



History International presents
Rise and Fall
of the **Spartans**
Part 1

classroom: **April 28-May 1**

One of the most famous Greek city-states was the military polis of Sparta. Characterized by an austere lifestyle that centered on the military training and prowess of its male citizens, Sparta was one of the most feared states in the ancient world. Spartan soldiers began their training at the age of seven, when they entered military life. These boys learned that they lived for the good of the state and that to be thought a soldier of the most savage kind was the highest honor a man could achieve. Thousands of years later, *spartan* has become a word that implies the simplicity and ferocity of the ancient polis.

This documentary explores the rise and fall of Spartan culture, and how it influenced and defined ancient Greece. Students will learn about the political, military, and cultural aspects of Sparta. They will explore the concept of the polis and the city-state, as well as the role of Sparta and other areas of Greece in the formation of Western civilization.

national standards

Rise and Fall of the Spartans fulfills the following National Standards for History for grades 5–12: Chronological Thinking, Historical Comprehension, Historical Analysis and Interpretation, and Historical Research Capabilities for World History Era 3.

curriculum links

Rise and Fall of the Spartans would be useful for classes in Western civilization, Greek history, military history and political science. It is appropriate for middle school and high school students.

discussion questions

1. Sparta was one of the ancient Greek city-states. Where exactly was Sparta located?
2. Describe and define the concept of the city-state. Why were these city-states so remarkable in the ancient world?
3. Spartan soldiers were famous and feared throughout the ancient world. What made Spartan soldiers so special?
4. Spartans fought their most famous battle at Thermopylae. What happened at Thermopylae that made the battle an example of and a metaphor for Spartan beliefs and way of life?
5. Describe and discuss the cultural life of early Sparta.
6. The Messinian Wars define Spartan history and life. What were the causes of the Messinian Wars?
7. Sparta was the most feared military state. Why did it become a military state?
8. The Greek god Apollo was the patron god of the Spartans. Who was Apollo? Why was he so appealing to the Spartans?
9. Discuss the Spartan social structure.
10. Discuss the unique concept of Spartan government and dual monarchy.
11. Spartan citizens had very little free choice in their lives. How and why did the society try to isolate and control its citizens?
12. Compare and contrast the training of Spartan boys and Spartan girls.

activities

1. Imagine that you are a child in Sparta. Write a short essay describing what a typical day in your life would be like.
2. Locate Sparta and the rest of the major Greek city-states on a map of Greece. How did the geography of the region contribute to and help define Greek history?
3. Though many writers consistently discuss Sparta's simple nature, there is evidence that Sparta had a flourishing artistic culture. Research some of the art that emerged from Spartan culture, and using a medium of your choice, create a replica of one of the pieces that you have learned about.



vocabulary

Students should identify the following terms. Visit www.merriamwebster.com for definitions.

aesthetic
austere
eugenics
euphemism
galvanize
homogeneity
indoctrinate
melee
ominous
oracle
phalanx
polity

resources

This is the teacher's guide for Part 1 of the documentary. Guides for Parts 2-4 can be found online at <http://www.historychannel.com/classroom/guides/>

websites & books

web sites

Women in Sparta
www.womenintheancientworld.com/new_page_1.htm

Sparta Reconsidered
www.elysiumgates.com/~helena/index.html

The Battle of Thermopylae
www.geocities.com/the_temple_of_ares/300spartans.html

Sparta
citd.scar.utoronto.ca/CLAC32/SCMEDIA/Website/SPARTA.html

For additional resources, visit us online at HistoryChannel.com/classroom

books

Guy, John. *Greek Life*. Barron's Educational Series, Incorporated, 1998. Reading level: Ages 9–12.

Hart, Avery, Paul Mantell, and Michael P. Kline (Illustrator). *Ancient Greece! 50 Hands-on Activities to Experience This Wondrous Age, Vol. 3*. Williamson Publishing Company, 1998. Reading level: Ages 9–12.

Nardo, Don. *Women of Ancient Greece*. Lucent Books, 2000. Reading level: Ages 12 and up.

Powell, Anton, and Gillian Evans (Editor). *Ancient Greece: Cultural Atlas for Young People*. Facts on File, Incorporated, 1989. Reading level: Ages 9–12.



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