Exploring Ancient Greek Religion

Overview of the Unit

Children from a range of ages can use this unit to find about the religion of the Ancient Greeks: teachers should select the material they would find useful for their particular age-group.

- This scheme of work is aimed primarily at KS2 (History), but teachers have reported that it is very useful for KS3 students studying the ancient world or ancient languages.
- It accompanies a series of podcasts that may also be useful for advanced KS2, and KS3 students.
- In addition, teachers have reported that Year 13 students (studying Latin) have successfully used the lectures (and some of the exercises) for background; these may also be useful in preparation for OCR A Level Classical Civilisation (H408/31) Greek Religion.

The emphasis of this unit is on:

i) building up knowledge of ancient Greek culture and religious activities, and understanding of how we develop this from a range of different kinds of evidence; ii) developing some understanding of the experience of ancient Greek religion. Through their investigations the children find out about different kinds of rituals that the Greeks used to worship their gods, and are encouraged to think about the physical experience of worship and the emotions of their ancient subjects.

Links can be made with other ancient civilisations and societies they have studied. The emphasis throughout the unit is on developing the children's skills of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used to make historical claims, and on developing their understanding of historical concepts such continuity and change, similarity and difference, and significance. Throughout the unit, there is emphasis on specialised vocabulary and terminology of ancient history—such as ancient, modern, civilisation, citizens, democracy, archaeology, architecture—and a focus on the specialised vocabulary of terminology of ancient Greek religion.

Unit Structure

This unit is structured around 4 sequential history enquiries.

- 1. Where and when was 'Ancient Greece'?
- 2. What is ancient Greek religion and how do we know?
- 3. Why did ancient Greeks worship their gods?
- 4. How did ancient Greeks worship their gods? What did they think, experience and feel?

In terms of the progression of knowledge and understanding, the first two enquiries set the scene for the last two, but each inquiry builds on the next; the last two enquiries could be conducted either as a class, led by the teacher, or as project work set in small groups.

The enquiries are structured around key questions (four in enquiries 1 and 2, and three in enquiries 3 and 4). Each question is followed by an exercise, with suggestions underneath the exercise for activities that the children can do to gather and develop their knowledge and understanding. The exercise is intended to be what they work towards, and will require them to organise and communicate their findings. The suggestions for activities are suggestions: teachers should select and adapt the material to suit their students.

How This Unit Links to the New National Curriculum for KS2 History

- It provides a study of ancient Greek life, the achievements and influence of the culture on the western world.
- It inquires into the beliefs of another culture and asks how we can know about them.
- Children should know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world including the nature of ancient civilisations.
- Children should understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed.

The enquiries might be adapted for use with younger and/or less able children by:

- Focusing more time on the everyday lives of the Ancient Greeks and establishing a clear understanding of similarities and differences to the children's own lives
- Providing more structured guidance on completing the written tasks
- Modelling the process of historical investigation
- Introducing the children to a narrower range of sources and ensuring that these are widely accessible

More able children could demonstrate a more in-depth understanding of Ancient Greece by:

- Carrying out investigations with more independence, including posing their own questions and organising their own work
- Using a wider range of evidence to produce conclusions and assessing the usefulness of some of that evidence
- Beginning to provide substantiated reasons to explain the historical significance of Ancient Greece
- Beginning to reflect on the ways in which the evidence provides evidence for ancient religious experience and belief

Enquiry One (four sessions): Where and When was 'Ancient Greece'?

Through completing this enquiry, children should:

- Develop their **knowledge** of some of the key features of life in Ancient Greece, developing an understanding of the **distinctiveness of the civilisation** of Ancient Greece and, importantly, where it fits into the broader **chronological** framework set out in the programme of study for key stage 2 history.
- The enquiry takes the children from a very general overview of the civilisation and its chronology to the experience of individual historical actors: encouraging them to establish clear narratives within and across the periods studied, noting connections, contrasts and trends and developing an appropriate use of historical terms

- Understanding of the continuing legacy of ancient Greek culture, and an appreciation of its historical **significance**, using a combination of studies in overview and depth
- Ideas of change and continuity between ancient and modern, making links between events and ideas in ancient Greece and modern culture
- Appreciate **causation** in thinking about, for example the links between physical terrain and urban and political development

