**Background**Ancient Greek and [**Hellenistic**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=hellenistic','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');) cultural achievements span two different eras. The Ancient Greek [**golden age**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=golden%20age','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');) occurs under the leadership of [**Pericles**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=pericles','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');)in the 5th century BCE. These achievements were mainly confined to the [**city-state**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=city-state','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');) of **Athens**, where a strong economy and good [**government**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=government','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');) created the conditions necessary for such advancements.

The Hellenistic golden age occurs under the leadership of [**Alexander the Great**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=alexander%20the%20great','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');), who conquered an [**empire**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=empire','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');) stretching from the **Greek** mainland all the way to the **Indus River Valley**. Hellenistic society was a blending of **Greek**, **Egyptian**, **Persian**, and many other cultures that gave rise to advancements in math, science, art, and literature.

**Government**The Ancient Greeks were the first to use [**democracy**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=democracy','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');) as a form of government. Under Pericles, male citizens in Athens participated in the daily running of government. This form of direct democracy excluded all **non-citizens**, such as **women** and [**slaves**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=slave','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');). Today, many governments around the world practice some form of democracy.

**Philosophy**  
Greek [**philosophers**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=philosopher','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');), or "**lovers** **of** **wisdom**," used observation and reason to study the world around them. This spirit of inquiry led to advancements in the **arts** and **sciences**, as well as examining the **best** **form** **of** **government** for men to live under. Famous philosophers include **Socrates**, **Plato**, and **Aristotle**.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Socrates** | **Plato** | **Aristotle** |
| **Socratic Method** of questioning as a learning tool. | Wrote ***The Republic*** Favored a strong, controlling government | Developed ideas on government Favored the one strong and wise rule as best form. |
| Considered to be first western philosopher | Society has three classes: Philosophers, Soldiers, and Workers | Human Reason was the key to learning |

**Literature**  
Early Greek literature was in the form of **plays** developed for [**religious**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=religion','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');) **ceremonies**. Famous writers, such as **Aeschylus** and **Sophocles**, wrote **tragedies** and **comedies** about human conflict and interaction between the gods and man. These stories were very popular, and became the basis for modern literature. The Greeks were also the first **historians**. **Herodotus**, known as the **Father** **of** **History**, wrote books chronicling historical events, such as the **Persian** **War**.

**Art & Architecture**  
Greek artists portrayed the human figure in [**idealized realism**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=idealized%20realism','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');). **Paintings** and **sculptures** show humans in the perfect form. Greek [**architects**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=architect','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');) build elaborate buildings using **marble** and the **Greek** **column**. The most famous example of Greek architecture is the **Parthenon** in Athens. Many buildings around the world today use Greek architectural ideas.

**Math & Science**  
Greek mathematician [**Pythagoras**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=pythagoras','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');), developed a formula to calculate the relationship between the sides of a **right** **triangle**, a method still in use today. [**Aristarchus**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=aristarchus','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');), a Greek astronomer, discovered that the **earth rotated on its axis**, and **revolved** **around** **the** **sun**. [**Eratosthenes**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=eratosthenes','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');) discovered that the **earth was round**, and accurately calculated its [**circumference**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=circumference','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');). [**Euclid**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=euclid','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');) wrote a book called ***The Elements***, which is the basis for **modern** **geometry**. A Greek scientist named [**Archimedes**](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=archimedes','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');) tried to use science for more practical matters, he showed how the use of a **lever** and **pulley** **system** could lift just about any weight.

**Medicine**  
**[Hippocrates](javascript:%20window.open('http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/global/vocab/def.cfm?term=hippocrates','','status=no,resizable=yes,scrollbars=yes,%20width=400,height=200');%20void('');)**, a 5th century BCE physician, studied the causes of illnesses and experimented with various cures. He is also credited with creating a set of **ethical** **standards** for doctors called the **Hippocratic** **Oath**.