

Ancient Greece Archaeo-Box (HI00126)

This collection contains a variety of Ancient Greece replica artefacts ideal for investigating evidence, encouraging historical enquiry and role-play of an archaeological dig.

Contents: -

1. 1 x Spinning Top
2. 1 x Oil lamp
3. 2 x Wax tablets & Stylus
4. 1 x Hanging oil lamp
5. 1 x Statue with discus
6. 1 x Victory Plaque
7. 2x Theatrical Masks
8. Archaeology CD
9. 1 x Trowel
10. 1 x Brush Set

All contained in 1 x Storage Box

(Contents may vary)



Questions you could ask children about the artefacts

Initial Discussion

- What is this object?
- Does it resemble anything the children have seen?
- What do you think the item was used for and by whom?
- Does anyone know what it is called?

Collect any other questions the children might have about the artefacts and display them as you try to find the answers through your learning sessions.

Other questions to consider:

- Where does the object come from?
- Who might have made this object? And how were they made?
- Why were they made?
- **What do the objects tell us about life in Ancient Greece?** *This last question can be returned to at the end of the investigation.*

All About the Artefacts

1. Spinning Top

Webster's dictionary defines the top as "a child's toy shaped somewhat like an inverted cone, with a point at its apex upon which it is spun, usually by unwinding a string." But there are a number of references to tops that do not include use of a string.

Greek pottery was decorated with scenes showing top spinners, some of which include women playing with tops. Whilst tops for play are likely to have been made of wood, clay tops could have been used for religious purposes, to honour the gods. Some may have also been a sign of affluence and at times were placed in tombs as an item to be taken into the afterlife. The Greek top would have been spun by wrapping a piece of leather around the ridges.

2. Oil Lamp

This lamp would have been made on a potter's wheel, with a hole cut through the side and a nozzle stuck on. You can see that the clay has gone black where the wick burned. The small hole at the top helped to stop the oil evaporating and kept mice and insects out of it. Oil would be poured into the central hole, and a piece of string or linen would be dipped into the oil and as this soaked up a steady flame would produce light.

Pupils could use clay to create their own oil lamps.

3. Wax Tablets and Stylus

Temporary work was executed on a wax tablet, scraped with a pointed bone or metal styli. These beeswax tablets were thought to be the first objects used to record thoughts. The Greeks bequeathed a rich literacy legacy for today's world, including the forerunner to the alphabet, as well as some of the most enduring poetry, drama, epics, history and philosophy of any time.

4. Hanging oil lamp

Learn about ancient Greek life and how ancient Greeks used oil lamps for lighting. They were also important for religious purposes.

5. Statue with discus

The ancient Greek statue depicting an athlete throwing a discus is called the Discobolus or Discus Thrower. It has become an iconic image of the Olympic Games. The sculptor was Myron.

Discuss the Olympic Games and compare the Games today with those in Ancient Greece. Find out the importance of sport for the ancient Greeks and which sports were part of the ancient Games. Find out when events were added to the Olympic Games and make a list of events at the latest Olympics. What things are similar and what has changed? Learn how to throw the discus and set up own mini-Olympics.

6. Victory Plaque

In Greek mythology, Nike is the goddess of victory. She is often depicted with wings to symbolise her speed and ability to deliver news of victory. She was connected with competitions such as the Olympic Games and with war.

7. Theatrical Masks

The history of European theatre begins with the Greeks, whose annual festivals in honour of the god Dionysus included competitions in tragedy and comedy. According to tradition, the first of these dramatic forms evolved from choral songs concerning the death and resurrection of Dionysus. Thespis won first prize in the initial tragedy competition held at Athens in 534 BC and is also credited with the introduction of masks. He wrote a play, giving the storyteller the task of speaking in dialogue. To make it easier for the audience to tell which character was speaking at a particular time, the narrator used different masks to represent the various characters.

These plays were performed in natural amphitheatres on the hillside and, to make the narrator's voice travel over the whole area, the masks were given large funnel-shaped mouths like megaphones. The Greek word for an actor is 'hypocrites'. So, our word hypocrite is derived from the fact that an actor wore a mask and was 'two-faced'.

Masks were afterwards used by all actors in the Greek theatre. Most of the people in the auditorium would not be able to see changing facial features so the large masks exaggerated facial features and emotions. They covered the whole head, and included hair, with two eyeholes and a mouth slightly open. The mouths were always open, so that the actors' voices could be heard. Very few masks have survived because they were usually made of linen or cork. Images of masks survive on sculptured friezes and statues.

Even after the plays ceased to be directly about the joys and sorrows of Dionysos, they were still performed at his festivals - the Rural and City Dionysia respectively. New dramatic presentations were first performed at the City Dionysia, where there were competitions for the best plays. The Rural Dionysia would see repeat performances of the plays in areas outside of Athens. People would travel from all over to witness these competitions. They lasted for almost six days, and included processions, songs, dances,

and feasts. After Alexander the Great brought Greek culture to the places he conquered, no city was complete without its Greek theatre.

Children could be presented with a description of a Greek mask: "The large masks exaggerated facial features and emotions. They covered the whole head, and included hair, with two eyeholes and a mouth slightly open". They could then compare the description with the replica artefact. Does it match the description? If not, why not? What is missing? What about the materials used to create the replica mask? They could design their own mask for someone who is 'sad', 'angry', 'happy' ... Children could look for evidence of masks in pictures of Greek sculptures and statues. How do they compare with the description, the replica or their designs? Then could then make masks using appropriate material [useful link with Design and Technology] and use them to retell a Greek myth.

8. Archaeology

Learn about archaeology and set up own archaeological dig finding clues to uncover the past.

9. Trowel

Archaeologists use trowels to carefully remove layers of soil to uncover artefacts and find out about the past. They would use a grid of the site and record on the grid to show where each object was found. You could also include other tools such as sieves and scrapers as part of your archaeological dig.

10. Brush Set

Archaeologists use brushes to carefully clean and reveal artefacts. They are essential for delicate work to help expose fine details, reveal patterns and prepare the artefacts for photographic documentation. Archaeologists will use a variety of brushes of different sizes to give them more control when removing dirt and dust from the artefacts.

Reference Websites:

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/learn/schools/ages-7-11/ancient-greece>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/greeks/>