**Lesson Concepts for Exploring the Athenian Acropolis!**

**Designed for grades 9th - 12th**

Introduction and Project Background:

Flyover Zone’s streaming app [YorescapeTM](https://www.flyoverzone.com/yorescape/) allows you to take a virtual tour whenever you want, to listen to experts explaining what you see at each stop along the way, and to go back to revisit the site as often as you like. Yorescape’s Group Tour feature also makes it easy to take the same tour on a specific date and time in the company of family, friends, or students. The Free Roam feature allows you to move around the site wherever your curiosity leads you.

The idea is to make it possible for you to freely visit these landmarks, teleporting from point of interest to point of interest!

**INTRODUCTION TO TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE:**

**FIRST STEPS:**

Make sure you and your students can access the [Yorescape](https://www.flyoverzone.com/virtual-tours-2/) virtual tours and the Athenian Acropolis virtual tour. This can be done via a web browser or downloaded through Google Play or the App store for mobile devices. You can lead the experience synchronously in class, or, if able, your students can download the app or stream on their own devices.

The following lesson concepts are approached through the following selected thematic lenses outlined by the [National Council for Social Studies](https://www.socialstudies.org/):

* Culture
* People, Places and Environment
* Individuals, Groups, and Institutions and Power, Authority and Governance

**What is included in this guide?:**

Background information on the Athenian Acropolis

Vocabulary list for key terms

4 Lesson Concepts with thematic approaches, objectives, suggested stops and essential questions.

**What is the Athenian Acropolis?**

**Background information for teachers and students**

**Show students stops 1 *Introduction* and 2 *What is the Acropolis?*  on the virtual Tour and/or introduce the following background information.**

The ancient Greek term “acropolis” is actually a compound word composed of “acro” and “polis,” which translate in English as “highest” and “city,” respectively. Therefore, the Acropolis was, for the ancient Athenians, the highest area inside their city. While it was not the only hill in the landscape, its combination of an essentially flat surface measuring 330 by 150 meters and an imposing height of 70 meters above its surroundings, was unique and made it highly attractive to human populations from earliest times. In fact, there is no other formation like the Acropolis in all of Attica, the large peninsula that juts out of the east side of mainland Greece.

The high, rocky plateau was originally used as a citadel beginning around 1600 BC, the walls of which are still preserved. In addition to the elevation, the location of the Acropolis was desirable because of the geology of the limestone and its slopes, which formed natural reservoirs and springs fed by rainwater. Inhabitants began to create terracing in the thirteenth century BC, including rock-cut stairs on the west slope. The citadel may have even been accessed by a broad ramp. A circuit wall was then built of enormous stones, that measure over 10 meters high and ranging from 3.5 to 6 meters thick and changed the shape of the Acropolis and came to act as a sort of extension of the bedrock for later builders.

By the sixth century BCE, the Acropolis had transitioned from serving primarily as a citadel to a sanctuary (although the retention of its fortified character meant that it reverted to a stronghold several times in later periods). In the year 566 the “Great Panathenaia” festival was organized. This event, along with growing prosperity in Athens, corresponded with a phase of renovation and construction that included a propylon, a smaller columned entrance porch. In 480 BC, the Persians sacked the city of Athens, including the Acropolis. Years later, in 447 BC, Perikles, the then leader of the Athenians, led the efforts to rebuild the Acropolis.

The striking character of the Acropolis gave it an aura of power and sanctity that favored Athens’ political and social domination of Attica in historical times. The Acropolis became the most significant site of religious pilgrimage in Attica.

The exploration of the Athenian Acropolis you will see reflects how the site may have looked in about the year 330 BC when it had become a locus for lavish dedications by the people of Athens, statesmen, athletic victors, and even Alexander the Great.

Now that you and your students know more about the Athenian Acropolis, you can explore some of the monuments, art and architecture in more detail through the following themes and associated lesson concepts. Choose the activities that catch your attention and adapt them to fit your needs!

