

## Teachers Notes for the Premium TimeMaps Unit

# Greece and Persia

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# Section 1: Introduction

## One Unit, Two Resources

This Premium TimeMaps Unit is based on a **sequence of maps** showing the history of Greece and Persia, between 500 BCE and 100 CE.

This sequence is presented in **two resources**, a slide show and a series of map pages, so that teachers can choose **two approaches** to covering the topic with your students: a whole-class presentation; and individual project work, for which the institution will need a multiuser licence so that the students can access the resources for themselves.

### 1. Slide show

The slide show is primarily designed for use as a whole-class presentation. Commentary notes are available as an *aide memoir* for the teacher when delivering the presentation. They provide talking points on each map in the slide show.

The slide show can also be used by the students for their own project work. A students' commentary is provided.

### 2. Timemaps map pages

These are designed specifically for use by students in their project work.

The maps show Greece and Persia at different dates. Each map is accompanied by information about what is happening in the region at the date of the map.

This combination of map and information makes it easy for students to use the map pages, though not so ideal for teachers to use as a class presentation (hence the slideshow, see above).

## Why Greece and Persia?

In school and college curricula, the Ancient Greeks usually form a distinct unit, in which the Persian Empire plays only a marginal role. In fact, though, the Persians were central to the history of Ancient Greece, and vice versa. A map-based approach is the ideal way to appreciate this. Hence the subject of this unit is Greece *and* Persia.

The ancient histories of the two regions are intertwined to the extent that it is impossible to understand one without the other. For example:

- no sooner had the Persian Empire reached its fullest extent than it embarked on its attempt to conquer Greece;
- the Golden Age of Greece (between 490 BCE and 338 BCE) was bookended by conflicts with Persia;
- and the conquests of Alexander the Great, in which the Greeks conquered the Persians, began a new phase in history when the civilizations of the two regions mingled to form a distinct new culture, that of the “Hellenistic” world.

## Section 2: Using the Resources

The unit can be used in one of two ways:

### 1. Whole-class presentation

The **slide show** is specifically designed for teachers to use as a whole class presentation, offering a visual, panoramic overview of the topic. It can be used as an introduction to the topic, or as a wrap up, or as a stand-alone resource.

A commentary is provided to help teachers cover the key points for each slide.

In Section 3 Task 2 (below), are a series of questions (which can also be found at the end of the commentary), which can be answered by a single word or short phrase. The questions aim to reinforce the learning outcomes from the presentation, and can be used as a test or reinforcement exercise at the end of the presentation.

Another way might be to print the questions out and give them to the students, and ask the students to note down the answers as the slide show progresses. They can either submit their answers for marking, or collaborate in small groups to come up with an agreed set of answers.

### 2. Student-based enquiry work

Students use the maps, plus linked information, to find out for themselves about the topic. In the process, they gain knowledge and understanding of the topic, whilst at the same time developing analytical and other thinking skills.

Students can use either **map pages** or **slide show**. In the map pages, the linked information is right next to the maps; in the slide show, it is in the student commentary.

In either case the institution will need a multiuser licence.

Both slide show and map pages are built around the same series of maps, following the history of Greece and Persia between 500 BCE and 100 CE.

Simple forward/back navigation buttons (and in the map pages, a timeline below the maps) make it easy to move through the map sequence.

To start the sequence of map pages, click on the map of Greece and Persia 500 BCE.

To start the slide show, click HERE.

Teachers may wish to combine the whole-class presentation approach with the student-based approach - for examples, see Section 4.

## Section 3: Activities

In this section are some suggestions to using this Premium Unit actively in the classroom.

Students can do the activities as individuals or in small groups. They will obviously need to have direct access to this Premium TimeMap unit, for which a multi-user licence is required.

### Task 1. Preparatory work - Geographical Background

Locate the area in the world covered by this unit on a modern world atlas or map (if you want you can use the one in the Timemaps site by comparing the world in 2005 CE with the world in 500 BCE).

