



Introduction

Grab your passport and your map. Strap on your backpack and tie your shoes! In this book, the third in the Child's Geography series, we'll take a grand adventure through the countries that surround the sparkling Mediterranean Sea.

This area was once known as The Classical World and is considered to be the birthplace of Western Civilization, that is, the “way of life” for all people living in the western hemisphere of our planet. These countries are both very old and very new at the same time. How can this be? They are old because the very first European colonies began and flourished in this little corner of the world. Did you know that the oldest wooden wheel has been found in Slovenia, a country in Europe, not the Middle East? They are new because country lines have been redrawn, new names have been given to them, and new governments have been formed. Of course, the redrawing of imaginary lines on a map cannot change the people, culture, or landforms of a geographical area. So, we will rediscover these old places together. Are you ready?

As we travel around the Classical World, we'll learn about Greece, North Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, San Marino, Vatican City and Malta. Some of these countries are tiny islands, and others are peninsulas that jut into the sea; some are hot and dry, while others are cool and snowy; but each of these countries have at least one thing in common—these lands were the center of world power during the Classical Age, from around 2000 B.C. to A.D. 500. They also relied upon the Mediterranean Sea for travel, trade, and conquest. It was known as The Great Sea in ancient times for it stretches from the Holy Land of Israel to the “very edge of the world” as it was considered then, which we know now as the Iberian Peninsula, or Spain. The ancient people didn't know there was any land further west than this. (In fact, Jonah tried to flee to Tarshish in Spain because this was as far as anyone could travel back in his day. Do you remember what happened to him?) This great body of water is also where three continents meet—Africa, Asia, and Europe.


While the Mediterranean is one great big salty sea, it is called by different names at various places. Here are the names of portions of the Mediterranean waters—Aegean Sea, Sea of Crete, Ionian Sea, Adriatic Sea, Tyrrhenian Sea, Ligurian Sea, Balearic Sea, and the Alboran Sea. These eight seas all mix and run together in one great body of water, but like land, have different names at different locations. We will concentrate on just the first five, as they are the ones that surround Greece, the northern Balkan countries, Italy, and Malta.

See the map on the next page!



1

Greece [part one]: Island Hopping



As we begin our tour around the countries of the classical world, Greece is a natural starting point for this adventure. Of the countries that encircle the Mediterranean Sea, only Egypt has a longer recorded history. From the legendary warriors of Sparta, who stalked the seas on their mighty **triremes**, to the philosophers, mathematicians, and inventors of ancient Athens (have you ever heard of Plato, Socrates, Pythagoras, or Archimedes?), the influence of ancient Greek culture upon the rest of the world from then until now has been monumental. The legacy that the ancient Greeks left behind can still be felt and observed today as the result of their democratic ideas, mythological stories, philosophical beliefs, and world-changing inventions.

trireme: An ancient Greek warship with three rows of oars to propel the ship.

Are you ready to learn more about this fascinating country? Let's go!

Crete: If we were in an airplane looking down at the country of Greece, we would spy the mainland with its curious hand-like shape surrounded by thousands of small islands dotting the blue sea. Many of these islands look like specks because they are so small, but Crete is one of the largest. In fact, Crete is the largest and most populated Greek island, the fifth largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, and the 88th largest island in the world.

It was on this crescent-shaped island located in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea that a seafaring people group known as the Minoans [mi-NO-ens] once lived over 4,000 years ago. The ancient Minoans grew and became a great power around the year 2500 B.C. They lived on Crete for over a thousand years and built the earliest known civilization in Europe. They built grand palaces with flushing toilets, heated floors, and a dual pipe system for hot and cold running water. And they explored the Great Sea (as the Mediterranean was known at that time) in large sailboats. Even with all these modern advancements, the Minoans are most remembered for the way they



celebrated their special holidays. Brave young people exhibited their acrobatic skills by vaulting over charging bulls.

So, to begin this journey, just as we begin all journeys, we need a map. It is important to know where we are now and where we are going—or we might get lost! Grab your globe or use the map on page 16 of this book to locate the island of Crete. Its crescent shape makes it easy to find—it is located south of mainland Greece and Turkey. It sits like a jewel in the center of the enormous crystal sea.

The Minoans were master storytellers and were known far and wide for telling a good story. Around their fires at night, they told a mythical tale about a fictional king named Minos, the son of the false god Zeus and his wife Europa. Minos was very clever, but also very cruel. This tyrant of a king built an elaborate maze, called a labyrinth, which became the home of the Minotaur, a ferocious

man-eating beast. Every nine years, King Minos would send seven young men and seven young women to their doom in the labyrinth. As you can imagine, the people of Crete were afraid of their king.

As the story goes, word of the Minotaur and the cruelty of King Minos spread far and wide until it reached the city of Athens on the mainland of Greece. The



Prince of Athens, Theseus, also a son of false gods (and a fictional character) resolved to end the madness and slay the beast, and so, he set off across the sea.

Once in Crete, Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos, fell in love with the heroic prince. Having learned of his plot to secretly take the place of one of the youths so that he might slay the dreaded Minotaur, she pleaded with him to reconsider his plan.

On the day he was to enter the labyrinth, Theseus, like all the others, was stripped of his weapons. During their final goodbye, Ariadne pressed into Theseus' hand a ball of string to help him find his way out of the labyrinth and back to her. Once inside, Theseus tied the string to the doorpost and pulled out the small sword that he had concealed from the guards beneath his tunic. Following Ariadne's directions, he moved ever forward and ever downward, never to the left or to the right. At the center of the labyrinth, he met the Minotaur and killed him. Theseus managed to get himself and the other thirteen youths safely out of the labyrinth by following the string back to the entrance. Theseus then returned to Athens with Ariadne.

This Greek myth provides us with clues into early Greek culture, their values of selflessness and heroism, and how the Aegean Sea received its name. It also highlights their ignorance about real love and sacrifice by the one true God as revealed in the Bible. Ancient Greek storytellers, such as Homer, Ovid, and Plutarch, penned this myth and many others after hundreds of years of people passing them down to their children and grandchildren—something we call “oral tradition.” Even today, the Cretans love to tell a good **yarn** because they are proud of their history and their oral traditions.

