Classical Greece: The Beginnings

Geographic Influences
- Located in SE Europe
  - Cities separated from one another by Mountains and water
  - Loose collection of city-states on Balkan Peninsula and islands scattered around the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea
- Easy access to sea allowed Greeks to trade goods and ideas with nearby Civilizations
  - Ex. Traded wine for metals
  - Adopted Phoenician Alphabet

Beginnings of Greek Society
- Early Greeks (Known as Minoans) developed on Island of Crete around 1600 B.C.E.
  - Heavily influenced by nearby Mesopotamia and Egypt
- Capital of Knossos
  - Center of Minoan Civilization
- 1400 B.C.E Mycenaean migrate into area
  - Conquer Greek mainland than over-run Crete
- By 1400 B.C.E. Minoan Civilization Gone
  - Reasons for Decline are unknown
  - Absorbed into Mycenaean Civilization

Greece’s Literary Heritage
- Homer
  - The Iliad
    - Tale of the Trojan War
    - Mycenaean versus powerful city of Troy
      - Legend – Paris (Prince of Troy) Kidnaps Helen of Troy from Greek king
      - History – War most likely erupted because of trading dispute
    - Rise of Champion Achilles
      - Greek champion who defeated Troy’s Champion Hector
      - Semi-Mythical Warlord
      - Said to be a son of the gods
    - After 10 years of war the Trojans were defeated
    - Troy was burned to the ground
    - Achilles was killed by Paris by a poisoned arrow that hit his heel
  - The Odyssey
    - Journey of Odysseus home after the end of the Trojan war
      - Takes him 10 years
    - Finds wife had moved on
      - Must win back his wife with help of the gods