

Escape the Hall of Empires: Greece vs. Rome

Ancient Greece vs. Ancient Rome (G.R.A.P.E.S.): Compare ancient Greece and ancient Rome using G.R.A.P.E.S.: how geography shaped each civilization, their religions, achievements, political systems (Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic), economies and trade, and social structures, and explain how both influenced the United States today.

Learning target: I can use G.R.A.P.E.S. to compare ancient Greece and ancient Rome and explain how each one influenced the United States.

Success looks like: Students use the vocabulary correctly, complete the escape room, and score 80% or higher on the evidence-based exit ticket.

Materials: Student devices, the printed lesson worksheet (one per student), projector for the mini-lesson presenter.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

60 minutes

Time	Part	Teacher does	Students do
0:00-0:08	Warm-up	Project the warm-up. Circulate, then call on 2-3 students. Save question 3 for the debrief.	Answer Part 2 of the lesson worksheet; share with a partner.
0:08-0:20	Mini-lesson	Teach with the 4-step presenter. Run each quick check with the whole class.	Complete worksheet Parts 4-11 as each slide appears; answer checks with fingers.
0:20-0:48	Escape Room	Launch Escape the Hall of Empires: Greece vs. Rome. Assign mission levels; circulate with the answer key.	Play solo or in pairs; record code pieces; complete any written evidence task.
0:48-0:52	Debrief	Ask 2 debrief questions and revisit warm-up question 3.	Finish worksheet Part 13 (prediction check + one thing learned).
0:52-1:00	Exit ticket	Hand out the exit ticket. Collect and sort with the mastery guide.	Answer with evidence independently.

Key vocabulary

Word	Student-friendly definition
G.R.A.P.E.S.	Geography, Religion, Achievements, Politics, Economics, Social structure: six categories for studying a civilization.
City-state (polis)	An independent city and the land around it, with its own government, like Athens or Sparta.
Direct democracy	Citizens vote on laws themselves (Athens).

Word	Student-friendly definition
Republic	Citizens elect representatives to make laws (Rome, and the U.S. today).
Polytheism	Belief in many gods.
Patricians / plebeians	Wealthy Roman nobles / ordinary Roman citizens.

1. WARM-UP

0:00–0:08 · 8 min

Warm-up expectations (post these): Answer in Part 2 of the lesson worksheet (or on this sheet). Number each answer to match the question. Answer in complete sentences. For math, show your work. Work silently for 5 minutes, then share with a partner for 2 minutes. Be ready to share one answer with the class.

#	Question	Look for
1	What does G.R.A.P.E.S. stand for? Write all six words.	Geography, Religion, Achievements, Politics, Economics, Social structure.
2	Name one thing in the United States today that might have come from ancient Greece or Rome.	Examples: democracy, voting, the Senate, columns on government buildings, the Olympics, Latin root words, arches.
3	How could mountains and the sea change the way people in a region live?	Mountains can separate people into small communities; the sea encourages fishing, trade, and travel by ship.

2. MINI-LESSON

0:08–0:20 · 12 min

Project the Lesson presenter from the room page. It runs the whole hour: target and agenda, warm-up with timer, hook vote, 4 teaching steps (key idea, interactive tool, turn and talk, check for understanding), I do / we do / you do, a work-time screen with a timer and expectations, debrief, and the exit ticket. Press N for teacher notes, T to pause the timer, and P to pick a student.

Hook (1 min): Your class must make a rule. Who should decide? Class vote: Everyone votes / Elected leaders vote / One leader decides

Step 1 (3 min): G and R: Geography and religion

Teach	Greece is a mountainous peninsula with many islands, so people formed separate city-states and turned to the sea. Rome grew on seven hills by the Tiber River, with fertile plains that were easier to unite. Both worshipped many gods; Rome renamed many Greek gods.
Interactive tool	Flip cards: Zeus, Athena, Poseidon, Ares
Students do	Match each Greek god to its Roman name.
Turn and talk	How might life be different if you lived in a city cut off from others by mountains?