After the thousand years of Minoan reign, the Mycenaeans [my-se-NEE-ens] conquered the Minoans, who had been weakened by the terrible destruction of a tsunami—a massive wave that rolls across the sea in the aftermath of a large earthquake or volcanic explosion. Later, the island

yarn: to tell a long or implausible story





Chania Harbor

moorage: a place where a boat, ship, or aircraft can be made fast by means of a cable, chain, or rope used to stop it from drifting away

artisan: somebody who is skilled at a craft

catamaran: a sailing boat or engine-powered boat that has two identical hulls fixed together by a rigid framework

of Crete was taken over by the Romans, then the Byzantines, the Venetians, and finally the Ottomans. Crete ruled itself for a short time from between 1899 and 1913 and then joined itself with Greece before the beginning of World War I in 1914.

And that brings us to the Crete of today.

Although Crete is now part of Greece, the islanders are unique and have their own dialect and dress, as well as distinct musical tastes. Families on Crete are large and have long histories. Not unlike the Montagues and Capulets — the feuding families of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* — or the Hatfields and McCoys — the feuding families of Appalachia — the family clans of Crete are known for

their long-standing quarrels with one another. Most families who live outside the cities own guns, whether they have legal permission or not. So, while we’re traipsing through the countryside of Crete, we should stick to the roads and not trespass through a farmer’s field!

The countryside of Crete, however, is lovely. The island is mountainous, and its mountain caps are blanketed with snow in the wintertime. From the tops of these jagged mountains, home to

the kri-kri (a wild goat) and the Cretan wildcat, we have a breathtaking view of the wide Mediterranean Sea and the white beaches encircling the island. Natural harbors surround Crete, providing **moorage** for boats of every size and kind, from small dinghies to towering cruise ships. Crete is a popular holiday destination for local and international tourists alike, as one in five travelers to Greece make a stop in Crete.

Koules Fortress in Heraklion, Crete

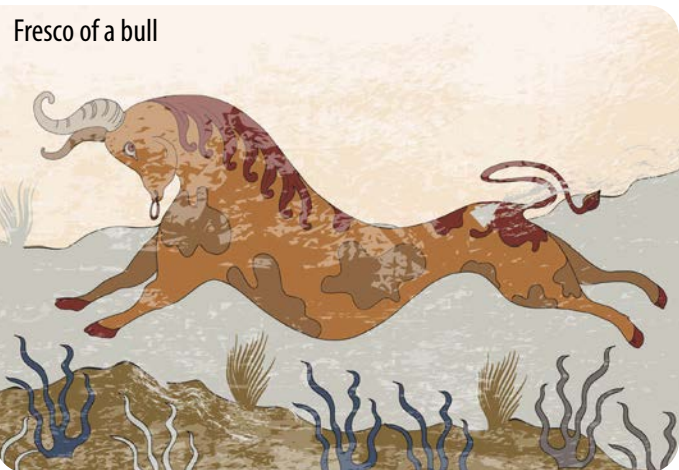




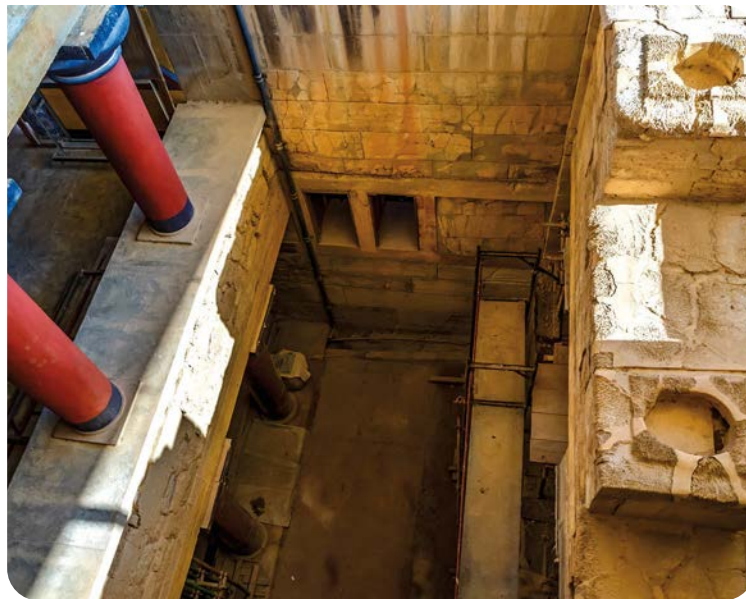
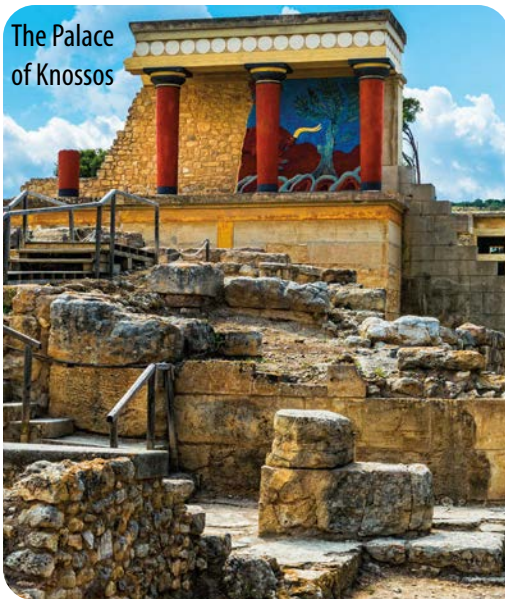
While we are in Crete, let's visit some landmark sites. On the northwest coast is Chania [HAN-ya] Town on Chania Harbor, a popular tourist destination and favorite stop for the locals. We can take a walk through the narrow and colorful streets with their mixture of Venetian and Turkish architecture to see what the local **artisans** are selling. We can have a light breakfast at a quaint cafe, sip some Greek coffee, or hop on a **catamaran** to visit some of the smaller islands nearby.

Soon, we'll leave Chania and head east toward the middle of the island along the northern coast to the city of Heraklion [ear-RACK-lee-yon], Crete's largest city and its capital. We can see that the Greeks, Italians, and Turks have been here. During the Crusades, the Republic of Venice conquered the island of Crete and its footprint has been left behind. We see Venetian structures such as mighty fortresses, giant walls, and canal systems in the old city. Around the corner, we notice Turkish mosques and government buildings dating from the time when the Ottoman Turks conquered the island—after 21 long years of siege during the 17th century (known as the Cretan War).

If we go just three miles southeast of the center of Heraklion, we reach the ancient



fresco: a painting on a wall or ceiling done by rapidly brushing watercolors onto fresh damp or partly dry plaster



ruins of the Palace of Knossos, the oldest and best-preserved ruins on the island and the fabled home of the cruel mythological King Minos. If these walls could speak, they would tell stories indeed. Actually, the artwork that has been left behind does! **Frescoes** of dolphins leaping through the sea and of youths bull-jumping adorn the walls and columns of the palace.

