



Travelling in Time

Supported by the Helen Hamlyn Trust in memory
of Paul Hamlyn

Ancient Greece through the ages



Travelling in Time

This trail leads young visitors and their families on a journey to discover some of the British Museum's treasures from India and Southeast Asia. On the way, there are counting activities and the chance to meet the Buddha and the Hindu gods Shiva and Ganesha.

The Asia Gallery, Room 33 is on the Main Floor.

Starting point: Room 33 in the north of the Museum. Turn left on entering.

Time: about 30-40 minutes

Suitable for age: 3-5 years

Access: four steps up to Room 33.
Lift adjacent to steps.



If you have enjoyed this trail, there are other journeys round the British Museum you could try.

Ask for them in the Reading Room:

- Sailing on the Nile: a voyage through ancient Egypt
- Travelling through time: ancient Greece through the ages
- Tracking fantastic creatures: a trip across the globe
- Searching for treasures: Anglo-Saxons and Vikings revealed

Also for young children:

- Chasing rainbows with Mama Wata: a trail about colour and shapes

You can also visit our special websites for children:

www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/childrenscompass
www.ancientcivilisations.co.uk

Credits

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Room 12

The Bronze Age: 3200–1050BC

Archaeologists have given the name 'Bronze Age' to the time when people first started to use the metal bronze to make objects. The Minoans and the Mycenaeans are the peoples we know most about from the Bronze Age in Greece.

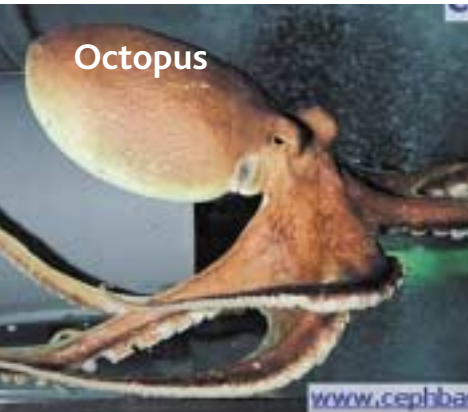
The Minoans lived on the island of Crete. They built huge palaces and were great sailors. The Mycenaeans lived in mainland Greece and eventually took over Crete. They also got wealth from trade and were powerful warriors.

Both the Minoans and the Mycenaeans decorated pots with paintings of animals that were important to them. They also made objects in the shape of animals.

Here are photographs of eight animals. Can you find a painting or object in the shape of each animal?



Clue: make sure you look high and low in the glass cases



Octopus



Bull



Dolphin



Cuttlefish



Murex shell



Horse



Goat

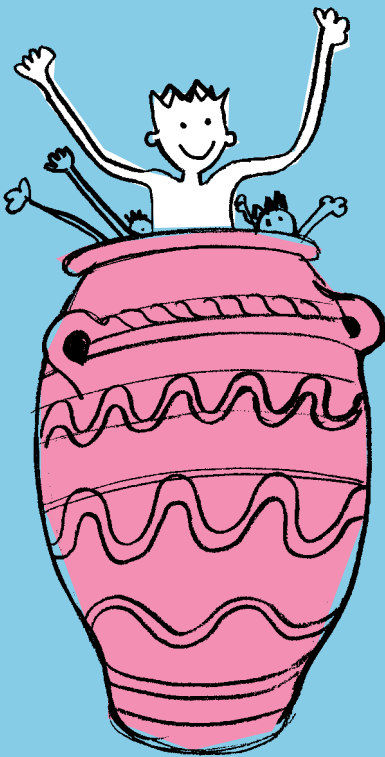


Duck

Talking points

Find the huge storage jar from the Minoan palace at Knossos. Hundreds of these jars have been found.

They hold xxx litres of wine or oil and were also used for storing grain.



1. Why do you think the Minoan kings need to store so much food and wine?
2. The patterns on the jar look like ropes – why do you think that might be?
3. Which members of your family would fit inside the jar?

Look at all the objects from the Mycenaean cemetery in Case 8.

