

**Time Needed:** 160 minutes (approximately three class periods, or homework time plus two-and-a-half class periods)

**Supplies:**

- [A Guide to Ancient Greek Life and Values](#) (handout)
- [Annotation Sheet: Ancient Greek Guide](#) (handout)
- [How Ancient Greek Are You? Survey](#) (handout)
- [Dilemma of the Time-Traveling Teen: Prompts and Rubric](#) (handout)
- Writing utensils and paper or one-to-one devices (optional)

**Content Objectives: Students will know:**

- The vocabulary of ancient Greek home and community: *oikos*, *polis*, *kurios*, patriarch, nuclear family, extended family, community (in contrast to family)
- Some introductory facts about ancient Greek society and values: family structure, husband/wife roles, lack of privacy, community life, slavery, childhood, importance of family, peer pressure)

**Skill Objectives: Students will be able:**

- To compare and contrast facts and cultural elements from two cultures separate in time
- To apply knowledge of ancient Greek culture and values to problems of American life
- To generate creative solutions to social problems in ancient Greek culture, solutions that are hybrid applications of ancient Greek and modern American values
- To present orally to classmates using role plays
- To listen to, affirm, and critique classmates' oral responses involving ancient Greek and American culture

**Essential Understandings: Students will understand:**

- There are some things in life that are culture-specific, and others that are universal.
- People of other cultures are both different from the student and the same.
- Cross-cultural problems require tact, sensitivity, creativity, and thoughtfulness to be solved.

**Essential Question: Students will explore:**

- What was it like to be an ancient Greek?
- What did the ancient Greeks value?
- How do the ancient Greeks and Americans differ in values and beliefs?
- What things about ancient Greeks and Americans coincide?
- How ancient Greek am I personally? Why might that be so?
- Can we craft an ancient Greek-meets-modern American solution to teen-relevant problems?

**Activities**

This role play activity is a formative assessment grappling with open-ended questions about cultural values. See the end of the lesson for ideas on more formative and summative assessments.

*Reading about ancient Greek culture*

- Option 1: students pre-read and annotate Guide as homework, then do activities in class
- Option 2: students are handed Guide as they come into class and spend 30 minutes on reading and annotation, then do activities)

Set up the reading assignment with this prefatory information:

Tomorrow we are going to discuss the ancient Greeks' way of life and compare it to ours.

What does this have to do with you and your life?

A lot.

First, when we learn about other cultures, we learn about ourselves. I think you're going to learn a lot about yourself tomorrow.

Second, the ancient Greeks are an important culture to study, because they were the first great civilization in Europe and we have used many of their best ideas to help us as a civilization.

Third, we are going to see how differences in time and circumstances made a big difference as to why the ancient Greeks lived as they did. You're going to see that how people live can change over time and that when thousands of years separates two cultures, there will be big differences.

Finally, we are going to discover that even though the ancient Greeks lived a long time ago, they were still human beings and human beings do not change all that much over time. All of our basic needs are the same.

*The Dilemma of the Time-Traveling Teen*

And hopefully, because you are learning about others, this will help you to see people who are not like you as worthy of kindness and understanding just as you are.

As you read, use the Annotation Sheet to record your reactions to the Guide. You will also record definitions you look up and learn on the Guide itself.

### *Introduction (2 minutes)*

Set up the lesson with this prefatory information:

You have now read and annotated the Guide to Ancient Greek Life and Values. Hopefully you learned a lot about the ancient Greeks.

Now you are going to demonstrate that knowledge by taking a survey. You may use your annotation sheet to help you with the Guide; if you do not have an annotation sheet and/or have not read the Guide, take this time to do as much as you can of the Survey by reading the Guide.

### *Survey Activity: (10 minutes)*

Ask students to independently complete the How Ancient Greek Are You? Survey. You can introduce the survey this way:

Is your personality suited to living in ancient Greece?  
Do you practice the values and beliefs of the ancient Greeks?

