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

CHILDREN

- know that 'history' means 'enquiry'
- select words with Greek origins from a dictionary
- recognise that words with certain prefixes and suffixes are likely to be Greek in origin

- deduce that the Greeks had a spoken and written language
- copy accurately part, or all, of an inscription
- recognise the similarities and differences between the English and Greek alphabets

- devise appropriate questions for the enquiry
- find answers to the questions using a range of sources of information
- describe and explain the similarities and differences between school in ancient Greece and now
- provide some reasons why education was different then

- identify aspects of Greek culture in their local surroundings
- show understanding that Greek architectural ideas were prized by people living in recent times

POINTS TO NOTE

This activity provides opportunities for links with work in reading and writing on word roots, prefixes and suffixes. Highlight the significance of such word parts in suggesting meaning and spelling. This activity provides a useful context for work on etymology.

These activities could be linked with an investigation of the influence of the Greek language on English today.

Children could look around their local area for buildings with Greek inscriptions.

Children could look at their first names and decide which have a Greek origin, eg *George, Alexander, Helen*.

Abacuses and replicas of wax tablets can be bought or made.

This activity could be adapted by providing children with questions to ask from specific sources.

Children could discuss how the ancient Greeks borrowed architectural features from the ancient Egyptians and modified them and how the Greek architectural style was adapted and used by the Romans.

There are opportunities to link this work to shape and space in mathematics.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- about the contribution made by ancient Greek scholars to our knowledge and understanding of the world
- to select information from encyclopedias and summarise it appropriately for a specific purpose

- reasons why the ancient Greek games took place
- the main features of the ancient Olympic games
- to compare the ancient and the modern games
- to make their own interpretation of the ancient Olympic games

- to summarise all that they have learnt about the legacy of the ancient Greeks
- to make judgements about the relative importance of the different contributions of the ancient Greeks to life today
- to select, organise and structure information in a piece of extended writing

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

What did the ancient Greek great thinkers contribute to our knowledge of history, geography and other school subjects?

Produce two sets of cards: one stating the names of ancient Greek scholars and one stating their main discoveries or contributions to knowledge. Ask the children to use reference sources, eg *encyclopedias*, *CD-ROMs*, to find out about each of the scholars and match them to their contributions. Discuss the children's answers.

Tell the children about CVs and the type of information they contain. Ask them to produce a CV for one of the scholars for a class display, including information that shows that the scholar contributed to our knowledge of geography, history, etc.

In what ways are the modern Olympic games like the ancient ones?

Discuss with the children what they know about the Olympic games. *Why are the games held? How often are they held? Who takes part? How do they prepare for the games? What are the different events? What prizes do the winners receive? Who watches the games?* List the questions on one large sheet of paper and the answers on another.

Discuss with the children what evidence they might have of the last school sports day and of the last modern Olympic games. Ask them to consider which of these things will survive a long time and which will soon be destroyed.

Ask the children to read and find out about the ancient Olympic games, using the questions above to structure their enquiry.

Organise for the children to hold a mini ancient Olympic games.

Discuss how the children's ancient Olympics differed from the modern version. Ask them to suggest possible reasons for the differences. The information can be recorded on a Venn diagram, or in a two-column grid with the columns labelled 'ancient' and 'modern', and the rows labelled 'Location', 'Reason for games', 'Events', etc.

What has been passed down to us from the ancient Greeks? Which is the most important? Why?

Discuss with the children what has been passed to our society from ancient Greeks. Use their responses to develop a skeleton plan for a piece of structured extended writing.

Ask the children to suggest the main points and then structure their suggestions to create paragraph headings. Ask them to summarise what they have learnt under the appropriate paragraph headings.

Ask the children to consider which contribution is the most important, and why. Ask them to draw or select a picture to represent what they consider to be the most important legacy.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

CHILDREN

- match the scholars to their contributions
- produce a CV of one of the scholars, including relevant information

- provide information about the modern Olympic games
- use a range of appropriate sources to find out about the ancient Olympic games
- feed back accurate information to the rest of the class and contribute to a class discussion on the ancient Olympic games
- suggest similarities and/or differences between ancient and modern games

- select the main points from what they have learnt about the contributions the ancient Greeks have made to life today
- decide which contribution is the most important and give at least one reason for that selection
- produce a piece of structured, extended writing that answers the questions

POINTS TO NOTE

The task could be produced for the children in the form of a 'heads' and 'tails' sheet rather than on cards and would be a suitable activity for homework.

This activity provides an opportunity to reinforce and extend children's research skills, eg *retrieving information from a text, evaluating its usefulness*.

It can be linked with work in English on biography and autobiography. Teach the children how to summarise information for a CV. Use examples of CVs to discuss presentation, eg *the use of headings to organise and highlight information*.

When considering the influence of Pythagoras, the work could be linked to mathematics.

This activity can be combined with the activity on the ancient Olympic games in Unit 14. Children could be read to or told about the ancient Olympic games, rather than carry out an enquiry.

If the class held a mini ancient Olympic games, links could be made to physical education. Children will need to use athletic equipment and PE facilities to practise, and the safety of the children needs to be ensured at all times. Where more than one class will be completing this unit in the year, the activity may best be carried out as a joint event.

Alternatively, children could develop a class display or produce a 'Guide to the ancient Olympics'.

This activity could be adapted by using an IT word-processing package to provide the children with paragraph headings and a range of examples of possible text for use. The children could select the text they wish to use for each of the headings, and cut and paste and print out their answers to the question.