Use the objects to decide which of the following words you would use to describe the Mycenaeans:

- skilful
- warlike
- rich
- primitive
- artistic
- peaceful
- proud



Clue: look in case xx

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Room 13

The Archaic Age: 700–480BC

After the Bronze Age, Greece became poorer and traded less. In the Archaic Age, the Greeks grew wealthier again as they made new contacts with their neighbours in the Mediterranean area, for example the Egyptians and the Syrians.

They borrowed many patterns, designs and other ideas from these peoples.

Find this Greek stone statue of a young man. The Greeks borrowed the idea of making stone statues from Egypt.

Here are all four sides of an Egyptian statue.

How many similarities and differences can you spot between the Greek statue and the Egyptian one?

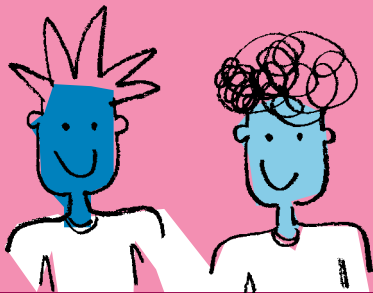


Statue ideas

Here are some of the similarities and differences you may have spotted:



- Both have left leg forward
- Both have arms at sides
- Both look straight ahead
- Greek is naked; Egyptian is clothed
- Greek is more broken because...
- Greek's arms and legs are carved free of the stone;
- Egyptian sculptor left arms and legs attached by blocks of stone
- Egyptian is painted; paint on Greek statue has worn off
- Hair is different



Find the object that is this shape...

The Greeks used bowls like this to mix wine and water together ready for drinking. This large bowl and its stand were made in Athens and may have been used at a wedding celebration.

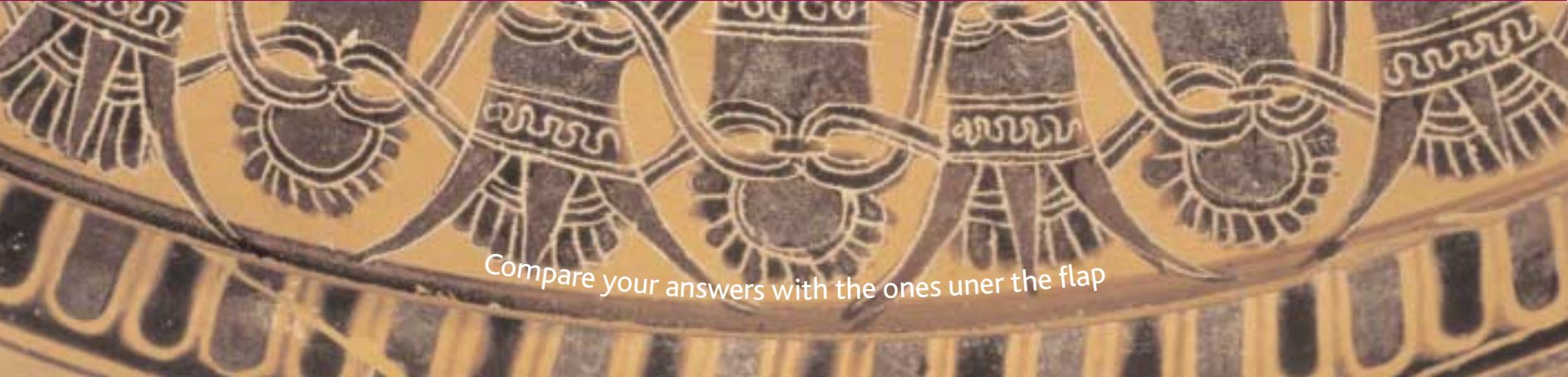


Whereabouts on the pot can you find these creatures and patterns?



After this trail
If you want to see objects made by the ancient peoples of Syria and Lebanon, visit room 57.

The Egyptian statue is in Room 4.