Learning Objectives	Key Content and Suggested Lesson Ideas	Suggested Resources	Sample Assessment Criteria
Children should	The influence of ancient Greece: how does this ancient	What did the Greeks do for us?	
learn:	culture and its ideas still effect us today?	http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/z	Can the children use
• Examples of some		<u>9kmhv4</u>	terminology to do
of the key ideas	a) Identify some important events or ideas which originate		with chronology
from ancient	in/are heavily influenced by ancient Greek culture, examples	• Lots of materials online on	accurately?
Greek culture that	include:	Olympic Games	
still influence us	: The Olympic Games	• See below for resources for:	
today.	: Democracy	Democracy	
• The chronology of	: Myths and legends	• Myths and legends	
ancient Greece: its	: Philosophy	,	
sequence and	: Drama	Timelines:	
duration		https://www.tes.com/teaching-	
	b) Draw on the previous exercises to start to create a timeline of	resource/resources-for-ancient-greece-	
	key historical events and figures for ancient Greece: this could	timeline-lesson-6322532	

	be a living timeline across the school playground or hall : Using correct terminology for chronology, e.g., understanding different periods 'archaic', 'classical' and 'Hellenistic' and the use of BC and CE : Identify some key events, such as the rise of the city state, Persian Wars, the Peloponnesian War; and historical figures : Put these events and figures on a timeline : Relate the dates they are looking at to other historical cultures that they have studied	https://www.tes.com/teaching- resource/ancient-greek-timeline- booklet-6357522?theme=3 https://www.history.org.uk/primary/cat egories/792/resource/3876/teaching- the-ancient-greeks	
Children should	Where was 'ancient Greece'? What did it feel like to live in		Can the children find
learn:	ancient Greece and how is it different from modern Greece?	Historical atlas or historical maps from	Greece on a map, and
• The main features	Where and why did ancient Greek culture spread?	the internet	can they name
of Greek		http://www.timemaps.com/history	capital/major cities,
geography and	Exercise: Write a postcard/design a travel brochure from the past		mountains, rivers, etc
topography,	that gives details of climate, location and landscape	Maps and timelines as above;	of Greece?
including the		postcards/pictures and brochures of	Can they explain what
location of the	To do this, the children will	ancient Greek settlements	causes there were for
mainland of	: Use an atlas to locate Greece and find key sites on a map of		Greeks to travel and
Greece and key	Greece, including Athens, Sparta, Delphi, Mount Olympos and		settle elsewhere?
sites.	the different groups of islands		
• The challenges	: Use the atlas and maps, along with postcards/pictures and		
facing an ancient	brochures to discuss the climate and physical features of Greek		
settlement, the	mainland and islands		
difficulties of	: Use a historical atlas to compare modern Greece with Ancient		
travel, and	Greece, and think about the ways in which people moved		
responses to Greek	around ancient Greece compared to modern Greece		
settlers	: Look beyond the Greek mainland, to think about the extent of		
• The evidence we	Greek settlement		
use to learn about	: Explore the reasons why Greeks might travel to settle		
Greek settlement	elsewhere: what was it about the landscape that might cause		
patterns	this? How did those living there regard the settlers?		

