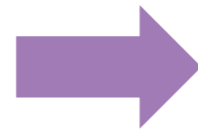


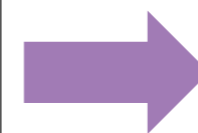
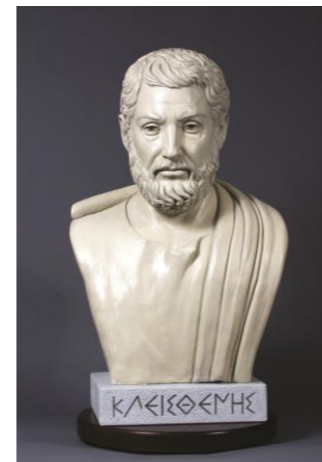
Year 3 Unit 5: Ancient Greece, Teacher Subject Knowledge Guide
Democracy in Greece:
594 -593 BC

Solon was an Athenian statesmen, poet and commander. He was appointed as archon which was the highest administrative position of Athenian government. Athens was facing a period of economic crisis and much of the agricultural land was dominated by a small aristocracy. People were forced to work for landowners and pay one sixth of their crops or become slaves. Solon proposed to cancel all debts and allow anyone to own land. He also reformed the class system creating four groups based on agricultural production. The crops you produced the more power you had under his reforms. He was able to reduce the dominance of the Athenian aristocracy and improve the participation of ordinary citizens in the political arena.

Solon laid the foundations of Athenian democracy. Aristotle criticised Solon's laws in *the constitution of Athenians* for being too vague and open to very different interpretation and consequently many legal disputes. Therefore, democracy was not yet widespread.


508 BC

Cleisthenes became the democratic ruler of Athens in 508 BC. Cleisthenes changed the political structure and processes of Athens. He was one of the earliest rulers to support Athenian democracy. Cleisthenes *demokratia*, means 'rule by the people'.


461 BC

Pericles joined the reformer Ephialtes in organizing a vote in the popular assembly that stripped all remaining powers from the Areopagus, the old noble council. Many historians consider that event to have marked the birth of Athenian democracy. After Ephialtes was assassinated in 461 B.C., Pericles emerged as Athens's foremost politician, and he would lead the popular assembly and the city until his death three decades later.

Pericles ushered in what is considered "radical democracy." This meant that ordinary Athenian citizens were paid by the state to participate in public affairs. Previously, only the wealthy could afford the time to participate in politics. Pericles approved payment for jury duty and for soldiers, sailors, and administrators. That development transformed the character of Athenian democracy and society; lower-class Athenians (called thetes) could now participate as fully as citizens with property. A noted orator, Pericles stated in his famous Funeral Oration that Athenian citizens regard "a man who takes no interest in public affairs not as a harmless, but a useless character."

The First Persian War:

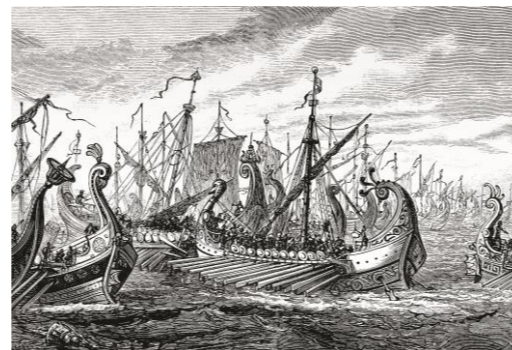
The Persian Empire was led by King Darius I. The Persian Empire at this time was the largest and most powerful empire controlling land from Egypt to India. King Darius decided to invade Greece. The Greeks known as the Ionians revolted against the Persians, and they asked for help from the city-states. The city-states sent ships, but the revolt failed, and the Persians defeated the Ionians.

To punish the Greeks for helping the Ionians, King Darius invaded the Greek mainland in 492BC. The Persians had a huge army, but they did not expect the fighting capability of the Greeks. At the Battle of Marathon, the Athenian army defeated the Persians. The Athenian army then ran the 25 miles back to Athens to protect the city from the Persians. This is said to be the origin of the marathon running race.

The Second Persian War:

King Darius' son King Xerxes decided to invade Greece a second time 10 years later in 480BC. He sent a huge army of 200,000 soldiers and around 1,000 warships and they defeated King Leonidas and Sparta at the Battle of Thermopylae.

The Persians then marched on to Athens. When they arrived in Athens, they realised it was deserted. The Athenians defeated the Persians at the Battle of Salamis by ramming their triremes into the larger Persian ships. King Xerxes fled.


The Greek Dark Ages

Archaeology suggests a collapse of civilisation during the Greek Dark Ages. The great palaces and cities of the Mycenaeans were destroyed or abandoned. The Greek language stopped being written during this time. Due to lack of evidence, it is thought that the Greeks lived in fewer and smaller settlements during this period, suggesting famine and depopulation. No foreign goods have been found, suggesting little international trade and contact between foreign powers which could have interrupted any cultural progress or growth.

The Dorian invasion/migration has been one explanation for the cultural and economic breakdown after the Mycenaean period. However, despite investigation, the mass migration of Dorians into Greece has never been established, and the origin of the Dorians remains unknown.

It is important to be aware that historians are increasingly rejecting the terminology of 'dark ages' preferring to use terms like 'Early Archaic Period'.