As you may have already guessed, the bull was celebrated and falsely worshipped by the ancient Minoans, as well as by other nearby Mediterranean civilizations. The scenes in these old frescoes show young athletes vaulting over bulls as part of a ceremonial ritual, not unlike how modern gymnasts flip, twist and turn over the vault during the Olympic games—only this vault moves! How would you like to leap over a charging bull?

The Minoan civilization was ultimately destroyed by a terrific and terrifying volcanic eruption on the nearby island of Thera (known as Santorini today) that resulted in a great tsunami in 1420 B.C., around the same time that the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt down in Africa. The Minoan eruption of Thera was one of the largest volcanic explosions that ever occurred on Earth. It blew off half the island of Thera and devastated many of the surrounding islands as well, including the island of Crete. Its explosion and tsunami were likely felt in far-off Egypt.



Here we are in Greece, the birthplace of the Ancient Classical World!

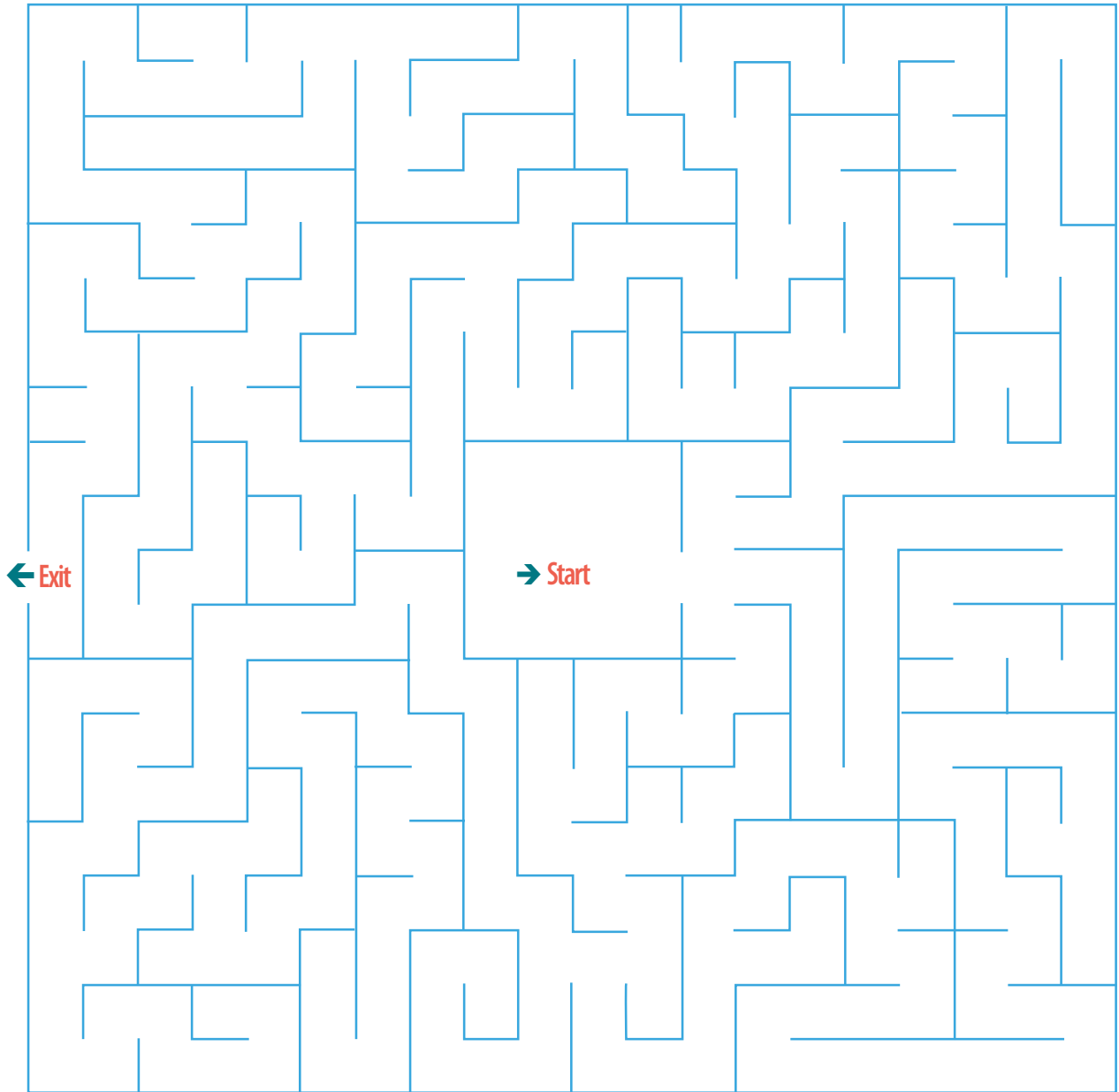
- ✓ *Founded by a seafaring people centered on Crete.*
- Minoan civilization:**
 - ✓ *Earliest civilization in Europe after the Genesis Flood.*
 - ✓ *Known by grand palaces/cities; largest is Knossos.*
 - ✓ *Weakened by giant tsunami; conquered by Mycenaeans.*
- Geography of Crete:**
 - ✓ *A mountainous island with kri-kri and Cretan wildcat.*
 - ✓ *White sand beaches encircle the island.*
 - ✓ *Lots of natural harbors for various ships.*
- Sites of Crete:**
 - ✓ *Chania Town features Venetian and Turkish architecture.*
 - ✓ *Heraklion, capital and largest city, with fortresses, canals, giant walls.*
 - ✓ *Minoan Palace of Knossos ruins over 150,000 square feet.*

Adventure Challenge I

name _____

The Lost Labyrinth!

Labyrinth is a big word that basically means a maze. Some of these types of puzzles can be simple, and others can be much more difficult. In this labyrinth, you made it to the center, but now you have to find your way out!



Ancient Minoan Bull-jumping

Bull-jumping is a dangerous sport, but you can try to get an idea of how difficult it is by setting up your own “bull” to jump over. Stack pillows into a small tower and then see how well you can jump over them! Be careful not to have other things around the “bull” you could run into while jumping.