	: Revisit the terminology of archaeology and evidence to think about how identify ancient settlements		
 Children should learn: About ancient Greek cities— what key buildings they included, including relevant vocabulary (e.g., <i>polis</i>) Some of the key features of ancient Greek government structures, especially democracy and oligarchy, and how they differed 	 How did the landscape influence how and where they lived? What kinds of political organisation did they develop? What were the key spaces in a Greek city? Exercise: create a guidebook to one of the cities, using photos of ancient monuments to illustrate the key sites and describe what happened in there To do this, the children will: Build on the previous session to explore how the geography of the country creates different regions—and different city states Explore how the city states had different forms of government, focussing on Sparta and Athens Democracy/oligarchy exercises: think about a family and the different responsibilities of everyone involved—and the different ways this can be organised; compare ancient and modern government structures Learn about the key spaces in a polis—for example, the agora, the acropolis, religious sanctuaries. Discuss why these spaces were important and for whom; what happened in those spaces 	http://www.eduplace.com/ss/socsci/ca/b ooks/bkf3/reviews/pdfs/LS_6_11_03.p df Ancient Greek Government at KS2 https://www.history.org.uk/primary/cat egories/135/resource/3838	Can the children explain: - how geography of Greece affects politics? - the difference between a city state and a modern city? Can the children name some of the key places in a <i>polis</i> and what happened there?
 Children should learn: What daily life in a citystate was like Differences between city states 	Summative exercise: A day in the life This brings together the learning of the enquiry, and builds on it to develop insights into the lived experience of a historical figure.	http://www.ancientgreece.co.uk/athens/ story/sto_set.html To think about women's lives: http://teachers.theguardian.com/teacher -resources/13826/?CMP=edi_44	Can the children explain: - some aspects of daily life for an ancient Greek man or woman

experience (by thinking aboutancient characters an life' of a character in women and slaves)Explore the lives of	he students find images of different I the students write or draw 'a day in the ancient Athens or Sparta i) slaves; and ii) women; compare how it in ancient Athens and Sparta	ve in an ancient
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Enquiry 2: What is Ancient Greek Religion and How Do we Know?

This enquiry builds on the previous work on Greek society, focusing on religious ideas and rituals of the Greeks. Through completing this enquiry, children should develop their **knowledge** of Greek religion and myth, **understanding** how we use different kinds of **evidence** to develop **interpretations** of Greek religion.

- Reflecting on the **similarity and difference** between different religious concepts of gods and their role in society
- Evidence, in particular the use of visual and material evidence as sources to develop historical understanding
- Interpretations, exploring how we may use myths and stories to try to understand how the Greeks believed in their gods, and developing a more refined understanding of the concept of history itself, by comparing myth to history

Learning Objectives	Key Content and Suggested Lesson Ideas	Suggested Resources	Assessment Criteria
Children should learn:	Who were the ancient Greek gods and	https://www.history.org.uk/primary/categories/135	Can the children
• The meaning of	what were they understood to do? How are	/resource/3843	: Connect one or more
polytheism and how it	they different or the same as other gods?		Greek gods with their
manifested in ancient		https://www.nga.gov/education/classroom/interacti	symbols and areas of
Greece	A creative exercise: Make a family tree of	ve/arcade.htm	responsibility
• That there was no	the Greek gods, identifying the twelve gods		: Understand that Greek
Bible or Church	and their areas of power	https://www.eduplace.com/ss/socsci/ca/books/bkf3	gods had some human
		/reviews/pdfs/LS_6_11_02.pdf	characteristics and that
More advanced students:	To do this:		they helped the Greeks to
that the gods had different	: Discuss how the gods divide up the world	Use the podcast on ancient Greek religion to think	explain the world around
local personas	and how they rule it: consider hierarchies and	about the variety of ancient Greek religious	them
-	teams	practices and institions	
Understanding of :	: Exercise: Each child/groups of children		More advanced students:
Similarity and difference	research a god and then 'audition' that god to		that the gods had
5	be king of the gods—by telling the class		different local personas
	about their powers		
	: Game: Use images of ancient pictures or		
	statues of gods to play a version of Greek god		
	'arcade'—match the attributes/symbols with		

	the god and discuss what each god represents : Consider how some gods seem to wield contradictory powers : How to become powerful: introduce the idea of the 'hero' (mortals who became supernaturally powerful) : Compare and contrast the children's understanding of modern attitudes to Gods/God, using and understanding the terms monotheism and polytheism		
 Children should learn: How the ancient Greeks talked about their gods in myths That the gods had human characteristics That the gods were not benign and forgiving That the idea of the gods helped ancient Greeks men and women to explain the world around them 	 What kinds of stories did the Greeks tell about their gods? What is a myth, and what does it do? Creative exercise: Tell the story of a myth—make a picture book/write a play/create a cartoon. To do this: The children source ancient Greek myths: the Odyssey is a good example Select a number of episodes in the myth and discuss how the characters of the gods are described, who is in charge, and their attitudes to mortal men and women Myths are also a good opportunity to discover the supernatural creatures that the Greek imagined: read the story of the Cyclops: what does it tell us about Odysseus and his men? Compare Greek myths and fairy tales: how are they different/the same? 	 Ancient and modern texts and pictures that depict episodes from Greek myths. The Odyssey provides a good example of a Greek myth, with lots of different episodes to explore. There are some terrific cartoons of episodes from the <i>Odyssey</i> on Youtube. From the HA website: ttps://www.history.org.uk/podcasts/categories/834/podcast/439/ancient-greek-myths-and-legends 	Can the children tell a myth and reflect on what it reveals about Greek attitudes to the gods (and vice versa)?