**LESSON CONCEPT #1**

**CULTURE**

**ESSENTIAL GUIDING QUESTION:** How do the art, architecture and monuments of the ancient Athenian Acropolis reflect Greek culture?

**INTRODUCTION**

Using the lens of Culture as defined by the National Council for the Social Studies, students will Explore, Synthesize, Connect, Reflect and Share what they learn through multiple stops on a virtual tour of the Athenian Acropolis.

**Culture** is defined as the socially transmitted beliefs, values, institutions, behaviors, traditions and way of life of a group of people encompassing other attributes and products, such as language, literature, music, arts and artifacts, and foods.

* Cultural Expressionism is valuing and conveying culture through the creation and communication through art, literature, music, linguistics, folkways, customs, cuisine, architecture, and economy.
* Individual Development and Identity is shaped by an individual’s culture, by groups, by institutional influences, and by lived experiences shared with people inside and outside the individual’s own culture throughout her or his development.

## **LESSON GOALS:**

Students will:

* **explore** the Athenian Acropolis virtually and understand its importance in antiquity;
* **synthesize** information learned from each virtual stop;
* **connect** the information they learned to activate prior knowledge and **reflect** on what they learned and what questions they still have;
* recognize the ways in which specific monuments and monuments in general played a key role in ancient Athens, Greece, and more broadly, how these ideas are relevant today to different communities around the world;
* **share** observations and inferences about ancient Greek and Athenian culture.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

* Introduce the essential guiding question: How do the art, architecture and monuments of the ancient Athenian Acropolis reflect Greek culture?
* Go over the Acropolis background information and definitions for culture.

Stops 17 and 18: *Athena Nike: Design and Production* and *Athena Nike: East Frieze*

Stop 21: *Trojan Horse Sculpture*

Stop 29: *The Erechtheion*

* Refer students to vocabulary list for use during their exploration if needed.
* Ask students to take notes on observations and questions as they explore each stop.
* Once students have completed the stops move on to the **SYNTHESIZE, CONNECT, REFLECT AND SHARE CONNECT** activities. These activities can be written, worked on in small groups or pairs, or shared with the class:

**SYNTHESIZE:**

Considering all of the stops and sites you visited:

* How are the monuments and the art you explored examples of cultural expressionism?
* What ways did Athens differ from the rest of Greece?

Give concrete examples considering the following categories:

* Beliefs
* Values
* Institutions
* Behaviors
* Traditions
* What did they have in common? How were they different?
* From what you learned, can you describe or list any factors that led to the development of Athenian cultural achievements and social norms?

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### **CONNECT AND REFLECT**

Thinking about and reflecting on your virtual touring experience can help connect to people and ideas across time and place.

Use these prompts to reflect on your experience as related to the theme of **culture**:

* What more do you know about the Acropolis and ancient Greece? How do you imagine the lives of the people for whom the monuments and buildings were created? How is anything you saw or learned about today similar to or different from your own life and experiences?
* What are you still curious about? What did the experience NOT answer for you? Name three things that you wish you knew more about and why. How might you go about finding out the answers to your questions?
* Compare the art and architecture in your life (home, school, place of worship) to what you saw in the Athenian Acropolis tour you explored. Consider materials used, presentation, audience, intended use, value, etc. What similarities and differences can you think of?

**SHARE**

Have students share their reflections in pairs, small groups or with the entire class.

**LESSON CONCEPT #2**

**PEOPLE, PLACES AND ENVIRONMENTS**

**ESSENTIAL GUIDING QUESTION:** How did geography influence the social, cultural, political, and economic development of Athenian society and the Acropolis?

**INTRODUCTION:**

Using the theme of People, Places and Environments as developed by the National Council for the Social Studies, students will Explore, Synthesize, Connect, Reflect and Share what they learn through multiple stops on a virtual tour of the Athenian Acropolis.

The study of people, places, and environments can help us understand the relationship between human populations and the physical world. This study can be considered through the following categories:

**Physical Systems** – climate, weather and seasons, and natural resources, such as land and water, on human populations.

