

3. CLASSICAL GREECE AND THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

Study Questions:

INTRODUCTION – THE CLASSICAL IDEAL

1. What name is given to the period of Greek history between the Persian Wars and Alexander the Great?
2. What descriptive name has been given to the Athenian civilization of the last half of the fifth century B.C.E.?
3. Why are Greek tragedies still read and performed?
4. What influence did the Macedonians and Romans have on the spread of Greek ideas?
5. What name is given to the period of history following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.E. (and until the rise of the Roman Empire)?
6. Why was the Greek belief in “nothing in excess” important in avoiding *hubris*?
7. Why did the Greeks emphasize the study of human thought and actions?
8. What accounts for the powerful position of Athens during the first half of the Classical period?
9. What was the purpose of the Delian League according to Athens? According to the other Greek city-states?
10. What was the cause of the Peloponnesian War and the eventual result of the war?
11. What great historian wrote the *History of the Peloponnesian War*? (And why was he a “great historian”?)
12. According to Thucydides, which leader is most associated with the achievements of the Athenian Golden Age?

DRAMA IN CLASSICAL GREECE

1. Who were the three great masters of Classical Greek drama?
2. What was the relationship between theater and religion in Classical Greece?
3. What was the function of the chorus in Greek theater?

4. Who was the first important Athenian tragic dramatist (he wrote the *Oresteia* trilogy)? What does the *Oresteia* trilogy say about the way to bring a rational society of human beings out of primeval chaos?
5. Who are the main characters in the *Oresteia* trilogy and how are they related to one another?
6. Who was the author of *Antigone* and *Oedipus the King*?
7. Why did Antigone disobey King Creon?
8. What action did Oedipus take regarding his father? his mother? According to the Greeks, why did Oedipus deserve to suffer for his actions?
9. Which Greek dramatist showed the most sympathy for the problems of women (*Medea*, *Phaedra*) who lived in a society dominated by men?
10. Who was the greatest Greek author of comedy plays?
11. In Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, what action did the women of Athens take to convince men to stop their war?

PHILOSOPHY IN THE LATE CLASSICAL PERIOD

1. How much of our knowledge of Socrates comes from his own writings? from the works of his student Plato?
2. What was the method used by Socrates to test the truth of traditional ideas?
3. How did Socrates' opponents feel about their ignorance being exposed by the questions of Socrates? (Also, consider how various people today react to their ignorance being exposed.)
4. What events do Plato's works the *Apology*, the *Crito*, and *Phaedo* record?
5. What institution, founded by Plato in 387 B.C.E., was the first permanent institution in western civilization devoted to education and research?
6. What was Plato's "Theory of Forms"? What does his theory say about the world we perceive around us? In what phenomenon was Plato particularly interested?
7. Who was Aristotle and what school did he found in 335 B.C.E. (in competition with Plato's Academy)?
8. How did Aristotle's view of reality differ from that of Plato?
9. According to Aristotle, what caused the downfall of tragic heroes? What was the effect on the audience of watching the fate of the tragic hero?

10. Why did Plato advocate the censorship of music? (Do you agree? Why or why not?)
11. What were Aristotle's views on music?

THE VISUAL ARTS

1. What was the subject of the *Canon* by Polykleitos? What did Polykleitos mean by a "canon of proportion"? (Would this understanding of the importance of proportion and scale to beauty also apply to architecture?) (See figure 3.7.)
2. How did the Peloponnesian War influence the arts in Classical Greece?
3. Why is the Parthenon an "incomparable symbol of the Golden Age of Greece" (figure 3.13)?
4. How did the building of the Parthenon contribute to the Peloponnesian War?
5. What was the subject of the Parthenon frieze (the Elgin Marbles) (figures 3.14 and 3.15)?
6. What is the subject of the caryatids of the Erechtheum (figure 3.18)?
7. Why was the nude statue of *Aphrodite of Cyrene* by Praxiteles important in the history of western art (figure 3.21)?

THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

1. What two events mark the beginning and the end of the Hellenistic Period?
2. Where were the centers of Greek art and learning in the Hellenistic Period?
3. How did Hellenistic art differ from Classical art? Which style emphasized order and balance? Which style emphasized emotion and expression (figures 3.2 and 3.24)?
4. How did power of city rulers and businessmen in the kingdoms of Pergamum and Antioch herald in a new era in the arts?
5. What was the subject of the frieze on the *Altar to Zeus* at Pergamum (figure 3.26)?
6. What story was told by the *Laocoön* sculpture (figure 3.28)?
7. Into which empire were the Hellenistic cities absorbed?

Short Essay Questions:

1. Explain the chief differences among the three principal Greek tragic dramatists. Illustrate with episodes in particular plays.
Points to consider-
 - The pessimism or optimism inherent in their work
 - The primary focus of each the playwrights (faith in human reason, the inability of humans to control destiny, or the desire for truth and justice)

2. Discuss the contributions of Plato and Aristotle to the development of philosophy.
Points to consider-
 - Plato's writings on the life and teachings of Socrates
 - Their establishment of institutions of learning
 - Their investigations into the nature of human existence and the physical world
 - the methods they used in their arguments and investigations

3. Describe Greek musical theory in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.
Points to consider-
 - Beliefs about the cosmic nature of music
 - beliefs about "ethos" and the power of the modes
 - The meaning of *harmony* for the Greeks (different from our current usage)

4. How was sculpture used to decorate the buildings on the Athenian Acropolis (see figure 3.12, 3.15, 3.16, and 3.17)? What is the significance of the myths it illustrates?
Points to consider-
 - Apollo as an emblem of the state of Athens
 - The symbolic meaning of battle of Lapith and Centaur
 - The Three Goddesses and the birth of Athena as symbols on Athens' divine history

5. What are the features of a work of art that indicate it is Hellenistic (figures 3.23, 3.24, 3.26, 3.29 and 3.30)? How does the Hellenistic style contrast with that of the Classical period?
Points to consider-
 - The emotions expressed in the faces and bodies
 - The sense of motion versus stasis
 - The complex arrangement of compositional elements

Questions about the Readings:

1. *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles:
 - a. Who are the main characters in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*?
 - b. As the play opens, what problems is the kingdom faced with (see lines 14–30)?
 - c. What does Teiresias, the blind prophet, tell Oedipus and how does Oedipus react (see lines 288–454)?
 - d. At what point is the “flaw” in Oedipus' character most revealed (see the exchange between Creon and the king, lines 490–600)?
 - e. How did both Oedipus and his natural parents try to ‘trick’ destiny (see lines 690–700 and 760–771)?
 - f. What is the function of the strophes and antistrophes? How do you imagine they were performed?
2. What is the meaning of Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*? What do its various components (cave, light, shadow, darkness, chains) symbolize?
3. According to Aristotle, what is/are:
 - a. the highest good (Book I Section II)
 - b. the nature of happiness (Book I Section VII)
 - c. the causes of revolution (Book V Section I)
 - d. the characteristics of a monarchy vs. a tyranny (Book V Section VIII)

Key Terms to Identify and Define:

Acropolis
 Aegisthus
 Aeschylus
 Alexander of Macedon
 Antigone
 Antioch
 Aphrodite
 Aristophanes
 boule
 Caryatids
 Catharsis
 Chaeronea
 chorus

Clytemnestra
Creon
Delian League
dithyrambic
Doryphoros
ecclesia
Electra
Elgin (Lord)
entasis
Erechtheum
Eumenides
Euripides
fourth
Freud, Sigmund
Furies
Gandharan
Gesamtkunstwerk
hamartia
harmony
Helen
Ictinus
Iphigenia
Laocoön
Lysippus
Medea
Mnesikles
mode
Myron
Oedipus
Orestes
Panathenaic
Parthenon
Parthenos
Peloponnesian War
Pericles
Phaedo
Phaedra
Phidias
Philip of Macedon II
Plato
Polykleitos
Polynices
Praxiteles
propylaea
Ptolemy
Satyr play
Satyr
Scopas
Seleucids
Socrates
Sophists

Sophocles
tetrachord
Tholos
Thucydides
trilogy
vendetta
Wagner, Richard

Study Question Answers:

INTRODUCTION – THE CLASSICAL IDEAL

1. The period of Greek history between the Persian Wars and Alexander the Great is called the Classical Period.
2. The Athenian civilization of the last half of the fifth century B.C.E. has also been called the Golden Age of Greece.
3. Greek tragedies are read and performed today because they deal with human experiences which still have the emotional and intellectual power and relevance.
4. The Greeks were conquered by the Macedonians and Romans who then spread Greek ideas throughout the ancient world.
5. The period of history between the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.E. and the rise of the Roman Empire is called the Hellenistic period.
6. Hubris, which meant excessive ambition, could be avoided, along with many other problems, if humans stayed within reasonable limits, living in equilibrium with the natural world and creating a balanced society.
7. The Greeks believed it was through the study of human thought and actions that we could understand what forces lay behind people's deeds.
8. The powerful position of Athens during the first half of the Classical period was due to its having played a decisive role in the defeat of the Persians, and the establishment of a stable and effective democratic system of government.
9. According to Athens, the Delian League, whose treasury was on the island of Delos, was created in order to protect the states from possible outside attack. The other Greek city-states—Thebes, Corinth, and Sparta—suspected that Athens was using this treasury, and the power of the Delian League, for its own purposes rather than the welfare of all the states. They believed that Athens aimed to subjugate the independent states, creating an empire under Athenian rule.

10. Athens' use of the Delian League's treasury for Athenian building projects ultimately led to the Peloponnesian War. Athens fell to the Spartan army in 404 B.C.E.
11. *History of the Peloponnesian War*, written by Thucydides, gives a detailed and impartial description of events and attempts to analyze human motives and reactions to understand why the conflict occurred. This was a seminal work in the development of historical writing because rather than seeking to entertain the reader, its aim was to discover and record the truth of events.
12. According to Thucydides, Pericles is most associated with the achievements of the Athenian Golden Age.

DRAMA IN CLASSICAL GREECE

1. The three great masters of Classical Greek drama are Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.
2. Greek theater developed out of choral hymns sung to the gods (Dionysius in particular) and plays were written for and performed at festivals intended to honor the gods. Theaters were considered sacred ground and to attend a play was to participate in a religious ritual.
3. The chorus represented the point of view of the spectator and interpreted and commented upon the characters, their words, and actions.
4. Aeschylus wrote the first major tragic drama, the *Oresteia* trilogy. Through these three dramas Aeschylus expresses his belief that ultimately the power of persuasion and human reason can put an end to violence and despair, and for the larger community secure civilization and order over primeval chaos.
5. The main characters in the *Oresteia* trilogy are King Agamemnon, his wife Clytemnestra, their two grown children Orestes and Electra, and Clytemnestra's lover Aegisthus.
6. Sophocles is the author of *Antigone* and *Oedipus the King*.
7. Antigone disobeyed King Creon because she wanted give her brother Polynices a proper burial despite the King's proclamation that Polynices was a traitor.
8. Oedipus, despite his efforts to avoid his tragic fate, unknowingly killed his father and married his mother. According to the Greeks, Oedipus deserved to suffer for his actions because he was guilty of the character flaw *hamartia* (excessive pride and stubbornness.)
9. The dramatist Euripides showed the most sympathy for the problems of women living in a male dominated society, particularly through the characters of Medea and Phaedra.

10. The greatest Greek author of comedy plays was Aristophanes.
11. In Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, the women of Athens withhold sex from their husbands until they have negotiated peace and brought an end to war.