Worksheet Part 5A	Greek mountains created independent CITY-STATES. Both civilizations were POLYTHEISTIC: they believed in many gods.
Check for understanding	Why did ancient Greece develop as separate city-states instead of one kingdom? Answer: (A) Mountains and seas divided the land

Step 2 (3 min): A: Achievements

Teach	Greece gave the world democracy, philosophy, the Olympic Games, drama, and columns like those on the Parthenon. Rome built arches, concrete, aqueducts, paved roads, and the Colosseum, and wrote down its laws in the Twelve Tables.
Interactive tool	Board and notes
Students do	Sort the achievement cards into Greece or Rome.
Turn and talk	Which achievement, Greek or Roman, would you miss most if it disappeared today? Why?
Worksheet Part 6A	Greek achievements include DEMOCRACY and the OLYMPICS. Roman achievements include AQUEDUCTS and ROADS.
Check for understanding	What was the purpose of a Roman aqueduct? Answer: (C) To carry fresh water into cities

Step 3 (3 min): P: Politics

Teach	Athens created direct democracy: adult male citizens voted on laws themselves. Rome created a republic: citizens elected representatives, including two consuls and a Senate. The United States is a republic that also uses democratic voting.
Interactive tool	Board and notes
Students do	Complete the T-chart: Athenian democracy vs. Roman Republic.
Turn and talk	Is it fair that only some people could vote in Athens? How is that different from the U.S. today?
Worksheet Part 7A	In a direct democracy, citizens VOTE ON LAWS themselves. In a REPUBLIC, citizens elect representatives.
Check for understanding	The United States elects senators to make laws. Which ancient government is this most like? Answer: (A) The Roman Republic

Step 4 (3 min): E and S: Economics and social structure

Teach	Greeks traded olive oil, wine, and pottery by sea. Rome traded across a huge empire linked by roads and used the denarius coin. In Athens, only free adult male citizens could vote; in Rome, patricians held more power than plebeians. Both depended on enslaved people.
Interactive tool	Board and notes
Students do	Label the social classes of Athens and of Rome.
Turn and talk	Why would a huge empire need good roads and one kind of money?

Worksheet Part 8A	Greece traded OLIVE OIL and wine by sea. Rome's social classes were PATRICIANS and PLEBEIANS.
Check for understanding	Which group could vote in the Athenian Assembly? Answer: (D) Free adult male citizens

I do: worked example (shown one step at a time)

1. G.R.A.P.E.S. chart: Greece | Rome.
2. Geography, Greece: mountains and islands split the land into city-states.
3. Geography, Rome: seven hills by the Tiber River and fertile plains, easier to unite.
4. Conclusion: geography helps explain why Rome became one large empire.

What to say on every slide is in the presenter script PDF.

We do: guided practice

Use G.R.A.P.E.S. to explain why Rome could build a bigger empire than Greece.

1. Geography: Greece was split by mountains and seas into separate city-states.
2. Geography: Rome sat in the middle of Italy with plains that were easier to unite and control.
3. Achievements and economics: Roman roads and one currency connected the lands Rome conquered.
4. So Rome could unite and hold together a much larger empire than the separate Greek city-states.

Answer: United geography, roads, and one currency helped Rome grow

You do: independent check (2 min)

Which pair shows a Greek idea and a Roman idea that the United States uses today? (A) Chinampas (Greece) and quipus (Rome) (B) Democracy (Greece) and a republic with a Senate (Rome) (C) Pharaohs (Greece) and pyramids (Rome) (D) Feudalism (Greece) and knights (Rome)

Answer: (B) Democracy (Greece) and a republic with a Senate (Rome). Students who miss it: 3-minute reteach at the teacher table, then start the room at the Explorer level.

Misconception: "Greece and Rome were the same civilization." They were different peoples, languages, and governments, though Rome borrowed heavily from Greek culture.

Misconception: "Everyone in Athens could vote." Only free adult men who were citizens could vote. Women, foreigners, and enslaved people could not.

Misconception: "Rome was always an empire." Rome was a kingdom, then a republic for almost 500 years, and only then an empire.

Misconception: "The Romans copied everything from Greece." Rome added its own achievements, like concrete, arches, roads, and written law.

3. ESCAPE ROOM: ESCAPE THE HALL OF EMPIRES: GREECE VS. ROME ⏱️:20–0:48 · 28 min

Launch: project the start screen, read the story aloud, and assign mission levels (Explorer = extra support, Agent = on level, Legend = challenge). Students can open Supports any time for read-aloud, bigger text, a word bank, and a scratch pad.

- Locks open in order, so every student moves through the same sequence. Circulate and listen for which lock is causing a traffic jam.
- Pairs work well: one student reads the clue card aloud, the other controls the device. Switch roles at

every lock.

- If a group is stuck for more than 3 minutes, ask "What does the clue card say about this?" before giving the hint.

Students turn in: the completion code plus their copied "turn in your work" block (Canvas Text Entry).

4. DEBRIEF

0:48–0:52 · 4 min

1. Which G.R.A.P.E.S. category shows the biggest difference between Greece and Rome? Why?
2. How did geography help Rome build a larger empire than Greece?
3. Which idea from Greece or Rome can you see in the United States today?

