See inside
The Ancient Greeks
Resource Pack

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KS2History

A full unit of history work for **KS2** covering the **Ancient Greeks** topic.

Detailed plans for each lesson

Ready to pick up and teach

Differentiated activities to adapt for your pupils' needs

Assessment opportunities

Pupil activity sheets

10 full lessons with Powerpoints

Fully resourced lessons

Extension ideas for further thinking and discussion

Weblinks

Ancient Greece
Lesson 4: Why did a small Greek army win the Battle of Marathon?

Lesson Objectives
- To find out what happened at the Battle of Marathon
- To analyse the main reasons for the Greek victory

Resources:
- Slides: Lesson 4
- Resources 4a & 4b
- Scissors and glue
- Small whiteboards or pieces of card
- A dice

Starter

Use the *Starter* slides to introduce pupils to Greek hoplite soldiers and the phalanx fighting formation. It is important that pupils understand that in Ancient Greek times there were lots of wars, both between different Greek city-states and also against foreign enemies. Play a quick class game of 'Ready, Steady, Battle'. This is a game of two teams and the aim is to make a phalanx formation containing as many soldiers as you can. To begin with, simply choose two children to become generals. Each general takes it in turn to role a dice and then collects that number of other children to join his or her team as hoplites. Once all of the pupils have joined a team, ask each team to get themselves into a phalanx formation. They should stand in rows of 4, making a wall around the edge of their formation by each holding a small whiteboard or piece of card as a 'shield'. This would protect them from enemy arrows. They could also hold up pencils or rulers as a spear! The winning team is the one with the largest number of hoplites. Emphasise that the larger an army is, the better their chances are of winning a battle. Ask pupils to think of additional factors, other than number of soldiers, that might make an army more likely to win a battle.

Main Input

Use the *Main Input* slides to give pupils more information about the Battle of Marathon, pausing at key moments to discuss the questions in the blue boxes. Extend older or more able pupils to think about the different perspectives involved in the story (e.g. *What were the Persians expecting to happen? Why were they taken by surprise? How do you think the Spartans reacted when they heard the news? How confident do you think Miltiades was that his plan would work?*).
NB: The distance between Marathon and Athens was just under 25 miles. For many years, the Olympic long-distance race named after this journey was also 25 miles, but was extended at the 1908 London Olympic games to 26.2 miles when Queen Alexandria requested the route to run from Windsor Palace to her royal box in the Olympic Stadium!

Activity

In this activity, pupils will work in pairs or small groups to analyse some of the key reasons for the Greek victory by sorting them in order of importance. Hand out copies of *Resource 4a and 4b* to each small group of pupils. Ask children to read the factor cards from *Resource 4a* and complete diamond nine diagram from *Resource 4b* by ordering the cards in rows of importance, with the most important factor being at the top and the least important at the bottom. Remind pupils that this is an analytical exercise about different opinions, so there is no right or wrong answer so long as they can justify their reasons!

More Support: You can simplify this activity by just giving out 3 or 4 of the factor cards and asking pupils to pick out which they think is the most important reason that contributed to the Athenian success. Prompt pupils to explain their choices.

More Challenge: You can extend pupils by asking them to write an explanatory text to answer the question *What were the three main reasons for the Athenian victory at the Battle of Marathon?* Pupils can write a short paragraph explaining each of their top three reasons.

Spot check

Use the *Spot Check* slide to assess if pupils have understood the key vocabulary from the lesson.

Plenary

Take a class poll to find out which was the most popular main reason from their diamond nines. If you have time at the end, the BBC has a useful website that you may wish to look at together, with more information about Greek warfare and a comparison of the Battle of Marathon with two other famous battles:
https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z87tn39/articles/zckr4wx

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Lesson 1: Ancient Greece — **Who were the Ancient Greeks?**

Lesson 2: Ancient Greece — **Why were Athens and Sparta so different?**

Lesson 3: Ancient Greece — **What was Alexander the Great's impact on the Greek Empire?**

Lesson 4: Ancient Greece — **Why did a small Greek army win the Battle of Marathon?**

Lesson 5: Ancient Greece — **What were the Ancient Greek gods known for?**

Lesson 6: Ancient Greece — **What happened at the Ancient Greek Olympic Games?**

Lesson 7: Ancient Greece — **What were the Ancient Greek philosophers famous for?**

Lesson 8: Ancient Greece — **Did the events of the Trojan Horse story really happen?**

Lesson 9: Ancient Greece — **What was life like for children in Ancient Greece?**

Lesson 10: Ancient Greece — **How significant is the legacy of Ancient Greece for life today?**