**Migration** – patterns and effects of human settlement and migration, including the roles of different kinds of population centers in a society, and the impact of human activities on the environment.

**Contributions and innovations** – the creation, development and implementation of a new product, process or service, with the aim of improving efficiency, effectiveness or competitive advantage.

## **LESSON GOALS:**

Students will:

* **explore** the Athenian Acropolis virtually and understand its importance in antiquity;
* **synthesize** information learned from each virtual stop;
* **connect** the information they learned to activate prior knowledge and **reflect** on what they learned and what questions they still have;
* recognize the ways in which specific monuments and monuments in general played a key role in ancient Greece and more broadly, how these ideas are relevant today to different communities around the world;
* **share** observations and inferences about ancient Greek culture.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

* Introduce the essential guiding question: How did geography influence the social, cultural, political, and economic development of Athenian society and the Acropolis?
* Go over the Athenian Acropolis background information and definitions for culture. You will want to show or assign Stops : 1 *Introduction and* 2 *What is the Acropolis ?*
* Assign the following stops for students to EXPLORE or lead them through yourself.

Stop 41: *Parthenon: Design and Decoration*

Stop 9: *Parthenon:* *West Side*

Stops 4 and 5: *Propylaia: Design and Construction* and *Propylaia: West Side*

Stop 30: *The Erechtheion: Decoration and Design*

* Refer students to vocabulary list for use during their exploration if needed.
* Ask students to take notes on observations as they explore each stop.
* Once students have completed the stops move on to the **SYNTHESIZE, CONNECT, REFLECT AND SHARE CONNECT** activities. These activities can be written, worked on in small groups or pairs, or shared with the class:

**SYNTHESIZE:**

Considering all of the stops and sites you visited:

* Why did the city of Athens and the Acropolis develop where it did?
* How do myth and geographical features come together? Consider the myth of the contest between Athena and Poseidon in particular.
* Can you make connections between the physical environment of the Acropolis and politics? How did this change over time?
* How did the Parthenon and Erechtheion architects consider the environment when designing and building? In what ways were they innovative?

Give concrete examples considering the following categories:

* Physical systems
* Migration
* Contributions
* What commonalities did you notice between the stops you visited?

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### **CONNECT AND REFLECT**

Thinking about and reflecting on your virtual touring experience can help connect to people and ideas across time and place.

Use these prompts to reflect on your experience as related to the theme of **People, Places and Environment**:

* What more do you know about the Acropolis and ancient Greece? How is anything you saw or learned about today similar to or different from your own life and experiences?
* What are you still curious about? What did the experience NOT answer for you? Name three things that you wish you knew more about and why. How might you go about finding out the answers to your questions?
* Compare the art and architecture in your life (home, school, place of worship) to what you saw in the Athenian Acropolis tour you explored. Consider materials used, presentation, and relationship with the environment. What similarities and differences can you think of?

**SHARE**

Have students share their reflections in pairs, small groups or with the class.

**EXTEND**

Do more research and consider how contrasting philosophies of government and culture, as well as geographic features, divided the Greek city states and prevented the establishment of a centralized government.

**LESSON CONCEPT #3**

**INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS AND POWER, AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE**

**ESSENTIAL GUIDING QUESTION:** How do the art, architecture, and monuments of the ancient Athenian Acropolis reflect group identity and notions of power, authority and government?

**INTRODUCTION**

Using the themes of Individuals, Groups and Institutions and Power, Authority and Governance as outlined by the National Council for the Social Studies, students will Explore, Synthesize, Connect, Reflect and Share what they learn through multiple stops on a virtual tour of the Athenian Acropolis.