Children should learn: • Where the Greeks	 : Compare Greek myths and history: how are they different/the same? : Explore the children's understanding of the attitudes of gods to mortals—how do Greek gods compare to, for example, a Christian god. Where did the Greeks worship their gods? 	Plans of different ancient sites and picture of ancient Greek temples	Can the children describe the key elements of an
 Where the Greeks worshipped their gods, including the basic features of a Greek sanctuary and temple Reflect on the differences between an ancient Greek and a modern religious space 	Exercise: recreate a visitor's experience to a sanctuary or a temple: why would they visit and what would they do where? To do this, the children will: : Compare ruins of temples and what they looked like originally : Use plans and pictures of sanctuaries and temples to explore what they looked like/were made of/how they were decorated and what happened where : Use a map of the Athenian Acropolis and count the different sanctuaries in that one space, identifying the different gods : Compare and contrast modern religious institutions		ancient Greek sanctuary—and how we know about these ancient sites?
Children should learn:	Summative exercise: This brings together	Podcast on sacrifices.	Can the children describe
About religious	the learning of the previous sessions, and		what happens at a
activities in ancient Greece, focusing on the ways in which	builds on it to develop insights into the lived experience of a religious ritual.	Descriptions of sacrifice in Homer's <i>Odyssey</i> : 3.5- 9, 3.453-464, 7.186-190 Description of the altar at Olympia in Pausanias	sacrifice and why this was a way of worshipping the gods?
people worshipped together	Exercise: design and then act out a sacrificial ritual, and then explain their design,	5.13.8-11	worshipping the gods:

 How can we build up a picture of the activities involved in a religious ritual, using many different kinds of evidence to help support our written sources, including inscriptions, visual and material evidence How does this help us to think about the experience of worshipping the gods, and what ancient Greek men and women believed? 	 including what the different parts of the ritual are for, the links to a particular god, the location of the ritual. To do this, the children will: Explore worship in different cultures and religions. Discuss different religious activities and what do they indicate about how people think and feel about their gods? Use this to begin to think about the act of sacrifice: find images of ancient Greek men or women praying or sacrificing and explore how this activity is different from modern activities of prayer Use sacrificial calendars to make a 'timeline of worship' and think about how often the Greeks made sacrifices 	The texts of sacrificial calendars can be found here: <u>https://www.atticinscriptions.com/browse/byinscri</u> <u>ptiontype/sacrificial-calendar/</u> Photos can be found: http://aleshire.berkeley.edu/holdings/images http://ancient-greece.org/archaeology/olympia.html	
	: Select images of different kinds of sacrifice and ask the children to come up with reasons why there were different kinds of sacrifice		

Enquiry 3: Why did ancient Greeks worship their gods? (Oracles and Healing)

Through completing this enquiry, children should:

- Develop their knowledge of ancient Greek religion, examining particular kinds of religious events and situations, and their characteristic features.
- The enquiry will help the children to gain **historical perspective**, making eonnections between cultural/religious and political and social history.

