

# Ancient Greece

Nearly four thousand years ago, in the countries that we now know as *Greece*, Turkey and Bulgaria, lived the earliest Greek civilisations.

## The Government

Ancient *Greece* was split into many different states, which were each ruled in their own way. Each state had its own laws, government and money, but they shared the same language and religion. At this time, the two important states in *Greece* were Athens and Sparta.

## Greek Gods

Religion was important to the *Greeks* because they believed that it would make their lives better while they were living and the *Greeks* believed that the gods would care for them when they died. There were 12 major gods who ruled Mount Olympus. These gods were:

- Zeus
- Hera
- Hephaestus
- Athena
- Hermes
- Artemis
- Apollo
- Dionysus
- Ares
- Aphrodite
- Demeter
- Poseidon.

## Greek Writing

The Greek alphabet was the first alphabet with vowels.

Unlike our alphabet, the Greek alphabet consisted of unusual symbols such as Γ (gamma) and Δ (delta). Interestingly, this alphabet is still used in *Greece* today.

## Greek Buildings

To show the gods how important they were, the *Greeks* built big temples in every town for one god or goddess.

The temples were homes for statues of gods and were cared for by priests. Religious ceremonies and festivals were held outside the temples. A few of these temples can still be found today around *Greece* including The Parthenon (dedicated to the goddess Athena), which can be found in Athens, *Greece*.

### Glossary

**States** - Territories of land

**Zeus** - King of the gods

**Mount Olympus** - Home of the major *Greek* gods.

**Temple** - Housed the statues of gods.

### **Did you know...**

That the Ancient *Greeks* invented theatre?

They loved to watch plays and most cities had a theatre - some big enough to hold 15,000 people!