Nearly four thousand years ago, in the countries that we now know as Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria, lived the earliest Greek civilisations.

**The Government**

Ancient Greece was split into many different states, which were each ruled in their own way. Each state had its own laws, government and money, but hey shared the same language and religion. At this time, the two important states in Greece were Athens and Sparta.

**Greek Gods**

Religion was important to the Greeks because they believed that it would make their lives better while they were living and the Greeks believed that the gods would care for them when they died. There were 12 major gods who ruled Mount Olympus. These gods were:

* Zeus
* Apollo
* Dionysus
* Ares
* Aphrodite
* Demeter
* Poseidon.
* Hera

**Glossary**

**States –** Territories of land

**Zeus –** King of the gods

**Mount Olympus –** Home of the major Greek gods.

**Temple –** Housed the statues of gods.

* Hephaestus
* Athena
* Hermes
* Artemis

**Greek Writing**

The Greek alphabet was the first alphabet with vowels.

Unlike our alphabet, the Greek alphabet consisted of unusual symbols such as Γ (gamma) and Δ (delta). Interestingly, this alphabet is still used in Greece today.

**Did you know...**

That the Ancient Greeks invented theatre?

They loved to watch plays and most cities had a theatre – some big enough to hold 15,000 people!

**Greek Buildings**

To show the gods how important they were, the Greeks built big temples in every town for one god or goddess.

The temples were homes for statues of gods and were cared for by priests. Religious ceremonies and festivals were held outside the temples. A few of these temples can still be found today around Greece including The Parthenon (dedicated to the goddess Athena), which can be found in Athens, Greece.