# Aegean Adaptability: Geography and the Ancient Greeks

Students learn about Ancient Greek, while reinforcing writing skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>2 class periods</td>
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**National Geography Standards**

**ELEMENT FIVE: ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY**

15. How physical systems affect human systems.

**Arizona Geography Strand**

**Grade 6**  
**Strand 4 Geography**  
**Concept 2 Places and Regions**  
PO 1 Identify regions studied (i.e., Greece, Rome) using a variety of criteria, (e.g., climate, landforms, culture, vegetation).

**Concept 5 Environment and Society**  
PO 1 Describe ways that human dependence on natural resources influences economic development, settlement, trade, and migration.

**Concept 6 Geographic Applications**  
PO 1 Describe ways geographic features and conditions influenced settlement (e.g., near waterways, on high terrain, with adequate fresh water, on good land for farming, in temperate climates) in different periods of time, places, and regions.

**Other Arizona Standards**

**Grade 6**  
**Strand 2 World History**  
**Concept 1: Research Skills for History**  
PO 7. Analyze cause and effect relationships between and among individuals and/or historical events.

**Concept 2: Early Civilizations**  
PO 8. Describe scientific and cultural advancements (e.g., networks of roads, aqueducts, art and architecture, literature and theatre, mathematics, philosophy) in ancient civilizations.

**ELA Common Core Standards**

6-8 Reading Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies  
**Key Ideas and Details**  
6-8.RH.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

**Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity**  
6-8.RH.10 By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

6-8 Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects  
**Text Types and Purposes**  
6-8.WHST.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.  
a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to
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Overview
The early Greeks had limited resources and adapted to their natural environment. Living on an infertile, rugged, mountainous land, which offered few natural resources, the Greeks took to the sea. They became fishers, sailors, and merchants of the sea, trading with civilizations as far away as Egypt.

Purpose
In this lesson, students will analyze how the rugged geography of the land challenged the ancient Greeks. Students will explain how the environment caused the ancient Greeks to become sea traders.

Materials
- National Geographic's Reading Expeditions, *Civilizations Past to Present, Greece* (a class set would be nice, but at least 6 books)
- Copies of Handout 1 - "Geography of Ancient Greece" reading selection - one copy per student
- Copies of Handout 2 - "Cause and Effect" worksheet - one copy per student
- Copies of Handout 3 - "Ancient Greece Writing Prompt & Checklist" - one copy per student
- (Optional) National Geographic Society, NGS Picture Pack transparencies: Geography of Europe Picture Pack, Transparency #25/Ancient Ruins in Athens and

Achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge
6-8.WHST.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Transparency #26/Greek Orthodox Church on Thira, Greece.
- (Optional) National Geographic Society, NGS Picture Pack transparencies: Physical Geography of the World, Transparency #30 - Crete.
- Picture books on Greece or web sites with pictures (to demonstrate Greece's rugged, mountainous terrain and harbor-filled coastlines) Suggested web sites: www.fortunecity.com www.planetware.com

Objectives
The student will be able to:
- evaluate how geography affected the early people of ancient Greece.
- identify the causes that led Greeks to become seafarers.
- analyze a reading selection for cause and effect.
- write a summary describing how the land's limited resources caused the early Greeks to rely on the sea.

Procedures
SESSION ONE
1. Students read pages 6 and 7 in National Geographic's Reading Expeditions, "Civilizations Past to Present, Greece."
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2. Begin a discussion about the unchanging geography of Greece using the physical maps on pages 6 and 7. If picture books or Internet sources are available, share actual photos of the rugged terrain. Ask the following questions: *What do the physical features of the map tell you about Greece’s land? How could such an environment affect human life? What did the early Greeks do to survive and to meet their basic needs?*

3. Distribute copies of Handout 1 - "The Geography of Greece" and ask students to read it to themselves. Model for the class how to highlight/underline key points. Explain that this is a pre-writing strategy that will enable students to remember main ideas and significant details for the summary writing assignment.

4. Distribute copies of Handout 2 - "Cause and Effect" to students. Instruct students to analyze the selection for cause and effect by completing the worksheet.

SESSION TWO

5. Distribute copies of Handout 3 - "Ancient Greece Writing Prompt & Checklist" to students. Go over the writing prompt and checklist, discussing the criteria for the summary writing assignment. Explain that the summary will be graded in the areas of Organization, Ideas & Content, and Conventions (punctuation).

**Assessment**

Summaries are assessed with the Simplified Writing Traits Rubric in the areas of Ideas & Content, Organization, and Conventions, specifically punctuation. A score of 4 or higher indicates mastery level for the particular writing trait.

**Extensions**

Even though Greece is a small country, its merchant fleet ranks high in total tonnage compared to other nations. Have students research modern Greece’s shipping industry.

Venn Diagram the similarities and differences between the ancient Greeks and one of the river valley civilizations (Egyptian, Mesopotamian, or Chinese).

**Source**

National Geographic's Reading Expeditions Series, *Civilizations Past to Present, Greece* Order # JK41204