Paint Frescoes

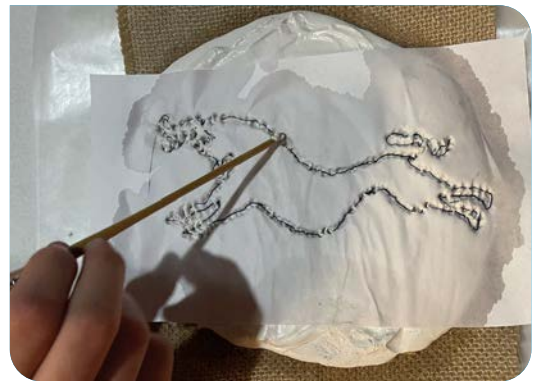
Long ago, people recorded moments in human history on the walls. Frescoes, meaning “fresh” in Italian, are painted onto wet plaster. The great Italian masters Michelangelo and Raphael used this technique to create beautiful works of art. The wet plaster reacts with carbon dioxide in the air to bind the applied pigment, making frescoes one of the most durable styles of painting. Do you remember those beautiful frescoes we saw at the ruins of the Palace at Knossos? Today you get to make your own!

Materials needed:

- Plaster of Paris
- Water
- Mixing bowl
- Measuring cup
- Spatula
- 10 x 12-inch piece of burlap
- Scissors
- Wax paper
- Watercolor paint
- White craft glue
- Paintbrushes

Directions:

1. Mix the plaster of Paris using the directions on the box.
2. Lay out your burlap on top of plenty of newspapers. Pour the plaster of Paris mixture in the middle.
3. Smooth out the plaster with a spatula, making sure to squish the plaster into the burlap. Leave at least an inch of burlap around the edges uncovered.
4. Let the plaster set until firm but still wet.
5. If you want, you can first draw your picture on a piece of paper then trace it onto the plaster by laying the paper over the plaster and “drawing” over the lines with a toothpick. Using watercolors, paint a picture onto the plaster.
6. Let the plaster dry completely. This can take several days.
7. Optional: For a more “ancient” look, gently break or crack the fresco so it is in several pieces. Make sure it doesn’t detach from the burlap. Align the pieces back together and paint over it with a very watery mix of light golden-brown watercolor paint (you don’t want to cover your picture, just make it look old and worn). Cover any white plaster showing through the cracks. Let the paint dry.
8. Spread glue over your fresco using a paintbrush, getting it well into the cracks. Let dry then add another coat. (You may need to add a third coat if necessary.)



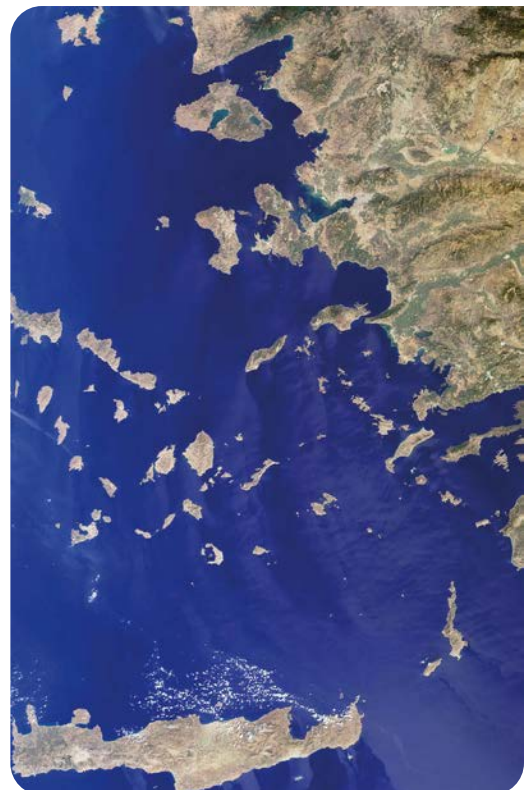


→ **Santorini:** Since Santorini (or Thera as it was known in ancient times) is one of the few **Cyclades** [ki-KLAH-dees] Islands with an airport, let's hop on a small jet and visit this volcanic island that caused such a stir in the Mediterranean waters around 1450 B.C. This island also belongs to Greece. Did you know the number of inhabited Greek islands ranges from 166 to 227? However, if you count every single outcropping in the Aegean Sea (which is the northern part of the Mediterranean between Greece and Turkey), the count soars to over 6,000!

Santorini, located about 120 miles (200 km) southeast of mainland Greece, is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world.

Its picturesque towns perched high atop steep cliffs surrounding a sparkling **lagoon** draw vacationers, photographers, and hikers from around the world. But don't let its beauty fool you! Santorini is home to the most active and dangerous volcano in the Aegean Sea. Volcanic eruptions have devastated this island and its neighbors on numerous occasions.

Cyclades: The Cyclades are a group of Greek Islands located in the southern part of the Aegean Sea. The archipelago contains some 2,200 islands, islets, and rocks. (NASA/GSFC/LaRC/JPL, MISR Team)



Nea Kameni seen from
Thera, Santorini



From the air, Santorini looks a bit like a “J” with two smaller islands lining its gap. Before the enormous Minoan eruption, Thera was probably one large circular island. Parts of its circle were blown to bits by the massive force of the explosion, forming a **caldera** in the middle. A caldera is a cauldron-like geological feature usually formed by the collapse of land following a volcanic eruption. In this case, the land collapsed right into the sea!



The Santorini caldera, with
Nea Kameni in the center

Hercules: a character in Greek mythology falsely presented as a god

In fact, this “sinking into the sea” event of the greater portion of ancient Thera may have inspired Plato’s account of Atlantis. The islanders of Atlantis, according to Plato, were a great naval super-power from the sea beyond “the pillars of **Hercules**”— a people who had conquered a large portion of Europe and Africa and were now ready to attack Athens, Greece, on the mainland. They failed in their attempt to invade the Greek capital, and it is told, “after a day and a night of misfortune,” the island of Atlantis sank into the sea. Indeed, a great volcanic explosion would certainly cause great misfortune! Ancient scholars never believed the tale, but many modern historians do, and the hunt for Atlantis continues to this day.



Archeology dig in
ancient town of Akrotiri

Perhaps scholars need to look within the caldera of Santorini or maybe below the very rock of the island itself to find some clues. In 1967 the ancient town of Akrotiri [ack-row-TEE-ree] was discovered below the lava-rock on the southern end of the island (in the curve of the J), revealing a well-preserved Minoan settlement. Only a small portion of the town has been uncovered so far, yet a complex civilization has been revealed.



