

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
 - o *The Illiad*
 - 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
 - o 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