**Background**Ancient Greek and **Hellenistic** cultural achievements span two different eras. The Ancient Greek **golden age** occurs under the leadership of **Pericles**in the 5th century BCE. These achievements were mainly confined to the **city-state** of **Athens**, where a strong economy and good **government** created the conditions necessary for such advancements.

The Hellenistic golden age occurs under the leadership of **Alexander the Great**, who conquered an **empire** 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** 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**. Today, many governments around the world practice some form of democracy.

**Philosophy**
Greek **philosophers**, 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**.

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| **Socrates** | **Plato** | **Aristotle** |
| **Socratic Method** of questioning as a learning tool. | Wrote ***The Republic*** Favored a strong, controlling government | Developed ideas on governmentFavored 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** **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**. **Paintings** and **sculptures** show humans in the perfect form. Greek **architects** 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**, developed a formula to calculate the relationship between the sides of a **right** **triangle**, a method still in use today. **Aristarchus**, a Greek astronomer, discovered that the **earth rotated on its axis**, and **revolved** **around** **the** **sun**. **Eratosthenes** discovered that the **earth was round**, and accurately calculated its **circumference**. **Euclid** wrote a book called ***The Elements***, which is the basis for **modern** **geometry**. A Greek scientist named **Archimedes** 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**, 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**.