Institutions are the formal and informal political, economic, and social organizations that help us as both individuals and as part of a group, carry out, organize, and manage daily affairs. Each culture has a set of beliefs and values that form the foundation of their religious and political thought and their systems of government. These values tend to be clearly reflected in art and architecture, among other things. Art and architecture are important vehicles for communicating messages, often by those in charge. By examining the art and architecture of the Athenian Acropolis, we can learn about Athenian and Greek political systems, the values behind how they governed, how they came into conflict with others, and how they attempted to resolve these conflicts and sought to establish order and security. We can also gain a better understanding of how practices like colonization, imperialism and nationalism have played a role in Greek civilization.

**LESSON GOALS**

Students will:

* **explore** the Athenian Acropolis virtually and understand how selected buildings and monuments are representative of individual and group identity;
* **synthesize** information learned from each virtual stop;
* **connect** the information they learned to activate prior knowledge and make connections between what they learned about ancient Greece and life today;
* **reflect** on what they learned and what questions they still have;
* identify the function of the monuments as related to political and or governmental messages;
* **share** observations and inferences about ancient Greek culture.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

* Introduce the essential guiding questions: How do the art, architecture, and monuments of the ancient Athenian Acropolis reflect identity and notions of power, authority and government?
* Go over the Athenian Acropolis background information and introductory section on Individuals, Groups and Institutions and Power, Authority and Governance. Go over the Athenian Acropolis background information and definitions for culture. You will want to show or assign Stops : 1 *Introduction and* 2 *What is the Acropolis ?*
* Assign the following stops for students to EXPLORE or lead them through yourself:

Stops: 42 *The Parthenon: West Side*

Stop: 50 *Acropolis Afterlives*

Stop: 13 *Perikles*

Stop 40: *Parthenon: Building Accounts*

Stop 29: *The Erechtheion*

* Refer students to vocabulary list for use during their exploration if needed.
* Ask students to take notes on observations as they explore each stop.
* Once students have completed the stops move on to the **SYNTHESIZE, CONNECT, REFLECT** AND **SHARE** activities. These activities can be written, worked on in small groups or pairs, or shared with the class:

**SYNTHESIZE:**

Considering all of the stops and sites you visited:

* How do the buildings and monuments you explored show ideals of Athenian society? How do you think the people who viewed them saw them?
* Giving concrete examples and using what you learned explain how some of the categories below were reflected in the art and architecture:
* Belief
* Cultural Values
* Institutions
* Religion
* Victory
* Resilience
* Economy
* Were there similarities you picked up on between stops? Were there differences? What can you attribute those similarities and differences to?
* How are mythology and social values reflected in some of the art and architecture you saw?
* How do some of the changes reflect various motivations and conflicts? What were some of the motivations and reasons for conflict you saw examples of?
* Based on what you learned, what factors led to conflict between Greece and Persia? What were the immediate and long-term consequences of the Persian Wars? How are both of these evident on the Athenian Acropolis?

### **CONNECT AND REFLECT**

### Thinking about and reflecting on your virtual touring experience can help connect to people and ideas across time and place.

### Use these prompts to reflect on your experience as related to the theme of **Individuals, Groups, and Institutions and Power, Authority And Governance**

* How is what you saw or learned about today similar to or different from your own life and experiences?
* What are you still curious about? What did the experience NOT answer for you? Name three things that you wish you knew more about and why. How might you go about finding out the answers to your questions?
* Compare the art and architecture in your life (home, school, place of worship) to what you saw in the Athenian Acropolis tour you explored. Consider materials used, presentation, audience, intended use, value, etc. What similarities and differences can you think of?
* How do we as a society represent our values through public art and architecture?

**SHARE**

Have students share their reflections in pairs, small groups or with the class.

**EXTEND**

Research some of the events you learned about and analyze the effects of political conflict and national unity.

What factors led to conflict between Greece and Persia?

What were the immediate and long-term consequences of the Persian Wars?

Evaluate how Greek political ideals influenced later societies including the stages in the evolution of Athenian government.

**LESSON CONCEPT# 4**

**MYTH AND RELIGION: GREEK GODS, GODDESSES, AND PRACTICE**

**ESSENTIAL GUIDING QUESTION:** How are myth, religion and politics evident together in the art and architecture of the Athenian Acropolis?

