Lesson 4  Sparta and Athens

MAIN IDEAS

Government  Sparta built a state in which every part of life was organized around the need to have a strong army.

Government  Athenian citizens were expected to participate actively in government.

Government  A Persian invasion endangered Greece, so some city-states united to fight their enemy.

Sparta’s Military State

ESSENTIAL QUESTION  What did Spartan society emphasize the most?

Spartan Society Changes

• Athens’ main rival was Sparta—city-state in Peloponnesus

• Sparta changed after conquering neighboring area around 715 B.C.
  - forced defeated people to become slaves called helots
  - helots were forced to farm and give Sparta half their crops

• Helots outnumbered Spartans; often rebelled but were defeated
  - fear of helot revolts led Spartan state to build strong army

Government and Society

• Two kings ruled Sparta; five elected supervisors ran government
  - Council of Elders proposed laws
  - assembly of citizens elected officials, voted on Council’s laws

• Three social groups: citizens lived in city, trained to be soldiers
  - free noncitizens lived in nearby villages, had no political rights
  - lowest group—helots—grew food so citizens could be full-time soldiers

Education

• Boys lived in barracks—military houses—from age seven
  - were taught discipline, duty, strength, military skill; little reading

• All male citizens entered army at age 20, served until 60
Women

- Emotionally, physically tough; were taught strength, athletics
- Family life less important in Sparta; husbands, wives usually apart
- Women had more freedom than elsewhere, allowed to own property

REVIEW QUESTION
How did Spartan education support the military?
Athens’ Democratic Way of Life

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What was the government of Athens like?

**Government and Society**
- Athens had two governing bodies
  - Council of Four Hundred ran daily life; Assembly voted on policies
- Citizens had to serve in army, on juries when needed
  - juries had several hundred people; in courts, all citizens were equal
- Slaves—noncitizens, a third of population, worked in homes, on farms
  - some earned money, were able to buy freedom

**Education**
- Boys of wealthy families started school at age six or seven
  - prepared for citizenship; learned logic, debate for future in Assembly
  - also studied reading, writing, poetry, arithmetic, music

**Women**
- Expected to be good wives, mothers; some were priestesses
- Had less freedom than in Sparta—did not attend school
  - only inherited property if father had no sons

**REVIEW QUESTION**
What were the duties of an Athenian citizen?
The Persian Wars

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What happened when Persia invaded Greece?

**The First Persian Invasion**
- Persia conquered Anatolia in 500s B.C.—area had many Greek colonies
  - Athens supported failed Greek revolt in Anatolia in 499 B.C.
- Persia wanted to punish Athens, so arrived near Athens in 490 B.C.
- Athenians met Persians at plain of Marathon; had no Spartan help
  - Athenians were outnumbered but won battle by clever military tactics
  - legend says soldier ran 25 miles to Athens to deliver victory message

**Greek Victory**
- Persians invaded again in 480 B.C.; city-states united against them
- 300 Spartans fought to last man at narrow Thermopylae pass
  - gave Athens time to prepare for battle
- Athenians left city, fought nearby naval battle against Persians
  - narrow body of water helped more mobile Greek ships win battle
  - this victory ended the war

**REVIEW QUESTION**
How did the Persian Wars bring the Greek city-states together?

**Lesson Summary**
- Sparta organized its state around its strong army.
- Athens valued democratic government and culture.
- Some Greek city-states united to defeat the Persians.

**Why It Matters Now . . .**
Defeating the Persians allowed Greek democracy and culture to continue. This culture greatly influenced later world civilization.