

Museum explorers

Ancient Greece

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Welcome

This trail guides you on a fascinating journey of exploration and discovery around the Museum. On the way you'll track down some amazing treasures and experience tales of human history from around the world. You'll also need to search, look, pose and draw.

Whichever way you go, and whatever you discover, enjoy yourself! If you ever feel lost, just ask a member of staff for help.

Useful information for families

- You can pick up a map in the Great Court to help you get around the Museum.
- You can leave fold-up pushchairs in the cloakroom free of charge.
- Accessible toilets and baby changing facilities are available. You can breastfeed and bottle feed anywhere on the Museum's grounds but if you would like more privacy, the Museum has two feeding rooms.
- You can find child-friendly food at the cafés. High chairs are available.
- You can use the Ford Centre for Young Visitors to picnic with your family at weekends and during school holidays.

A trip to ancient Greece

Take a trip through thousands of years of Greek history to find out how life and art changed across the centuries. You'll explore how ancient Greeks lived and discover some of the beautiful things their sculptors and craftspeople made.

You'll need the sharp eyes of an art expert to track down everything you need.



1

Ancient makers

Go to Room 12
on the Ground floor.



The Bronze Age covers the period 3200–1050 BC.

The Greeks first made things from the metal bronze in what archaeologists call the Bronze Age. The Minoans and Mycenaeans are the peoples we know most about from this time in Greece.



Minoans and Mycenaeans decorated pots with animals that were important to them. They also made animal sculptures.

Explore the gallery and spot these creatures:



■ Horse



■ Cuttlefish



■ Goat



■ Duck



■ Octopus



■ Bull



Find the jar shaped like this. It once stood in the Minoan palace at Knossos on the island of Crete. It holds 450 litres of wine, oil or grain – that's two big bathfuls!

Which members of your family would fit inside the jar?



Look at the Mycenaean objects in Case 8.

What can they tell you about Mycenaean life?
What did Mycenaean people eat?
How rich were they?
Did they fight?

2

Meet the neighbours

Now go to Room 13.
Turn right and walk to
the far end of the gallery.



The Archaic Age
covers the period
700–480 BC.

In the Archaic Age the Greeks got to know their neighbours around the Mediterranean Sea. They set up trading towns in other countries and swapped ideas about art with the people they met.

Find the case with two statues: an Egyptian one (on the left) and a Greek one (on the right).

The Greeks were influenced by Egyptian sculpture, but then developed their own style.



What **similarities** can
you spot between
the two statues?
What **differences**
are there?



Walk back towards the entrance to this room
and find this object in Case 9. It was used to
mix wine and water ready for drinking.

Find these creatures on the jar.



3

Party time

Carry on into Room 15.



The Classical Age covers the period 480–323 BC.

Greek culture flourished in the Classical Age. Cities grew larger and richer and many great monuments were built. Craftspeople refined their skills, writers produced wonderful plays and great thinkers shared their deep thoughts with others.



Drinking parties were popular in ancient Greece.

Explore the cases in this gallery and find these things for a drinking party:



Pot with three handles



Bowl



Cups



Jug



Guests at ancient Greek parties told stories inspired by pictures on pots. **Find this pot** in Case 1. It shows the Greek hero Theseus fighting a creature called the Minotaur.



Use the picture on the pot as a starting point to **tell a story** to your family. Take turns telling different parts of the myth.

4

Happy birthday Athena

Now go to Room 18.



Start by standing in the middle of the gallery. The stone carving around the walls is known as a frieze.

Athens once controlled a large empire and was the richest city in Greece. The wealthy Athenians built a huge temple for the goddess Athena on top of a hill called the Acropolis. The temple was known as the Parthenon.

The long frieze round the wall shows a procession to celebrate the goddess Athena's birthday.



Turn round on the spot and follow the procession with your eye. Now spot:

- A cow mooing
- Women carrying wine jugs
- A horseman wearing a helmet
- Horses galloping



Choose a small part of the frieze that you find interesting.

Imagine you're there. What can you see, hear and smell?

5

Walking on water

Go back the way you came and enter Room 17. Turn left.



Lykia is a town in what is now south-west Turkey.

The skills of Classical Greek architects and sculptors were well known. The 2,000-year-old Nereid Monument is a beautiful tomb made for a king of Lykia. It is named after the nereid sea-goddesses whose statues look as if they are hovering over the ocean.



Pick one of the nereid sculptures standing between the columns and stand in the same position. **Ask** the other people in your group to guess which one you are copying.

Look around the gallery and find this woman.



Wave your arms like her. **What** do you think she might be saying?

6

People and portraits

Now go to Room 22.
Find Cases 6, 7 and 8 on
the left side of the room.

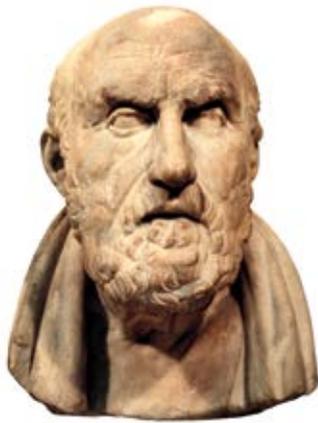


The Hellenistic
Age covers
the period
323–30 BC.

Lifelike sculptures of people, called portraits, became popular in the Hellenistic Age. A bit like looking at family or school photographs today, people enjoyed seeing pictures of someone's face. Artists of the time became very skilled at showing different people.



What different sorts of people have the artists shown?



Do any of them look like you, or a member of your family?



Take it in turns to choose a sculpture like this and describe it in words. **Ask** the group to guess which one each of you is talking about.

Draw a portrait of someone in your group.





You've completed the **Ancient Greece** trail!

What an adventure you've been on. You've travelled through thousands of years of Greek history and explored life and art in ancient Greece. **Of all the things you discovered, what was your favourite?**

As a reward for completing the trail, here's a mysterious ancient object. Don't look too closely or you may turn to stone!



Bowl with gorgon's head, Room 13



You can find out even more about life in ancient Greece in other parts of the Museum:

- **Discover** a painted lady from Bronze Age Greece in Room 11.
- **Learn** about everyday life in ancient Greece in Room 69.
- **Travel** to Italy with the Greeks in Room 73.



Other things you could do when you get home:

- **Design your own Greek pot**
Use just orange and black – one colour for the figures, the other for the background.
- **Read some Greek myths**
Find out what the ancient Greek gods, goddesses and heroes got up to.

See you back at the British Museum soon!