PHILOSOPHY IN THE LATE CLASSICAL PERIOD

1. Socrates didn't set down any of his ideas in writing; it was his disciples—particularly Plato—who recorded his teachings.
2. Socrates tested the truth of traditional ideas by subjecting them to intense questioning.
3. Like many today, Socrates' targets didn't appreciate their ignorance being exposed by his questions. Eventually his enemies brought Socrates to trial on the charge of collaboration with the tyrants in an unsuccessful coup.
4. Plato's *Apology* records Socrates' speech in his own defense at the trial; the *Crito* relates Socrates' reasons for not escaping from prison; and *Phaedo* recounts Socrates' last days and discussion with his friends about death and the immortality of the soul.
5. Plato founded the Academy, which was the first permanent institution in western civilization devoted to education and research.
6. In his "Theory of Forms," Plato delineates his theory that there exists a higher dimension of existence in which all things are perfect (in an ideal form) and that the world we experience around us is only a corrupted reflection of these ideal forms. Much of his work centered upon political theory and the construction of an ideal state.
7. Aristotle was Plato's most gifted student. In 335 B.C.E. he founded the Lyceum, based upon theories of reality which differed from those of Plato.
8. According to Aristotle, the reality of forms is present and discernable in this world.
9. According to Aristotle, the downfall of a tragic hero is caused by some previously undetected flaw in his character which ultimately brings him to a bad end. This flaw is part of a dramatic formula in which the audience relates to the hero and, after experiencing his intellectual and emotional turmoil, has a catharsis, or cleansing.
10. Plato advocated the censorship of some music because he believed it had the power to influence people, called *ethos*, and that certain music could negatively shape a listener's character.
11. Aristotle believed that music, due to its mathematical qualities, could and should be used to elevate listeners to a higher state of reason, and that the state could be served by supporting the composition of such "ethical" music.

THE VISUAL ARTS

1. The subject of the *Canon* by Polykleitos was the proportions for the perfect male body. His “canon of proportion” set down his belief that beauty, in particular the human body, could be represented in precise mathematical relationships among the various parts of the body. Architects also embraced the concept of beauty being a result of precise proportions of a structure.
2. The Peloponnesian War led to an increase in individual expression in the arts rather than the depiction of a generally accepted ideal. As in drama, the trend was towards the representation of the sculptor’s or vase-painter’s emotions as well as the experiences of everyday life and people. Because of the heavy toll of the drawn-out conflict, death and mourning became common themes.
3. The Parthenon is a monument to the Classical Greek faith in the power of human intellect and achievement. It was dedicated to Athena, the goddess of wisdom, intelligence, and understanding.
4. The Athenians used money from the treasury of the Delian League to build the Parthenon; however, these funds were supposed to be held and used for the welfare of all the Greek states. This was seen by the member states as an indication of Pericles’s imperialistic designs and thus contributed to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.
5. The Parthenon frieze depicts the procession that occurred every four years as part of the opening ceremonies of the Great Panathenaic Festival in which Athenians carried a robed, wooden statue of Athena to the Parthenon.
6. The caryatids of the Erechtheum are statues of robed young women which function as columns supporting South Porch roof of the temple.
7. *Aphrodite of Cyrene* by Praxiteles is important in the history of western art because it portrays the nude female body as an object of art and emphasizes the sensuality of the female form.

THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

1. The death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.E and the Roman conquest of Greece in 146 B.C.E. respectively mark the beginning and end of the Hellenistic Period.
2. The centers of Greek learning and art during the Hellenistic Age were Alexandria, in Egypt (known as the Kingdom of the Ptolemies), Pergamum in Macedonia, and Antioch in Syria (known as the Kingdom of the Seleucids).
3. Whereas the artists of the Classical Period emphasized order and balance in their work, the artists of the Hellenistic Period emphasized emotion and expression. The daring and heroism of Alexander’s life infused artists with a spirit of adventure which, in addition to the many portrayals of the Emperor and

the tales surrounding his exploits, led to a general freedom of expression throughout the visual arts. These works are characterized by strong contrasts of light and shade, an interest in depicting motion, and a complex composition of elements.

4. During the Hellenistic period a new generation of city rulers and businessmen emerged in Antioch and Pergamum who became patrons of the arts. The works commissioned for this new class adorned marketplaces, theatres, centers of science and technology, as well as their own palaces and villas.
5. The frieze on the *Altar to Zeus* at Pergamum depicts Athena slaying the giant Alcyoneus while his mother, Gaia, watches.
6. The *Laocoön* sculpture depicts the priest, Laocoön, and his sons being strangled by two sea serpents sent by Apollo.
7. The Hellenistic cities were eventually absorbed into the Roman Empire.

CHAPTER 3 - REVIEW

Begin by writing the title of the chapter you've just studied. Next, without looking at the text or your study guide, use your memory to recall and to list the major sections or topics covered in the chapter. Finally, check your knowledge by taking the short "Self Quiz" below.