**INTRODUCTION:**

The word *myth* comes from the Greek word (*mŷthos*), which literally means “story” or “narrative.” Myths tell stories about gods, goddesses and heroes, but they are different from the way we think about "stories" or “myths” today. Myths are traditional narratives of gods, goddess, and heroes, great deeds and supernatural powers, that also explain various natural phenomena. All cultures have myths that are passed down through oral traditions, texts, and visual sources. These myths have a profound religious significance to the members of the culture that believe in them and they convey commonly held beliefs in a particular society not only about the forces of the world around them, but also proper behavior. Mythology can be considered a collection of myths or stories that are part of a larger, more formal system of religion. The term “religion” generally encompasses some kind of worldview, which usually includes some sort of mythology, but also the attitudes, ritual practices, communal identity, and moral teachings associated with the worldview.

In both Greece and Rome, myth, religion, and politics were all intertwined and evidence of this existed in their beliefs and practices and therefore the art and architecture they built for these purposes.

The lesson below will help students to think more about this and understand how we see evidence of the blending of myth, religion and politics in Ancient Greece.

## **LESSON GOALS:**

Students will:

* **explore** the art and architecture of the Athenian Acropolis virtually and find evidence of where mythology, religion and politics are blended together;
* **synthesize** information learned from each virtual stop;
* **connect** the information they learned to activate prior knowledge and **reflect** on what they learned and what questions they still have;
* recognize the ways in which art, monuments, and monuments in general played a key role in ancient Greek and Athenian society with relation to myth, religion and politics.
* **share** observations and inferences about ancient Greek and Athenian culture.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

* Introduce the essential guiding question: *How are myth, religion and politics evident together in the art and architecture of the Athenian Acropolis?*
* Go over the Roman Forum background information and definitions for culture. You will also want to show or assign Stops: 1 *Introduction* and 2 *What is the Acropolis?*
* Assign the following stops for students to EXPLORE or lead them through yourself.

Stops 39 and 40: *The Parthenon* and *The Parthenon: Building Accounts*

Stop 46: *Parthenon: The Metopes* and Parthenon: West Side

Stops 29 and 32: *Erechtheion* and *Poseidon-Erectheus and Athena*

* Refer students to vocabulary list for use during their exploration if needed.
* Ask students to take notes on observations as they explore each stop.
* Once students have completed the stops move on to the **SYNTHESIZE, CONNECT, REFLECT AND SHARE** activities. These activities can be written, worked on in small groups or pairs, or shared with the class:

**SYNTHESIZE:**

Considering all of the stops and sites you visited:

* How do the monuments you explored relate to myth, religion and politics? What did you notice about the relationship of myth, religion and politics?

Give concrete examples considering the following categories:

* Beliefs
* Values
* Institutions
* Behaviors
* Traditions
* Using information from the Intro and the stops you visited describe the influence of Roman mythology, gods and goddesses on the social and religious structure of Roman society.
* What did the stops and places have in common? How were they different?

### **CONNECT AND REFLECT**

### Thinking about and reflecting on your virtual touring experience can help connect to people and ideas across time and place.

### Use these prompts to reflect on your experience as related to the theme of **myth, religion, and politics:**

* How is what you saw or learned about today similar to or different from your own life and experiences? How are the ideas you explored relevant today to different communities around the world? Consider countries that have separation of church and state and those that do not.
* How is what you learned similar or different to what you studied for ancient Greece? Compare Roman gods and goddesses with what you know of gods and goddesses of ancient Greece.
* What are you still curious about? What did the experience NOT answer for you? Name three things that you wish you knew more about and why. How might you go about finding out the answers to your questions?
* Compare the art and architecture in your life (home, places of business, school, place of worship) to what you saw in the Roman Forum tour you explored. Consider materials used, presentation, audience, intended use, value, etc. What similarities and differences can you think of?

**SHARE**

Have students share their reflections in pairs, small groups or with the class.