



"Hi! I'm Max...

... NG Kids' time-travelling mouse! This month's mini-histories magazine sees me scuttling off across Europe to meet the Ancient Greeks. This clever civilisation is where Western culture began. For example, the idea of democracy (where a government is elected by its people) was invented by the Ancient Greeks! Read on to find out more...

Amazing empire



The earliest Greek civilisations date back nearly 4,000 years, to around 1,600 BC. The Ancient Greek Empire spread from Greece through Europe, and started when the Mycenaeans from Crete fought and won the Trojan War, thanks to a clever trick involving a wooden horse (see below)!

In 800 BC, the Greeks started to split their land – which included the Greek mainland, islands and the countries we now call Bulgaria and Turkey – into city-states, each with its own laws, customs and rulers. Athens, Sparta and Corinth were the most powerful.



Did you know...?

The Spartans were fearsome warriors – they started their training when they were just seven years old!

TOP TRICK!

A famous legend tells how the cunning Greeks conquered the city of Troy – by hiding inside a giant wooden horse!

The horse was left outside the city's walls and, thinking it a gift, the people of Troy wheeled it inside... only for the sneaky Greek soldiers to creep out after dark and seize the city. How clever!

The crafty Greeks hid inside this huge horse!

Incredible athletes



The Ancient Greeks held many festivals in honour of their gods.

To celebrate the god Zeus, for example, the first Greek Olympics were held in the city of Olympia in 776 BC and are thought to have inspired our own Olympic Games! The winners of each event were given a wreath of leaves, and when they returned home, they would be given free meals and the best seats in the theatre!



Did you know...?

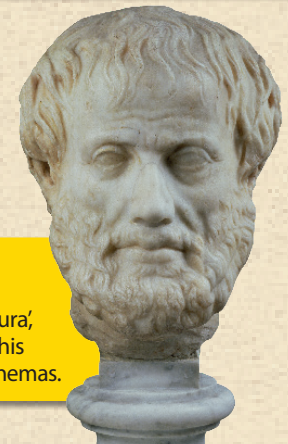
The city-states were often at war, but just before the Olympics, a truce would be called so that everyone could travel to Olympia safely.

SCARY SPORTS

Events at the Greek's Olympics included wrestling, boxing, long jump, javelin, discus and chariot racing. But those taking part in the wrestling event had to be the toughest, as there were hardly any rules – and they had to compete naked. Eek!

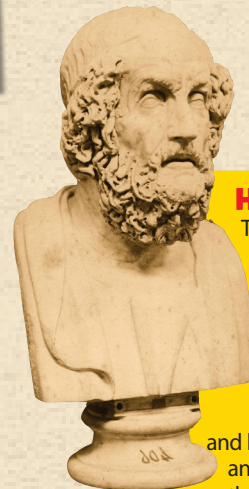
Brilliant boffins

The Greek people were a clever lot, and came up with ingenious ideas that changed their world – and also helped to shape ours...



ARISTOTLE

A great Greek philosopher and teacher, Aristotle also invented the 'camera obscura', a sort of pinhole camera. Today, we use his principles to make our televisions and cinemas.



HOMER

The *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* are two very important works of Greek literature, and they were both written by Homer. They're about a warrior, Odysseus, and his adventures during and sailing home from the Trojan War.

HIPPOKRATES

This Greek doctor is often called the 'father of modern medicine'. It's believed that he created the Hippocratic Oath, which requires doctors to promise to always help, and never harm, their patients. And this oath is still used today!

