The Greeks 500 – 300 BC

- Greek City States
- Early Greek states called polis
- Usually built around a market or fortified hilltop called an acropolis
Greek City-State Political Structures

- **Monarch** - ruled by a single person called a king
- **Aristocracy** - government ruled by a small group of noble, land owning families
- **Oligarchy** - government ruled by a few wealthy and powerful people
- **Direct democracy** - citizens rule directly
Athens and Sparta

• Rival Greek city-states
• Athens moved towards Democracy or rule by the people
• Sparta built a military state
Athenian Democracy

- Draco, 621 BC, started rule by the people with equal rights
- Solon, 549 BC, more equality and equal participation in Athenian Assembly
- Cleisthenes, 500 BC, expanded the role of the Assembly and created the Council of Five Hundred, whose members were chosen by random or lot
- Pericles, 421 - 429 BC, increased public officials and introduced direct democracy
Athenian Education

• Sons of wealthy families received education
• Schooled in reading, grammar, poetry, history, math and music
• Trained in logic and public speaking
• Physical fitness also taught and prepared boys for the military
Greek Art and Architecture

- Pericles wanted to glorify Athens through Greek artists, architects and sculptors
- Parthenon - a masterpiece of Greek architectural design and craftsmanship, a temple to honor Athena, the goddess of wisdom and the protector of Athens
- Greek artists, especially sculptors, created graceful, strong and perfectly formed works in stone
- Greek artists’ works showing harmony, order, balance and proportion become the standard of what is called classical art
Greek Drama

- Invented drama as an art form
- Created two kinds of drama:
  - Tragedy – serious drama about common themes of love, hate, war and betrayal
  - Comedy – contained scenes filled with slapstick situations and crude humor
Math, Physics, and Astronomy

- Euclid, contributions in geometry
- Archimedes, the value of pi
- Eratosthenes, estimated the circumference of the earth
Philosophy
“Lovers of Wisdom”

• Socrates, known through the writings of his student Plato
• Plato continued the “Socratic method” of questioning followed by the Academy founded by Socrates
• Aristotle, one of Plato’s brightest students, opened his own school the Lyceum and was the teacher of Alexander the Great
Greek Religion
Polytheistic

- Developed rich set of myths or traditional stories about their gods
- Homer, the most famous of the writers of Greek mythology
- Attributed human qualities to their gods
- Gods lived on Mount Olympus
Every four years the Greeks would come to town of Olympia to compete in Olympic Games

Competed for the glory of the games
Alexander the Great 356 – 323 BC
Alexander the Great 356 – 323 BC

- Philip II was a brilliant general and developed the phalanxes, a group of 16 men across and 16 men deep with 18 foot pikes.
- Philip defeated the Greek City-States in 338 BC.
- Son of Philip II of Macedonia, northern area of Greece.
- Philip was assassinated in 336 BC and his son Alexander became king at the age of 20.
Alexander Expands

- Well prepared to take over, Alexander had a strong military and learned background as a student of Aristotle
- 334 BC invaded Persia with 35,000 troops and crushed the Persians
- Alexander defeated and conquers Egypt a Persian territory
- Moved back into Persia and defeated the remainder of King Darius’ Persian army
- Alexander marched east to the Caspian Sea
- Alexander and his army pushed further east through central Asia
- 326 BC Alexander and his army reached the Indus valley
- 11 years of battle, covering 11,000 miles - Alexander had conquered what was the known world
- In route to return, Alexander was taken ill and died in Babylon in the spring of 323 BC at the age of 32
Alexander's Empire
Alexander’s Legacy

• He had adopted Persian dress and customs and married a Persian woman
• The spread of Greek settlers to the far reaches of Alexander’s empire created a new culture, Hellenism
Hellenistic Culture

- Alexandria, Egypt, became the center of Hellenistic culture
- The center of trade and commerce in the Eastern Mediterranean
- An international community of half a million people
Hellenistic Culture

- A blend of Greek, Egyptian, Persian, and Indian cultures
- Lighthouse called the Pharos marked the entrance to Alexandria
- Massive museum and library in Alexandria
- The library contained one-half million works on papyrus scrolls, the first true library in the world
Hellenistic Science and Technology

- Preserved Greek and Egyptian works of science and technology
- Major contributions in astronomy
- Aristarchus estimated the size of the sun, proposed heliocentric theory, that earth and planets revolve around the sun
- Ptolemy refuted this and put earth back in the center of the universe, geocentric theory
- Eratosthenes calculated the circumference of the earth
- Euclid discovered geometry and Pythagorean theorem
- Archimedes correctly estimated the value of pi
Philosophy and Art

- Stoicism and Epicureanism
- Stoics founded by Zeno (355 - 363 BC) believed people should live virtuous lives in harmony with will of God and natural laws
- Epicurus founded philosophy call Epicureanism, taught that Gods who ruled the universe had no interest in humans
- Greatest statue of the ancient world, the Colossus of Rhodes was created, over 100 feet high, later destroyed by an earthquake in 225 BC

Epicurus says: “Life is good! Make sure to enjoy it.”