Compare your answers with the ones under the flap

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Room 15

The Classical Age: 480–323BC

In 480 and 479 BC, the Greeks defeated an invasion by the king of Persia (modern Iran). After this, several of the Greek cities became very powerful and very wealthy.

Many of the most highly-skilled and important Greek craftspeople, writers and thinkers lived at this time. The name 'classical' shows that people have thought that this was when Greek civilisation was at its very best.

This is Melissa. She is a slave girl in ancient Athens. Her master is holding a drinking party tonight and has left her a list of what she has to get ready.



Everything that Melissa needs is in this room

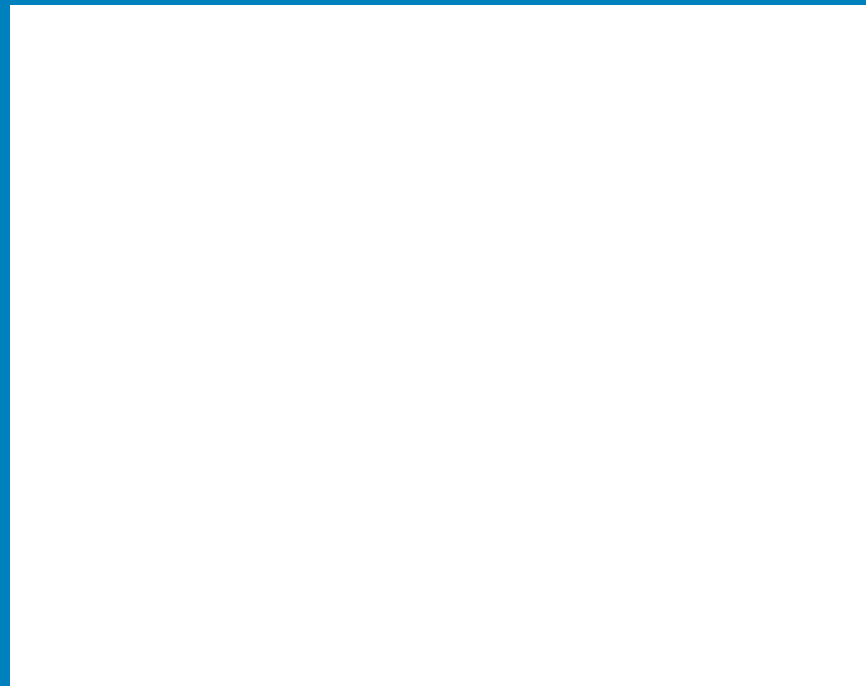
Can you help her find it all?

- pot with three handles to hold and pour water
- large bowls to mix wine and water
- jugs to serve wine from
- shallow cups to drink wine from
- deep cups to drink wine from
- couches for guests to lie on
- musicians
- stripey cushions
- low tables for snacks
- girl dancers
- garlands of flowers or leaves for guests to wear on their heads



Clue: make sure you look at the pictures on the pots as well as the

pots themselves!



Spot the pot

The pots that were used to hold and carry wine in ancient Greece were called amphoras (sounds like am-for-ahs). They had handles on both sides of the neck.

Can you find an actual amphora in this room?

And can you find a picture of one on a pot?

Talking point

In ancient Athens, drinking parties were for men only. Only slave girls and some other women entertainers were allowed to go. During the party, men talked, sang songs and played games. Sometimes pots had paintings on which gave the men things to talk about. This painting shows the fight between Theseus and the monster Minotaur.

Find the actual pot and talk about:

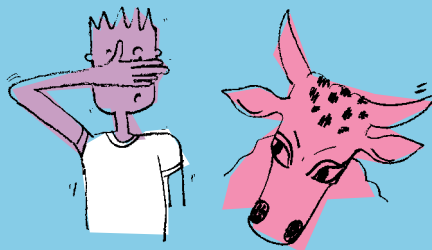
Who is going to win?

How is the Minotaur trying to defend himself?



Look what Theseus is doing with his left foot.

How terrifying does the Minotaur look to you?



After this trail

In Room 51 you will find objects from ancient Persia. Make sure you see the Persian soldier made of coloured bricks and the wonderful gold treasures in Cases 27, 28 and 29.



