

Find your Greek Philosopher Name

A Delphic Philosophy Activity

This is a fun¹ activity to explore the characteristic provinces of some of the Greek gods, and some of the places in the ancient Greek world that came to be associated with certain philosophers. If you follow the steps below, you should find yourself with an ancient Greek style name that exemplifies something about your philosophical intuitions and amazes your *philoi* (friends & family).

If you're interested in ancient Greek names, you can read (much) more [here](#) at the Oxford Lexicon of Ancient Greek Personal Names.

If you like, you can share your Greek philosopher name & say 🙌 *chaire* in our community.

Steps

- [Step 1. Choose a Greek god to explore](#)
- [Step 2. Add a quality of relation to that god \(optional\)](#)
- [Step 3. Add an ending](#)
- [Step 4. Add "of", and an ancient philosophical town](#)

Step 1. Choose a Greek god to explore

Watch our short introduction to the Olympian gods: <https://youtu.be/Z-l03iGfRm0>.



¹ Fun not guaranteed.

Here's a short list of some of the deities prevailing in the Olympian period of Greek mythology, and some of their traditional associations. (Drawing on what feels *core* to you in their ancient conceptual associations, feel free to explore, rethink, and adapt their meaning and stories to your context, identity, and interests. Ancient Greek [rhapsodes](#) often improvised and revised the myths from “inspiration,” and some reported gods and heroes appearing to them to [correct the record](#) about their own stories).

- **Zeus:** the sky, wisdom, justice, willpower, protection of the needy, thunderbolt.
 - [Root: Dio-, meaning light, or Olympio-, meaning the Olympian]
- **Hera:** power, royalty, importance of family and trust.
 - [Root: Hero- or Hera-]
- **Athena:** wisdom and insight, skill and strategy in battle, kindness to those who struggle.
 - [Root: Atheno-]
- **Apollo:** sunlight, prophecy, music, memory, and medicine, young men coming of age, rites of passage.
 - [Root: Apollo-]
- **Artemis:** moonlight, the wilds of nature, forests, archery and hunting, young women coming of age, rites of passage.
 - [Root: Artemid-]
- **Hestia:** hearth and home, security, centeredness, firelight.
 - [Root: Hestio-]
- **Aphrodite:** love, desire, playfulness, beauty, sexuality, connecting opposites.
 - [Root: Aphrodisi-]
- **Ares:** war, anger, passion, dance.
 - [Root: Areo-]
- **Hermes:** interpretation, language, translation, business, travel, philosophy.
 - [Root: Hermo-]
- **Demeter:** cultivated nature, agriculture, food security, motherhood.
 - [Root: Demetri-]
- **Persephone:** flowers and agriculture, daughterhood, transition between life, death, and life again. Also known as *korē*, young woman.
 - [Root: Kore-]
- **Poseidon:** the oceans, deep places, monsters, emotional passion, life-giving fertility of water.
 - [Root: Poseidon-]
- **Hades:** the underworld, the dead, the “other,” shadows, invisibility. Also known as *ploutos* “wealth” for the great wealth under the earth.
 - [Root: Plout-]
- **Dionysus:** ecstasy, self-transcendence, the party, wine and dance
 - [Root: Dionys-]
- **Hecate:** magic, travel between realms, crossroads
 - [Root: Hekat-]

Step 2. Add a quality of relation to that god (optional)

- Add **-odor-** or **-dot-**: a *gift* of the god to the world. Hooray!
 - Example: Apollodorus.
- Add **-ophan-**: a *manifestation* of the god. They keep showing up!
 - Example: Dionysiophanē.
- Add **-klei-**: bringing *glory* to the god. Going out there and doing what they need.
 - Example: Heracles.
- Add an **-i-** or **-ai-**: *similar* to the god.
 - Example: Aphrodisia.

Step 3. Add an ending

Ancient Greek is a gendered language like French or Italian, although any ending can also represent any gender identity. For example, we have ancient representations of a bearded Aphrodite, Zeus as a woman (Dia), and the famously non-binary god Hermaphrodite. The famous speech of Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium* describes men as “children of the sun,” women as “children of the earth,” and non-binary people as “children of the moon.”

- Add **-os**: usually *m.* “he/him”. (Note: if you picked **-phan-** above in step 2, add **-ēs** instead, which is also a he/him ending. Endings get... complicated).
- Add **-a** or **-ē**: usually *f.* “she/her”.
- Add **-on**: gender-neutral: “they/them”.
- Any ending can also represent any gender identity at your discretion.

