

Overview of Greek Geography

Read and answer #1 and #2 Together.

Geography plays a critical role in shaping civilizations, and this is particularly true of ancient Greece.

The Greek peninsula has two distinctive geographic features that influenced the development of Greek society. First, Greece has easy access to water. The land contains countless scattered islands, deep harbors, and a network of small rivers. This easy access to water meant that the Greek people might naturally become explorers and traders.

Second, Greece's mountainous terrain led to the development of the polis (city-state), beginning about 750 B.C.E. The high mountains made it very difficult for people to travel or communicate. Therefore, each polis developed independently and, often, very differently from one another. Eventually, the polis became the structure by which people organized themselves. Athens and Sparta are two good examples of city-states that contrasted greatly with each other.

Questions on Overview of Greece Geography

1. What are the two distinctive features of all of Greece?
2. How did these two features impact the development of the Civilizations of Greece?

GEOGRAPHY IMPACTS ATHENS AND SPARTA.

Divide: One read Athens fill in Athen Chart, one read Sparta and fill in Sparta Chart.

Then share answers and discuss.

| Athens | Sparta |
|---|--|
| <p>Mediterranean Climate</p> <p>Thanks to its geography, Greece enjoys a moderate climate. In the summer, its average temperature can reach around 80 degrees. This climate allowed ancient Athenians to spend plenty of time outside. This affected Athenian lifestyle and culture, since the Athenians were able to be active within their city. For example, many Athenians would</p> | <p>Mediterranean Climate</p> <p>Thanks to its geography, Greece enjoys a moderate climate. In the summer, its average temperature can reach around 80 degrees. This climate allowed ancient Spartans to spend plenty of time outside. This affected Spartan lifestyle and culture, since the Spartans were able to be active within their city. For example, all male Spartans would be</p> |

meet in public forums outside to discuss the latest news and debate public issues. It also meant that theaters — attended by many Athenians — were built as roofless amphitheaters.

Seafaring

With Athens close to the sea, ancient Athenians realized their destiny as a seafaring people. Ancient Athenians used sea travel as their primary mode of transport. Athens, alongside many other Greek city-states that were located close to the coast, depended on the sea for trade. Because Greece lacked materials such as precious metals and had little farming land, trading with foreign cities allowed ancient Athens to grow and prosper as a city-state.



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Need for Expansion

Since Athens' position and the geography of Greece as a whole meant that the city-state lacked several essentials — such as fields for raising livestock and enough living space to support a larger population — the ancient Athenians were driven to expansion. Athenians traveled far to establish colonies loyal to the city-state. Athens controlled a large empire made up of islands, which would provide troops for Athenian wars. This need

required to join the military around age 12. They would participate in military drills and fighting everyday in the fields that surrounded Sparta. It also meant that Spartans were able to farm year-round to supply food to it's citizens.

Farming

Although Sparta was located on a river, it was a land-locked city-state. The Spartans relied on farming to feed it's citizens. As the population increased, so did the amount of food needed to support that population. In order to get more farmland, Sparta often invaded and captured neighboring city-states. Sparta would then turn the people it conquered into slaves. These slaves were called *helots*. Eventually, the helots of ancient Sparta outnumbered Spartan citizens.

Need for Expansion

While Sparta did have a few colonies, because it was landlocked it relied on warfare to overthrow neighboring city-states. Sparta remained a strong city-state because of its military. They were able to conquer other Greeks and use them as slaves to work the fields and provide food.

for expansion and empire eventually led to rebellions and conflicts such as the Peloponnesian War with the city-state of Sparta.

In this chart, fill in how each topic impacted the lifestyle and culture of each Group (provide specific details).

| | Athens | Sparta |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mediterranean Climate Impact People | | |
| Seafaring Impact People | | NO DETAILS PROVIDE: Why is that?- |
| Farming Impact People | No Details provided: Why is that? | |
| Need for Expansion Impact People | | |