Big clue: this pot will help you a lot!

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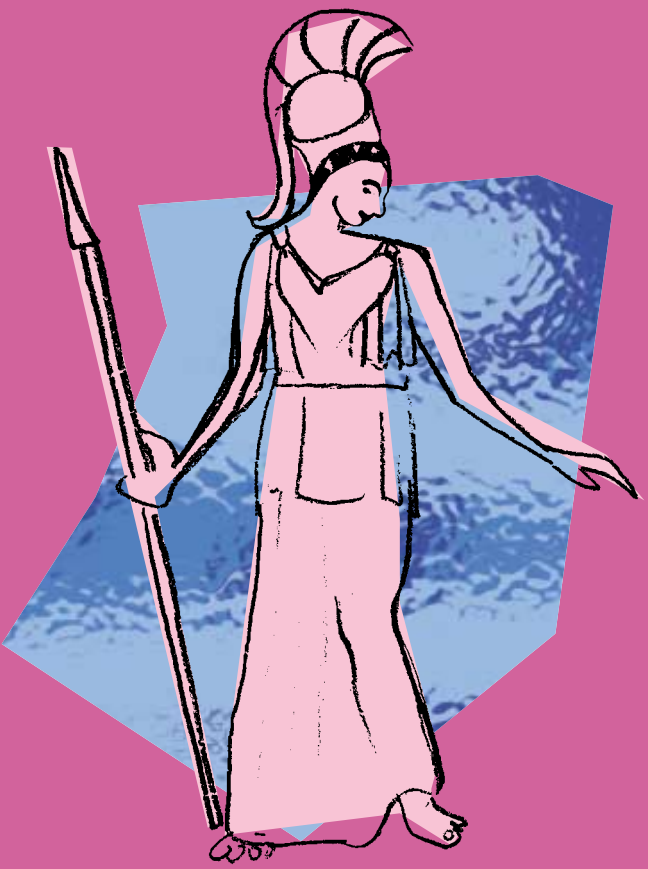
Room 18

The Classical Age – Two

Go through the glass doors and turn right into the smaller room. There you will find a model of the temple called the Parthenon. During the Classical Age, Athens controlled a large empire and became the richest city in Greece.

The Athenians used some of their wealth to build the Parthenon on top of the Acropolis, a hill in the centre of the city. It was a temple for Athena, the patron goddess of Athens.

Remember – it is fine to touch these models, but no one touches the ancient objects in museums because even clean hands can do damage. **The museum assistants who move the ancient objects wear special white gloves.**



Touch...

... **the triangular spaces** at the ends of the temple. These are called the **pediments**.

... **the square spaces** all round the outside of the temple above the columns. These are called the **metopes**.

Put your hand on the wall between the columns and touch **the row of dots** at the top of the wall. This is where the **frieze** of the temple was.



Before you leave this room, find out what colours were used to paint the Parthenon, and if you like, you can touch the parts of the frieze on the walls.



Now go into the main room to see the real sculptures from the Parthenon...

The frieze was carved around 2,500 years ago. It shows a great procession to celebrate Athena's birthday.

There are hundreds of people and animals on the frieze.

Can you spot these?

- a cow mooing at the sky
- two people folding up a cloth
- a horseman wearing a hat with floppy ears
- a man leaning on a stick
- women carrying wine jugs in their hands
- a horseman wearing boots
- a horseman wearing a helmet
- a man carrying a shield
- some horses standing still
- a man pulling a rope
- a boy helping tie a young man's belt

Talking point

Now choose a small part of the **frieze** and try to imagine you can hear what is going on.

What sounds can you hear? What might the people in your part of the frieze be saying?