Step 4. Add “of”, and an ancient location

You might choose a town (*polis*) or location that might reflect your *initial* philosophical associations or intuitions—it's ‘a place to start’. No right or wrong answers: and you can always ‘move’ later!

A place to start

You like to see the world through...	Start here	Known for...
Mythology, storytelling, and artistic inspiration	Helicon In Boeotia, Greece	Hesiod's inspiration by the Muses
Statecraft and just laws, for the common good of all	Knossos On the Isle of Crete	Minos' laws, Minoan civilization, justice

Scientific accuracy and material analysis	Miletus On the Coast of Turkey	The Milesian physicist Thales and his pupils; Anaxagoras & Aspasia
Pure mathematics, with a tinge of mystery & music	Croton In Italy	Pythagoras, mathematician, geometer, vegetarian, and spiritual leader
Mystery, magic, and the unknown	Akragas In Sicily	Empedocles, doctor and wonder-working magician
Life's ever-changing flux, with a pattern	Ephesus On the Coast of Turkey	Heraclitus
The constancy of logic and intuition... and paradox	Elea In Italy	Parmenides and Zeno
It's all a matter of perspective and persuasion	Abdera In Thrace	Protagoras, 'sophist' and famous relativist

Other places to explore

A common city for all persuasions and cities, for truce and peace; seat of the Pythia, the Oracle <i>For those in a course: Gathering-place for all of us.</i>	Delphi Mount Parnassos	Prophecy, peace, and self-knowledge
The birthplace of democracy (on some accounts), and of Socrates and Plato. <i>For those in a course: Will be unlocked later.</i>	Athens Attica	Democratic governance, sophists, philosophers
The place of the philosopher who, on Plato's account, teaches Socrates about the 'Theory of Forms'. <i>For those in a course: Will be unlocked later.</i>	Mantineia	Home of the prophet Diotima, teacher of Socrates in <i>Symposium</i>
Specific Platonic dialogues. <i>For those in a course: Will be unlocked later.</i>	Demes of Athens, Alopeke and others	These demes will be unlocked later.

Examples of Names

- **Apollophanē of Elea.** ‘How Apollo shows up’, *she/her* (Apollo-phan-ē). As an Elean, her initial intuition is that careful, valid reasoning can solve problems and point to the eternal nature of things.
- **Herodotos of Knossos.** ‘Gift of Hera’, *he/him* (Hero-dot-os). As a Knossian, he is particularly interested to apply philosophical principles to thinking about what’s just and fair for the common good.
- **Hermokleion of Helicon, currently exploring the Academy.** Glory of Hermes, *they/them* (Hermo-klei-on). As a Heliconian, they delight in beauty and the inspiration of art. They are walking in the groves of the Academy with Plato to contemplate the beauty of the visual arts, music, dance, and mathematics.

Link to this page

- [Find your Greek Philosopher name!](#)

Optional addition on the next page...

Optional Bonus: Choice (*hairesis*) of a Post-Socratic school

You may choose and change your ‘enrolment’ as a friend of one of the major Hellenistic and later schools, as you explore them and discover your preferences. ‘... **currently studying in ...**’

The Academy	Ethically, Plato’s school values virtue or human goodness (<i>aretē</i>) alongside deeper contemplation and the discovery of wisdom and beauty in the world. It can give rise to research in areas like the arts or pure mathematics.	Founded by Plato of Athens
The Lyceum	Aristotle’s school follows the Academy, where Aristotle also studied, with a stronger accent on empirical scientific research. Aristotle and his students brought great rigour to disciplines like biology, logic, and botany.	Founded by Aristotle of Stagira
The Stoa	Ethically, this school prizes natural virtue or human goodness (<i>aretē</i>) as the goal, even when it’s uncomfortable or challenging. Since the natural cosmos is an interconnected whole, they aim for action that helps the whole human community and is in harmony with nature.	Founded by Zeno of Citium
The Garden	Ethically, this school prizes moderate pleasures and a close community of friends. Its adherents tend to be less active in public life, valuing personal friendships and tranquility.	Founded by Epicurus
At Large	You may also choose the Cynics, Skeptics, or other schools, or declare yourself an ‘eclectic’ at large, with no current focus.	