

## Prepare to Read

## Objectives

In this section you will

1. Learn about public life in Athens.
2. Find out how the people of Athens spent their time at home.
3. Study the practice of slavery and its effects in ancient Greece.

## Taking Notes

As you read, look for details about daily life in ancient Greece. Copy the table below, and use it to record your findings.

Daily Life in Ancient Greece		
The Marketplace	Life at Home	Slavery
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•



## Target Reading Skill

## Recognize Word Origins

The origin of a word is where the word comes from. The word *splendor*, on page 182, comes from the Latin word *splendere*, which means "to shine." In *splendor*, the suffix *-or* means "quality." Use your knowledge of the origin of the word *splendor* and the context to determine what this word means.

## Key Terms

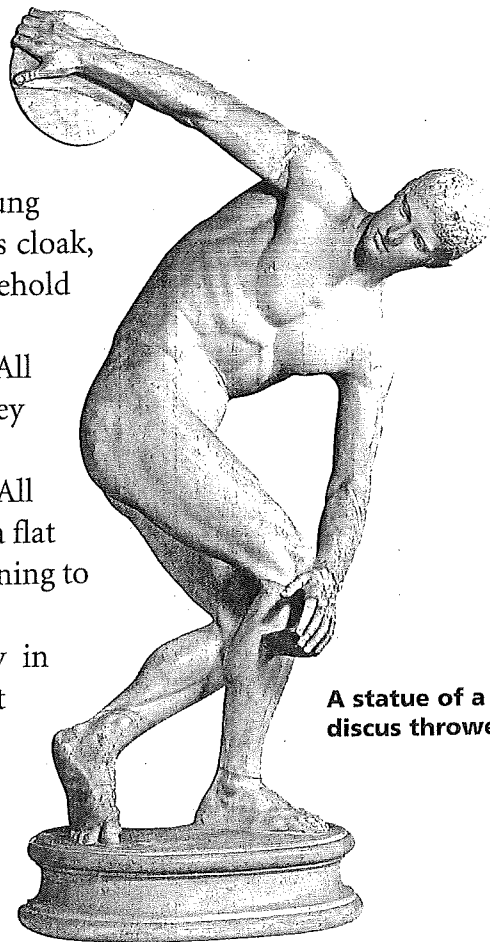
- **Athens** (ATH unz) *n.* a city-state in ancient Greece; the capital of modern-day Greece
- **agora** (AG uh ruh) *n.* a public market and meeting place in an ancient Greek city; the agora of Athens when spelled with a capital A
- **vendor** (VEN dur) *n.* a seller of goods
- **slavery** (SLAY vur ee) *n.* condition of being owned by, and forced to work for, someone else

The light from the courtyard was still gray when the young boy awoke for school. He ate his breakfast, pulled on his cloak, and stepped outside. Soon, the women of the household would be starting the day's weaving and other chores.

On the way to school, the boy met other students. All were carrying wooden tablets covered with wax. They would write their lessons on the tablets.

After school, the boy went to the training ground. All the boys exercised and practiced wrestling and throwing a flat plate called a discus. They might watch older athletes training to compete in the Olympic Games, held in honor of Zeus.

This story shows how a boy might spend his day in ancient Athens, a city-state in ancient Greece. A look at daily life in ancient Athens will help you understand how many of the ancient Greeks lived.



A statue of a discus thrower

Ruins of the agora of ancient Corinth, Greece ▶

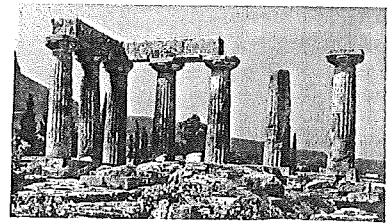


### Recognize Word Origins

Combine your knowledge of the Latin word *splendere* and the suffix *-or* with the context at the right to figure out the meaning of *splendor*.