It's time to analyze our own values and beliefs while examining the values and beliefs of the ancient Greeks.

This self-survey will prep you for a group scenario where you will have to bring your imagination and problem-solving skills to some time-travel scenarios.



### Directions:

- Answer True or False for yourself in the second column.
- Answer True or False for the ancient Greeks in the third column
- In the fourth column, justify your answer for the ancient Greeks using the Guide and your annotation sheet.

### *Review of the Guide and Survey (10-20 minutes)*

Depending on your students' prior knowledge, their reading and retention skills, and your community, call out aspects of the Guide and Survey as you see fit to engage students in digesting the information about ancient Greek life. What surprised you about ancient Greek life?

### ***The Dilemma of the Time-Traveling Teen***

What did not? Where are you similar or different to ancient Greeks? Raise your hand if you think you could travel back in time and assimilate into ancient Greek culture.

You may wish to spend some time helping students understand and process the nature of slavery in ancient Greek culture. See notes below about how you will monitor any role plays where students choose to represent the slave role.

*Break into groups: (5-10 minutes)*

Break the class into threes or fours according to instructor preference. Hand out a prompt and rubric to each group. You may not want to do voting or ranking activities in your class, so determine whether you would like to keep this part of the prompt.

Share this prompt with the students to frame the activity:

How well would you survive as a teen in ancient Greece? That is today's question. For this activity you will need to imagine that you have time-traveled back to ancient Greece and been plopped into a typical ancient Greek family. You have no way of getting back to the modern day and you may need to stay there forever! In any case, you cannot reveal that you are a modern person (the future would be immediately changed and you might cease to exist!) but must act within the rules of the ancient Greek family. But you are still hoping to be yourself as much as possible. In this group activity you will determine the best way forward with your family, and then when we gather, we will analyze our presentation and identify the most creative solutions—ones that truly balance what the ancient Greeks want with what we need to do as Americans.

Let's review the Rubric so you know what we're looking for.

Then, quietly read each prompt and before you move into your groups, pick one that you think might be interesting to solve. You will use the Guide, the Annotation Sheet, and the Survey to help you make a group decision and create a role play.

*Notes for the instructor*

- This role play should be playful as you talk about tricky, emotional social situations in a different time, so therefore the Rubric levels are appropriately whimsical in stating “Disaster!/Safe for Now!/Win-Win!”
- These prompts may be handled as the instructor sees fit. They can be handed out and students can choose which dilemma they want to discuss; the instructor can assign them randomly; the instructor can give certain groups certain prompts based on the makeup of the group (e.g. groups of same gender students can be given prompts with

- protagonists of the same gender— or, to make it more challenging, of different gender).
- Please feel free to create new prompts! But remember that these prompts have been created with special reference to the Guide to Ancient Greek Life and Values. For every dilemma, there are clues in the Guide that help groups to come to satisfactory conclusions concerning their dilemmas. So new prompts should have those same characteristics and students should be able to be directed to specific sections of the Guide if they feel clues were lacking for their prompt.
  - Note that the prompts offer the role of ancient Greek slave as well as family members. You may want to call out this role, indicating that slavery is a sensitive subject in the United States because slavery existed for a long time and resulted in death, injury, and generational impact on many people. Clarify that no one should be assigned or expected to do such a role if they are not comfortable, depending on how discussion of the Guide and Survey progressed prior. That said, role playing allows some students a chance to practice empathy and understand the perspective or someone who is enslaved, and to appreciate the challenges of such a life. You may want to add, “This role should be presented thoughtfully and if you are going to portray this role, run your choices by me before we go live with class presentations.”
  - Finally, this assignment can be adapted for any culture students are studying, with the caveat of course that the instructor will need to create the Guide to Life and Values and adjust the prompts as needed.
  - Consider cutting these prompts into individual pieces of paper and either a) let students draw them randomly or b) assign them based on the makeup of the groups.