Buildings up to three stories high, as well as streets, squares, and staircases were found still intact. Houses in Akrotiri had a dual-pipe plumbing system, indicating that families enjoyed both hot and cold running water. Their hot water probably came from underground volcanic hot springs. **Archaeologists** have also discovered many colorful wall frescoes here along with other fine artwork such as painted pottery, carved sculptures, and delicate jewelry. They have concluded that this was a wealthy and civilized

society. Could it be that Plato was inspired by this advanced Minoan civilization that sank into the sea one terrible day in 1450 B.C., triggering his account of Atlantis? What do you think?

Let's travel up the rocky coastline of Santorini from Akrotiri to the city of Fira [FEE-ruh]. This beautiful **whitewashed** city sits atop the cliff walls, blanketing the bare rocks that overlook the blue lagoon. See the steep, zigzag footpath allowing visitors access to the town from the seaport 400 feet below? If you would rather not walk, you may ride a donkey to the top or take a ride on the cable car that transports guests from the terminal at the port to the city on the cliff.

On this rocky bluff, buildings appear to be stacked on top of one another and connected to each other with shared walls. Let's walk along the narrow streets through small passageways and staircases to browse the vendor stalls. Afterwards, we'll have lunch in an outdoor café with a blue umbrella over our table. It does not get more quaint or "Mediterranean" in appearance than this. Fira is the epitome of a Mediterranean Sea town with the warmth of a white-hot sun, the cool of man-made shade, the brightness of whitewashed buildings, and the blue of the crystal sea. The sun is almost always shining here in Santorini, as the island only gets about twelve inches of rain each year.



Fira, the main town on Santorini Island

whitewashed: lime suspended in water, often with glue or sizing, and used like paint for whitening walls



Let's head back down that zigzag footpath to the port below. We'll hop on a ferry that will take us to another beautiful Greek island in the Aegean Sea. We'll travel north by ferry and pass the islands of Ios [ee-YOSS], Naxos, and Paros to arrive at Mykonos [MEE-ko-noss], a popular tourist destination for beach lovers, windsurfers, and photographers. Can you find all of these islands on your map?

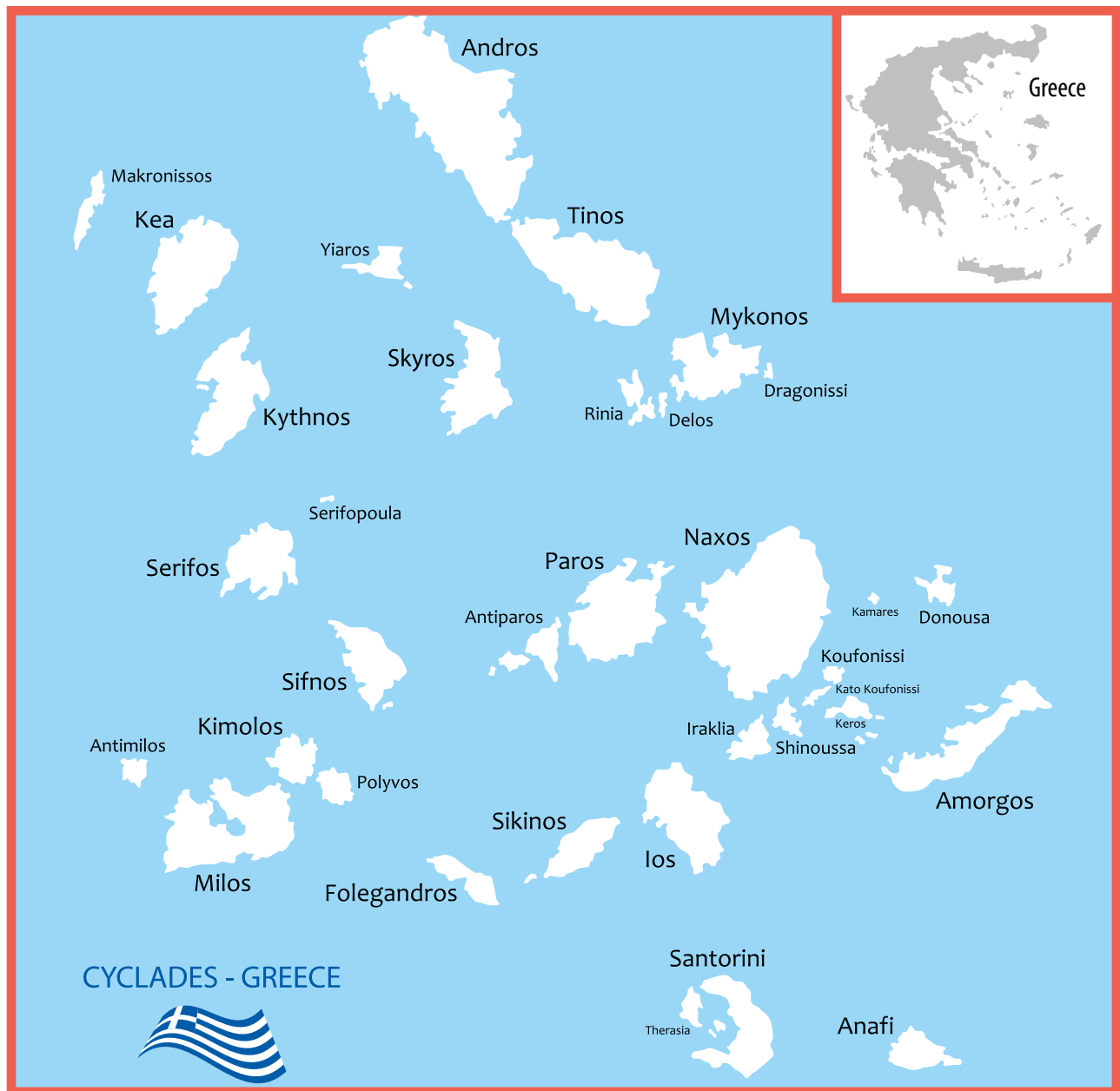
Mykonos: As we step off our ferry, we can see why tourists flock to enjoy the beaches at Mykonos. The golden sand where the granite island meets the glistening waters of the Aegean Sea feels soft and luxurious under our feet. Sunbathers line the beaches, escaping from the heat when necessary under umbrellas woven from palm fronds.

After a refreshing dip in the salty sea, it's time to see a little more of the island. Mykonos is the main city on this island with the same name and is located on the western coast. Although the buildings look decidedly Greek, we can still see influences of past civilizations as we walk the narrow streets of this old town.