## Life in Public

On their way to school, the boys passed through the Agora (AG uh ruh) of Athens. All Greek cities had agoras, or public markets and meeting places. Athens' Agora was probably the busiest and most interesting of them all. It was not far from the great Acropolis, which rose in splendor above it. Just as the Acropolis was the center of Athens' religious life, the Agora was the center of its public life.



**The Business of Men** In the morning, many Athenian men found their way to the Agora. The mild climate of Athens made it possible to carry on business in the open. In the Agora, the men talked of politics and philosophy. Sometimes they just gossiped.

As they talked, they heard the cries of vendors, or sellers of goods. Buyers and vendors commonly haggled, or bargained, for the best prices. The streets were lined with shops. Farmers and artisans also sold their wares from stands set up under shady trees. Just about any food an Athenian would want could be found in the Agora. Other goods were also for sale—sheep's wool, pottery, hardware, cloth, and books.

**Public Buildings** Temples and government buildings lined the Agora. One building was the headquarters of Athens' army. Another was a prison. A board displayed public notices such as new laws and upcoming court cases.

✓ **Reading Check** What business did Athenians conduct in the Agora?



### Community Life

A vase from the 400s B.C. shows two Greeks discussing philosophy. **Analyze** Why do you think the Agora was the center of public life in Athens?



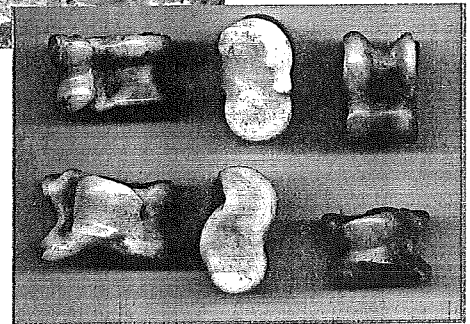
## At Home in Athens

The grand public buildings of Athens contrasted with the simplicity of people's houses, even during the Golden Age.

**Private Life** Throughout Greece, private homes were plain. Most were made of mud bricks, with rooms set around an open courtyard hidden from the street. The courtyard was the center of the household. Other rooms might include a kitchen, storerooms, a dining room, and bedrooms. Some homes had bathrooms. But water had to be carried to them from a public fountain.

The ancient Greeks ate simple foods. Breakfast might be just bread. For midday meals, Athenians might eat cheese or olives with the bread. Dinner might consist of fish and vegetables followed by cheese, fruit, and even cakes sweetened with honey. Most Athenians ate little meat, because there was little space or extra money to raise cattle. Even wealthy families ate meat only during religious festivals.

**Women of Athens** If you had walked through the Agora, you might have been surprised to see that most of the people there were men. If you had asked where the women were, an Athenian man might have replied, "At home."

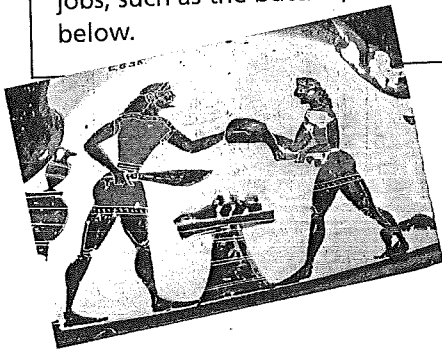


### Greek Games

The people of ancient Greece played a game called knucklebones, as shown in the terra-cotta figures at the top. Knucklebone playing pieces are shown above. **Predict** Use what you know about the lives of the ancient Greeks to predict where girls might gather to play a game of knucklebones.

## Links to Art

**Painting Their Lives** The Athenians were known for their beautiful pottery. They decorated vases, jars, and cups with black or reddish-tan figures. Many scenes were mythological, but others displayed scenes from Athenian daily life. For example, the pottery might show men talking together, or working at their jobs, such as the butcher, below.



Home was where most Athenian women spent their days. They had almost none of the freedoms that their husbands, sons, and fathers probably took for granted. They could not take any part in politics. Nor could they vote. They could not own property. One of the very few official roles allowed them was to be a priestess in religious ceremonies.

