

## Did you know?

- The first Greek civilisations were formed about 4000 years ago.
- Most wealthy Greek citizens owned at least one slave who carried out duties such as cooking, cleaning and working in the fields.
- Ancient Greek slaves were not allowed to go to school or use their own name!
- The ancient Greeks invented theatre. They performed the first examples of tragedy, comedy and satire.
- The Trojan War lasted for 10 years and began when Paris of Troy took Helen from her husband, Menelaus, King of Sparta. Helen was considered the most beautiful woman in the world in Greek mythology and was described as 'the face that launched a thousand ships'.
- The first two letters of the Greek alphabet (alpha and beta) gave us the word 'alphabet'.
- When a baby was born in ancient Greece, the family would decorate their home with a wreath of wool for a girl or an olive wreath for a boy.
- Much of Roman culture (such as their religion, architecture, language and politics) is thought to have been influenced by the Greeks.
- Pheidippides was the Greek messenger associated with the original marathon. He ran for two days, from Marathon to Sparta, to deliver the news of the great victory of the Greeks over the Persians at Marathon. He ran around 26 miles from Marathon to Athens, delivered his message and then died!
- Zeus was the god of the sky and the King of Olympus. His temper affected the weather, and he threw thunderbolts when he was unhappy! He was married to Hera, the goddess of marriage.
- Poseidon was the god of the sea. His temper caused earthquakes. Such a bad-tempered lot, these gods!
- Greek philosopher Anaximander was the first known person to realise that the Earth may not be flat (mind you, he thought it was cylindrical!)
- The ancient Greeks introduced the concepts of citizens' rights, democracy, freedom of speech and religion.
- The Greek Olympics inspired the modern Olympic Games and were originally held in honour of Zeus, king of the gods.