Mykonos was originally inhabited by the Carians [KAHR-ree-ans], a group of people from Anatolia (Turkey). Later, the seafaring Phoenicians used this island as a trading post in their vast Mediterranean trade network. Still later, Egyptians inhabited the island, followed by the Ionians [eye-O-nee-ins], a major civilization of ancient Greece.

A beach at Little Venice, Mykonos





Let's take a peek at Little Venice, a quaint old neighborhood on the west side of Mykonos Town. Here the buildings and houses are built so close to the water's edge that the balconies actually hang over the sea. Many of these dwellings were built several hundred years ago during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when pirating was still common and **merchants** needed to be able to load and unload their goods quickly before moving on to the next seaport.

Despite the pungent smell of seaweed and fish, travelers will often pay three times the going rate for a five-star hotel just to stay in a small fisherman's hut in Little Venice. This is a painter and novelist's paradise as it stirs the imagination and takes us back in time to an older world of romance and adventure.

We have two more stops here in Mykonos before we continue on our journey through the Greek Islands. The oldest standing structure on the island is the Paraportiani [pa-ra-por-tee-AH-nee], the old church built in A.D. 1425. Really, its construction only started in 1425 — it took around



Paraportiani



Old windmills of Mykonos



200 years to complete it! This humble whitewashed church acted as a gateway through the thick medieval walls that encircled the old town of Chora

(modern Mykonos). Its name, Paraportiani, means “Our Lady of the Side Gate.” Photographers flock to this landmark site to capture the essence of this impressive church, which has stood proudly for nearly six hundred years.

From the ferry, I can point out the last landmark I want you to see. The old windmills of Mykonos are giant sentinels guarding the island and can be seen from nearly any point in Mykonos as they stand tall on a hill overlooking the town and busy harbor. Built by the Venetians during the sixteenth century, they were used primarily as grain mills. The mills have not been in operation since the middle of the last century (1950s), but they represent the economy and hardworking nature of a people who lived and worked here in days gone by.



The Greek isles are spectacular, aren't they?

Santorini (Thera):

- ✓ *One of the Cyclades Islands, in the southern region of the Aegean Sea.*
- ✓ *Site of one of the most dangerous volcanoes in the world.*
- ✓ *May have been the inspiration for Plato's account of Atlantis.*
- ✓ *City of Fira is filled with white multi-storey houses perched on high cliffs.*
- ✓ *Minoan ruins of Akrotiri discovered below lava-rock on the island.*

Mykonos:

- ✓ *Island of golden sand and granite north of Paros and Naxos.*
- ✓ *The city of Mykonos, was founded by the Carians from what is now modern-day Turkey.*
- ✓ *Little Venice is a neighborhood in the city, with houses that have balconies hanging over the sea.*
- ✓ *Site of the old Paraportiani church and the 16th century windmills built by the Venetians.*

Adventure Challenge 2

name _____

Short Answer

Answer the questions below.

1. The island of Santorini was likely what shape before the enormous Minoan volcanic eruption?

2. What do you think of the search for the lost city of Atlantis? What about the discovery of Akrotiri?

3. What is the oldest standing structure on the the island of Mykonos?

4. Would you pay extra to stay in a small fisherman's hut in Little Venice? Why or why not?

5. Who built the windmills on Mykonos and what were they used for?

Before and After!

The volcanic eruption on the island of Santorini (Thera) was on a massive scale. Using modelling clay or playdough, create your own little island with a volcano. Be sure to take a picture of it or do a simple drawing. Then, imagine the volcano erupts. Now, destroy part of your island to show the damage.



Nisyros Island, Greece

Learning the Language!

The language of Greece has changed throughout time. From Ancient Greek to Modern Greek, like any other language, it evolved over time with subtle differences. At the time of Jesus and the disciples, the language was Koine Greek, also known as Biblical Greek. Here is an example:

John 1:1

Ancient Greek	έν	ἀρχῆ	ἦν	ὁ	λόγος	καὶ	ὁ	λόγος	ἦν	πρὸς	τὸν	θεόν
Modern Greek	en	archē	ēn	o	logos	kai	o	logos	ēn	pros	ton	theon
English	In	beginning	was	the	word	and	the	word	was	with	the	God

Fill in the missing Ancient Greek words in the blank spaces in the following partial verse:

In	beginning	was	the	word	and	the	word	was	with	the	God
		ἦν	ὁ		καὶ	ὁ		ἦν		τὸν	

But What Does It Mean?

Greek Alphabet Chart			
Case		English Name	Transliteration
Upper	Lower		
A	α	alpha	a
B	β	beta	b
Γ	γ	gamma	g ¹
Δ	δ	delta	d
E	ε	epsilon	e
Z	ζ	zeta	z
H	η	eta	ê or e
Θ	θ	theta	th
I	ι	iota	i
K	κ	kappa	k
Λ	λ	lambda	l
M	μ	mu	m
N	ν	nu	n
Ξ	ξ	xi	x
O	ο	omicron	o
Π	π	pi	p
P	ρ	rho	r
Σ	ς or σ	sigma	s
T	τ	tau	t
Υ	υ	upsilon	u or y
Φ	φ	phi	ph
X	χ	chi	ch
Ψ	ψ	psi	ps
Ω	ω	omega	ô or o

1. Gamma. When gamma is found in combination with another consonant, it may be transliterated as an “n”; γγ = ng; γκ = nk; γξ = nx; γχ = nch (gutenberg.org/wiki/Gutenberg:Greek_How-To). Follow the gutenberg.org link for additional information on transliteration.

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”
Revelation 1:8

Look on the Greek chart.
Write the letters for Alpha: _____
and Omega: _____.

Now, read the verse again. Can you write down what the words Alpha and Omega mean?

Alpha _____

Omega _____

→ **Skyros:** I don't know about you, but I am ready to leave the crowds and the tourists behind us and cruise north through the Aegean waters toward the Greek island of Skyros [SKEE-ross]. We pass the last of the Cyclades and enter into more open waters. Standing at the rail of the ferryboat and looking out at the deep midnight-blue waters, it is not hard to imagine the **Achaean** [ah-KAY-ens] of Sparta (a **city-state** of Greece) setting sail across the sea to besiege the city of Troy in what is now the country of Turkey. We visited Turkey in Volume II of *A Child's Geography*.

Achaean: people who lived in the area of Achaea in Greece, or in some context, Greeks in general

city-state: a city with any surrounding territory that forms an independent state

Let me tell you a very, very, old story of a city under siege and an unexpected gift... .