- Drawing contrasts between ancient and modern religious activities, and the role of religion in daily lives
- Highlighting the **causes and consequences** of ancient Greek religious activity and its influence on other areas of ancient life, such as decision making at a personal and political level, and on health
- Understanding and **evaluating** different historical arguments

Learning Objectives	Key Content and Suggested Lesson Ideas	Suggested Resources	Assessment Criteria
 Children should learn: The different reasons why ancient Greek men and women 	Key Content and Suggested Lesson Ideas What did you do if you were ill in ancient Greece? How could the gods help? : Use the podcast to identify the different sources of medical help that existed in	Suggested Resources Use the podcast on healing See British Museum website for examples of anatomical votives, and https://anatomicalvotives.wordpress.com/	Assessment Criteria Can the children: - Describe some of the ways that religion and medicine overlapped in ancient Greece—and
 worshipped the gods The different kinds of sanctuaries/gods they visited for different reasons How and why religious activities are part of the history of medicine 	 sources of medical help that existed in ancient Greece : Examine images of anatomical votives, and discuss what they were, what they represented, and why people may have given them to the gods. : Building on the previous work on the gods, introduce the god of healing, Asclepius and identify the location of Epidaurus 	https://thevotivesproject.org/ See https://thevotivesproject.org/2016/01/29/votive- efficacy/ For discussion of whether and why votives left to the gods might 'work'.	explain why?
	 : Read some of the magical healing stories (<i>Iamata</i>) from Epidaurus; discuss how realistic they are or not and what kinds of cures they describe? : Use the podcast to think about the role of 	Examples of Iamata can be found online in M. Dillon and L. Garland, Ancient Greece: Social and Historical Documents from Archaic Times to the Death of Socrates. Routledge	

 Children should learn: The different reasons why ancient Greek men and women worshipped the gods The different kinds of sanctuaries/gods they visited for different reasons The reasons why ancient Greek men and women visited oracles The different ways that oracle questions were constructed 	dreams and sleeping: what is special about dreaming and why do the gods appear there? How Greek religion played a key role in the decisions people made in their everyday lives a) The context for thinking about oracles and healing sanctuaries: :Ask the children to think together about the kinds of situations where people need advice—and where they go to get it? What kind of information is it difficult to find out, what kind of information is it impossible to find out? [Information that is hidden; information about the future.] Was it the same in ancient Greece—without Google?! : Make a list of the kinds of questions facing ancient Greek men and women in their avaryday lives_include both city states and	 Podcast on oracles Really great site from DK FINDOUT! https://www.dkfindout.com/uk/history/ancient-greece/oracle-at-delphi/ Overview of site: http://ancient-greece.org/architecture/delphi-temple-of-apollo.html 	Can the children: -Explain some of the key features of a visit to the Delphic oracle? - Describe the different ways that oracles may have worked, and discuss what was good and bad about each way?
 ancient Greek men and women visited oracles The different ways that oracle questions were 	what kind of information is it impossible to find out? [Information that is hidden; information about the future.] Was it the same in ancient Greece—without Google?! : Make a list of the kinds of questions facing		
	 b) How did oracles work? : Listen to the podcast, and ask the children to identify the different ways of getting an oracle : Highlight the role of the Pythia, drawing attention to the fact that she was a woman in a very powerful position: ask the children to explore the theories about her capabilities— was she drugged, did she talk rubbish? :Explain/give examples of the different kinds of answers that oracles gave—yes/no, or 		

riddles.	
: Read some stories (e.g., from Herodotus)	
that demonstrate the role of oracle riddles	
: Listen to the podcast, and use the story of	
Croesus to think about the dangers of using	
oracles	
: Break down a difficult task or decision (e.g.	
founding a new settlement) into separate	
questions, try working out what to do when	
the questions are answered with riddles or	
with yes/no answers	
: Ask the children to pair up: one person asks	
a question and the other answer it by writing	
an oracular riddle—take it in turns	
Summative exercise: This brings together	Can the children:
the learning of the previous enquiries, and	-Explain some of the key
builds on it to develop insights into the	features of a visit to the
lived experience of consulting an oracle.	Delphic oracle/Epidaurus
Exercise: Find the best way to	
communicate what it was like to visit	
Delphi and consult the oracle/visit	
Epidauros and be healed by Asclepius?	
This might be a story or a play, or a	
picture.	
: Start with a plan of the site to think about	
the route a visitor would take through the	
sanctuary and what the experience was like.	
: Who else was there and why?	
: What did the person see and hear?	
: What questions did they have to ask?	
: How did they receive their answers?	

