### Acropolis
In Athens, the steep fortified hill atop which stood the Parthenon and other temples dedicated to Athene.

### Amazons
A tribe of formidable female warriors who lived apart from men.

### ambrosia
Food of the Olympian gods.

### Apollo
Son of Zeus and Leto, he is also called Phoebus, the radiant god of light, music, prophecy, and the arts. His most famous shrine was at Delphi, where his priestess, the Pythia, proclaimed the divine will. His son, Asclepius, the first physician, was patron of the healing arts.

### Archaic period
The period of Greek history, roughly 800 – 480 B.C., characterized by the rise of the polis and other distinctively Greek institutions, including the creation of the Homeric epics.

### Ares
[AR-eez] (Mars) Son of Zeus and Hera, he is the personification of male aggression and the fighting spirit, an unpopular god in Greece but highly respected in Rome, where he was identified with Mars, an Italian god of agriculture and war.

### Athene
[uh-THEE-uh] (Minerva) Virgin daughter of Zeus born from her father's brain, she was goddess of wisdom, women's handicrafts, and victory in war.

### Athens
Dominant Greek city-state during the fifth century B.C., center of the intellectual and artistic developments that created the historical Golden Age.

### Atlantis
According to Plato's Timaeus and Critias, a legendary civilization that sank beneath the sea, perhaps a Minoan city on the volcanic island of Thera (Santorini) that was obliterated by an eruption in 1628 B.C.

### City (or Great) Dionysia
An annual festival in Athens honoring Dionysus during which tragedies, comedies, and other dramatic and musical performances were staged.

### Classical period
The period of Greek history, roughly 480 – 323 B.C., characterized by phenomenal creativity in art, architecture, drama, history, philosophy, and science.

### cosmos
Greek term for the harmonious structure of the universe.

### Cronus
[KROH-nuhs] Titan son of Gaea (Gaia) and Uranus, he deposed his father and ruled the cosmos until overthrown by his youngest son, Zeus. The Romans later identified him with Saturn.

### Dark Ages (Greek)
The obscure period of Greek history following the collapse of Mycenaean civilization about 1100 B.C. It ended with the Greek renaissance in Ionia during
| **Demeter** | [de-MEE-ter] (Ceres) Daughter of Cronus and Rhea, she was the Olympian goddess of agricultural fertility. Her myth is closely related to that of her daughter Persephone. (See Persephone.) |
| **Dionysus** | [dye-oh-NYE-suhs] Son of Zeus and Semele, and god of the vine that produces wine, he was a male fertility god who represented a great variety of natural forces, including the vegetative cycle of life, growth, death, and rebirth, and the conflicting power of human passions. He is also called Bacchus, Bromius, and Liber. |
| **Erechtheus** | [e-REK-thee-uhs] Legendary early king or founder of Athens, to whom a temple on the Acropolis was dedicated. |
| **Gaea** | [JEE-uh] (Gaia) The Greeks' original Earth Mother, a primal divine power coeval with Chaos. After producing Uranus (Sky), she mated with him to produce the Titans. |
| **Hellas** | [HEL-juhs] The ancient Greeks' name for their country. |
| **Hellenistic period** | The period of Greek history following Alexander's death in 323 B.C., and characterized by a creative synthesis of native Greek (Hellenic) and eastern cultures. |
| **Hephaestus** | [he-FES-tuhs] (Vulcan) Son of Hera (Hesiod) or of Hera and Zeus (Homer), he was god of fire and the forge, the master of metalcraft who built the Olympians' palace and fashioned armor for Achilles. He was married to Aphrodite, who preferred Ares as her lover. |
| **Hera** | [HEE-ra] (Juno) Daughter of Cronus and Rhea and sister and wife of Zeus, she was goddess of marriage and domesticity. Her matriarchal spirit ill fit the patriarchal rule of Zeus. |
| **Heracles** | [HER-a-kleez] (Hercules) Son of Zeus and the mortal Alcmene (who was married to Amphitryon), he was the strongest and the most long-suffering of all Greek heroes; best known for the Twelve Labors imposed on him by King Eurystheus, he was eventually rewarded with immortality on Olympus. |
| **Hermes** | [HER-meez] (Mercury) Son of Zeus and Maia, he was primarily his father's messenger and an embodiment of extreme mobility. The guide of dead souls, he was also patron of travelers, merchants, highwaymen, gamblers, and thieves. |
| **humanism** | A conviction that individual human beings occupy a central place in society and the cosmos, a belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all humanity. |
| **ichor** | [IH-kohr] The colorless liquid that flowed instead of blood in the veins of the Greek gods. |
| **individualism** | A belief that each human being has a unique value that grants one the right to personal freedom and the opportunity to fulfill one's full human potential. |
### Indo-European

**Linguistic**

Term designating an unrecorded prehistoric language spoken in Europe and western Asia, from which an interrelated group of languages, including Greek, Latin, French, and English, are descended.