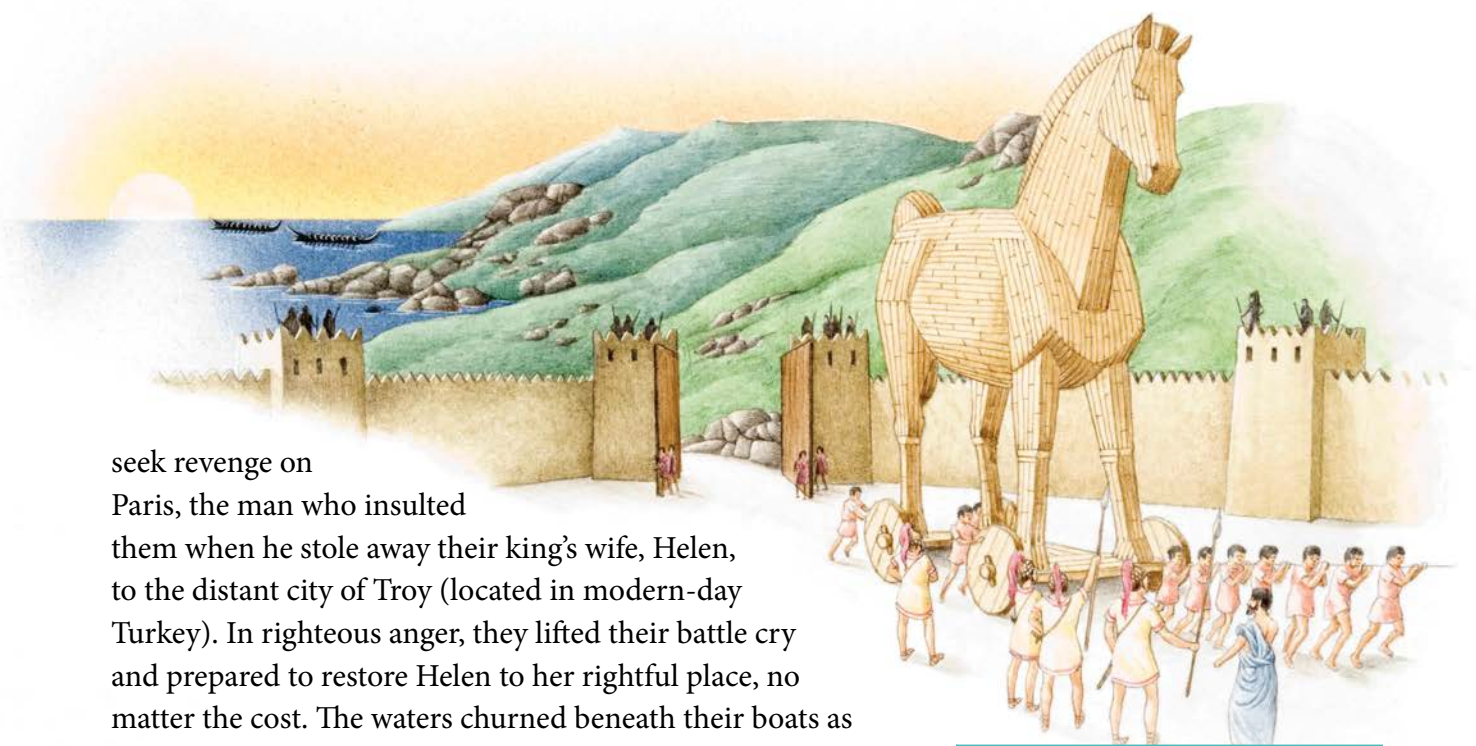
The Spartan Greeks were legendary and disciplined warriors from the city-state called, in ancient times, Lacedaemon, located in what is now called Laconia. These Greeks focused on physical strength and military development. Women in Sparta experienced freedoms and rights that were often not seen in other Greek **city-states** or even other places in the world.

So, our story began with the Spartans, who sailed furiously across the Aegean Sea to



Ancient ruins of Temple of Apollo in Corinth





seek revenge on Paris, the man who insulted them when he stole away their king's wife, Helen, to the distant city of Troy (located in modern-day Turkey). In righteous anger, they lifted their battle cry and prepared to restore Helen to her rightful place, no matter the cost. The waters churned beneath their boats as it churns beneath ours.

It was ten long years of siege before the Greeks finally defeated the Trojans through the clever use of the Trojan horse. Ten years of encampment outside the gates of Troy gave the Greeks plenty of time to think, and this is the plan they conceived... What if they could build a great horse on wheels that could be presented to the Trojans as a peace offering? It would be so big that a great number of soldiers could be hidden inside its hollow belly. It was an outrageous but tempting plan. So, they built the horse, set it before the gates of Troy, then sailed their sparsely manned ships out to sea. The curious Trojans wheeled the horse inside their walled city to inspect the supposed gift more closely. How surprised the people of Troy must have been when they saw those clever Greeks spilling out from the inside of the towering wooden horse! This surprise attack won the battle and ultimately the war for the Greeks.

True or False? Was the story of the Trojan horse inspired by an actual war between the Trojans and the Greeks? No one really knows for sure. Just remember that Greek mythology can be quite fascinating, but stories such as these are just that... myths!

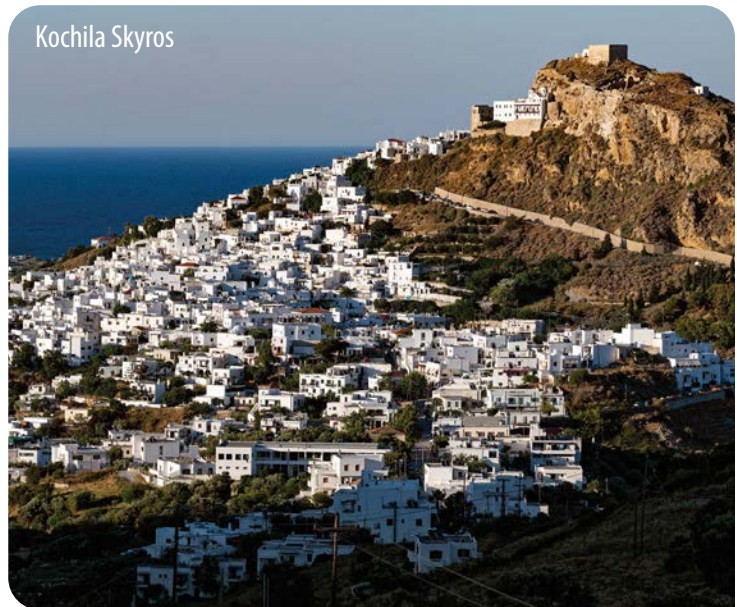


This epic battle involved warriors from several different city-states and other areas in the region. This story and its aftermath were preserved by Homer in one of the earliest pieces of literature, titled *The Iliad*. The city of Troy, with its tragic story of Helen, encouraged many archaeologists to seek this “lost” city until it was rediscovered in 1822. Turkey designated the area a **national park** in 1996 and it is now an **UNESCO World Heritage site**.