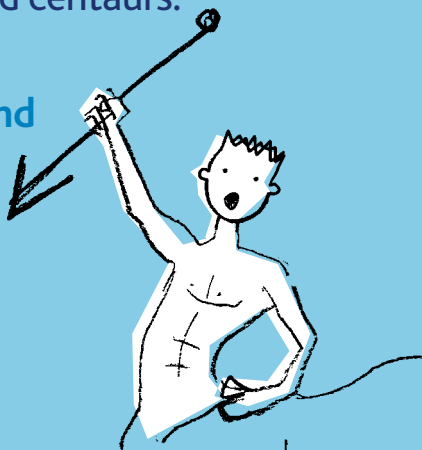


Make sure you...

look at the sculptures which used to be in the **pediments**.

The **metopes** show Greeks fighting monsters called centaurs.

Centaurs are half-human and half-what?



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Room 17

The Classical Age – Three

In this room you can see the huge tomb of a king of Xanthos in Lykia (southwest Turkey). Lykia was part of the Persian Empire, but the tomb looks very Greek.

In the Classical Age Greek architects and sculptors became well-known for the quality of their work. Clearly this foreign king employed Greeks to build and decorate his tomb.



Strike a pose!

The statues of young women between the columns and at the end of the room show sea goddesses called Nereids (sounds like neary-ids).

Get one of your family to pick a Nereid secretly and stand in the same position.

See if the rest of the family can guess which Nereid is being copied.

Now get the rest of the family to take turns and try to guess each time.



Clue: you need to look very carefully to get the positions right!



Talking point
Find this woman.

Where is she?
Why do you think she is waving her arms?

If she could speak, what do you think she would be saying?

Look!

Look at the three Nereids at the end of the room. Some experts think that they are standing on sea creatures – perhaps sea birds and a dolphin.

What do you think?



After this trail

The idea of carving friezes in stone may have come from Assyria (modern Iraq). In rooms 9 and 10, you can find carved friezes from royal palaces in Assyria. Several of these show battle scenes and others show the king of Assyria hunting lions.



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Room 22

The Hellenistic Age: 323–30BC



The Hellenistic Age begins in 323BC with the death of Alexander the Great. Alexander’s father had been King Philip of Macedon, the most powerful ruler in Greece. Alexander himself conquered large parts of what are now Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Iraq and Afghanistan and even reached northern India and Pakistan. This contact with many different peoples made the Greeks very interested in the ways people looked, dressed and behaved.

Portrait sculptures of actual people became very popular in the Hellenistic Age. Artists tried to show someone’s character in their face.

Here are some portraits of famous Greeks.

Look closely at the faces and match them to the characters below:

- 1. a playwright who explored right and wrong in his plays
- 2. a thinker who believed that being good was more important than looking good
- 3. a kindly god of healing
- 4. an energetic king and successful general
- 5. a thinker who said you should avoid all pleasures

Check your answers below.

So, do you think you can tell what someone is like from how they look?

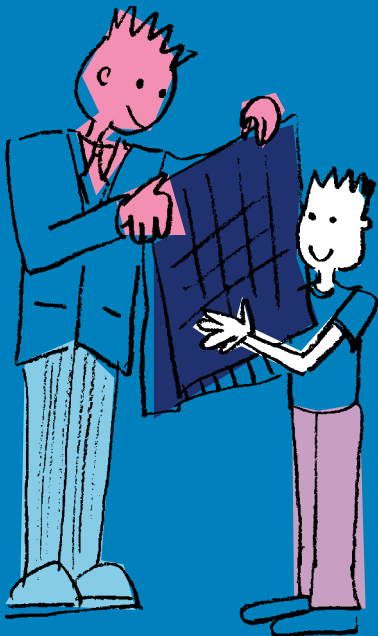


Look in Cases 6, 7 and 8 and see if you can find:

- people who are different ages
- people from different ethnic groups
- people with disabilities

Portrait answers:

- A = 2. Socrates
- B = 3. Asklepios
- C = 1. Sophocles
- D = 5. Antisthenes
- E = 4. Alexander the Great



After this trail

In Room 33, Cases 11 and 13, you will find sculptures from Gandhara (Northwest Pakistan and Afghanistan). Gandharan sculptors took some of their ideas from Hellenistic Greek statues.