

Key Stage 2: The Persian Wars

The final page of these notes can be copied and given to students who you think may need additional support during the workshop or to adult helpers.

Before your visit: preparing for your workshop

- Locate the area covered by the Persian Empire on a map and look at the modern countries which currently exist in this area.
- Find out about the Battle of Marathon. Introduce the participants and the reason for the Persian attack on Athens.
- Key vocabulary for the session includes Persia, empire, Athens, democracy and envoy. You might like to discuss these words before the workshop.
- Use the Explore section of the British Museum website (www.britishmuseum.org) to search for objects from Athens and Persia in the Museum's collections.

During your visit

- The session consists broadly of three parts. In the first part students will adopt the role of Athenian envoys visiting the Persian King, Darius (acted by a live interpreter), in 489BC, after the Battle of Marathon. In the second part students will visit Room 52, the Ancient Iran gallery, accompanied by the session leader, their teacher and adult helpers, to gather information about the Persian Empire and have their first meeting with King Darius. The final part of the session will involve discussions between the King and the Athenian envoys.
- During the session students will wear chitons (ancient Athenian costumes) and teachers are welcome to bring cameras to take pictures of the Athenian envoys. Please be aware that the session takes place in the gallery and some Museum visitors may seek to take pictures of the students in the chitons. Teachers and adult helpers are at liberty to ask visitors not to do so for child protection.
- Rooms with objects relating to the workshop include:
 - Room 52, Ancient Iran
 - Room 18, The Parthenon Sculptures
 - Room 69, Life in Ancient Greece

The Persian Wars continued...

After your visit: follow-up activities

- You may like to continue looking at objects from Athens and Persia in the in the British Museum's collections via the Explore section of the website at www.britishmuseum.org.uk.
- Look at the *Athens* section of our interactive website on Ancient Greece at www.ancientgreece.co.uk/athens/home_set.html
- Follow up the session by exploring what happened after the Battle of Marathon. Use the *War* area of our interactive Ancient Greece website to help: www.ancientgreece.co.uk/war
- Persian texts do not mention the wars between Greece and Persia but ancient Greek sources do. Discuss reasons for this and what it may reveal about differing attitudes.
- Citizenship: Discuss the idea of democracy and voting. Compare and contrast democratic government with monarch led government. Explore the similarities and differences between democracy in ancient Greece and democracy in Britain today.
- Find out more about ancient Persia and modern Iran.

Curriculum links

- History A European history study: *Includes links to QCA, History Unit 14 in general and in particular Section 4 Was the battle of Marathon a great victory for the ancient Greeks?*
- Citizenship guidelines Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities. Preparing to play an active role as citizens. Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people. Link to QCA, Citizenship Unit 8 *How do laws and rules affect me?*

In this workshop you will learn about:

- the Persian Empire
- ancient Athens in the 5th century BC (the 400s BC)

Key words

Athens

Athenians – the people who lived in Athens

Persians

King Darius – the King of Persia

democracy – government by the people

Assembly – where the Athenian people made decisions

envoy – a representative sent to find out about something

Becoming an Athenian

- You will learn about Athens, what it was like to be an Athenian and the recent wars with Persia. Using this knowledge you will think like an Athenian for the rest of the session.
- You are now an Athenian envoy going to visit the King. You have been asked to decide whether to recommend to the Athenian assembly that Athens join the Persian Empire or fight to stay independent.

Meeting the King and exploring his Empire

- You will be meeting King Darius, the King of Persia. He will tell you about himself, his large Empire and invite you to look at some objects from the Empire.
- You will explore the gallery in pairs or groups using some prompt sheets to help you. Look at the objects in the cases and think about what they tell you about the Persian Empire.

Discussions with the King

- This is your opportunity to talk to the King. He will ask you some questions and invite your thoughts. You are also able to ask him any questions that you have thought of.
- The King will ask you whether you will recommend to the Athenian assembly that Athens join the Persian Empire or fight to stay independent. A vote will be taken, you must vote for the option that you think best.