A) CHAPTER TITLE:

B) MAJOR SECTIONS OR TOPICS:

C) SELF QUIZ # 3 – IDENTIFY THE:

1. _____ Author of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*; his impartiality made him the first objective, scientific historian.
2. _____ Leader during the Golden Age of Athens; he made visible the glory of Athens by constructing magnificent new buildings atop the Acropolis.
3. _____ Author of *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone*.
4. _____ Best-known student of Socrates, author of *the Dialogues*, *The Apology*, *The Republic*, and founder of the Academy.
5. _____ "The Great Systematizer," founder of the Lyceum, and the best-known student of Plato.
6. _____ Most famous and beautiful building on top of the Acropolis in Athens.
7. _____ Columns in the shape of young women on the Porch of the Maidens of the Erechtheum.
8. _____ Name of the period of Greek culture from the death of Alexander the Great to the Roman conquest of Greece.
9. _____ Greatest city of the Hellenistic Age.
10. _____ Wealthiest city of Hellenistic Asia; its chief shrine was an immense Altar to Zeus showing the battle between the gods and the giants.

CHAPTER 3 - REVIEW Answers

A) CHAPTER TITLE: **Classical Greece and the Hellenistic Age**

B) MAJOR SECTIONS OR TOPICS:

- **The Classical Ideal**
- **Drama in the Classical Period**
 - Drama Festivals of Dionysus**
 - The Tragic Dramatists**
 - Aristophanes and Greek Comedy**
- **Philosophy in the Late Classical Period**
 - Socrates**
 - Plato**
 - Aristotle**
- **Greek Music in the classical Period**
 - Modes**
- **The Visual Arts in the Classical Period**
 - Sculpture and Vase Painting**
 - Architecture**
- **The Hellenistic Period**

C) SELF QUIZ # 1 – IDENTIFY THE:

1. **Thucydides**
2. **Pericles**
3. **Sophocles**
4. **Plato**
5. **Aristotle**
6. **Parthenon**
7. **Caryatids**
8. **Hellenistic Period**
9. **Alexandria**
10. **Pergamum**

3. WEB QUESTS - CLASSICAL GREECE

THE PARTHENON MARBLES

<http://www.greece.org/parthenon/marbles/pmarb.htm>

01. What three sets of sculpture decorate the Parthenon?

- A. _____ Individual sculptures in high relief?
- B. _____ One long continuous sculpture in low relief?
- C. _____ Sculptures in the round (not relief) filling the triangular spaces at both ends of the

Parthenon?

02. What was the name of the simple architectural decoration separating the metopes from each other?
03. What was the subject of the metopes on the
 - A. south side of the Parthenon?
 - B. east side of the Parthenon?
 - C. west side of the Parthenon?
04. What was the subject of the frieze placed above the inner row of columns?
05. What forty-foot-high statue was housed inside the Parthenon?
06. Of the surviving panels in the frieze, where are thirty-six found today?
07. Where are another fifty-six panels located?
08. Of the surviving metopes, where are thirty-nine located today?
09. Where are the other fifteen located?
10. What is the position of the Greek government about the Parthenon Marbles? Why?

THE HISTORY OF THE MARBLES

<http://www.greece.org/parthenon/marbles/history0.htm>

11. Why in 479 B.C.E. did Pericles and the Athenians want to construct new buildings such as the Parthenon on the Acropolis?
12. What was the fate of the Parthenon in 450 C.E.?
13. After the arrival of the Turks in 1458, what was the fate of the Parthenon?
14. In 1687, how was the Parthenon impacted by the Venetian army?
15. Between 1801 and 1816, what was the influence of Lord Elgin on the Parthenon (*See Part 2*)?
16. What recent developments have there been with the Elgin/Parthenon Marbles (*Click on "Campaign Update"*)?

DR. J's ILLUSTRATED GREEK THEATER

http://iilt.ilstu.edu/drjclassics/lectures/theater/ancient_greek_theater.shtm

17. What may have been the importance of the Theater of Dionysus in Athens?
18. What was the original purpose of the circular area called the “orchestra”?
19. Compare the Greek meaning of *theaomai* and *theatron* with the Roman “auditorium.”
20. What was the approximate seating capacity of an ancient Greek theater?
21. What was the *skene*?
22. Where were murders and other violent acts usually performed?

THESPIS

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thespis>

23. Who was Thespis? Why is he important in the history of theater?