**Ancient Greece Vocabulary Words**

1. **Acropolis**—A high, rocky hill on or near which early which early people built cities.
2. **Alexander the Great**—One of the greatest military commanders in history. **Alexander the Great** conquered Persia and Egypt. He invaded India. He was king of Macedonia from 336 BC to 323 BC. When Alexander took control of lands, he hoped the local cultures would mix with Greek culture. Greek history and culture after the death of Alexander is referred to as Hellenistic.
3. **Aristocrat**—A member of a rich and powerful family. Some city-states practiced an aristocracy (rule by a small ruling class).
4. **Aristotle**—A Greek philosopher who was a student of Plato and became a famous teacher; wrote about and taught logic, politics, science, and poetry. He taught that people should use reason in their lives.
5. **Athens**—An ancient city-state in eastern Greece, named after Athena (its patron goddess), it is widely referred to as the cradle of Western civilization and the birthplace of democracy. Athenians practiced direct democracy (the people decided - not representatives).
6. **City-state**—A city with its own traditions and its own government and laws; both a city and a separate independent state. Early Greek societies were heavily influenced by the topography and available resources of the region leading to the development of **city-states.** Greek **city-states** developed radically independent political and cultural systems, the most obvious example being Athens and Sparta.
7. **Democracy**—A form of government in which citizens govern themselves.
8. **Direct democracy**—A form of democracy in which political power is exercised by the citizens without representatives acting of their behalf. A government where the citizens propose and vote directly on each law.
9. **Golden Age** –A period in a society’s history marked by great achievements. The **Golden Age** of Greece brought important advances in government, art, architecture, and philosophy. These advances are foundational components of Western civilization to this day.
10. **Hellenistic**—Describing Greek culture after the death of Alexander the Great, including the three main kingdoms formed by the breakup of Alexander’s empire.
11. **Homer**-Greek Poet; credited with composing the epics the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.
12. **Myth**- A myth is a folktale that tries to explain the way the world is or how things came to be; usually involving a god or goddess, hero, and/or human.
13. **Mythology**—Is a collection of traditional stories that express the beliefs or values of a group of people.
14. **Oligarchy—**Means the rule of the few, and those few are generally the people who are richer and more powerful than the others, what you might call the aristocrats or the nobles.
15. **Pericles**— **Pericles**, an Athenian politician/leader, introduced reforms that strengthened the democracy. He encouraged the spread of democracy and led Athens when the city was at its height.
16. **Philosophy**-System of beliefs and values.Aristotle, Plato and Socrates were all notable Greek **philosophers**. The ideas of these men had a lasting effect on modern learning and thinking.
17. **Polytheism**—A belief in or worship of many gods.The Greek Mythology was polytheisticand portrayed gods and goddesses with human-like emotional states such as anger, jealousy, and joy. The Greeks believed that their deities took an active and constant role in their lives. All Greek City-States practiced **polytheism** (a belief in many gods). Zeus was king of the gods. Athena was Zeus' daughter and patron goddess of Athens. Poseidon is Zeus' brother and god of the ocean. Hades is Zeus' brother and god of the underworld. Greek mythologytells us that the Greeks worshipped twelve great gods.
18. **Socrates—**Athenian philosopher that taught through questioning; helped form many values of Western culture; was put to death for challenging Athenian values.
19. **Sparta**—A prominent city-state in ancient Greece. Sparta was unique for its social system and constitution, which completely focused on military training and excellence. **Sparta** was a very different city-state from Athens. Located in the southern portion of Greece, Sparta was a city-state devoted to war. Sparta's form of government is an oligarchy - rule by a small group of people.
20. **Trojan War**—in Greek epic poems and myths. A 10 year war between Greece and the city of Troy in Asia Minor.