



Ancient Greece

By: Lori McDonald
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Social Studies
Grades 6–8



Introduction

This is one lesson from a sixth grade unit that is designed to help students understand key characteristics of Ancient Greek culture including writing and religion. Through this lesson, students will examine a piece of Ancient Greek literature and how it reflected the social structure and religious beliefs of the time.

Learning Objectives

(1. Culture) Identify and explain the importance of the following key characteristics of civilizations:

- Culture
- Religion
- Social structure
- Writing

Materials Needed

- Picture of Theseus and the Minotaur
- Copies of the story "[Theseus and the Minotaur](#)"

Procedure

Warm up – Show students a picture of Theseus and the Minotaur. Tell students that this is an illustration that represents a very famous story from Ancient Greek culture. Ask students what they notice from the picture. What can they tell about this story? Is it fiction or nonfiction? What does this picture let us know about Ancient Greek culture? Discuss.

1. Give each student a copy of "Theseus and the Minotaur". Give students time to read the story independently.
2. After all students have finished reading the story, ask them to summarize the story for you, orally, clarifying any misunderstandings from the initial reading.
3. Ask students to discuss in small groups what they think this story tells us about Ancient Greek culture. Obviously, it is not informational, yet it reveals a great deal about social structures and religious beliefs.
4. Discuss those social structures and religious beliefs with the whole class after the small-group time.

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Evaluation

For this formative assessment, give students the choice of which of the following tasks he/she will complete.

- **Option 1:** Write a paragraph stating what he/she believes about the social structures and religious beliefs that were held by the Ancient Greeks based on the story, “Theseus and the Minotaur”. Give specific examples from the story.
- **Option 2:** Write your own story from Ancient Greece that involves royalty, a mythical creature, and an explanation of something that exists in nature, as did the story of “Theseus and the Minotaur”.