1. What modern countries would the ancient civilizations of Greece and Persia have covered? (*Greece, North Macedonia, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and a slither of India*).
2. Discuss the contrasting geographies of the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. In particular, note:
  - The maritime geography of the eastern Mediterranean characterised by sea, coast and islands; this environment favors the rise of small-scale states such as the Greek city-states.
  - The land-based geography of the Middle East, with its plains, rivers, deserts and mountains; this geography favors the rise of huge conquest states, like the Persian Empire (which is only the latest of a long succession of empires in the region - see the Timemaps unit on The Ancient Middle East).

### Task 2. Questions

These questions can be used with the slide show (see above; hence they also appear at the end of the slide show commentary). They can also be used in the context of student-based enquiry work, as a simple way to reinforce knowledge of the topic. If so, in place of whole class presentation, students access the slide show or map pages directly to answer the questions.

1. Merchants of which people brought the alphabet to the Greeks? (*The Phoenicians*)
2. Which kingdom was the first to use metal coinage? (*Lydia, in Asia Minor*)
3. Which were the two outstanding city-states of Classical Greece? (*Athens and Sparta*)
4. From which Indo-European people did the Medes and the Persians come? (*The Iranians*)
5. Who founded the Persian empire? (*Cyrus the Great*)
6. Why is the Persian empire also called the Achaemenid empire? (*That was the name of the Persian royal family*)
7. Which state led the Delian League? (*Athens*)
8. Name one of the three best-known philosophers in ancient Greece. (*Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle*).

9. Which state won the Peloponnesian War? (*Sparta*)
10. Of which kingdom did Alexander succeed his father as king? (*Macedonia*)
11. Many cities founded by Alexander were named Alexandria. Where was the most famous of these located? (*Egypt, on its north - Mediterranean - coast*)
12. Name one the three main kingdoms into which Alexander's conquests were divided. (*The Seleucid, in Syria; the Ptolemaic, in Egypt; or the Antigonid, in Macedonia*)
13. Name one of two states which conquered the Hellenistic kingdoms (*The Parthian or Roman*)

### **Task 3. Multiple choice questions**

This is a shorter alternative to Task 2.

1. A *helot* was A. a Macedonian soldier, B. a Spartan serf, C. an Athenian landowner, or D. a foreign trader?
2. The Battle of Marathon was a victory for A. Sparta, B. Athens, C. Persia, or D. Alexander the Great?
3. The statesman most responsible for setting up democracy in Athens was A. Draco, B. Solon, C. Cleisthenes, or D. Pericles?
4. The victor of the Peloponnesian War was A. Athens, B. Thebes, C. Sparta, or D. Corinth?
5. Alexander the Great succeeded, as king of Macedonia, his father A. Pericles, B. Seleucus, C. Ptolemy, or D. Philip?
6. Alexander the Great conquered A. The Assyrian empire, B. The Babylonian empire, C. The Persian empire, or D. The Roman Empire?

### **Task 4. Critical thinking questions**

The aim of these activities is to develop analytical thinking skills, and in particular getting students to grapple with history-specific issues such as cause and consequence, and change and continuity.

*General Instructions:*

1. Students read the questions below, which either they or their teacher has chosen.
2. They then go through the map sequence or slideshow (in the latter case they will have to have access to a copy of the student commentary).
3. As they do this, they carefully take notes, focusing on the questions they are answering. They should bear in mind when and where events or developments happen; why they happen; and what changes as a result of them happening.
4. Students use their notes to prepare their answers. These can be in either essay form or as presentations.

### Short questions:

Students give brief answers to the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers, but they must give reasons.