### Jason

Greek adventurer who led fifty Argonauts on a quest across the Black Sea for the Golden Fleece. After marrying Medea, who had helped him steal the fleece from her father, Jason divorced her. Her reaction is dramatized in Euripides’ Medea.

### Metis

[MEE-tis] Personification of wise advice; Zeus's first wife, whom he swallowed to produce Athene.

### Minoan

[mih-NOH-an] Term describing the earliest European civilization (c. 2500 – 1400 B.C.), which was centered on Crete and other Aegean islands and was characterized by elaborate palace complexes, such as that of King Minos at Knossos.

### Minos

[MYE-nohs] Name of a king—or line of kings—who ruled at Knossos on Crete. The son of Zeus and Europa, Minos married Pasiphae, whose unnatural union with a bull produced the Minotaur.

### monotheism

The belief in one God.

### Mycenae

[mye-SEE-nee] Ancient Greek city, capital of Agamemnon, after which the Mycenaean civilization is named.

### myth

From the Greek word mythos, a story typically involving gods and/or heroes whose adventures represent significant aspects of human experience.

### nectar

The drink of the Olympian gods that sustained their eternal youthfulness.

### Odysseus

[oh-DIS-ee-uhs] (Ulysses) Son of Laertes and Anticleia, husband of Penelope, father of Telemachus, king of Ithaca, and favorite of Athene, he was celebrated for his prudence, ingenuity, and resourcefulness among the Greek forces at Troy, the fall of which he engineered. Hero of the Odyssey, he demonstrated an endurance and adaptability that determined his successful return to Ithaca.

### Olympus, Mount

(1) A high mountain along the northern border between Thessaly and Greece proper, near the valley of Tempe, sacred to Apollo. (2) The mythical dwelling place of the Olympian gods, located somewhere in the sky.

### Panathenaea

[pan-ath-e-NEE-a] Athens’ major annual festival honoring its patron, Athene. It included athletic, poetry, and musical contests and culminated in a great procession to the Acropolis:

### Pantheon

(1) Term meaning "all the gods." (2) A circular temple built by Hadrian in Rome. **parados** The ode sung by a Greek chorus during its first appearance on stage.

### Parthenon

The Doric temple to Athene Parthenos (Athene the Virgin) that was built atop the Athenian Acropolis in the fifth century B.C.

### patriarchy

A social-political system in which male leadership and values dominate.
**Peloponnesian War**  A disastrous war (431–404 B.C.) between the rival states of Athens and Sparta and their respective allies, ending with Sparta's victory.

**Perseus**  Son of Zeus and Danae, he beheaded Medusa, wed Andromeda, and (in some myths) founded Mycenae.

**Persian Wars**  A series of three Persian invasions into Greece that continued the westward expansion of Persia begun by Cyrus the Great, conqueror of Babylon (539 B.C.). The Greeks repelled the Persians and their allies at Marathon (490 B.C.), but not until after the sea battles at Salamis (480) and Mycale (479) did the Persians permanently retreat into Asia.

**Plutarch**  A Greek biographer who wrote "parallel" lives of famous Romans and Greeks.

**polis**  Greek term for the city-state, such as Athens or Sparta.

**polytheism**  The belief in a multiplicity of gods.

**Poseidon**  [poh-SYE-duhn] (Neptune) Son of Cronus and Rhea, brother of Zeus, and husband of Amphitrite (a nereid); god of the sea and earthquakes, he used his three-pronged trident to raise storms and swamp ships.

**Rhapsode, Rhapsodist**  Originally a poet who recited his own works; later, a professional singer of Homeric poems, such as those who performed at the Panathenaea.

**Theseus**  [THEE-see-uhs] Son of Aegeus and legendary king of Athens, he won fame by slaying the Minotaur at Minos's palace on Crete. He fathered Hippolytus by the Amazon Antiope and later married Phaedra, daughter of Minos.

**Titans**  Race of giant gods whom Gaea and Uranus begot and whom Zeus overthrew and imprisoned in Tartarus.

**Trojan War**  The ten-year siege of Troy led by Agamemnon to retrieve Helen, who had eloped with Paris, a Trojan prince.

**Uranus**  [OOR-a-nuhs] The original sky god and son-husband of Gaea, he was castrated and deposed by his "crafty" son Cronus.

**Zeus**  (Jove, Jupiter) The youngest son of Cronus and Rhea, king of the Olympian gods, a personification of atmospheric phenomena—particularly storms and lightning—and the cosmic guarantor of justice, oath keeping, civic order, and kingship. As head of the Greek pantheon, he was the ultimate court of appeal for both humans and gods. All other Olympians were either his siblings or children, including his sister-wife Hera.