Life in Ancient Greece: A Journey through Time

Learning objective: To understand the social and political structure of Ancient Greek city-states, specifically Athens and Sparta.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below. Use evidence from the text to support your answers.

Ancient Greece was not a single country, but a collection of independent city-states. Each city-state, known as a polis, had its own laws and traditions. Ellie, who loves history, explains that Athens and Sparta were the most powerful. Athens is famous for being the birthplace of democracy, where male citizens could vote on important decisions in the Assembly. They valued philosophy, art, and theatre, building beautiful temples like the Parthenon on the high hill called the Acropolis. In contrast, Sparta was a society built for strength and military discipline. From a young age, Spartan children were trained to be resilient and physically tough. While Athens focused on the mind and public debate, Sparta focused on endurance and protection. Despite these differences, all Greeks shared a common language, religion, and a love for sport, which they celebrated at the Olympic Games. Even today, the legacy of their architecture and political ideas continues to influence how we live our lives in the modern world.

Word bank: City-state · Democracy · Philosophy · Citizen · Architecture · Olympic · Acropolis

1. According to the text, which two city-states were the most powerful in Ancient Greece? (1 mark)

2. What were the main differences between the priorities of Athens and Sparta? (2 marks)

3. Why might the Ancient Greeks have felt a sense of unity despite living in separate city-states? (2 marks)

4. What does the text imply about the role of the Acropolis in Athenian life? (2 marks)

5. Do you think it would have been better to live in Athens or Sparta? Explain your answer using evidence from the text. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a split image: one side showing a bustling Athenian marketplace with philosophers and marble statues, and the other side showing a Spartan training ground where soldiers are practicing their drills.

Extension challenge: Research the Olympic Games in Ancient Greece. Create a list of three sports that were played then and compare them to the sports we see in the modern Summer Olympics.