*Brainstorm, discuss, and prepare role play:* (60 minutes, 45 in this class to create and rehearse and 15 in the following class to warm up and dress rehearse)

Let students work on their own but circulate to provide feedback and/or hints. Halfway through the assigned time, students should be on their feet acting out their role play.

*Ways students can use the Guide to help them create their role plays*

Below are suggested solutions students might explore. These are not definitive or proscriptive, but you can use these proposed solutions to nudge students toward reasonable and creative outcomes that honor both ancient Greek and American values.

1. You are a teenage boy who likes to spend as much time as possible on computer games. In fact, you hope someday to become a professional computer game player or game designer and make your living at computer games. Of course, there are no computer games in ancient Greece. Your father is a farmer with three sons and ten slaves and says you will inherit one-third of the farm and he is feeling poorly; he may die soon. Imagine the conversation you have with your father about your future.

- *Students have a couple of avenues for this prompt. The first is to note that the father has three sons and ten slaves, which is a comparatively large number of people that can work as farmers. The boy can argue that he should be allowed to do something different from his peers because the father can spare one son out of the three. The boy can also argue that he doesn't want to inherit the farm and will gladly give his third to a brother.*
- *The boy can also argue that he is intelligent and would like to be educated in order to start a new business and make money for the family instead of farming. Military service could also be used in the argument.*
- *The boy could also argue that he should be allowed to write or act in plays or participate in entertainment instead of farming.*

2. You are a teenage girl who likes to spend as much time as possible playing a musical instrument. However, your father works very hard on a farm with poor soil and the family is barely making ends meet. You are needed to help the family income by weaving wool into fabric which the family will then sell. Your mother has one slave and one elderly aunt living at home with you. How might you convince her and your father that you should be allowed to do what you want to do at home?

- *Because this family is small and does not have a lot of help, it probably will not work for the girl to ask to be involved with music and entertainment for a living.*
- *The girl could negotiate time to play the musical instrument after her work for the day is done, and could enjoy festival times when possibly she might be able to play when the rules are relaxed.*

- *Students might also be perceptive enough to understand that music and stories are intertwined in ancient Greece and that she would be welcome to play music for the family at the hearth fire.*
  - *Students who have read the Guide closely may pick up that a shepherd plays a musical instrument. Suggesting the girl become a shepherdess might be viable if presented the proper way.*
3. You are a teenage girl of the age of 15. Immediately after you time travel to ancient Greece, you make friends with a boy down the street. You develop feelings for the boy and he for you. You approach your mother with the idea of going out on a “dinner date” with the boy. The boy is from a family with whom your parents are friends and your father has not decided who you will marry yet, so you figure that your mother will say yes. Instead, your mother flies off the handle, informs your father that you are wild and uncontrollable, and urges him to decide on your husband as soon as possible. Imagine the conversation you have with your mother and father to calm them down about your “mistake” and possibly allow you to continue on seeing the boy you like.
- *This prompt and the one after it are on the surface open and shut cases: there is no way that any ancient Greek parents are going to allow a girl to go on a “dinner date” with a boy; in fact, the question itself is a kind of anachronism that indicates the time-traveling teen has made a bit of a mistake in what she is asking.*
  - *In this situation, the teen in an authentically ancient context will have to settle for something much less than getting to see the boy on a regular basis, unless there is a willingness on the students’ part to pursue an argument that they should be married because the families are friendly with each other. Another way to think about it would be to settle for seeing the boy during festival times, when the rules are relaxed.*
4. You are a teenage boy of 16. Immediately after you time travel to ancient Greece, you make friends with a girl down the street. Now you have developed feelings for the girl and she for you. You approach your father with the idea of going out on a dinner date with the girl. The girl is from a family that is richer and more important than yours, and your father has not decided who you will marry yet, so you figure Dad will say yes. Instead, your father accuses you of thinking that your family is not rich enough and needs rich in-laws. He angrily tells you not to interfere with his decisions about your life. Imagine the conversation you have with your father (other family members may be

present) to calm him down and still possibly allow you to continue on seeing the girl you like.

