

# GREECE VS. PERSIA

## Mark It on the Map

Using the scale of miles on a world map, have students determine the approximate size of the area connected with this issue's theme and then compare this area with the continental United States. Have the students familiarize themselves with the map on pages 16–17, noting the battle sites and the various other labeled sites.

## Vocabulary

satrap	oracle
tyrant	Akropolis
democracy	pentekonters
trireme	hoplite
autocratic	cuneiform
phalanx	Zoroastrian

## Introduction

Ask each student to make a list of reasons why countries or peoples go to war. Write each on the blackboard. Discuss the results and see if there are any common reasons, such as age-old grudges or promotion of war by respected leaders. After reading the issue, have each student give the two main reasons the Persians fought the Greeks. Have students see if either of the two corresponds to any of the reasons they originally suggested. In a classroom discussion, have students give reasons for the similarities and differences in their two lists.

## Questions for Discussion

- Why was Histaios so intent on sending a message to Aristagoras? Give the nationality and position of each man.
- What were the underlying causes of the Ionian Revolt?
- What are triremes?
- What are the differences among a government ruled by a tyrant, an aristocracy, and a democracy?
- Why is Herodotos called “the father of history”?
- What is the symbolism of the demand for “earth and water”?
- What were Darius’ reasons for attacking Greece?
- What event do today’s marathon races commemorate?
- Who said that the Greeks needed a “wooden wall”? How did Themistokles interpret this?
- How did the Athenians pay for their new navy?
- Why did the Greeks lose at Thermopylae?
- What role did Artemisia play in the Persian Wars? Be specific.
- Who were the “Immortals”?
- Why was Salamis “an important moment in history”?
- What were the main results of the Persian Wars for the Greeks? For the Persians?
- Why was the deciphering of cuneiform important to our understanding of the Persians?

## Writing Workout

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Explain why the destruction of Miletos “forever symbolized the ruthlessness of war.”
- Make a list of the practices and characteristics Herodotos attributed to the Persians.
- Explain why Themistokles felt so strongly that Athens and Greece could defeat the Persians only if they had a proper navy.
- Make a list of the key individuals involved in the Persian Wars. Make a list of the characteristics you would assign to each and cite a reference passage for each characteristic.
- Which of the Persian or Greek personalities won your greatest admiration? Why?

## Think About It

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Read the words of Themistokles on page 2. Discuss what you think he was trying to say, what city-state he meant, and why he used the analogy of a harp and lyre.
- Why do you think stories such as the legend involving Pheidippides and his run to Athens develop? Are there any such legends in United States history? Name them and explain.
- Make a list of the Persian advantages in the Persian Wars. Then make a list of the Greek advantages. Below each item, explain exactly why it is an advantage. Then consider which three are key to winning a battle and explain the reason for each. End with your conclusion about which advantages led to Persian wins before the encounter with the Greeks and then to Persian losses in battle against the Greeks.
- In warfare, strategy is often more important than numbers. Discuss why this is true. Use the battles of the Persian Wars to illustrate your points.
- Did the contrasting forms of government in Persia and the Greek city-states play a role in Persia's defeat or in Greece's victory? Explain why. (Many of the Persian soldiers were conquered peoples, fighting for an overlord, not their own rulers or countries. The Greeks were fighting for their own freedom.)

## Then and Now

Have students study the reconstruction of Darius' palace complex on pages 8–9. Have them think about the principal government building in their city or town, and make a list of the similarities and differences between the two. Use a roundtable format to discuss why grandeur plays such an important role in these buildings.

## Research Projects

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Assign students to research the lifestyle of the Spartans, especially their attitude toward war. Have them present their findings to the class.
- Assign students to research the Green Berets and other such divisions and then compare them with Xerxes' Immortals. Have them present their findings to the class.
- Assign students to research key moments in military history, such as the Battle of Lepanto, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, or D-day and compare each with the Greek victory at Salamis.
- Assign students to research the Zoroastrian religion, past and present.
- Assign students to research the significance of the Rosetta Stone, why it was so named, and who found it. Have them present their findings to the class.

## Play the Part

Students may complete one or both of the following activities:

- Read, with the class, the story of Histiaios on pages 4–7. Divide the class into groups. Have one write a skit based on the story, remembering to include a narrator and a prologue that provides background information for the audience. Have another make costumes for the characters in the skit, referring to books illustrating ancient Greek and Persian dress. Have a third group design the props and make invitations to the performance for other classes, students, and teachers.
- Present the class with a brief overview of the play “Xerxes and the Strange Greek Fire” on pages 24–30. Then have half the class use illustrations in the issue to create simple costumes for the characters in the play. Have the rest of the class draw backdrop scenes, with size dependent upon available materials. Present the play in class or for other classes.

## Get Into Art

Create a map tracing the route of the Persian forces. Mark each battle site, and write the year of each battle, the key personalities, and which side won. Choose different colors to represent the Persians and the Greeks. Include a key so that readers can understand your symbolism.

## Just for Fun

Students may complete one or both of the following activities:

- Try “Putting a Spin on the Persian Wars” by following the directions on pages 31–33.
- Do your own “garbology” experiment by following the directions on pages 44–45.

## Follow These Footsteps

Histiaios  
Herodotos

Miltiades  
Pheidippides

Themistokles  
Leonidas

Darius  
Xerxes

Artemisia  
Rawlinson