AP World

As you come into class, grab the three sheets of paper by the door and put them in your notebook.

We will be taking the quiz after taking some notes today.

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An Overview

• Although the Greeks did not build a centralized state until the short reign of Alexander of Macedon, they did serve to link the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions through colonization, commerce, and cultural interaction.

• Through their unprecedented abilities as sea traders, and later through the unification provided by the Hellenistic empires, the Greeks left a rich cultural legacy of politics, philosophy, art, literature, and science that would go on to shape the European and Islamic worlds for centuries.

• Some of the enduring innovations for which the classical Greek cultures are best known include…
An Overview

• The earliest form of democracy, the best realization of which was found in Athens under the leadership of the statesman Pericles.
• The establishment of hundreds of cities throughout the Mediterranean basin and southwest Asia.
• Unique contributions to literature in the forms of mythology, poetry, drama, and essays.
• The contributions of the rational philosophical thought of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle and later the Epicureans, the Skeptics, and the Stoics.
Cultural Life of Classical Greece

– As merchants traded, they brought back sophisticated cultural traditions from Mesopotamia and Egypt, astronomy, science, mathematics, medicine and magic from the Babylonians as well as geometry, medicine and divination from the Egyptians.

– They adapted the Phoenician alphabet and added sounds for vowels.

– They combined these borrowed cultural elements with their own intellectual interests to create a rich cultural tradition.
Rational Thought and Philosophy

- The most distinctive feature of classical Greek culture was a system of philosophy based purely on reason.
  - **Socrates** (470-399 B.C.E.); **Plato** (430-347 B.C.E.); **Aristotle** (384-322 B.C.E.)
- They believed that truth could be discerned through rational thought and deliberate, careful observation, and that virtue and the quest for goodness would lead to internal peace and happiness.
Socrates

• Socrates is one of the few individuals whom one could say has so-shaped the cultural and intellectual development of the world that, without him, history would be profoundly different.

• He is best known for his association with the Socratic method of question and answer, his claim that he was ignorant (or aware of his own absence of knowledge), and his claim that the unexamined life is not worth living, for human beings.
Socrates

• Socrates was a widely recognized and controversial figure in his native Athens, so much so that he was frequently mocked in the plays of comic dramatists.
• He is portrayed in the works of Plato and Xenophon as a man of great insight, integrity, self-mastery, and argumentative skill.
• He focused on questioning to uncover truths about human ethics and morality
Plato

• One of his most influential contributions to philosophy was the Theory of Forms. In basic terms, Plato's **Theory of Forms** asserts that the physical world is not really the 'real' world; instead, ultimate reality exists beyond our physical world.

• Plato discusses this theory in a few different dialogues, including the most famous one, called 'The Republic.'
Plato

- Plato's philosophy asserts that there are two realms: the physical realm and the spiritual realm.
  - The **physical realm** is the material stuff we see and interact with on a daily basis; this physical realm is changing and imperfect, as we know all too well.
  - The spiritual realm, however, exists beyond the physical realm. Plato calls this spiritual realm the **Realm of Forms**.
  - Plato's Theory of Forms asserts that the physical realm is only a shadow, or image, of the true reality of the Realm of Forms.
  - It is believed that this Greek concept of another realm of perfection, above our own, eternal, and unchanging was the inspiration for the Christian concept of Heaven.
Aristotle’s intellectual range was vast, covering most of the sciences and many of the arts, including biology, botany, chemistry, ethics, history, logic, metaphysics, rhetoric, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, physics, poetics, political theory, psychology, and zoology. He rejected Plato’s Theory of Forms.
Aristotle

- He believed philosophers should rely on their senses and their reason to sort out the mysteries of the world.
- The father of the field of logic, he was the first to develop a formalized system for reasoning.
- “The master of those who know”
- Wrote more than 200 works but only 31 survived
Legacy

• Some of their observations proved false over time, but it was the process they established, rather than the actual conclusions they drew, that were so revolutionary.

• Although our modern understanding of the world differs in many ways from theirs, these three men are still revered today as the fathers of rational thinking.

• Legacy of Greek philosophy
  • Intellectual authorities for European philosophers until seventeenth century
  • Intellectual inspiration for Christian and Islamic theologians
Popular Religion

- Greeks did not recognize a single, exclusive, all-powerful god.
- Over time, they personified natural elements and came to think of them as gods.
- They constructed myths that told the stories of the gods
**Popular Religion**

- Greek polytheism was unique because the Greek gods were believed to possess human failings – they got angry, they got drunk, they took sides and they had petty arguments.
- Greek deities: Zeus and scores of subordinate deities.
- Various types of religious cults; Cult of Dionysus (the god of wine) most popular.
Historians refer to the age of Alexander the Great and his successors as the Hellenistic age – an era when Greek cultural traditions expanded their influence beyond Greece to a much larger world.

The Hellenistic empires helped to integrate the economies and societies of distant regions. They facilitated trade, and made it possible for beliefs, values, and religions to spread over greater distances than ever before.
Hellenistic Philosophy

• With the Hellenistic empire, the poleis (city-state) lost power and influence to the larger society. As a result, Greek philosophy and religion also changed.
• The Hellenistic philosophers: search for personal tranquility
  – Epicureans: identified pleasure as the greatest good
  – Skeptics: doubted certainty of knowledge, sought equanimity (mental calmness) over strong political and social issues
  – Stoics: taught that individuals had a duty to aid others and lead virtuous lives
Hellenistic Religion

• The ideas of the philosophers appealed to educated elites but the masses looked to religions of salvation for guidance
• Spread through trade routes
  – Mystery religions promised eternal bliss for believers
    – The popular Cult of Osiris (Egyptian) – salvation for those who led honorable lives
  – Speculation about a single, universal god emerged
  – Must like Hellenistic philosophies, they addressed the search for security in a complex world