- *Here there is a bit more freedom in that the time-traveling teen is a boy and the other family is one that the boy's kurios might like to make friends with. Marriage is again an option, as is seeing the girl during festival times, though this is not a long-term solution. But by then it's possible the teen will have found a way back to the modern day.*

5. You are a teenage boy who likes to spend as much time as possible on reading books.

Your father is a farmer and you are his only son. He has two slaves. After two days working sunup to sundown, you are tired and sore and would like to take a day off and rest at home. Your father has been hard on you for working slowly and making mistakes; it is near the harvest season and there is much work to be done. You approach your father with the idea saying that you would like to study the *Iliad*. Imagine the conversation you have with your father and mother about what you should be allowed to do.

- *The argument here hinges on whether the group can make the idea of educating the boy attractive to a father who has only the one son who presumably will inherit the farm. School is certainly an option and it is the right thing to emphasize the *Iliad*. The group will need to show that education will help with the economic well-being of the family and will be worth it in the long run even though the boy will not be there every day to help with the farm.*
- *The boy will earn points if he agrees to work during the crucial harvest time when there is much to be done, but he might suggest that during down times he could study.*

6. A large religious holiday in honor of a god is coming up and your mother tells you that you will be in a large group of dancers as part of the parade and celebration through the streets of the polis. You are a teenage girl who hates dancing and has never liked crowds. In fact, you start hyperventilating when you get in crowds—but no one really wants to hear about it, and in fact your family mocks you for being ridiculous. Imagine the conversation you have with your father and mother about this subject.

- *This dilemma is one where the group has to reverse-engineer their expectations and values and use the ancient Greek way of life to the girl's benefit. One good way to solve this problem is to argue that the girl should not be seen or heard outside the house—that it's proper for girls to stay inside. Also, the group can make an economic argument that the girl will work weaving fabric during this time so that no time is lost from the family business.*

- *Some perceptive students might pick up on the idea from the Guide of shepherds as solitary people. Although shepherds tended not to be girls, it is not impossible that the parents would agree to a change of occupation in this situation.*
7. You are an active, athletic teenage boy who finds out the ancient Greek way of conducting school is mostly memorization of the *Iliad*. You can't stand this type of school and have had a bad day acting out; your teacher has notified your parents. Your father is an important man who is active in local politics, owns three farms, and has fifteen slaves working for him. He believes you will follow his footsteps into politics and need to be educated. Worse yet, he has a terrible temper and hates to be shamed! Imagine the conversation you would have with your parents on this subject—to avoid a beating, for sure, but more importantly to convince them that your particular gifts and talents as a person are valuable to the family.
- *Here again, the group can use the ancient Greek way of life and values to their benefit: argue that the father needs help managing his farms and the boy should not have to go to school but should spend his time outdoors. The group can also argue that the boy would do better as a soldier than a scholar; an argument could also be made that if the boy is allowed to pursue athletics, honor could come to the family as well.*
8. You are a teenage girl living near the town of Delphi in ancient Greece. Your father tells you that you will become an assistant to the priestess of Apollo who prophesies the future for those who come to the temple and one day, with education, you could become the chief priestess. You are a scientific person who has never been interested in religion and you had dreamed of becoming an astronaut one day. Of course, the ancient Greeks are thousands of years away from being able to achieve space travel, so you would be revealing your real identity as a modern person if you said one word to your parents about your dream. Nevertheless, you want to be true to yourself. What conversation would you as a scientific person have with your parents about accepting or not accepting this prestigious and sought-after religious position in ancient Greece?
- *This one might be the most challenging of all and the one that you either would not give any group (if you have fewer than 32 students in the class), or that you would give to a group of ambitious students who are looking for a challenge.*