Close the loop: return to warm-up question 3. Answer: Mountains can separate people into small communities; the sea encourages fishing, trade, and travel by ship.

5. EXIT TICKET

0:52–1:00 · 8 min

Print the exit ticket PDF (page 2 is the key and mastery guide). Every item requires evidence: Part A asks students to justify each choice, Part B asks for an explanation, and Part C applies the standard to a new situation using Historian's Claim (Claim, Evidence, Source, Explain). Sort results into Mastered, Approaching, and Beginning to plan tomorrow's groups.

LESSON RESOURCES

Resource	How it fits the lesson
Warm-up worksheet (PDF)	Optional standalone warm-up (also Part 2 of the lesson worksheet), with a key.
Mini-lesson presenter	Projectable, step-by-step interactive lesson with tools and quick checks (room page).
Lesson worksheet (PDF + key)	One printable packet students complete during the whole lesson: short fill-ins and quick checks in 13 small parts that match the presenter slides.
Escape the Hall of Empires: Greece vs. Rome (.html)	The escape room for Canvas, with differentiated levels, supports, and a turn-in.
Exit ticket (PDF + key)	Evidence-based check with a rubric and a mastery sorting guide.
World History Encyclopedia (extra)	Reliable articles and images on ancient Greece and Rome. https://www.worldhistory.org/
National Geographic Education (extra)	Encyclopedia entries and maps of the ancient Mediterranean. https://education.nationalgeographic.org/
Khan Academy: World History (extra)	Videos on ancient Greece and Rome. https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history
Google Arts & Culture (extra)	Search "Acropolis" or "Colosseum" for 360° tours. https://artsandculture.google.com/

ANSWER KEY: ESCAPE THE HALL OF EMPIRES: GREECE VS. ROME

Lock 1: Door G: Geography (code piece: G)

1. Why did ancient Greece form many separate city-states instead of one kingdom? -> Mountains and seas divided the land into separate communities
2. Which geography fact describes each civilization? -> Greece: Mountainous peninsula with hundreds of islands, Little farmland, so people turned to the sea | Rome: Seven hills beside the Tiber River, Fertile plains in the center of a peninsula
3. How did Rome's central location in the Mediterranean help it? -> It could reach and trade with lands all around the sea

Lock 2: Door R: Religion (code piece: R)

1. Match each Greek god to the Roman god with the same role. -> Zeus (king of the gods) = Jupiter; Athena (wisdom) = Minerva; Poseidon (the sea) = Neptune; Ares (war) = Mars
2. What does "polytheistic" mean? -> Believing in many gods
3. True or false: Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in 380 CE. -> True

Lock 3: Door A: Achievements (code piece: A)

1. Sort each achievement to the civilization that created it. -> Greece: The Olympic Games, Philosophy of Socrates and Plato, Theater and drama | Rome: Aqueducts, Concrete and the arch, The Twelve Tables (written laws)
2. The first recorded Olympic Games were held in 776 BCE. The Twelve Tables were written around 450 BCE. How many years apart were they? -> 326 years
3. Why were Roman aqueducts so important? -> They carried fresh water long distances into cities

Lock 4: Door P: Politics (code piece: P)

1. What is the main difference between direct democracy and a republic? -> In a direct democracy citizens vote on laws themselves; in a republic they elect representatives
2. Which government does each feature describe? -> Athenian democracy: Citizens voted on laws in the Assembly, Every citizen man could speak and vote on laws | Roman Republic: Two consuls elected each year, A Senate advised the leaders
3. Put these events in order from earliest to latest. -> Rome overthrows its king and becomes a republic (509 BCE) -> Athens creates direct democracy (about 508 BCE) -> Augustus becomes Rome's first emperor (27 BCE)
4. The U.S. Senate is named after a body from which civilization? -> Rome

Lock 5: Door E: Economics (code piece: E)

1. Why did the Greeks trade olive oil and wine for grain? -> Their rocky land grew olives and grapes better than grain
2. How did one currency, the denarius, help the Roman economy? -> Traders across the empire could buy and sell with the same money
3. A Greek merchant trades 3 jars of olive oil for 5 sacks of grain. How many sacks of grain will 12 jars of olive oil buy? -> 20 sacks

Lock 6: Door S: Social structure (code piece: S)

1. Match each group to its description. -> Patricians = Wealthy Roman landowning families; Plebeians = Ordinary Roman citizens; Metics = Foreigners living in Athens; Tribunes = Officials elected to protect plebeians
2. True or false: Every adult who lived in Athens could vote in the Assembly. -> False
3. Which statement is true of BOTH Athens and Rome? -> Both depended on the labor of enslaved people

Final code: GRAPES