6.4 Activities
To answer questions online and to receive immediate feedback and sample responses for every question, go to your learnON title at www.jacplus.com.au. Note: Question numbers may vary slightly.

Check your understanding
1. Suggest reasons why Greece experienced a Dark Age from about 1150 BCE.
2. What happened to the Mycenaen cities and to writing in this period?
3. Who were the Dorians?
4. To which areas did Greeks migrate during and at the end of the Dark Age?
5. What was a polis?
6. Create a timeline of the major movements of people within and out of Greece between about 1200 and 700 BCE.

Apply your understanding
7. Look closely at Sources 1 and 3. Note the proportion of Greece that is mountainous and the length of the Greek coastline relative to the size of Greece. Explain how these geographical features could have:
   (a) reduced the amount of farming land in Greece
   (b) encouraged people to emigrate from Greece
   (c) made the Greeks dependent on sea travel
   (d) contributed to frequent wars and lack of central rule.
8. Imagine you are living in Greece around 750 BCE. Write a speech you would give to convince your family and friends to choose to emigrate.
9. Write down four questions you would ask about Source 2 if you were using it as evidence for a study of ancient Greek colonies.

6.5 Government in Athens and Sparta
6.5.1 Ancient Greek governments
Athens and Sparta were the two most powerful city-states in ancient Greece. They had many things in common with other ancient Greek city-states. For example, they generally worshipped the same gods and used the same language and alphabet. However, city-states had their own laws and traditions and their own ruling systems.

Greek city-states (or poleis) were originally ruled by kings. Later most came under the control of oligarchies. From the seventh century BCE many poleis were for a time led by absolute rulers called tyrants, who all the same often carried out reforms to win popular support. In most cases the aristocrats (oligarchs) eventually regained power. Then in 508 BCE Athens introduced a new system of government called democracy.

Athens — the roots of democracy
Democracy in Athens was at its height by the fifth century BCE. Athenian citizens decided how their city-state would be run. At meetings of the governing assembly (called the ecclesia), they voted on laws and elected officials.

Membership of the Council of 500 and jury courts was rotated. This meant that all citizens could participate, and no-one became too powerful. In fact, someone suspected of trying to grab power could be ostracised. Ostracism meant that if 6000 citizens spoke up against a man, he could be exiled from Athens for 10 years. Citizens expressed their concern by scratching the man’s name on a piece of broken pottery called an ostrakon.
But was it democratic?

In Athens, as in Australia, only adult citizens could vote. In Australia today most people who live here are citizens. However, during the fifth century BCE, only about 45,000 of Athens' population of around 300,000 were citizens. Women and children (who made up nearly half the population), metics (who made up about 12 per cent) and slaves (who made up about 25 per cent) could not take part in the democratic process.

SOURCE 1 Painting of Athenian assembly after the death of Pericles in 429 BCE

SOURCE 2 Government in Athens

Did you know?

Direct and representative democracy

All citizens were able to participate personally in the government of Athens because the citizen population was fairly small. Each citizen could discuss and vote on Athenian laws. They could also be elected to work as public officials on a fair, rotational basis. This sort of democracy is called direct democracy.

The form of democracy in Australia is called representative democracy. Australian citizens over 18 vote for politicians who they believe will best represent their or the community's interests. Generally, these representatives belong to political parties. The party or coalition winning most of the 150 seats in the federal House of Representatives (the lower of the two houses of Parliament) forms the Federal Government. The main losing party or parties form the Opposition, whose role is to critically review what the government does. The Senate comprises 76 people — 12 from each state of Australia and two from each territory. Its role is to protect state interests.