- *It would be very difficult in an ancient Greek context not to accept the position. This means honor for the family and not accepting it would mean great dishonor.*
- *One way out would be for the girl to admit she does not believe in the gods and that if she took the position she would not do a good job with it.*
- *She could also argue that being married to a rich man or to an important family might be a better fit for her.*
- *She also might argue that she wanted to be educated and become a philosopher but would have to articulate why that would benefit the family.*
- *She could also accept the position and see if there was a way to use it to her benefit by asking the priests if she could be educated once in the temple itself.*
- *You might also suggest the possibility that the parents are more understanding than the normal Greek parents and instead of being oppositional, might find a way to accommodate the girl.*

Students should take some time rehearsing their role play and at the instructor's discretion, 5 more minutes can be devoted to preparation.

*Present and critique: Who Passed the Time-Traveling Test? (40 minutes in the second class)*

- Introduce this next phase as a group check—where we help each other ensure that solutions are a great balance honoring ancient Greek values and our own American ingenuity and flexibility. Who had the most believable (for ancient Greeks) + creative solution? That's what we are here to decide.
- When students are ready to present, establish an order of presentations. Let groups volunteer for positions (e.g. "We want to go first— let's get it over with"), choose randomly (this forces all groups to be equally ready to go), or determine based on your understanding of each group's individual makeup.
- Prepare students for the discussion you will have post performances by reviewing the three rubric-related questions at the bottom of this page. You may want to post these.
- Understand that each group that presents will give ideas to the next groups that go and that their presentation may influence what other students present. If there is one group that is especially charismatic, the instructor might choose to have that group go last.

- Optional: have students record their presentation on their devices (such as iPads) and then present by mirroring the devices onto the class projection system. This will ensure that students present what is their own ideas.
- The instructor should read the prompt.
- Each dialogue/role play should take about 2-5 minutes to complete.
- After each presentation, ask the students at least two of the following questions. It will be easy to take too long for each individual group if there are more than 3-4 groups, so manage time based on the size of each class.
  1. *How Ancient Greek Was It?* What part of the presentation was the most authentic to an actual conversation a time-traveling teen might have with ancient Greek parents? Was the solution believable? Were there any anachronisms?
  2. *How Creative Was It?* How did the role play exhibit creativity and flexibility in finding a solution that met ancient Greek and American needs? Do you have any suggestions on how to make a better solution?
  3. *How Smooth Was It?* Role plays are experiments and rehearsals, so we don't expect perfection. That said, whose presentation was particularly smooth, and how did you know?

When discussing these questions, start with appreciation of what students did well, then move on to what students either did not understand or suggestions for improvement. With about five minutes to go, transition to voting for or discussing which performance was most effective in meeting rubric criteria.

Optional: diversify awards to include individual categories such as most creative, funniest, or best insight. In general, emphasize that voting is being used to identify merits of ideas and execution rather than honoring a particular student or performance. . If there is time, give the exit ticket.

#### *Optional Exit Ticket (5 minutes)*

Write one full sentence on the exit ticket (or write a response electronically using a website such as [socrative.com](http://socrative.com)) on the following prompt: “Now that I know more about the ancient Greeks, I

would say that I am not at all/not very/somewhat/a lot/very much like an ancient Greek, because...”

### Follow-up and Assessment Options:

This formative assessment can lead to other formative ones, or a summative.

- Do a warm-up at the next class period in which another dilemma is presented (from the prompts not used if desired) and students write a quick paragraph on how they might approach the situation with Greek parents. Or, have students use these prompts for a Socratic and/or fish-bowl discussion.
- Include an essay prompt in the next summative assessment that requires the students to create a solution to one of these dilemmas, using a similar rubric to the role play, where you assess both creativity and application of ancient Greek knowledge.
- Encourage students to write a short story that narrates the issue, how it’s dealt with, and how the teen might have gotten back to the present day. Create a rubric similar to the role play rubric.

