

Daily Life in Ancient Greece

How would you have behaved if you had lived in ancient Sparta? Or in ancient Athens? Or in Corinth, Argos or Megara? Meet the Greeks! They were a riot!

MEET THE GREEKS!

It's around 480 BCE

**You are an Olympian contestant,
representing your city-state at the Olympic games!**

How would you behave?

SPARTA

You are a Spartan! Be proud! You have endured unbelievable pain and hardship to become a superior Spartan soldier and citizen! Taken away from your parents at age 7, you lived a harsh and often brutal life in the soldiers' barracks. You were beaten by older children who started fights to help make you tough and strong. You were often whipped in front of groups of other Spartans, including your parents, but never cried out in pain. You were given very little food, but encouraged to steal food, instead. If *caught* stealing, you were beaten. To avoid severe pain, you learned to be cunning, to lie, to cheat, to steal, and how to get away with it! Some of you are members of the Spartan secret police and enjoy spying on slaves. If you find a slave who is showing signs of leadership, you have orders to kill them immediately. You are fierce, capable, and proud of your strength. You know you are superior and are delighted to be Spartan!

Spartan Goals and Behavior at the Olympics: Win at all costs. Lie, cheat, and do whatever it takes. If you can't win, at least beat your archrival, those silly citizens of Athens. You are the proud and fierce Spartans!

ATHENS

You are an Athenian! Be courteous. You have been superbly educated in the arts and the sciences, and trained to be extremely productive and capable in times of peace or war. You are an achiever. Until age 6 or 7, you were taught at home by your mother, or by a male slave. From age 7-14, you attended a day school in the neighborhood where you memorized Homeric poetry and learned to play that magnificent instrument, the lyre. You learned drama, public speaking, reading, writing, math, and perhaps even how to play the flute. You attended four years of higher school, and learned more about math and science and government. At 18, you attended military school for two additional years! You are proud to be an Athenian! Famed for its literature, poetry, drama, theatre, schools, buildings, government, and intellectual superiority, you have no doubt that your *polis*, Athens, is clearly the shining star of all the Greek city-states.

Athenian Goals and Behavior at the Olympics: You know your archrival, those horrible Spartans, will do anything to win, even lie and cheat, but you are Athenians - you would never stoop to such boorish behavior. Cooperate with your fellow Athenians to defeat those brutish Spartans, and do your personal best! Say witty things to impress representatives from other city-states. Be courteous to all Greeks, no matter what inferior city they represent

CORINTH

You are a Corinthian! As a coastal city-state, you have a glorious history as a cultural and trade center. Although your schools are not as fine, perhaps, as those of Athens, you have been educated in the arts and the sciences. As a child, you were taught at home by your mother, or by a male slave. From age 7-14, you attended a day school near your home where you memorized poetry and studied drama, public speaking, reading, writing, math, and the flute. You attended a higher school, if your parents could afford it. You also went to military school for at least two years. Your *polis* is famous for its bronze statues, pottery, and vase painters. You are creative problem-solvers. To solve the problem of foreign money pouring into your coastal *polis*, your city-state created its own coinage, forcing traders to convert their coins at your banks. To solve your problem of

unemployment, you created a huge and successful public works program. Literature, culture, art, and businesses thrive in your city-state. You are proud to be a practical, productive Corinthian!

Corinthian Goals and Behavior at the Olympics: If you can't win, help Argos and Megara to defeat those vain Athenians, and those animals, the Spartans. Do what it takes, but be honest about it.

ARGIVE

You are an Argive! You have been educated in the arts and the sciences, and trained to be productive and capable in times of peace or war. You have much to be proud of. Although your close neighbor, Corinth, is on the coastline, your *polis* is located on a plain, where the weather tends to be hot and dry in the summer, and cold and wet in the winter. Your soil is not especially fertile, and you must fight the elements to grow food. In spite of this hardship, your magnificent stone sculptures of athletes, rippling with muscle, are the envy of many a Greek city-state. You are famous for your wonderful musicians and poets. Drama reached new heights in your *polis*. Plays are performed in open-air theatres, drawing crowds of 20,000 or more Argive citizens! Unfortunately, you have a problem. When Athens and Sparta asked your *polis* to send supplies and troops to fight the Persians, after the battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE, you refused. For this decision, you are held in disgrace by the other Greek city-states.

Argive Goals and Behavior at the Olympics: Your goal is to reverse the negative reputation you currently hold in the ancient Greek world. You will have to work hard to convince other city-states that your athletes, soldiers, scholars, orators, architects, poets, dancers, and artists are as fine, if not superior, to the other city-states. You cheer Argive victories, and win as many events as you can. Your goal is to make sure that Athens and Sparta don't win at all.

MEGARA

You are a Megarian! Be proud that you are a Greek and come from such a respected city-state as Megara. As a coastal city-state, your history is similar to Corinth's,

your neighbor. You believe your schools are as fine as those of Athens, although you have no doubt that any Athenian would disagree. You have been trained in the arts and the sciences. As a child, you were taught at home by your mother, or by a male slave. From age 7-14, you attended a day school near your home where you memorized poetry and studied drama, public speaking, reading, writing, science, poetry, the flute, the lyre, and a great deal of mathematics. Like most Megarians, you love money and have been trained to be an excellent accountant. You attended a higher school, and went to military school. Your *polis* is famous for its glorious textiles, which are the envy of other Greek city-states. You have, of course, your own coinage, an idea you copied from Corinth. Literature, culture, art, and businesses thrive in your city-state. You believe you offer your citizens even more freedom than Athens. (After the Peloponnesian War, Athens' famous philosopher, Plato, moved to Megara, where he remained for 10 years, so perhaps you are right! You also founded the city of Byzantium, also called Constantinople, now called Istanbul, way back in 630 BCE.) You are proud of your city-state's past and present achievements, and proud to be a Megarian!

Megarian Goals and Behavior at the Olympics: If you can't win, help Argos and Corinth to defeat those boastful Athenians and those militant fanatics, the Spartans. If it comes down to Athens or Sparta, cheer for Sparta, loudly. (They might be militant, but those are good friends to have in time of war! Besides, you are tired of hearing about wonderful Athens.) You are Megarians, proud of your history, your flourishing businesses, your world famous textiles, your freedoms, your schools, your coastal advantage - your rich and vibrant city-state, Megara.