Running the home and family was the job of women. In some wealthy families, men and women had completely separate quarters. Women organized the spinning and weaving, looked after supplies of food and wine, and cared for young children. They also kept track of the family finances. If a family owned slaves, they were the woman's responsibility as well. She directed them, trained them, and cared for them when they were sick.

✓ **Reading Check** What kinds of foods did Athenians eat?

## Slavery in Ancient Greece

Slaves worked hard throughout the city-states of Greece. No one knows for sure, but historians estimate that as many as 100,000 slaves may have lived in Athens. That is almost one third of the population at that time. Slavery, the condition of being owned by someone else, was common in Athens. Today, we consider slavery a crime. But free people rarely questioned the practice in ancient times, even in democratic Athens.

### The Slaves of Athens

In this detail from a vase, a servant attends to a seated woman. **Draw Conclusions** Based on what you have read, draw a conclusion about the ancient Greeks' attitudes toward slavery.

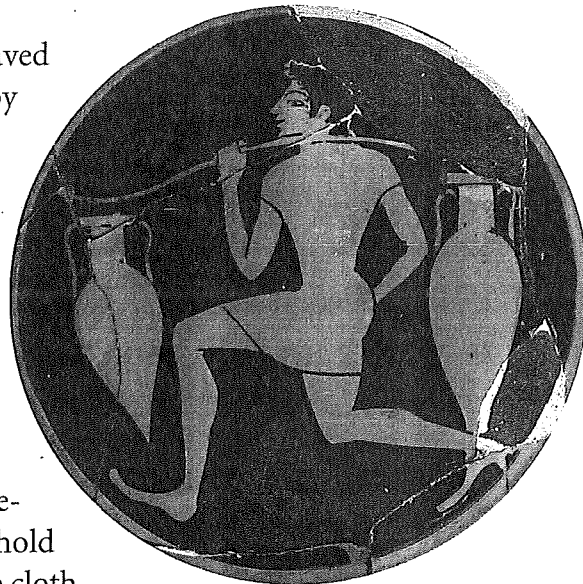


**Who Were the Slaves?** Many free people were enslaved when they were captured by armies during war or by pirates while traveling on ships. Some slaves were the children of slaves. A large number of slaves in Greece were foreigners, because some Greeks were uncomfortable owning other Greeks.

**The Lives of Slaves** Enslaved people did many kinds of work. Some provided labor on farms. Others dug silver and other metals in the mines. Still others assisted artisans by making pottery, constructing buildings, or forging weapons and armor. Most Greek households could not function well without slaves. Household slaves cooked and served food, tended children, and wove cloth.

Household slaves may have had the easiest life. Often they were treated like members of the family. The slaves who worked in the mines suffered the most. The work was not only physically tiring, but was also extremely dangerous. Slaves who worked in the mines often did not live long.

Some slaves were able to buy their freedom, but many were not. The hard work of slaves meant that the free citizens of Athens could afford to pursue art, education, and public service.



A painting from a cup shows a male slave balancing two vessels.

✓ **Reading Check** Why were many slaves in Greece foreigners?



## Section 3 Assessment

### Key Terms

Review the key terms at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.

### Target Reading Skill

What do you think the adjective *splendid* means?

### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Describe** What activities took place in the agoras of ancient Greece?

(b) **Draw Conclusions** What do the agoras tell us about the culture of the ancient Greeks?

2. (a) **Recall** Describe the home life of the Greeks.

(b) **Compare** What were the responsibilities of men compared with those of women in ancient Greece? Based on that information, what conclusions can you make about ancient Greek society?

3. (a) **Recall** Describe the various roles of slaves in ancient Greece.

(b) **Draw Inferences** Free people rarely questioned slavery in ancient Greece. Why do you think that was so?

### Writing Activity

Write a description of your school-day routine. How does your day compare with that of the Greek boy you read about at the beginning of this section?

**Writing Tip** Reread the description that begins this section. Think about how your days are similar to the boy's day and how your days are different. When you describe your own day, include both the similarities and the differences.