1. Which of Cyrus, Darius and Alexander most deserves to be called “the Great”, do you think?  
*(As said above, no “right” answers - the students should look at what they achieved and come to their own judgements)*
2. How did the geography of the Greeks’ homeland shape their society and government?  
*(A landscape of steep hills and valleys, coasts and islands made for numerous small-scale political units, each confined to only one valley or a single island; the maritime nature of the region encouraged seafaring and trade, which in turn favored an interest in the wider world and a readiness to accept foreign ideas)*
3. Which, do you think, was the most important battle in the Persian Wars? Give reasons for your answer.  
*(I refer you to my note for question 1, above!)*
4. What were the factors which brought about the Peloponnesian War?  
*(Rivalry and fear between the two leading powers of Greece, Athens and Sparta, and Athenian over-confidence which bred a certain recklessness - see question below)*
5. Why was Athens confident that it had a strong position at the outset of the Peloponnesian Wars? And what factors led to her defeat?  
*(The city was surrounded by long walls which ran down to the sea, and within which the Athenians could shelter; and their dominance at sea assured them - so they thought - of food supplies brought in from their allies and from trade)*
6. Account for Alexander the Great’s success as a conqueror.  
*(An answer should include one or both of the following: his father had united most of Greece under Macedonian rule, this giving him considerable manpower to draw on; Alexander’s own abilities as a commander seem to have been outstanding)*

### Extended exercises:

Students answer one or both of the following questions in essay form. There are no right or wrong answers, but they must give reasons.

1. If an alien from outer space was surveying Earth in about 500 BCE, just as the Persian Wars were about to begin, which side would he think was most likely to win?  
Why was the side which did win, victorious?
2. In your opinion, might things have turned out differently if Alexander the Great had not died so young? Give reasons for your answer.  
*(This may require some additional research. For example, are there any clues as to what Alexander might have done, had he lived longer? Did Alexander have a son? - and if so, why did he not inherit his father’s throne?)*

## Section 4: Plans of Action

Here in this section are possible strategies, plans of action you might like to follow (or adapt as you see fit) for using some of these activities.

### Plan A:

This plan combines the presentation approach with the student-centered enquiry approach. Do this if you are doing this topic as a major topic with the class.

1. Complete Task 1: Geographical Background.
2. Introduce the topic by presenting the slide show to the class. Use the teacher's commentary as a guide.
3. The students complete Task 4 by answering one or more of the questions given there.

They use either the map pages or the slide show (plus student commentary) to answer the question(s).

They can do this task as individuals, for their own project work. Alternatively, they can do it in small groups.

All the students or groups can be asked to do the same questions, or all to do different ones.

4. The students then write up and submit their work in essay form for marking, or prepare a presentation for showing to the class.

### Plan B:

This plan will take less time than Plan A to complete.

7. Complete Task 1: Geographical Background.
8. Show the slide show to the class, using the teachers' commentary as a guide. Tell the students that there will be a test at the end.
9. Ask the questions in Task 2 to the class as a whole, with the students calling out the answers (if they remember any!).
10. Give out the questions on printed sheets (for this, use the questions as given at the end of the students' commentary). Show the class the slide show again. This time they take notes in preparation for the same test again.
11. The students write their answers on this sheet and submit for marking.

### Plan C:

This should take longer than Plan B to complete, but not as long as Plan A.

1. Preliminary work: Geographical Background.

2. The students are handed copies of the questions (use the questions as given at the end of the students' commentary).
3. The students then work their way through the map pages or the slide show (if the latter, using the students' commentary), and as they do so they note down the answers to the questions.
4. The teacher then shows the slide show to the class as a whole, using the teachers commentary as a guide. In the course of this presentation they will give the students the answers to the questions.

## Section 5: Further Reading

A list of all TimeMaps articles can be found on the Encyclopedia home page. Here is a selected list of the key articles which students should find most helpful for this topic:

[The Phoenicians](#)

[The Babylonian empire](#)

[Ancient Persia](#)

[The Civilization of Ancient Greece](#)

[The History of Ancient Greece](#)

[Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic World](#)

[Hellenistic civilization](#)

[The Parthian Empire](#)