The gentle sway of the water, the hum of the ferry engine, and the satisfaction of a good story lulls us to sleep until we reach our last island stop.

Pulling into the Skyros harbor, the sun blazing golden on the eastern horizon, we notice that this is a very different island indeed. It truly is a peaceful place. There are no crowds. And instead of bare rock, we are greeted with pine forests and empty beaches. Skyros is the southernmost island in the **archipelago** of **Sporades** [spo-RAH-dees]. The northern portion of the island is covered in pine forests, and its peak is called Kochila. The southern half is bare and rocky. Its capital is also named Skyros (or Chora, as the locals refer to it) and is built along the slopes of a rocky butte overlooking the sea. Skyros is famous for its ancient Byzantine castle and monastery.

How did you enjoy our hop around the Greek isles? These are some fascinating islands, steeped in history and picturesque in landscape. If we had more time here in the islands, I would show you two more places — the islands of Rhodes and Corfu. Rhodes, the island of roses, is located in the southeast part





Gate of the Virgin, part of the Fortifications of Rhodes



Vlacherna monastery in Corfu, Greece

of the Aegean Sea just off the coast of Turkey. It has a rich medieval past with strong fortresses, majestic castles, and serene monasteries to explore. Can you find it on the map on the next page? (Hint: Look below Turkey.)

Another island that I think you would find intriguing is Corfu, which is located on the other side of mainland Greece in the Ionian Sea. Corfu and its surrounding islands mark the northwest border of the nation of Greece. Corfu Town is the charming capital of Corfu, and if you didn't know better, you might begin to wonder if you are in Italy instead of Greece. Of course, you wouldn't be far from Italy when on the island of Corfu. Check its location on your map. This island, along with so many other islands that surround Greece, was once under the control of the Republic of Venice and, like the others, has a Venetian flair.

It is time to head over to the mainland of Greece to continue our journey. There is so much more to see and learn about Greece.



The Greek isles are each so unique!

Skyros:

- ✓ Also known locally as Chora, as is the capital city of the same name built on the side of a mountain.
- ✓ The ancient story of Spartan warriors and the siege of Troy.
- ✓ Filled with pine forests and the mountain named Kochila.
- ✓ Famous for the Byzantine castle and monastery.

We enjoyed the first part of our trip through Greece! Now it's time to review what we've learned. Let's review the map on the following page.



See if you can locate the following places on the map:

- 🌐 Crete
- 🌐 Skyros
- 🌐 Mykonos
- 🌐 Athens
- 🌐 Heraklion
- 🌐 Mount Olympus
- 🌐 Ionian Sea
- 🌐 Sea of Crete
- 🌐 Aegean Sea

Thinking It Through!

There are a lot of different types of energy, but renewable energy is energy that can be naturally replenished. Waves, wind, rain, tides, and sunlight are some of these sources. Look at the map and remember what we have learned about the geography of the Greek islands. Which kinds of renewable energy are readily available to be used on the islands?



A Tasty Tour

[optional]

Greek Almond Macaroons (from Mykonos)

Ingredients:

½ lb. blanched almonds, or almond flour

2 egg whites

⅔ cup sugar

2 tsp almond extract

12–16 almonds, whole or sliced

NOTE: This recipe requires adult supervision and participation.



Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and line a baking pan with parchment paper or silicone baking sheet.
2. Place the almonds in a food processor and pulse until they are finely ground, or place almond flour into bowl.
3. Use a wooden spoon to mix the ground almonds with the egg whites, sugar, and almond extract until a stiff dough forms.
4. Drop 1-inch mounds of dough onto the prepared cookie sheet, evenly spaced, and shape by hand.
5. Top each mound with an almond, whole or sliced.
6. Bake for approximately 20 minutes, or until the edges are firm but the insides are still soft, and the cookies are golden.
7. Cool 5 minutes before removing from cookie sheet. Makes 12–16 cookies.

TIME LINE

c. 2500 B.C.	▶ Growth of Minoan Civilization.
c. 1450 B.C.	▶ Minoan Civilization of the Grecian island of Crete destroyed by tsunami, as a result of a devastating volcanic eruption on the Grecian island of Thera.
A.D. 1425	▶ Construction begins on Paraportiani church on the Grecian island of Mykonos in the town of Chora.
16th century	▶ Venetians built granary windmills on the island of Mykonos.
17th century	▶ Cretan War.
1822	▶ City of Troy rediscovered.
1899–1913	▶ Crete ruled itself.
1914	▶ Start of World War I.
1967	▶ Ancient town of Akrotiri discovered.
1995	▶ The Greek-imposed embargo of the Republic of Macedonia ends after the country agreed to change their name.
2008	▶ Greek riots after the death of a 15-year-old at the hands of a police officer.
2010	▶ European sovereign debt crisis demonstrations.

Timeline Activity **[optional]**

There are a lot of important dates about Greece. Be sure to include the ones you feel are important in your *Wonders of Old* book or a crafted timeline you are making yourself.

Flash Cards

Make flash cards of the bolded glossary words from this chapter. You can add drawings of the terms if you want. Be creative!



Research Project **[optional]**

Are you interested to know how windmills operate to grind grain? This is your opportunity to find out! Search books at your local library or search online, with a parent's permission, for information. On a piece of paper, draw a picture and write 1–2 paragraphs describing the grain grinding process of windmills.





Mapping It Out!

Let's work on your map skills! Follow the instructions below.

Label the following places on your map:

Greece

Crete

Mykonos

Skyros

Ionian Sea

Aegean Sea

Add a star ★ for the city of Athens.



name _____

destination: **Greece**

We traveled by [circle]:



What I will remember most about these Greek Islands is

Windmills capture wind to produce energy. Name two other natural resources used to produce energy.

If I ever get to visit again, I would like to explore or visit