: Did they understand the answers?	
: Did they leave anything behind/take	
anything with them?	

Enquiry 4: How did the Greeks worship their gods? What did they think, experience and feel?

This enquiry focuses on the Greek god Dionysus, and some different ways of worshipping him. The ideas in the section on ecstatic ritual could be difficult to teach; the suggestion here is to focus on Dionysus as a god that encouraged dance and 'letting go' and use that as an introduction to thinking about Greek drama.

Through completing this enquiry, children should:

- Develop their knowledge of ancient Greek religious activities, examining particular kinds of religious worship, and their characteristic features.
- The enquiry will help the children to gain **historical perspective**, making eonnections between religious and social history.

- Drawing contrasts between ancient and modern religious activities, and the role of religion in daily lives
- Reflecting on **changes** over time, for example in the role of theatre and of religion in society
- Understanding and **evaluating** different historical arguments

Learning Objectives	Key Content and Suggested Lesson Ideas	Suggested Resources	Assessment Criteria
Children should learn:	Who was Dionysos, what kind of god was he	Podcast on Bacchic worship	Can the children:
How we learn about what it	and what were some of the ways he was		- describe the god
felt like to worship ancient	worshiped?		Dionysus and his
Greek gods	: Use the podcast to think about the different		attributes
	attributes of the god Dionysus		- explain what are the
	: Research the evidence that shows how he		challenges of using
	was worshiped, including:		evidence like drama to
	: researching pictures from Greek vases to		describe how he was
	show some of the ways in which his		worshiped
	worshippers behaved (dancing), exploring		
	what the pictures reveal (body language)		
	: reading together a summary of Euripides'		
	Bacchae (or some parts of the play)		
	: Use the podcast to think about similarities		
	and differences with modern societies		
Children should learn:	What happened at the 'Dionysia'—and	Podcast on religious festivals	Can the children:

 How and why Greek communities worshipped the gods together The key elements of a religious festival: the Dionysia Some of the ways that Greek theatre and religion were connected 	 what did participants do? Exercise: : Using a map, locate the festival space: the theatre of Dionysus in Athens. : Use the podcast to create a timeline of the festival—what happened and when : Find some examples of tragedies and comedies: read some episodes—some are suggested here 	A great overview of Greek theatre: http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zx67xnb http://www.ancientgreece.co.uk/festivals/explore/e xp_set.html Graham Kirby's translation of <i>The Birds</i> : <i>abs.kafkas.edu.tr/upload/225/Birds.pdf</i>	-Describe what happened at the Dionysia -Explain the connection between theatre and religion at the Dionysia
Children should learn:	What was it like to perform in a Greek play? Exercise: Using the myths from the previous enquiry (2), ask the children to write a short play and act it out This could include: : Researching and making masks of different characters including the gods : Exploring the role of the chorus: divide the class into small groups and find a chorus that the children can chant together; ask them to work out some simple dance moves to accompany their chanting. After they have performed them together, ask them to reflect on their experience. How did singing and dancing together make them feel?	Some great material for making Greek masks: https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/greek- masks-6327978 Model scripts: Odysseus and the Minotaur by Tony North http://www.lazybeescripts.co.uk/Scripts/script.aspx ?iSS=377 Oedipus—Swollen Foot by Graham Milton http://www.lazybeescripts.co.uk/Scripts/script.aspx ?iSS=2829	Can the children: -Explain some of the key features of a Greek play
	The final summative exercise of the course will depend on the approach taken to		Can the children - use information from

teaching the course, but some ideas	the previous enquiries to
include:	help them to answer the
	question
Ask the children to use their knowledge and	1
understanding to:	
understanding to.	
: write an essay answering an overview	
question, for example:	
Describe a ritual used by the ancient Greeks	
to worship their gods, and explain why they	
did this?	
: select and research a particular sanctuary in ancient Greece, identifying the particular god	
worshipped at the sanctuary, and describing	
how he/she was worshipped.	
: choose a particular god and collect different	
kinds of evidence that shows how the god	
was represented across ancient Greece;	
remember to think about differences over	
time and place	